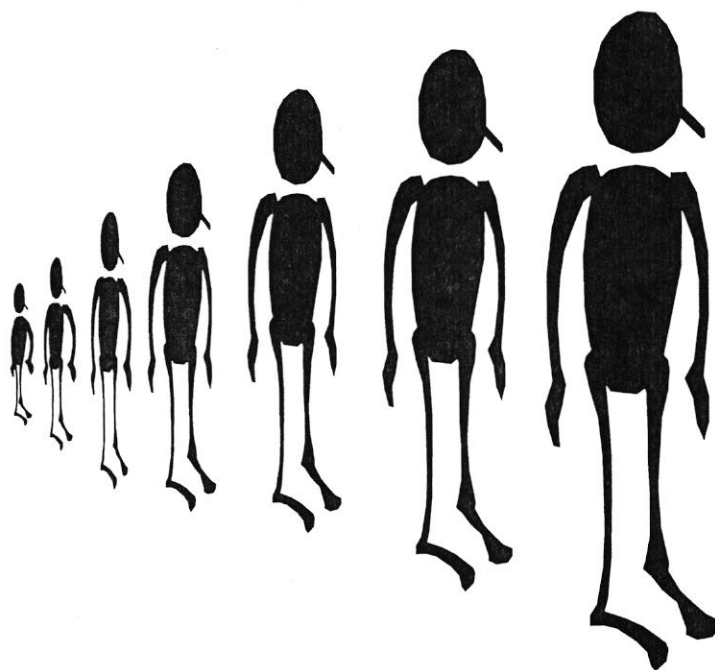# Working with Girls: Meeting the Challenge

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Curriculum created by
Greene, Peters, and Associates, Nashville, TN

WORKING WITH GIRLS: MEETING THE CHALLENGE

AGENDA

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Welcome/Introductions Strengths, Challenges and Expectations
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Gender Messages
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Profile of Juvenile Female Offenders/ Female Adolescent Development
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	BREAK
10:45 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Risk Factors/Protective Factors
12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.	LUNCH
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Active Listening
2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Boundary Setting
2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	BREAK
2:45 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Staff Issues Opportunities for Expression
4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Wrap-up/Evaluation

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Strengths, Challenges and Expectations

- What do you do well in your work with girls?
  (What is your greatest strength ?)

- What is your greatest challenge in working with girls?

- What do you need to get from this training?
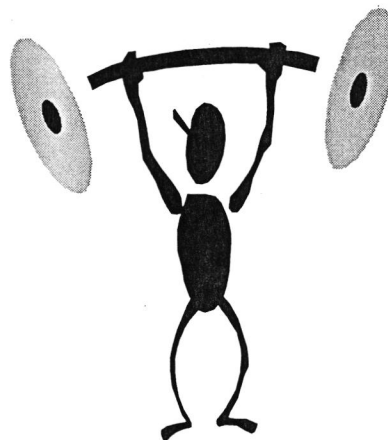
GENDER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

Gender-specific programming refers to unique program models and services that **comprehensively** address the special needs of a targeted gender group. An essential ingredient is the fostering of positive gender identity development, particularly during the formative years of the gender group.

COGNITIVE BLOCKS

- The words "Gender" and "Sex" are not synonyms.

- Just because a program serves only females does not make it gender-specific.

- Program designs can be gender-specific for adolescent males.

- Girls's sexuality is viewed as a problem rather than their victimization.

- Some perceive that girls need to be discouraged early on from delinquent acts and therefore dispositions need to be more harsh.

- The more the girl's behavior departs from the traditional female sex role the more punitive the punishment.

PROFILE of FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS:

- ▶ 14 -16 years of age (older adolescent)

- ▶ Marginal student or academic failure

- ▶ Victim of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse

- ▶ Status offender

- ▶ Living in poverty stricken environment

- ▶ Instability in living arrangements

- ▶ History of family incarceration

- ▶ Substance use and abuse

- ▶ High incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and chronic health conditions

- ▶ Likelihood of demonstrating heightened levels of relational aggression as compared to overt aggression

- ▶ Girls of color

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
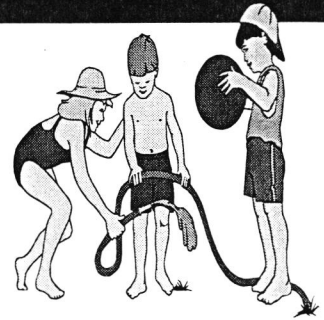
- Girls physically mature earlier than boys.
- Puberty begins before onset of menstruation, as early as 8-11 years of age.
- Girls who develop earlier are a greater risk for delinquency.
- Growth spurt is between 8 and 10 years of age.
- Girls' self image can be tied to physical development.
- There are cultural differences in how girls physically develop and view their bodies.
- Girls' physical make-up may have some influence on the types of crimes they commit and who they victimize.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Development of self-esteem, as determined by self, not others

- Girls are relationship oriented - struggle between autonomy and affiliation

- Peer relationships are important

- Ethnic identity development - positively reflected through cultural appreciation, pride and acceptance

- Gender identity development - what is the role of women, what does society expect

PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Expectations are different for girls; girls are to be feminine, polite, studious.

- Girls are more relationship oriented than boys.

- Self-concept is influenced by cultural stereotypes of female appearance.

- Physical attractiveness is highly valued.

- Lowered self-esteem is associated with physical development.

- Self-esteem cannot be viewed in isolation from the social context.

PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
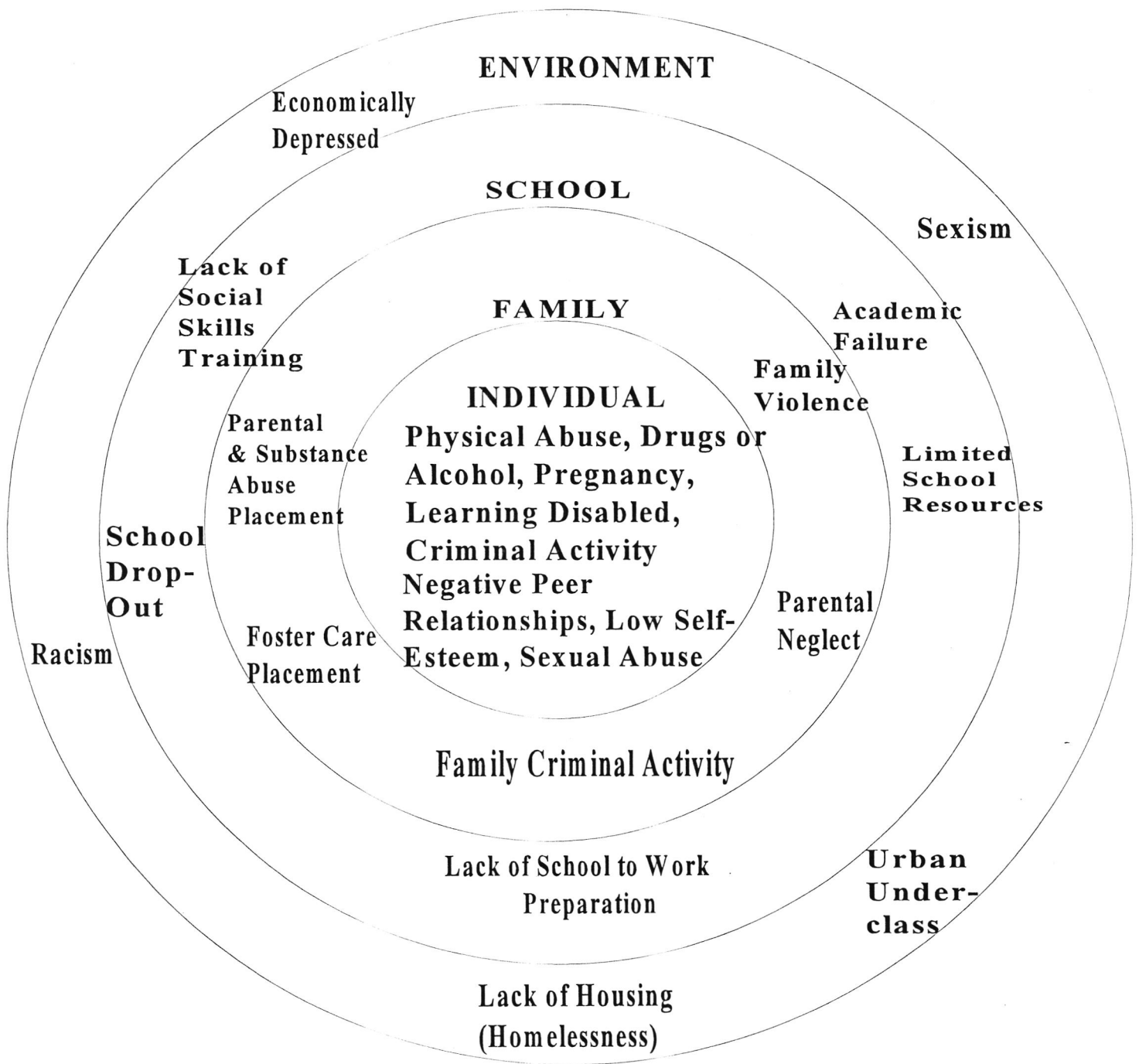
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Lowered self-esteem may be displayed as:

- failing to consider a full range of career options.

- becoming pregnant and often a single parent.

- being overly dependent on men.

- having an excessive need for external approval.

- sex role development - orientation to heterosexual preference, or to homosexual preference.

- having a need for spiritual development.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Develop her intuitiveness

- Devalue her own ability to learn and achieve; underestimate her abilities

- Start to hide her "smarts"

- Fear success and assertiveness

- Follow a relational path of development, learn through relationships

- Come to believe that the things she has learned about the way relationships and the world work are wrong or unacceptable (are subordinate to men)

Model of Risk Factors for Female Juvenile Delinquency

ENVIRONMENT

Economically
Depressed

SCHOOL

Sexism

Lack of
Social
Skills
Training

FAMILY

Academic
Failure

Family
Violence

INDIVIDUAL
Physical Abuse, Drugs or
Alcohol, Pregnancy,
Learning Disabled,
Criminal Activity
Negative Peer
Relationships, Low Self-
Esteem, Sexual Abuse

Parental
& Substance
Abuse
Placement

Limited
School
Resources

School
Drop-
Out

Racism

Foster Care
Placement

Parental
Neglect

Family Criminal Activity

Lack of School to Work
Preparation

Urban
Under-
class

Lack of Housing
(Homelessness)

Protective Factors in Female Development

INDIVIDUAL

Positive Self-Concept
Positive Gender Identification
Competence
Spirituality

FAMILY

Positive Ethnic Identity Formation
Family Connectedness
Child-Centered Family

SCHOOL

Extracurricular Activities
Abuse Education
Sexuality Education
Drug/Alcohol Education
Vocational/Educational Job Training
Non-Traditional Job Training
Social Skills Training
Fundamental Basic Education
School Bonding

COMMUNITY

Extracurricular Activities
Abuse Education
Sexuality Education
Drug/Alcohol Education
Vocational/Educational Training
Non-Traditional Job Training
Social Skills Training
Places to Grow (Safe Havens)
Mentoring Sisterhood

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE
GENDER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

- Gender-specific programs should be holistic in approach and address all relevant domains, such as individual, family, school, community, and peer group.

- Gender-specific programs should include a strong family intervention component.

- Gender-specific programs should be designed to address the individual needs of female adolescents; therefore, an individual assessment should be performed prior to developing a treatment plan.

- Gender-specific programs should contain empowerment strategies that focus on building relationships and improving self-esteem.

- Gender-specific programs should offer information about and/or treatment for victimization issues.

- Gender-specific programs should include a sexuality/family planning component.

- Gender-specific programs should provide mentoring relationships rooted in the realities of girls' own lives.

- Gender-specific programs should include substance abuse prevention and intervention components.

- Gender-specific programs should involve the participants in programming decisions.

- Gender-specific program components should be culturally appropriate.

- Gender-specific programs should include a monitoring and/or evaluation component.

Active Listening is:
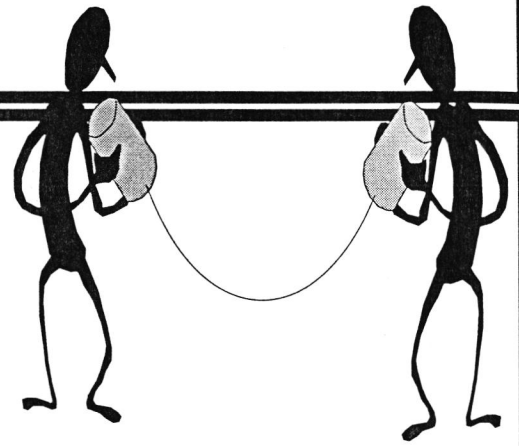
- restating in your own words your understanding of what the sender is trying to express.

- focusing on ensuring that the receiver accurately de-coded the sender's message.

- a "perception check" the receiver makes before continuing the conversation.

- Putting yourself in someone else's shoes.

- Showing non-verbal behavior which communicates interest and acceptance.

- Observing the sender's non-verbal behavior.

ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Mirroring - Repeating all or a segment of what a girl has said - using her words. It is like holding a mirror up to her so she can examine a portion of her statement.

The purpose of mirroring is to help a girl focus on a particular segment of a communication to help her think about it and /or expand on it.

Paraphrasing - Using your own words to communicate back to the girl what you heard her say. This includes your impressions of both the content and the emotion being expressed by the girl.

Door Openers - These are an invitation to talk. This simplest are non-committal, e.g., "I see", or "mm-hummm."

1. "I hate my mother."

Response:

2. "Robert is not fair. He drops a sanction on me every chance he gets. He lets Alicia and Ana get by with anything!"

Response:

3. "I don't care what happens. I didn't like that school anyway. What difference does it make if I can go back there!"

Response:

4. "I can't talk about that. It's too weird - you wouldn't understand anyway..."

Response:

5. "Kendra and Ruby are liars! When I get a chance, me and my friends will get them..."

Response:

6. "I don't like group. I don't see why I have to go. It's just stupid!"

Response:

BOUNDARY SETTING

- Why did you stop the person where you did?

- Did that change the second time, why or why not?

- What factors affected your comfort level and the size of your personal space?

BOUNDARY SETTINGS AREAS

- Limits of your professional training

- Gender differences

- Professional distance

ACTION PLANNING

Over the next six months I will...

Work on the following personal skills to enhance my effectiveness with girls:

Seek assistance from the following person(s) to learn new skills, techniques, tools in my personal development:

Use the following tools and techniques to improve my team participation/contributions:

Work in the following program areas to develop new opportunities for girls:

Specific Activities and Plan for Implementation:

Resources Needed:

Support and Assistance Needed from: