

# LESSONS LEARNED:

## EVALUATING THE CHANGES IN PERCEPTION OF PARTICIPANTS OF GIRLS E.T.C. WORKSHOPS, 1997

Prepared by

**Erica J. Boyce** of the Office of Research and Statistics for the  
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council

**February 2000**

Office of Research and Statistics

*Kim English, Research Director*

Division of Criminal Justice

*Raymond T. Slaughter, Director*

Colorado Department of Public Safety

*Aristedes Zavaras, Executive Director*

700 Kipling Street, Suite 3000

Denver, Colorado 80215

Ph: 303-239-4442

Fx: 303-239-4491

*This project was funded by the Colorado Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Council, through a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Research Design	9
Findings	
Demographics	11
Program Components	12
Participant Grouping	17
Qualitative Analysis	17
Conclusion	19
Appendix A: Program and Treatment Guidelines	21
Appendix B: Pre- and Post-Test Questionnaires	27
References	33



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Girls E.T.C. (Equitable Treatment Coalition) was formed in 1995 as a component of a Challenge Grant awarded to Colorado from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This Coalition of juvenile justice and youth-service professionals was formed to provide gender-specific services for programming and treatment of adolescent girls in the juvenile justice system. One of the objectives of Girls E.T.C. was to provide gender-specific training sessions throughout the state of Colorado for individuals such as judges, juvenile justice workers, family members, mental health providers, parole and probation officers, treatment providers, service providers, and social workers. Six regional, open-participation training sessions were offered statewide in 1997. The following report provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of these training sessions.

Researchers from the Office of Research and Statistics, Division of Criminal Justice, developed a pre- and post-test training questionnaire that was distributed at each of the training sessions. The questionnaire required participants to rank order the importance of 33 components used in programming for girls before and after they attended the training. Descriptive data analysis was performed to collapse and interpret the participant demographic information. Inferential techniques, such as paired sampled and independent t-test were administered to determine whether changes in rank ordering of program components may be attributed to the gender-specific training.

## Findings

- Approximately 68 percent of the training attendees were female. Slightly less than half of the total group had children. Only 2.5 percent of the participants worked with female-specific groups. The median number of years working with youth was four.
- For each of the training sites, the attendees' ranking of the importance of specific training topics changed from Time One (before training) and Time Two (after training) for 81.8 percent of the program components (25 of 33). Paired sample t-tests indicated that the change between pre- and post-training was statistically significant.
- Program components that increased in importance the most from before the training to after were *Body Awareness*, *Spirituality*, and *Gender Research*. *Life Skills* and *Peer Culture* Programs decreased the most in importance when assessed after the training.
- Many of the program components impacted the movement of other components. Four program components (*Sex Education*, *Self-Esteem*, *Problem-Solving*, and *Empowerment*) affected half of the remaining program components. Program components should not be viewed as individual trainings, but as pieces of a larger strategy.
- Men without children who thought that the training was excellent had the highest rate of change between the pre- and post-test. Men without children who thought that the training was adequate had the lowest variance between the pre- and post-test.



# INTRODUCTION

Girls E.T.C. (Equitable Treatment Coalition) was formed in 1995 as a component of a Challenge Grant awarded to Colorado from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The purpose of the grant was to develop programs and implement policies that would prevent gender bias in decisions pertaining to the placement and treatment of juvenile females within the criminal and juvenile justice systems. One of the Coalition's products was the *Guidelines for Female-Specific Programs* to be used for the programming and treatment of adolescent girls in the juvenile justice system (see Appendix A).

One of the objectives of Girls E.T.C. was to provide gender-specific training sessions throughout the state of Colorado for individuals such as judges, juvenile justice workers, family members, mental health providers, parole and probation officers, service providers, treatment providers, and social workers. The training curriculum included an explanation of what constitutes gender-specific services and education regarding the importance of providing female-specific services. Six regional, open-participation training sessions were offered statewide in 1997.





# RESEARCH DESIGN

The Office of Research and Statistics (ORS) contracted with Girls E.T.C. to evaluate the impact of the gender-specific training sessions offered in 1997. Researchers from the ORS developed a pre- and post-test training questionnaire to distribute to each of the participants attending the regional conferences. The questionnaire required participants to rank order, pre-training and post-training, the importance of 33 program components used in programming for girls (see Appendix B). The total number of questionnaires completed was 268. A five-item Likert scale was created, allowing the participant to choose a range of scores symbolizing his or her belief that the trainings were “very important” to “not very important.” Analysts performed inferential data analysis techniques, including paired sampled and independent t-tests, to see if a statistically significant change had occurred in the participants’ ranking of training components.

Demographic information for each of the participants was also collected. Individuals were requested to provide information on gender, age, whether they had children, how long they had worked with juveniles, and the gender of their typical client. Descriptive data analysis, such as frequencies and modes of central tendency (i.e., mean, median, and mode), were used to collapse and interpret the results. Findings are provided and discussed in the following sections of this report.

It was the intention of the Girls E.T.C. staff, through the implementation of this research project, to determine if the gender-specific training material was useful to individuals who worked with adolescent females and if participants’ attitudes changed from pre- to post-test. The results may also be used as a self-evaluation for the trainers and coalition staff.



# FINDINGS

## Demographics

The Girls E.T.C. staff conducted six statewide gender-specific training conferences (Pueblo, Grand Junction, Alamosa, Ft. Collins, and two conferences in Denver). Demographic information was collected at each site to provide a profile of attendees. Approximately 69 percent of the attendees were female. It is interesting to note that more women attended the training than did men. This may indicate that more women work with juvenile offenders. Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not ask the occupation of the attendees. With such a low percentage of individuals working with girls exclusively, it would be interesting to find out what agencies were not represented that might have benefited from this training.

Slightly less than half of the total group had children (48 percent). The median number of years that attendees worked with youth was four. Only 2.5 percent of participants worked with female-specific groups. Representatives from varying age groups were in attendance. The range covered ages from 21 to 66 (with a mean age of 35).

Demographic information was broken down by each of the training sites. The data are presented in the table below.

**Table 1. Demographic Information of Training Participants**  
(n=268) (Percentages may not total 100 due to missing values.)

SITE	AVERAGE AGE	% FEMALE	% MALE	HAS CHILDREN	YEARS WORKING W/ YOUTH	WORK W/ GIRLS ONLY	WORK W/ BOYS ONLY	WORK W/GIRLS AND BOYS
DENVER 1ST	33	78%	18%	43%	3.00	3.2%	1.6%	90.5%
DENVER 2ND	35	73%	24%	39%	4.00	6.1%	0.0%	84.8%
ALAMOSA	37	61%	33%	61%	5.00	0.0%	0.0%	93.9%
PUEBLO	39	85%	15%	59%	4.00	0.0%	2.6%	94.9%
GRND JUNCTION	35	79%	21%	57%	4.50	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
FORT COLLINS	34	83%	16%	42%	4.00	3.5%	3.5%	91.2%
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>81.7%</b>

The largest demographic variation among sites was the gender of the participants. Overall, 69 percent of those individuals who attended were female. The largest percentage of female participants was found in Pueblo (85%). Conversely, male attendees comprised on average, 18 percent of the participants. A notable exception existed in Alamosa where one-third of the participants was male.

According to the data presented in Table 1, trainees representing communities located in rural portions of Colorado were slightly more likely to work with *both* boys and girls. This may be attributed to a lack of resources these communities can direct toward specialized programming. The highest percentage of direct services being offered specifically for girls existed in the second training of

the Denver region. This finding may be reflective of how larger communities are able to offer more gender-specific services because the sheer number of clients creates an “economy of scale.” As the proportion of female offenders increases in the future (DCJ’s Juvenile Detention and Commitment Population Projections, 1999), the juvenile justice system may respond to the need for more programs serving girls and young women.

Pueblo’s attendees represented the oldest group, but they had relatively little experience working with youth compared to some of the other sites. The first session Denver site was the youngest group of participants and also the site with the least amount of experience working with youth. Alamosa’s participants had the most experience working with youth (an average of five years).

## Program Components

For each of the training sites, the attendees’ ranking of the importance of specific component topics changed between Time One (before training) and Time Two (after training) for 81.1 percent of the program components (25 of 33). Paired sample t-tests, measuring the differences in score averages, indicated that the change present between pre- and post-training was statistically significant.

**Table 2. Combination of All Components – Paired Samples Tests**

VARIABLE	N	MEANS	SIGNIFICANCE P VALUE
Combination of Components Before and After Training	268	Before – 64.5 After – 55.8	<.001



### t-Test Overview

In research, it is not sufficient to report that there are differences between groups (e.g., the median income for men and women is 18,000 and 16,000, respectively). The *scientific method* mandates the researcher to substantively demonstrate that the results are not likely **the result of chance or inherent biases contained in the sample**.

A t-Test is commonly used to determine that the preceding two conditions are not present. In regards to ensuring that the results are not the product of chance, researchers have established an assumption that when the results are shown to have a less than five percent ( $\leq .05$ ) chance of randomness, those findings are believed to be statistically significant. Moreover, once statistical significance has been established, it is generally assumed that the dependent measure (i.e., the variable being affected) is likely to have been impacted by the membership of whatever group its participants belong (or the independent measure- the variable that is assumed to be causing change).

*(continued on next page)*

(continued from previous page)

For example, in 1991, a survey asked men and women to respond whether they felt their lives to be “exciting, routine, or dull.” The results from this survey indicated that men generally believed their lives to be more exciting than did women. Though the differences in means scores were not considerably different, the t-Test revealed that they were nonetheless statistically significant.

Another important component of the t-Test is the **Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variance**. One of the basic assumptions of the t-Test is that *there is equal variance in the dependent variable between the groups being measured*. If it is assumed that variances between groups are identical, then researchers must determine the probability that the sample could have produced results that varied as greatly as what was observed in the data. Since homogeneity of variance is assumed, the Levene’s test should produce results that are NOT statistically significant. Stated another way, the greater the probability that the variance between groups can occur, given the assumption of a homogeneity of variance, the more confident one can be assured that inherent biases are NOT contained in the sample. Researchers have commonly agreed to accept a sample as long as the probability of a homogeneous sample is greater than five percent.

Independent sample t-tests were performed to observe if participant demographic information statistically affected the modification of ranking of program components. None of the demographic variables were related to changes in the rankings before and after the training. Each of the independent t-tests passed the Levene’s test for the equality of variance. This means the trainees responded similarly across the demographic and length of experience variables. Likewise, the equality of means tests indicate that any change in the ranking of components cannot be attributed to the variable in question. Results for each of the variables tested are presented below.

**Table 3. Significance of Demographic Variables Related to Change in the Ranking of Training Components**

VARIABLES	LEVENE’S TEST FOR EQUALITY OF VARIANCE Significance Level	T-TESTS FOR EQUALITY OF MEANS Significance Level
<i>Gender</i>		
Before Training	.385	.896
After Training	.505	.501
<i>Have Children: Yes, No</i>		
Before Training	.114	.608
After Training	.066	.805
<i>Age: 35 or Below, Older than 35</i>		
Before Training	.686	.884
After Training	.615	.539
<i>Years Working With Teens: 4 yrs or less, &gt; 4 yrs</i>		
Before Training	.458	.695
After Training	.395	.100
<i>Gender Worked With: Boys Only, Girls Only</i>		
Before Training	.821	.617
After Training	.314	.533

Table 4 presents the ranking of components before and after the training. The first item on both of the lists represents the most important component for programming reported by attendees from all six training sessions. The third column, magnitude of change, reflects the shift in rank order before and after the training. For example, *Body Awareness* moved up in importance from the sixteenth to eighth position. This is a positive movement of eight placements.

**Table 4: Magnitude of Change for Components Before and After Training**

IMPORTANCE BEFORE TRAINING	IMPORTANCE AFTER TRAINING	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE
1. Self Esteem	1. Self Esteem	0
2. Problem Solving Skills	2. Personal Empowerment	-3
3. Communication Skills	3. Female Role Modeling	-1
4. Personal Empowerment	4. Communication Skills	2
5. Family Relationships	5. Problem Solving Skills	-5
6. Sexual Education	6. Success in Education	-3
7. Life Skills	7. Sexual Abuse	-6
8. Female Role Modeling	8. Body Awareness	5
9. Success in Education	9. Sexual Education	3
10. Sexual Abuse	10. Family Relationships	3
11. Conflict Resolution	11. Social Skills Development	-3
12. Health	12. One-to-One Interactions	-5
13. Social Skills Development	13. Life Skills	2
14. Assertiveness Training	14. Conflict Resolution	-1
15. Leadership Skills	15. Assertiveness Training	-1
16. Body Awareness	16. Leadership Skills	8
17. One-to-One Interactions	17. Health	5
18. Mentoring Programs	18. Mentoring Programs	0
19. Vocational Training	19. Spirituality	-4
20. Violence Experience	20. Cultural Expectations	-1
21. Peer Culture Programs	21. Violence Experience	-6
22. Work Habits	22. Gender Research	-3
23. Emancipation Preparation	23. Vocational Training	-3
24. Cultural Expectations	24. Entitlement Issues	4
25. Entitlement Issues	25. Work Habits	1
26. Spirituality	26. Emancipation Preparation	7
27. Exercise and Fitness	27. Peer Culture Programs	-3
28. Group Therapy	28. Group Therapy	0
29. Gender Research	29. Leisure Time	7
30. Leisure Time	30. Exercise and Fitness	1
31. Law Education	31. Law Education	0
32. Team Sports	32. Team Sports	0
33. Political Activism	33. Political Activism	0

The components that most increased in importance from before the training to after were *Body Awareness*, *Spirituality*, and *Gender Research*. *Body Awareness* increased by eight placements, whereas *Gender Research* and *Spirituality* increased by seven placements. *Life Skills* dropped the most in importance from seventh position to thirteenth after the training. Some of the components remained in the same ranking level such as *Self-esteem*, *Political Activism*, *Law Education*, *Group Therapy*, and *Team Sports*. A breakdown of the curriculum components that moved the most, either up or down in the order of importance, is provided below.

**Table 5. Curriculum Components that Increased In Priority at Least Five Items**

COMPONENTS	PRIORITY RANKING	
	Before	After
Female Role Model	8	3
Body Awareness	16	8
One-to-One	17	12
Spirituality	26	19
Cultural Expectations	24	20
Gender Research	29	22

**Table 6. Curriculum Components that Decreased in Priority at Least Five Items**

COMPONENTS	PRIORITY RANKING	
	Before	After
Health	12	17
Peer Culture	21	27
Family Relationship	5	10
Life Skills	7	13

# *i*

## **Correlation Overview**

A correlation coefficient conveys two important pieces of information: 1) The strength of the relationship between variables; and 2) the directional nature of how these variables interact with one another. The strength of the relationship between variables is depicted by the value of the coefficient. The range of coefficient values is from 0.00 to 1.00. A coefficient of 0.00 indicates that the variation between variables has absolutely NO relationship. Conversely, a coefficient of 1.00 indicates that the variation found in one variable is PERFECTLY related in the variation found in another variable. In social science research, a coefficient of .30 or higher is considered to be an indicator of a STRONG correlation.

The second important piece of information harvested from a correlation coefficient is whether the coefficient is a positive or negative integer. *A positive coefficient indicates that as one variable increases in value, the other variable also increases in value.* An example of a positive correlation would be the regularity a driver exceeds the speed limit and the number of speeding tickets that driver is likely to have received. *A negative coefficient indicates that as one variable increases in value, the other variable will decrease in value.* An example of a negative correlation would be the number of miles a car has been driven and the resale value of that car.

Data analysis was performed to determine if the introduction of certain program components affected the importance or value bestowed upon other program components. In other words, researchers wanted to know if the movement in rank order for one component would affect any other program components. Bivariate correlations were performed among all of the program components to see if there were any statistically significant relationships. The cut-off point for the correlation coefficient, or strength of the relationship, was .50 (an extremely high correlation in social research). Any relationship possessing at least a correlation coefficient of .50 was considered for further research.

Many of the program components surfaced as having an impact on the movement of other program components. Four components -- *Sex Education, Self-Esteem, Problem-Solving, and Empowerment*-- affected, on average, half of the remaining program components. These four program components and the components they impacted are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7. Program Components and Impacted Criteria**

SEX EDUCATION	SELF ESTEEM	PROBLEM SOLVING	EMPOWERMENT
Communication Skills	Social Skills	Social Skills	Communication Skills
Health	Communication Skills	Communication Skills	Health
Body Awareness	Health	Health	Body Awareness
Sex Abuse	Body Awareness	Body Awareness	Sex Abuse
Education	Sex Education	Sex Education	Education
One-to-One Interactions	Sex Abuse	Sex Abuse	One-to-One Interactions
Family Relationships	Education	Education	Vocation Training
Life Skills	One-to-One Interactions	Vocation Training	Family Relationships
Empowerment	Family Relationships	Family Relationships	Life Skills
Female Role Model	Life Skills	Life Skills	Empowerment
Assertiveness Training	Empowerment	Empowerment	Female Role Model
Conflict Resolution	Female Role Model	Female Role Model	Conflict Resolution
Self Esteem	Assertiveness Training	Assertiveness Training	Self-Esteem
Problem-Solving	Conflict Resolution	Conflict Resolution	Problem-Solving
	Leadership	Self-Esteem	Leadership
	Exercise	Leadership	

As the above table indicates, many program components are interrelated to other program components for reasons that are readily understandable. For example, *Sex Education* is highly correlated with *Health, Body Awareness, Sexual Abuse, Relationships, Empowerment, and Self-Esteem*. This finding reflects that when some program components increase in importance, other related program components will evidence similar increases. Since the program component of *Sex Education* was made more important, the training participants appear to be saying that other related components needed to increase in importance, as well. Another interpretation of the close interrelationships between program components is that the participants may be contending that training certain program components only makes sense when they are trained in conjunction with other related program components. The above two interpretations are not mutually exclusive and



point to the need to think of program components not as individual trainings, but as pieces of a larger strategy.

## Participant Grouping

Finally, participants were grouped into eight categories to determine if a particular group of people changed their rank ordering more than other groups. Independent t-tests were administered to determine the statistical significance. Grouping variables included *gender*, *whether or not participants had children*, and *if the participant felt that the gender-specific training was excellent or adequate*. The breakdown of each group is presented in Table 8. The column titled “Rank” represents the group’s magnitude of change in ordering program components from before to after the training. For example, Group 2 had the largest amount of change in rank ordering of program components, therefore, Group 2 received a number one in the rank column. Group 6 possessed the smallest amount of change after the training and received the lowest rank of eight.

**Table 8. Breakdown of Each Group by Magnitude of Change**

GROUP	MEN	FEMALE	HAVE CHILDREN	TRAINING EXCELLENT	TRAINING ADEQUATE	RANK
Group 2 (n=13)	X			X		1
Group 5 (n=4)	X		X		X	2
Group 4 (n=82)		X		X		3
Group 3 (n=64)		X	X	X		4
Group 1 (n=15)	X		X	X		5
Group 7 (n=6)		X	X		X	6
Group 8 (n=3)		X			X	7
Group 6 (n=4)	X				X	8

Group 2, *men without children who thought that the training was excellent*, had the highest rate of change between testing timepoints. The group with the second highest change in ranking components was *men with children who thought that the training was adequate*. *Women who had children and expressed that the training was excellent* reported the third highest variance when rank ordering the program components. The group having the lowest variance between pre- and post-tests was Group 6, *men without children who found the training to be adequate*. Only one group had statistically significant differences in mean scores across time: Group 5, *men with children who thought that the training was adequate*. However, due to the small sample size of four, this finding must be viewed with caution.

## Qualitative Analysis

Two questions were asked on the survey that could not be analyzed because of the open-ended nature of the question. The first question asked the participants how they would better serve their female clients during the next month. Four overall themes surfaced when the results were reviewed. They included *conducting increased one-on-one sessions*, *creating stronger relationships with the girls based on*

*listening and trust, offering additional girl's specific activities, and stressing the importance of self esteem with female clients.* These answers coincided with responses provided to the second question – *the best thing I learned at this workshop.* Several major themes were apparent in the participants' answers. First, the four components of gaining self-esteem were seen as valuable. Second, the importance of providing self-esteem information to female juvenile offenders was considered valuable. Third, participants stated that they learned to make sure that girls knew that they were different than boys and that their differences were acceptable. Last, the main theme that participants extracted from the training was that girls define themselves through relationships and that in order for juvenile justice professionals to make a difference in the lives of these girls they must develop strong, trustworthy relationships.

# CONCLUSION

Results from this analysis indicated that the Girls E.T.C. training changed how individuals rank ordered the importance of program components for girls in the juvenile justice system. Many variables may have affected the ranking of program components, such as personal life experiences, but these were not measured in the current study. Demographic variables of the participants did not appear to affect how individuals rank ordered training components. However, the data does suggest that certain groups of individuals obtained information from the training that changed their perception of the importance of certain program components.



## APPENDIX A

# JUVENILE FEMALE-SPECIFIC PROGRAM AND TREATMENT GUIDELINES

The following guidelines were developed by the Girls Equitable Treatment Coalition to be implemented within female-specific programs. The coalition emphasizes that a program curriculum must integrate these guidelines in order to create an amiable atmosphere for girls.



# ***Guidelines for Female-Specific Programs***

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

---

**The Girls Equitable Treatment Coalition (Girls E.T.C.) seeks to enhance the quality of services for juvenile female offenders.** When we provide quality services, we meet our clients' needs and increase the likelihood that offenders will not re-offend and that young women "at risk" will not offend in the first place.

Because female delinquents are outnumbered by male delinquents in the juvenile justice system, and because young women offenders may seem less dangerous to society, their needs have largely gone unaddressed. However, there is an increasing rate of females entering the system and some are committing more violent offenses. And as researchers focus specifically on females, they are gaining a better understanding of female adolescent development and the factors that put them at risk of delinquency. Female-specific programming offers a way to tailor juvenile justice services specifically to the needs of young women. It is imperative we work to create such programming.

Gender-specific programming for girls is a comprehensive approach to female delinquency based on an understanding of female experiences. (Similarly, male-specific services take into consideration what is good practice for males.) To develop quality female-specific services, we need to know what is considered good practice for females in all areas of correctional treatment and programming including staff training and development and support services (food services, mental and physical health services, and aftercare and follow-up services).

First, we consider criteria that are appropriate for all programs and services as well as criteria that are appropriate for coeducational programs and services.

November 1999

**There are criteria that all programs and services (female-specific and male-specific) need to meet.**

These services need to be:

- ◆ accurately designed around statistical data and developmental research;
- ◆ focused on measurable, clear, and focused objectives;
- ◆ affirming of the worth of individuals whatever their background or offense history;
- ◆ representative in staff and approach, balancing multiple perspectives including those of race, gender, and ethnic background;
- ◆ offered within safe and secure environments; and
- ◆ built on participants' existing strengths.

**Additionally, coeducational programs and services must:**

- ◆ acknowledge and affirm similarities and differences among and within groups of people;
- ◆ integrate the experiences, needs, and interests of both males and females in ways that serve each most effectively and appropriately; and
- ◆ allow females and males to find and identify positively with the messages and expectations of society.

**The remainder of this document highlights guidelines for female-specific programs.** The guidelines reflect current research on what is considered good practice for females. They should be used to form a foundation on which to build quality female-specific programs. They are "the essentials." While guidelines support many program curricula, without the guidelines firmly in place curricula alone will not create a quality female-specific program.

The coalition uses these guidelines as a working document. We distribute them to service providers and other professionals in the field and revise them to reflect new learnings. **We strongly urge our readers to consider utilizing them in all programs that serve young women.**

---

## PROGRAM AND TREATMENT GUIDELINES

---

### (1) CLIENTS' ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

All program components have opportunities for participants to actively participate in the development and the evaluation of the services they receive.

Staff needs to listen to what young women know, what has helped them, and what they still need. Young women benefit from feeling empowered about their role in treatment. Student councils and evaluative processes that include the young women's voices are ways to build empowerment. Taking an active role in defining and implementing their health treatments is another component, such as being able to select from various treatment options.

### (2) ALL-FEMALE SETTINGS

Programming provides all-female settings.

In all-female settings, juvenile female offenders can develop cooperative and supportive ways to benefit from treatment. When males are absent, young women have opportunities to speak up, to look internally, and to heal. All-female settings can reduce the negative impact of socialization that teaches young women to value male relationships over female relationships. But all-female settings are not automatically beneficial just by virtue of being all-female — they need appropriate structure and guidance to be beneficial.

### (3) TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

All program components provide opportunities for participants and staff to develop and maintain trusting relationships.

Females see the world in terms of relationships. Effective treatment often happens in the context of relationships with adult treatment staff. Structuring the program to support ongoing communication with a particular staff member or primary counselor is desirable. Interactions between young female offenders and staff provide a context for the young women to participate in healthy relationships.

### (4) FLEXIBILITY

Programming contains flexible approaches.

Programs meet the specific needs of the individuals served. Creativity and a willingness to respond to changing needs are essential.

### (5) SPIRITUALITY

Treatment provides opportunities for spiritual and/or religious expression and growth.

Spirituality is a significant aspect of female development and needs a place in treatment. It may be expressed through formal religious observances and through informal ways such as reflection, relaxation, journaling, gardening, etc.

### (6) RESPECT FOR CULTURE

All program components provide opportunities that value young women's cultural background and growth.

Culture is an important aspect of our lives. We deserve — and thrive in — environments that show respect for our culture and give us opportunities to express and celebrate it.

### (7) PERTINENT TOPICS

Treatment services include topics that directly affect the quality of young women's lives and topics that reflect all the dimensions of their lives.

Pertinent topics include body image, self-esteem, issues of violence against women, self-confidence, motherhood, impact of the media, and life skills. Anger expression, mediation, and other traditional treatment techniques must be addressed in a female context. For example, social culture tells young women not to express anger outwardly and punishes them when they do. Staff working with female offenders on anger expression needs to understand and incorporate this context into the treatment program.

### (8) SOCIETAL ISSUES

Treatment relates to larger societal issues.

The needs presented by young women in juvenile justice treatment are very often issues that have their basis in society's expectations of both girls and women. Therefore, effective treatment recognizes the connection between women's roles in society and societal barriers to women's growth and development. Effective treatment empowers young women to reach their full potential. Effective treatment operates on three levels: (1) a level of *individual change* for the young woman in the program; (2) a level of *relational change* between the young woman and key individuals in her life; and (3) a level of *community change* in which the young woman learns how to become an advocate for other young women.

### (9) SEXUAL ABUSE AND POWER IS ADDRESSED

Treatment services address issues of sexual abuse and the balance of power in relationships.

Most young women referred to the juvenile justice system have histories of sexual abuse. Therefore, treatment programs need to offer individual and group time for those women who have experienced sexual abuse and group time for all young women to focus on healthy relationships, boundary issues, and how to manage power in relationships.

### (10) EVALUATION

All program components are evaluated.

Evaluation includes how well programs implement these guidelines.



---

## PROGRAM AND TREATMENT GUIDELINES

---

### (11) NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

**Support services meet the nutritional needs of young women.**

Young women need food services that provide lower caloric and lower carbohydrate levels than do food services for young men. To encourage healthy eating habits and to discourage eating disorders, young women need choices of healthy food items.

### (12) ADVOCACY

**Treatment services are designed to teach advocacy.**

Young women can be advocates and agents of change around the issues they are overcoming. They need to be taught to be advocates and given opportunities to practice these skills, such as through community service, restitution activities, and volunteerism. An effective program works to change attitudes — those of the participants themselves and society in general — which prevent or discourage young women from recognizing their full potential.

### (13) FAMILY MEMBERS

**Treatment builds in the involvement of family members.**

Families are an integral part of young women's lives. Structured family activities create opportunities for open communication. Support for the mother-daughter relationship is especially important. Parent groups offer a forum for discussing issues that often span generations — and hold the potential to break negative cyclical patterns.

### (14) RESILIENCY

**Treatment helps young women build their resiliency and unlearn learned helplessness.**

Females often display behavior called "learned helplessness" which is based on an "I can't" attitude. When treatment helps them unlearn helplessness, they become resilient and can face life's challenges with an "I can" attitude and "I can" behaviors. It is important for staff to model resiliency.

### (15) AFTERCARE

**Follow-up services respect and support the relational nature of young women.**

Aftercare is an important component of the continuum of care. Transition is a transfer of a relationship as well as a transfer of service. Aftercare staff needs to be involved early in the treatment process, not just at the time of transition. While in care, young women need preparation for their transition.

### (16) EDUCATION

**Treatment values and provides opportunities for educational skill development in a setting that maximizes their learning.**

Success in their educational endeavors is critical for female offenders and holds the promise of helping them break negative behavior patterns. The educational program must be strong, integrated with treatment, and appeal to a variety of learning styles.

Treatment staff and program staff need to understand and use practices that encourage young women's participation and achievement in educational settings. For example, young women learn well through hands-on applications and when sufficient time is given for response to questions. Educational materials need to be nonsexist and show women in many roles. Alternative learning approaches may be helpful in serving young women who have failed to thrive in mainstream classroom settings.

Young women need to apply what they are learning in classrooms to what they are learning in treatment programs, and vice versa. Lifelong learning needs to be modeled and encouraged. Young women need skills that they see as relevant to success. They also need access to quality reading materials.

### (17) PHYSICAL HEALTH NEEDS

**Support services meet the physical health needs of young women.**

Young women need opportunities for physical activity — to experience movement, strength, and flexibility. Offering non-competitive structured activities is desirable. Health staff also needs to provide gynecological services that are sensitive to many female juvenile offenders' sexual abuse experiences.

### (18) MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

**Support services meet the mental health needs of young women.**

Mental health services need to include a comprehensive strategic counseling plan that addresses issues of self-mutilation, eating disorders, suicide gestures, attachment disorders, and self-esteem. Additionally, mental health staff need to avoid over-medicating young women with psychotropic medications.

### (19) AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM

**All components are integrated.**

All the components of a program need to be talking together, training together, working together, meeting together, and jointly providing services. This integration models functional family dynamics for the participants and avoids compartmentalization of functions.

---

## STAFFING GUIDELINES

---

### (20) STAFF WORKS ON SELVES

Staff looks to themselves to be good role models and are **willing to work on themselves to grow and change.**

When we ask and expect young women to become the best they can, it only makes sense for staff to be their best. That requires attitudes and behaviors that demonstrate how we are all "works in progress."

### (21) STAFF KNOWS ABOUT GENDER ISSUES

**Staff training includes issues of gender identity and female development, and ongoing professional development provides opportunities for reflection and discussion related to these topics.**

To be able to model positive gender relationships to the young women, staff needs training as well as active engagement in reflection and dialogue about their own relationships and growing up experiences. Informed staff who have addressed their personal issues about growing up female or growing up male will be better equipped to provide guidance and direction to young women. The needs of both female and male staff must be addressed.

### (22) STAFF LIKES AND RESPECTS FEMALES

**Staff includes only people who have a strong interest and respect for females.**

Staff must value the female perspective, honor the female experience, and respect female development. It is not appropriate to hire staff for female-specific programming who believe that "girls are impossible" or say "give me 20 boys instead of one girl."

### (23) STAFF REFLECT CLIENTS' CULTURES

**Staffing reflects the cultural diversity of the young women served.**

To foster role modeling, it is essential that staff be representative of the young women's cultural backgrounds.

### (24) RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

**Staff utilizes language that respects program participants and shows them dignity.**

Staff refrains from cursing, telling inappropriate jokes, and using language that discounts and insults program participants, either as individuals or as a group.

### (25) STAFF MEETS REGULARLY

**Staff meets regularly to discuss participants' progress and staff issues.**

Meetings are necessary for fostering quality communications among staff and for creating a shared knowledge base and commitment to good female-specific services. Weekly is good, biweekly is minimum.

### (26) TEAMWORK

**Staff models teamwork and cooperation.**

When young women see staff cooperating, they observe positive interaction among adults. For many, such interaction may be very different from the family settings in which they grew up. Staff cohesion can counter young women's chaotic and pathological family experiences.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **PRE- AND POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRES**



Your response to this questionnaire is anonymous, but with the following information we can uniquely identify each survey response.  
 Please list your initials \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please list your date of birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## Girls E.T.C. Workshop Introductory Questionnaire

Instructions: Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion regarding programming for girls. If I were to design a program for girls, I would emphasize the following issues (1 = very important/5 = not very important):

Social skills development	1	2	3	4	5
Communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
Health	1	2	3	4	5
Body awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual Education and dating skills	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual Abuse	1	2	3	4	5
Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5
Success in education	1	2	3	4	5
Peer culture programming	1	2	3	4	5
Group therapy sessions	1	2	3	4	5
Exercise and fitness	1	2	3	4	5
Team sports	1	2	3	4	5
Personal experiences of violence	1	2	3	4	5
One-on-one interactions	1	2	3	4	5
Vocational training	1	2	3	4	5
Family relationships	1	2	3	4	5
Mentoring programs	1	2	3	4	5
Life skills development	1	2	3	4	5
Emancipation preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Work habits and presentation (dress, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Personal empowerment	1	2	3	4	5
Female role modeling	1	2	3	4	5
Assertiveness training	1	2	3	4	5
Entitlement issues	1	2	3	4	5
Research that indicates gender differences	1	2	3	4	5
Leisure time activities	1	2	3	4	5
Conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5
Law-related education	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Political activism	1	2	3	4	5
Self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
Problem-solving skills	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5

1. One way I plan to better serve my female clients during the next month is:

---

---

---

---

2. The best thing I learned at this workshop was:

---

---

---

---

3. The most important thing about this training to change is:

---

---

---

---

Please tell us a little about yourself so we may better plan future workshops:

1. Your Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender  M  F

2. Do you have children of your own? Yes  No   
If you do have children, please list their gender(s) and age(s):

Gender	Age

3. I have worked with troubled teens for \_\_\_\_\_ years.

4. I have worked in programs the serve:

\_\_\_\_\_ Boys only

\_\_\_\_\_ Girls only

\_\_\_\_\_ Both boys and girls

**TRAINING EVALUATION FORM**

Please take a few minutes to tell us about your experience of this training. Using the scale below, please evaluate the following items (circle one):

- 1 = poor
- 2 = fair
- 3 = average
- 4 = good
- 5 = excellent

Trainer was prepared and seemed to have an understanding of the materials	1	2	3	4	5
Trainer explained ideas clearly and accurately	1	2	3	4	5
Trainer was able to answer questions thoroughly and accurately	1	2	3	4	5
Overall rating	1	2	3	4	5

**General Comments Concerning Training Session...**

---

---

---

**Topic(s) I Found Most Useful...**

---

---

---

**Topic(s) I Found Least Useful...**

---

---

---

**Topic(s) Which Were Not Discussed That I Would Have Liked to Have Learned About...**

---

---

---

**Follow-up Activities I'd Like to See Happen...**

---

---

---

**THANKS FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!**





## REFERENCES

Juvenile Detention and Commitment Population Projections (Fall 1999). Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Office of Research and Statistics, Denver, Colorado.

