

**P**ROVIDING  
**G**ENDER-SPECIFIC **S**ERVICES  
FOR **A**DOLESCENT  
**F**EMALE **O**FFENDERS

*Guidelines  
&  
Resources*

***Providing Gender-Specific Services  
for Adolescent Female Offenders:  
Guidelines & Resources***



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# *Table of Contents*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **THE IOWA GENDER-SPECIFIC SERVICES TASK FORCE**

#### **PART ONE**

Adolescent Female Offenders Fact Sheet .....	7
Providing Gender-Specific Programming for Adolescent Female Offender & Girls In High-Risk Situations .....	10
Four Basic Assumptions of Gender-Specific Programming for Girls .....	10
Components of Gender-Specific Programming for Girls .....	11
Recommendations in Overall Program Design .....	18
Characteristics of a Strong Staff .....	19

#### **PART TWO**

Reflective Questions for Service Providers .....	25
Parents and Caregivers: What you can do .....	27
Concerned, Caring Adults: What you can do .....	31
Educators: What you can do .....	33
Policymakers: What you can do .....	36
Juvenile Court Officers and Judges: What you can do .....	37
Department of Human Services Personnel: What you can do .....	38
Businesses: What you can do .....	39

#### **PART THREE**

Resource Organizations .....	43
National Organizations .....	43
Iowa Organizations .....	47
Successful Gender-Specific Programs for Girls .....	50
Programs Serving Juvenile Female Offenders .....	50
Community-based Intervention/Prevention Program for Girls .....	51
Bibliography.....	54
Other Print Resources .....	61
Curricula for Girl-Serving Programs .....	61
Magazines By, For, and About Girls .....	62

# Introduction

**I**n the United States, the development of juvenile justice systems, theories, and program models was shaped by the needs and experiences of male offenders. Meanwhile, the needs of the relatively small population of adolescent girls in the juvenile justice system went unmet as the system strove to provide adequate and appropriate services for adolescent boys. Girls were required to fit into existing service resources that were not equipped to meet the specific needs of adolescent girls.

Fortunately, this is changing. In the early 1990s, scholars, policymakers and juvenile justice and youth-serving professionals recognized that our juvenile justice and youth programs did not effectively serve adolescent girls. Concurrently, statistics revealed more increases in the numbers of juvenile female offenders involved with the juvenile justice system. Due to heightened advocacy by states and national organizations, this combination of new awareness and revealing statistics led to a focus on the gender-specific programming and service needs of girls. Within the most recent years, funds for gender-specific services began to appear at the federal and state levels, and traditional foundations began to fund programs specifically designed to serve this population.

Iowa is involved in these changes through the receipt of the Challenge Grant. The 1992 reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974 added Part E, State Challenge Activities, to the programs funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The purpose of Part E is to provide incentives

for states participating in the Formula Grants Program to develop, adopt, and improve policies and programs in one or more of ten specified Challenge areas.

In Iowa, as well as other states, this means that moneys have been specifically allocated to support the development and adoption of policies to prohibit gender bias in the placement and treatment of adolescent females involved in the juvenile justice system. Further, the Challenge Grant supports the establishment of programs that ensure these female youth have: access to the full range of health and mental health

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***Acts that come to be labeled as delinquent or criminal are like all other social behaviors--they take place in a world where gender still shapes the lives of young people in powerful ways. This means that the way gender works varies by the community and culture into which the girl is born. The choices of women and girls on the margin place them in situations in which they are likely to be swept up into the criminal justice system. Likewise, responses to girls' and women's offending must be placed within the social context of a world that is not fair to women, people of color, or those with low incomes.***

*Meda Chesney-Lind, The Female Offender*

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services, treatment for physical or sexual assault and abuse, self-defense instructions, education in parenting in general, and other training and vocational services.

This publication is one result of Iowa's receipt of the Challenge Grant. Written as a guide for those who want to use a gender-specific approach in girl-serving programs, it is

intended for Department of Human Services personnel, juvenile court officers, educators, and administrators and service providers in girl-serving programs. It provides a thorough description of the gender-specific programmatic framework for creating quality services and programs for adolescent female offenders and girls in high-risk situations. Further, it includes reproducible lists of supportive actions to be taken by adults who serve in varied roles in girls' lives as well as comprehensive lists of resources, including organizations that focus on girls and curricula for girl-serving programs.

We recognize that much of the programmatic information contained in this publication may be useful to programs that serve adolescent boys. However, it should be noted that the guidelines outlined in this publication are based on statistical data and verifiable developmental research related to adolescent girls. This does not eliminate the possibilities that may arise from the suggestions herein for creating positive changes in programming for boys. Those possibilities would simply need to be supported through statistical data and verifiable developmental research related to adolescent boys.

In all, we hope this publication will create change in the way services are provided to adolescent female offenders and girls in high-risk situations across the state. Ultimately we hope it will result in the healthy development of Iowa girls who may otherwise not have the opportunity or supportive understanding.

# *The Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force*

**T**he Iowa Gender Specific Services Task Force is a group seeking to assure that adolescent females in the juvenile justice system receive equitable services. The Iowa Juvenile Justice Advisory Council along with the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) formed the Task Force in 1995 to look at gender issues in the development and provision of services by Iowa's juvenile justice system. The task force comprises a multi-disciplinary group representing key players in the juvenile justice system including judges, juvenile court officers, Iowa Department of Human Services officials, and service providers. Also involved are educators, researchers, representatives of women's organizations, and other individuals who are interested in the healthy development of all adolescent girls.

In its four years of existence, the Task Force has accomplished several steps in bringing forth the issues of adolescent girls in the Iowa juvenile justice system. First, the Task Force has organized "Whispers & Screams are hard to hear: Creating an audience for girls' voices," a statewide conference held each year since 1997. The conference connects professionals who are committed to equitable, gender-specific services for those girls who are involved with or at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system. The conference attracts over 200 professionals and teenage girls each year. Second, the Task Force has organized two train-the-trainers sessions intended to prepare Task Force members and others to provide trainings on gender-specific programming to their staffs and in their communities. Third, through the growing efforts of the Task Force, the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) published the report Female Juvenile Justice

(1997). The publication, funded by CJJP and researched by Boddy Media Group, includes information related to the current situation for female juvenile offenders, relative issues, and the types of treatment received by female juvenile offenders in Iowa's juvenile justice system. Finally, in 1998, CJJP entered into an agreement with the ICSW to provide staff support to the Task Force. This position coordinated the 1999 "Whispers & Screams" conference; provided conference presentations and staff trainings on female adolescent development and gender-specific programming and services; wrote "The Girl Connection" in the ICSW's IoWoman newsletter; surveyed the Task Force regarding the future direction of their efforts; and developed this publication.

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**P**ART ONE is intended to provide information for those seeking to understand the gender-specific programming approach as well as the population this approach is designed to serve. It contains two sections. First, the *Adolescent Female Offender Fact Sheet* provides recent national and state statistics on female juvenile offenders. Second, *Providing Gender-Specific Services and Programs for Adolescent Female Offenders and Girls in High-Risk Situations* describes the four basic assumptions of gender-specific programming for girls, components of gender-specific programming, recommendations in overall program design, and characteristics of a strong staff.

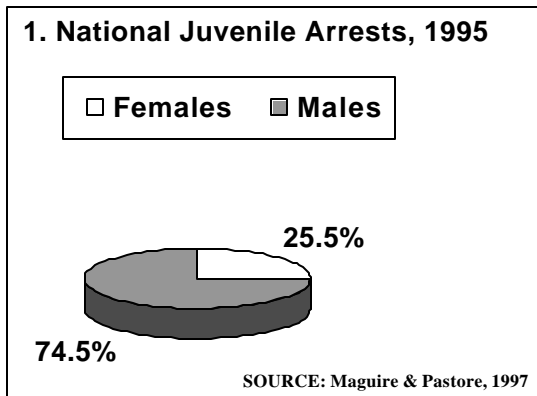


# Adolescent Female Offender Fact Sheet

**W**hile this fact sheet does not comprehensively address every aspect of the adolescent female offender population, it does provide a foundation for understanding the present circumstances of adolescent females in Iowa's juvenile justice system. Statistics are provided that allow for comparisons between national and Iowa statistics as well as between boys and girls in the juvenile justice system. The information given in the *National Profile of a Female Juvenile Offender* illustrates the socio-economic context of many of these girls' lives and introduces critical issues to be addressed in quality gender-specific programs and services.

## National Statistics

In 1995, girls accounted for about one-fourth (25.5%) of juvenile arrests (Maguire & Pastore, 1997). (See Figure 1.)



During the decade from 1983 to 1993, arrests of female juveniles increased by 31%, compared to 21% for boys. Between 1989 and 1993, the relative growth in juvenile arrests involving females was 23%, more than double the 11% growth for males (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996).

Girls are more likely to be arrested for status offenses; however, they are increasingly likely to be arrested for robbery, assault, drug trafficking, and gang activities (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996; Calhoun, Jurgens & Chen, 1993).

Theft cases account for nearly one-fourth of girls' arrests (Bergsmann, 1994).

## **National Profile of a Female Juvenile Offender**

In 1997, a typical girl involved in the juvenile justice system would:

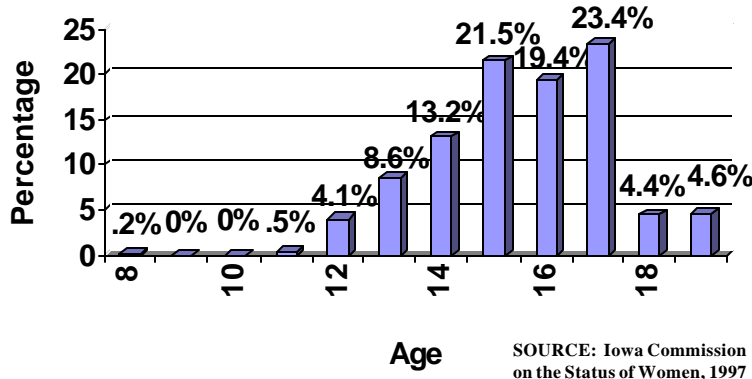
- be 15-16 years of age (an older adolescent).
- be a marginal student or academic failure.
- be a victim of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.
- be a status offender.
- live in a poverty stricken environment.
- live in an unstable living environment.
- have a history of family incarceration.
- have a history of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use/abuse.
- be a girl of color.
- possess the likelihood of demonstrating heightened levels of relational aggression (Greene, Peters & Associates, 1998).

It should be noted that, while the national profile is nearly representative of the experiences of Iowa female juvenile offenders, there are some differences. As of April 1997, over 40% of the girls involved in the Iowa juvenile justice system were 16-17 years of age. (See Figure 2.) Further, Caucasian girls comprised over 81% of Iowa's female juvenile delinquent population, compared to only 10% African-American girls, around 4% Hispanic girls, under 1% Native American girls, and under .5% Asian and Pacific Islander girls. (See Figure 3.) Importantly, African-American and Hispanic girls are disproportionately represented in Iowa's

female juvenile delinquent population as compared to Iowa's general African-American and Hispanic populations (Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, 1997).

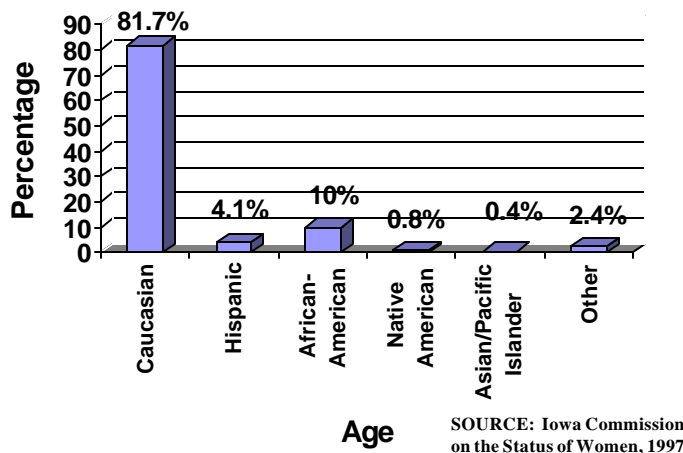
Of these, 17.2% or 907 were adolescent females (Division on Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning, Department of Human Rights). (See Figure 5.)

### 2. Female Juvenile Offenders by Age Iowa, April 1997



Each year between 1994 and 1998, the number of adolescent girls held in detention facilities increased. In 1994, 612 girls were held. By 1998, the number had risen to 907 girls. While this may seem like a sharp increase, it is primarily a reflection of an increase in the number of detention beds during this period. It should be noted that the number of boys held in detention facilities during this period also increased (Division on Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning, Department of Human Rights).

### 3. Female Juvenile Offenders by Race Iowa, April 1997



During state fiscal year 1998, the monthly average of juveniles sent to group foster care was 1079. Of this, 28% were adolescent females (Iowa Department of Human Services, 1998).

During state fiscal year 1998, the monthly average of juveniles in shelter care facilities was 303. Adolescent girls represented 45% of this total (Iowa Department of Human Services, 1998).

During calendar year 1997, 26% of the juveniles arrested for Group A offenses

## Iowa Statistics

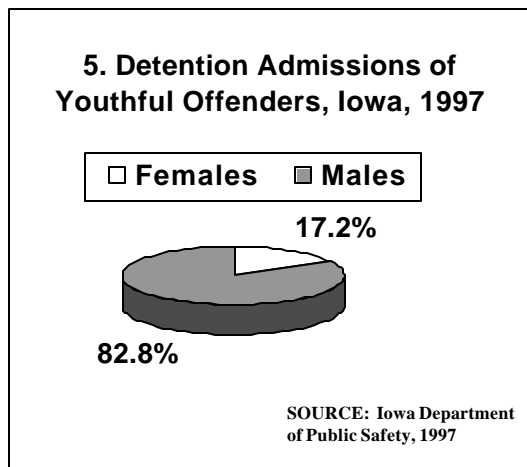
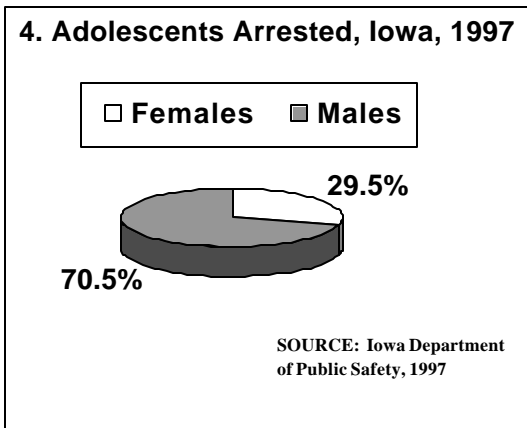
In 1997, 6612 adolescent females were arrested. This comprised 29.5% of all juvenile arrests in Iowa during that calendar year (Iowa Department of Public Safety, 1997). (See Figure 4.)

In state fiscal year 1998, there were 5285 detention admissions of youthful offenders.

were adolescent females. During that same time, arrest of juvenile females comprised 34.5% of the juvenile arrests for Group B offenses (Iowa Department of Public Safety, 1997). (Group A offenses include serious offenses or those perpetrated against another person. They include arson, assault offenses, burglary, drug/narcotics offenses [except driving under the influence], homicide offenses, motor vehicle theft, prostitution offenses, robbery, sex

offenses, and weapon law violations, among others. Group B offenses include curfew/loitering/vagrancy violations, disorderly conduct, driving under the influence, nonviolent family offenses, liquor law violations, runaway, and trespass of real property, among others.)

In April 1997, roughly one-third of Iowa's female juvenile delinquents committed offenses that involved theft. Nearly one-quarter committed drugs/alcohol offenses and over one-fifth committed offenses that involved assault (Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, 1997).



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# *Providing Gender-Specific Services and Programs for Adolescent Female Offenders and Girls in High-Risk Situations*

**T**his section offers a synthesis of several sources that have offered various frameworks to understand the essential program elements of quality gender-specific programs and services for adolescent girls. It includes four basic assumptions central to any good juvenile justice program, program components of gender-specific programming for girls, recommendations for overall program design, and a description of staffing issues for programs that seek to serve girls in ways that are meaningful and lasting.

Gender-specific programming for adolescent girls is defined as “comprehensive programming which addresses and supports the psychological development process of female adolescents, while fostering connection within relationships in the context of a safe and nurturing environment” (Lindgren, 1996). Certainly, gender-specific programs and services extend beyond simply targeting adolescent girls as an audience; rather, these programs intentionally serve girls. In addition, they meet the standard of being specific to the female experience and free from gender bias. In order to be effective, gender-specific programs and services must reflect an understanding of female development and the specific issues of contemporary adolescent girls.

## **Four Basic Assumptions of Gender-Specific Programming for Girls**

It is assumed that good juvenile justice programs will adequately meet the following four criteria. To be sure, these four assumptions serve as the basis upon which quality gender-specific program design can take place.

### **1. Good gender-specific services begin with good services.**

Any effective program that serves the needs of adolescent girls must have a solid programmatic base. Certainly, quality juvenile justice programs share basic strengths no matter who their clientele. These strengths include:

- well-trained, competent staff who are involved with and knowledgeable about the youth served.
- effective, ongoing program evaluation.
- thoughtful treatment techniques that are based in current adolescent development theory.
- sensitive assessment techniques that consider offense history and issues of gender development.
- an atmosphere of highly structured activities with specific treatment goals (Maniglia, 1998).

Furthermore, effective juvenile justice programs also include:

- collaboration across traditional and professional boundaries.
- the practice of viewing the adolescent within the context of his/her family and viewing the family within the context of their neighborhood and community.
- the inclusion of parents in collaborative efforts.

- the establishment of trusting relationships with the adolescent and his/her family.
- a long-term prevention orientation.
- an organizational culture that is less rule bound and more outcome oriented than traditional approaches (Girls E.T.C., 1997).

## **2. Young women are different than young men, so their services must be also.**

Psychological research shows that while there are developmental similarities between the genders, there are unique issues specific to the process of female development. Moreover, juvenile justice research reveals that adolescent females' patterns of offending often vary in scope and motivation from those of adolescent males. These differences must be considered when designing effective treatment programs. This may result in qualitatively new approaches to traditional treatment modalities as well as slight adaptations in content or approach (Maniglia, 1994).

## **3. Equality does not equal sameness.**

In juvenile justice program planning, equality of service delivery does not mean simply allowing adolescent girls access to the services traditionally provided for adolescent boys. Instead, boys and girls must have sameness only in the basic program requirements. These basic program requirements include sameness in the quality of all staff, in the amount of financial support, and in the quality of the physical structure. However, in treatment, equality must be redefined to mean providing opportunities that are equally meaningful to each gender. So, while equal in quality, treatment services may differ depending on whether males or females are served. This redefinition of equality not only embraces an understanding of developmental differences, but legitimizes

those differences as valuable indicators of necessary programmatic approaches (Maniglia, 1994).

## **4. Services for young women cannot be viewed in isolation from society.**

Very often, the problems presented by teen girls in juvenile justice treatment are based in society's gender role expectations of girls and women. There is often a connection between women's roles in greater society, the societal barriers to healthy female growth and development, and the specific treatment issues of girls. It is essential then that staff guide girls to an awareness of this connection. In effect, each girl must recognize her treatment issues as related to larger societal issues and as relative to her specific culture. When successful, this gender-specific treatment approach is impactful on three levels of change:

- individual change (e.g., a girl in drug treatment).
- relational change (e.g., involves the significant relationships that affect the girl who abuses drugs).
- community change (e.g., the girl takes action to alter the cultural and material contexts which may contribute to her problem and/or its solutions) (Valentine Foundation, 1990; Maniglia & Albrecht, 1995).

## **Components of Gender-Specific Programming for Girls**

Shaped by revealing statistical data and developmental research on female development, the following eleven components are essential to any gender-specific program that attempts to holistically address the developmental needs of adolescent girls who are involved with or at risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.

**1. Programs must provide emotional and physical safety.**

Girls need space that is emotionally safe, removed from family and friends who depend on them, and removed from the demands for the attention of adolescent males (Valentine Foundation, 1990). Further, programs are obligated to provide an environment that is safe from any verbal, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse that may be committed by staff. This goes beyond screening possible staff members to include measures that create an environment of safety for the participants, particularly those in residential programs. This may include enhancement of the established safety plan by candidly addressing

ways that support each individual's cultural identity. Too often program staff and administrators provide services in a culturally neutral way, particularly when issues of race are involved. This approach, however, denies that girls of color and those of non-majority cultural backgrounds "have different experiences of their gender and different experiences with the dominant institutions in the society" (Chesney-Lind, 1997, 93). In order to optimize effectiveness, programs must not ignore cultural differences, but create and provide appropriate services rooted in specific cultures. This means, rather than solely focus on the individual girl, programs must tap girls' personal and cultural strengths (Valentine Foundation, 1990). Clearly, programs must be shaped by the unique developmental issues facing minority girls, and then build in the particular cultural resources accessible in minority communities (Chesney-Lind, 1997).

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*“Girls of color grow up and do gender in contexts very different from those of their white counterparts. Because racism and poverty are often fellow travelers, these girls are forced by their color and their poverty to deal early and often with problems of violence, drugs, and abuse. Their strategies for coping with these problems, often clever, strong, and daring, also tend to place them outside the conventional expectations of white girls.”*

Meda Chesney-Lind, The Female Offender

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safety concerns voiced by the participants and then implementing measures to address those concerns. Beyond these safety concerns, programs must also provide an environment where girls are safe from self-inflicted harm.

**2. Programs must be culturally appropriate.**

To be culturally competent, one must be capable of functioning effectively in the context of cultural differences (Raheim, 1998). This means that program planners and service providers must acknowledge and approach the cultural differences of program participants in

**3. Programs must be relationship based.**

An important goal of gender-specific programs with girls is that of improved relationships. This does not necessarily mean that girls simply learn to get along better with others. For most girls, this approach reinforces the traditional

female role expectations of passivity, subordination, and self-sacrificing. Instead, girls must learn skills of assertiveness, appropriate expression of anger, and selection of healthy relationships (Maniglia, 1998).

Furthermore, programs must shift the primary discussion of relationships off of girls' relationships with males. While those relationship issues are important, girls often lose themselves in those relationships and/or create false selves that focus on the needs of others. Instead, girls need guidance to develop identities that extend beyond their connection to

males. They must learn to place an equal value on their relationships with women and other girls. Rather than seeing other females as potential competition (for attention, for affection, for turf), girls must exchange those habits for the development of trust in and respect for women and other girls. It is important that staff possess the skills to share, without belittling the girls, their observations regarding girls' relationship behaviors with other females. Moreover, girls must learn to seek nurturance and support in their female relationships while accepting help and support from adult women who have their best interests at heart (Valentine Foundation, 1990; Pipher, 1994; Maniglia, 1998).

This approach requires that the process be led by adult women who model genuine respect, trust, and caring for other women and girls. It requires women who, in ongoing relationships with the girls, can create an emotionally safe space for comforting, challenging, nurturing conversations (Myhand & Kivel, 1998). To be sure, the girls must see this component piece mirrored in the lives of female staff and in the relationships among those female staff.

Finally, because this approach may cause girls to separate from old, unhealthy relationships, program planners and staff must be prepared to provide adequate emotional support and to address relationship issues that may arise once the girl leaves the shelter of the program (Maniglia, 1998). Aftercare plans should include explicit ideas on how girls will continue their new relationship patterns as well as how they will stay connected in their new relationships.

Although this approach is best facilitated by female staff, inevitably some programs will employ men to do this work. While there are important roles for positive, non-exploitive men to play in the lives of adolescent girls,

there are concerns that must be explicitly addressed in programs that employ men. The presence of a male may restrain girls from speaking openly about very personal or sensitive issues. It may create sexual tension, harmless or not, at a time when girls need to concentrate on themselves. Moreover, sexual issues may be complicated for girls who are survivors of incest or sexual assault. Girls who are eager to develop positive relationships with men may not have the skills to do so; accordingly, they may use compliance, deference, or their sexuality to gain attention from male staff. Men will also bring their own gender role socialization and expectations into their work, which may clash with a gender-specific approach and/or interfere with girls' treatment. Therefore, men who work with adolescent girls must:

- be especially sensitive to girls' patterns of male attention-seeking. Encourage clear and direct communication from individuals and within the group.
- establish and maintain clear boundaries around verbal and physical interactions.
- encourage girls to find, accept, and trust approval from one another and other women.
- understand their own gender role socialization and expectations and do not allow these to interfere with their work (Myhand & Kivel, 1998).
- model non-exploitive relationships with female staff.

#### **4. Programs must provide positive female role models and mentors.**

In addition to adult female staff who model healthy relationships, programs must also potentiate girls' relationships "of trust and interdependence with other women already present in their lives. Friends, relatives, neighbors, church and social group members can be critical providers of insight, strategy and strength." Furthermore, girls need

mentors whose lives reflect the realities of the girls' lives. They need mentors who show by example that survival and growth, as well as resistance and change, are possible. Such role models must be from the girls' particular communities as well as from the wider world of women (Valentine Foundation, 1990, 3).

### **5. Programs must address the abuse in girls' lives.**

Research indicates that the majority of girls involved in the juvenile justice system have experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse. A study of girls in juvenile correctional settings revealed that the overwhelming majority (61.2%) of those girls, about half who were of minority backgrounds, had experienced physical abuse. For most, the abuse was repeated. For those who have been sexually abused (54.3%), the perpetrator was usually a family member, family friend, or personal acquaintance (American Correctional Association, 1990). Sadly, it is speculated that statistics underestimate the extent of abuse in the lives of girls, since violence—particularly sexual violence—is underreported. Nonetheless, many researchers suggest that the pervasiveness of abuse in the lives of adolescent girls could be the most significant underlying cause of high-risk behaviors that lead to delinquency (James & Meyerding, 1977; National Institute of Mental Health, 1977; MacVicar & Dillon, 1980; Youth Policy and Law Center, 1982; Bracey, 1983; Chesney-Lind, 1987; Calhoun et al., 1993; Dembo et al, 1995). It is essential that juvenile justice personnel interpret girls' offenses within the gendered context of lives that often include extensive abuse histories. This shift in perspective can help professionals to reinterpret girls' offenses as complex survival strategies rather than simply as unacceptable social behaviors. To be sure, this is not to suggest that a girl's victimization

leaves her with no personal accountability; however, considering a girl's personal history illuminates the context within which she moves and makes "choices" (Chesney-Lind, 1997).

Because girls' problem behavior often relates to an abusive and traumatizing home life, it is important that program procedures, particularly those for crisis intervention, be informed by the assumption that adolescent girls have histories of physical and sexual abuse. Many standard crisis protocols have acutely sexual overtones. Requiring groups of men to surround and subdue adolescent girls through physical force as well as requiring disrobing and body searches "strongly convey implied messages: that girls do not have a right to their own bodies, that male intrusion is acceptable, and that violent responses to female behavior is normal" (GAINS Center, 1998, 16). Programs must explore alternatives to current crisis intervention practices that do not retraumatize girls who live in restricted environments.

Other program practices to mitigate abuse retrauma include:

- requiring a female presence at all health care screenings.
- integrating mental health, substance abuse, and victim services.
- training all staff to understand the effects of retraumatization.
- using gender- and culturally-specific criteria to determine variations in mood, perception, and behavior that could signal serious distress.
- providing information about protocols at the initial intake so that the adolescent girl knows what to expect.
- asking about abuse directly and in a manner that is culturally and linguistically sensitive (GAINS Center, 1998).



## **6. Programs must be strength-based, not deficit-based.**

When girls' behaviors are removed from the gendered context in which they make choices, those behaviors are often recast as symptoms of pathology in mental health systems (Rieker & Jankowski, 1995), relapse in substance abuse systems, and antisocial in the juvenile justice system. Furthermore, the lack of viable options for girls to express their true selves may lead them to act in ways that appear self-destructive, but may be "logical adaptive responses to the world in which they live" (GAINS, 1997, 11). Girls' behaviors become labeled as "anti-social acting out," "manipulative," "attention-seeking," "trouble-making," "deviant," and "delinquent." These labels erode girls' pre-existing low self-esteem and create feelings of shame. Moreover, they distract from the underlying causes of girls' behaviors and intensify the alienation girls feel from school, peers, family, and themselves.

Instead, programs must reframe girls' behaviors as strategies for coping with the problems they face. "Coping with intense feelings of pain, violation, fear, powerlessness, and despair—in many cases without adequate support or even acknowledgment—some girls turn to alcohol and other drugs, silence, food, belligerence, perfectionism, manipulation, and other dangerous activities to survive" (Myhand & Kivel, 1998, 2). Programs must help girls move from just coping to survive to utilizing their experience, support, intelligence, and inner wisdom to develop strategies that lead to their personal success and growth. This means that programs must employ staff who are able and willing to address girls' behaviors from this position, leaving behind the diminishing and shameful labels that so often limit adults' abilities to see the resiliency and strengths of girls who live in high-risk situations.

## **7. Programs must address sexuality, including pregnancy and parenting.**

Often education around sexuality, when addressed at all, is limited to information about contraception and sexually transmitted infections. While this information is essential, girls need information that extends beyond the possible consequences of sexual acts. Girls also need information about reproductive anatomy and physiology, dealing with pregnancy and motherhood, and confronting the risk of HIV-AIDS. Girls need opportunities to identify their personal sexual limits and to rehearse communicating those limits to a potential partner. They need opportunities to explore media messages about relationships, body image, and gender role expectations. Moreover, girls need opportunities "to explore the meaning and value of sexual pleasure, the establishment and nurture of committed relationships, and the exploration of conflicting cultural messages about sexual behavior" (Valentine Foundation, 1990, 3-4). Further, programs should be inclusive of accurate, unbiased sexuality information that may be meaningful to adolescents who are lesbian or bisexual, who are questioning their sexual orientation, or who have engaged in same-sex sexual behaviors.

Clearly, a program must have at least one staff person who is uniquely skilled at communicating with adolescent girls around sexuality issues. This must go beyond a personal willingness to discuss sexuality to include the possession of accurate information, the ability to empathize, the appropriate use of humor, the appropriate use of self-disclosure, and the ability to objectively communicate the range of sexual values present within the greater community.

**8. Programs must provide equitable educational and vocational opportunities.**

Often, girls involved with the juvenile justice system have not experienced academic success. Their experiences in school settings may have been fraught with educational bias, disciplinary measures, and sexual harassment. However, in a supportive, unbiased learning environment that incorporates a variety of learning styles, many girls can achieve a level of academic success not otherwise attainable. To be sure, girls involved with the juvenile justice system must receive educational opportunities that lead to a shared standard of achievement with girls and boys who are not involved in the juvenile justice system. Education in gender-specific programs must address the academic, social, and life-skill needs of adolescent girls. Academically, girls

to a variety of workplaces can help girls see successful women in the workplace and provide that connection.

Although many girls in the juvenile justice system may not have experienced academic success, the recent research about girls and academics may still be relevant in shaping the educational planning of gender-specific programs. Much of this research addresses girls' abilities in the areas of math and science. Relatedly, girls are far less likely to take advanced computer science courses, using computers "for word processing, the 1990s version of typing" (American Association of University Women, 1998). Girls who report enjoying math and science are more likely to have higher self-esteem, to feel better about their schoolwork, to have more

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***Programs should assure that all curricular materials offer girls positive images and balanced information that include the experiences of women and men from all walks of life. Girls should see women from various cultural backgrounds represented in books, videos, posters, and other resources utilized in classroom settings.***

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faith in their career aspirations, and to have greater confidence about their appearance than girls who do not enjoy math and science (American Association of University Women, 1992). Therefore, it is important that girl-serving programs stress to girls the importance of taking math and science classes as well as advanced computer science courses. While many emphasize the relationship between

may "need alternatives to traditional classroom instruction to deal with learning disabilities, overcome learning deficits, or change negative attitudes about their ability to learn and the value of education." Academic experiences may include preparation for higher education, career development, vocational training (particularly in non-traditional and/or higher-paying occupations), high school completion or GED diploma, or English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998, 46). Girls also need opportunities to make connections between classroom study and necessary life skills. Guest speakers and visits

girls' participation in math and science and their future access to high-paying work, this concern should be secondary to the "conviction that girls are fundamentally entitled to develop as competent, intellectual individuals who are encouraged and well-prepared to pursue any areas of study and work they choose" (59). Further, the emphasis on math and science should not diminish the proven verbal skills of girls as these skills are also indispensable to girls' capacities to achieve across subject areas, to think critically, and to make their voices heard (Phillips, 1998).

Gender-specific programs should be especially mindful of curricular materials. Programs should assure that all curricular materials offer girls positive images and balanced information that include the experiences of women and men from all walks of life. Girls should see women from various cultural backgrounds represented in the books, videos, posters, and other resources utilized in classroom settings. Moreover, school curricula should deal with issues of power, gender politics, and violence against women. Arts-based curriculum that includes the visual arts, dance, drama, music, and/or creative writing can provide girls alternative ways of expression by encouraging them to find their voice and overcome patterns of silence or passivity. Finally, in addition to using competitive learning models, and because girls tend to value relationships, teachers should incorporate cooperative learning strategies into classroom practice in which problem solving is a group task (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998; Phillips, 1998).

Linkages with teachers, school guidance personnel, nurses, and board members can further strengthen programs' abilities to better serve girls in treatment and as they transition into the community (GAINS Center, 1998).

### **9. Programs must address the unique health needs of females, including nutritional concerns and regular physical activity.**

It is essential that programs use a holistic approach in understanding and supporting girls' health needs. The approach should include alcohol and drug treatment, when necessary, as well as mental health services that are sensitive to issues of gender. Mental health services must avoid the traditionally negative relationship between mental health treatment and females, often characterized by over-medication with psychotropic drugs. Food service personnel must consider the

unique nutritional needs of women of child bearing age, integrating recent nutritional research into menu planning. Also, in light of the high rates of sexual abuse among this population, gynecological service providers must be especially sensitive to the emotional responses of girls to standard gynecological procedures. Whenever possible, those services should be provided by a woman. Girls should also be encouraged to participate in regular physical activity and provided a reasonable range of exercises from which to choose. As often as possible, girls should be encouraged to take an active role in deciding their health treatments, selecting from several options when addressing a health-related concern. Finally, health staff should communicate regularly with program staff, while maintaining confidentiality, and be included in the overall treatment team (Maniglia, 1998).

### **10. Programs must nurture the spiritual lives of participants.**

When planning for the inclusion of spirituality, program staff must look beyond institutionally religious experiences. Indeed, girls with religious backgrounds must be provided opportunities to participate in worship and religious discussions. However, spirituality may also be expressed in other ways through daily time for relaxation, journaling, poetry, or quiet time. Gardening and service projects, when defined by the girls, also provide ways to refresh their spirits (Maniglia, 1998). Furthermore, program staff can cultivate spiritual awareness by addressing—through one-on-one conversations, circle groups, or other routes—girls' connections to other living things and to the mystery of the greater Universe. Staff should also allow for girls to explore different spiritual practices and to ask questions, guiding girls to seek the answers themselves. Programs can strengthen this

component by utilizing resources that address spiritual practice in ways that affirm and support girls and women.

### **11. Programs should involve individual members of girls' families.**

Efforts must be made to include families in girls' programs and services. Building in structured family activities in which members interact and communicate openly is essential. Specifically, the mother-daughter relationship should be addressed. Of course, this component can be challenging. Many families are closed to outside help and/or lack adequate skills or resources to participate actively. However, for girls from physically or sexually violent family settings, it is essential to provide services as intensely for the family members as for the adolescent girls themselves. Similarly, staff should support multigenerational and extended family placements for girls who cannot return to their families of origin (GAINS Center, 1998, 15).

## **Recommendations in Overall Program Design**

In addition to the 11 components of gender-specific programming for girls, there are concerns about the approach program planners take when designing effective programs. To assure a solid program design that will reflect the developmental needs of adolescent girls, program planners should consider the following recommendations for the overall program design.

First, the program design must be accurately planned around statistical data and developmental research that is verifiable and able to withstand critical analysis (American Association of University Women, 1992, 64). Although much of what works with girls may seem like common sense to some, gender-specific programs must be firmly rooted in

reliable, relevant research. A program design based on careful review and understanding of the literature will strengthen program practices, policies, and structure and lead toward greater credibility.

Secondly, girls must have a voice in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs if the intended benefits are to be meaningful and relevant to them (Valentine Foundation, 1990). Although some professionals are initially resistant to the inclusion of girls in decision making processes, girls' perspectives can significantly inform and strengthen programs designed for their benefit. Furthermore, such inclusion of girls may validate their opinions and experiences, provide opportunities for skill development, and strengthen relationships between the girls and adults involved.

Thirdly, programs must address the economic survival of girls as a critical need. Traditionally, programs have relied simply on the provision of counseling services to address girls' experiences of victimization. Successful programs, however, will target the housing and employment needs of girls while providing them with the specific skills they need to survive on their own (Girls Incorporated, 1996; Schwartz & Orlando, 1991). Indeed, girls need "support for living on their own, because many cannot or will not be able to go back home" (Chesney-Lind, 1997, 94).

Program planners must also look beyond the often-stated goal of self-sufficiency towards a more appropriate and realistic goal. The concept symbolized by "self-sufficiency" must be reconceptualized to include the value of those networks and support systems of interdependence that often play a significant role in the lives of low-income young women (Valentine Foundation, 1990).

Finally, in order for girls to fully benefit from a program, the program approach must be comprehensive, integrated, and sustained over time, or linked so as to achieve such criteria. Although challenging, program administrators must communicate to funders that sustained funding is a key to program success with girls. Sometimes programs labeled a failure have simply not been funded long enough for the girls to achieve the program goals. While this is a financing problem, not one of program design (or inability of girls to respond), it is essential that those involved in the program design consider the sustainability of the program over time (Valentine Foundation, 1990).

An important strategy to receiving sustained funding is effective evaluation. From the early planning stages, program planners should build in effective evaluation strategies that continue throughout the life of the program. In addition to the ability to demonstrate success to present and potential funding sources, good evaluation results can provide useful information for tailoring a program to be more effective. Furthermore, evaluation may provide the knowledge of where to focus efforts for program improvements; knowledge among staff that they are making a difference in the lives of the girls served; and, the ability to report success to program board, staff, and policymakers (Community Research Associates, 1997).

Because community-based programs may lack the evaluation resources to achieve these benefits, college or university researchers may exchange evaluation services for access to the research population. While collecting useful programmatic information, this can also “provide an important mechanism for advancing gender-specific research, and, eventually, help to reduce the number of

female delinquents” (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998, 57).

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### **Characteristics of a strong staff**

As evident in the preceding information, programs must have quality staff who possess the unique skills and perspectives essential to a successful gender-specific program. It is strongly suggested that gender-specific program staff be women (Myhand & Kivel, 1998). If there are male staff, they must be men who can communicate a genuine commitment to the principles of gender-specific programming for girls. They must also avoid the traditional male-female relationship dynamics with staff and program participants. Furthermore, staff persons who work with girls should be:

- aware of their own values and be willing to make them explicit, when appropriate. Most importantly, their values should be consistent with those of gender-specific programming.
- open to mutual relationships with those girls whom they serve. They should be

emotionally available and involved, yet able to avoid “super-mom” roles that foster over-dependency rather than encourage self-growth.

- willing to work on themselves as models for growth and change. Staff should not see themselves as finished products, but understand that they are also in life’s ongoing process of learning and personal development. They must be willing to acknowledge this to the girls.
- willing to work toward optimal functioning in their own lives.
- politically aware and oriented toward social action for the issues which are critical for women and girls.
- willing to model this awareness to girls and teach them how to reach a similar state (Gilligan & Mikel Brown, 1992; Taylor, Gilligan & Sullivan, 1995).
- sensitive to gender distinctions in risk factors, aggressive motivators, self-concept concerns, and individual treatment needs (Chesney-Lind, 1997).

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**P**ART TWO is intended for use by girl-serving programs, advocates for girls, change agents in business, education and government, and more. First, the list *Reflective Questions for Service Providers* can be utilized in the provision of staff trainings, as discussion points in staff meetings, or as part of the initial training process of new employees in girl-serving programs.

Next, a series of *What You Can Do* lists can serve as presentation handouts, mailing inserts, or talking points. The lists are not specific to adolescent girls involved in the juvenile justice system and, in fact, provide many suggestions for preventive measures in all girls' lives. The lists are intended to be reproduced and to facilitate change, individually and systemically, in adults' varied relationships with girls.



# Reflective Questions for Service Providers

**O**ne key to providing effective, quality services for girls is to engage in a self-reflective journey in which one explores how his/her professional practices may be shaped by his/her personal perspectives surrounding gender issues. Those who have embraced this journey comment that their work is strengthened as they become increasingly introspective, authentic, and compassionate. It may be useful for you to use a journal to explore your responses. Or perhaps you may choose to form a supportive group of co-workers or other colleagues in your community with whom you'd feel safe exploring your responses. Be assured, this will not be an easy or quick process. The potential, however, is great for strengthening your work and positively impacting the lives of the girls with whom you work. Be willing to take the risk.

## The Essential Questions

- Do I like girls?
- Do I enjoy working with girls? How often do I wish, secretly or aloud, that I worked with boys instead?

## Listening to Girls' Voices

- Do I encourage girls to express themselves honestly? Do I silence them for being too loud, too abrasive, or too forceful? Which girls do I tend to encourage? Which girls do I tend to silence?
- Do I often dismiss girls as manipulative and sneaky? Do I thoughtfully search for the meaning behind their words, actions, and demeanor? Do I assume to always know their motivations? Do I ever ask for more information behind their words, emotions, or behaviors?
- What actions do I typically take when girls speak out? Are there ways I respond that encourage girls' authentic ways of expression? Are there ways I respond that discourage girls' authentic ways of expression?
- In what specific ways do I make sure each girl with whom I work feels confident and safe sharing her ideas, opinions, and life questions? In what ways can I improve in this?

- To what extent does our program silence girls' voices? What rules may discourage girls from authentic expression of their opinions, experiences, and emotions?
- Are girls encouraged to be independent thinkers, to resist peer pressure to conform? What happens when a girl steps out of the bounds of conformity in your program?

## Building Healthy Relationships with Girls

- Do I hide my true self from the girls with whom I work? How does this affect my ability to form honest relationships with them? How can I be a more supportive, caring, candid adult and still maintain my role as counselor, educator, mentor, or coach?
- Am I able to be my true self with other staff? In what ways do we, as a staff, stifle or encourage one another's true selves? How do our relationships impact our relationships with the girls we serve?
- In what specific ways do I nurture non-exploitive relationships with girls and all other staff?
- How does my relationship with girls affect their views of themselves as females? How does my attitude towards females in general affect girls' views of themselves

and other females?

- How does my attitude towards males affect girls' views of boys, men, and relationships between men and women?
- Does my relationship with girls provide a balance of encouragement, safety, and challenge for them?
- Are there program rules that prevent girls from building appropriate, nurturing relationships with staff? Are girls encouraged to build supportive relationships with one another?
- How are behavior expectations (or rules) communicated to girls in my program? Is the purpose of the expectation clear to staff and the girls? Is it a meaningful expectation? How do we respond when those expectations are not met? How could we respond in a way that would communicate to girls that we are disappointed, but that we believe they can meet the expectations?
- With what attitude do I communicate with girls when they fail to fulfill expectations? Does my demeanor shame, embarrass, demoralize, support, encourage, trust?
- What messages do I give to girls about anger? How do I respond to their expressions of anger? What do I consider an appropriate expression of anger? How do I express anger?

### **Modeling Wholeness**

- What does wholeness mean to me? Does my understanding include all aspects of being human? Does my worldview, including my understanding of wrong and right, place limits on wholeness?
- How do I encourage wholeness in girls? How would I describe wholeness for adolescent girls?
- Do I model wholeness? If I am a woman, do I balance caring for others with self-love and self-reliance? If I am a man, do I balance strength with nurturing qualities?

- How do I help girls discover, trust, and value what they already know? How do I help them claim their true desires, interests, and talents?
- Am I uncomfortable with “masculine” women, who are physically strong, who perform traditionally masculine tasks, or who appear masculine? Am I uncomfortable with “feminine” men, who are emotional, who perform traditionally feminine tasks, or who appear feminine? Do I ever feel uncomfortable with a girl in my program who may display these masculine qualities? If so, how does this limit my ability to accept this girl as a whole person? How does this limit my understanding of what it means to be a man or a woman?
- Am I comfortable with my own sexuality? Do I view sexual expression as a healthy aspect of being human? Can I comfortably discuss issues related to sexuality without using words that judge, shame, or control? Do I possess strong feelings about controversial issues such as masturbation, teen pregnancy, homosexuality? If so, do these feelings limit my ability to accept others who feel differently than I do? How do these feelings impact my ability to be helpful to girls?
- Does our program have images on its walls of girls and women participating in a range of activities, including athletics, parenting, non-traditional careers, outdoor activities? Is there a variety of races and ages represented?

(This list was developed using Deidre Quinlan's “Questions for Service Providers,” published by Colorado's Girls E.T.C., as a springboard.)

# Parents and Caregivers: What you can do

**P**arents and caregivers are essential to the healthy development of adolescent girls. While no parent is given a map to help guide his/her daughter's growing up, there are things parents can do to encourage girls' healthy growth into wholeness. This list of recommendations can serve as a guide for how you, as a parent or caregiver, can support the adolescent or pre-adolescent girl in your life.

## General

- Serve as a positive role model by showing respect for and confidence in girls and women.
- Embrace all aspects of girls' identities, including their perspectives and their priorities.
- Praise your daughter for her accomplishments not only for her appearance.
- Encourage honesty and authenticity rather than niceness and popularity.
- Be an "askable" parent and reward questions. Provide a respectful context where girls can voice their concerns.
- Teach your daughter how to listen and to express anger in constructive ways by modeling these behaviors.
- Validate your daughter's responsible choices whenever possible.
- Teach your daughter how to take risks and overcome fears.
- Encourage your daughter to do something she loves.
- Congratulate your daughter on her maturity, insight, and good judgment.
- Help your daughter to internalize her successes, take credit for her achievements, and not downplay her role in meeting her own challenges.
- Focus on nurturing a loving relationship with your daughter rather than creating a long list of rules. Remember that in the absence of loving relationships, rules inspire rebellion in adolescents.

- Raise boys in ways that foster their respect for girls and women.
- Form a support group of parents in your community.

## Academics

- Encourage your daughter to do well in school by discussing her studies with her, exploring potential areas of interest, and supporting her achievements.
- Engage your daughter in projects that develop spatial reasoning and analytical skills. Girls ten and older may enjoy exploring a chemistry set or building a model robot.
- Ask your daughter's teachers about specific math and science projects. Express interest in your daughter's progress in these subjects. Foster interest in your daughter's participation in school science fairs and advanced math and science courses.
- Encourage your daughter to take advanced computer science and technology classes. The courses can move her skills beyond keyboarding into computer programming and problem solving.
- Encourage your daughter's verbal skills as these are indispensable to girls' capacities to achieve across subject areas, to think critically, and to make their voices heard.
- Praise her intellect.

## **Athletics**

- Advocate for equal programs, facilities, equipment, and publicity for girls and boys in school- and community-based athletic programs.
- Support the involvement in athletics of girls who may not see themselves as athletes.
- Encourage your daughter to participate in outdoor activities and organized sports.
- Participate with your daughter in an outdoor adventure experience organized by a women's outdoor adventure organization.

## **Career Exploration**

- Encourage your daughter to explore her strengths and develop her talents in all fields, especially those not traditionally thought of as "female."
- Participate in the annual *Take Our Daughters to Work Day* on the fourth Thursday each April.
- Organize a job shadowing experience in a field in which your daughter has expressed interest.
- Help your daughter compare the earning potential of the careers in which she is interested with the expenses associated with the lifestyle she wants as an adult consumer.

## **Connection to Community Life**

- Support your daughter's involvement in community groups and extra-curricular activities.
- Provide opportunities for your daughter to take leadership roles in her church, home, school, and community.
- Encourage your daughter to volunteer for an organization in which she is interested.
- Support your daughter to take action to promote constructive social change.
- Take your daughter with you to vote. Model active participation in the

democratic process.

- Take your daughter to community activities that support women's experiences, such as "Women Take Back the Night" marches or Women's History Month celebrations.

## **Decision Making**

- Ask your daughter, "What do you think?" to teach her to be discriminating.
- Ask her, "Where do you draw the line?" to help her set boundaries.
- Ask her, "What do you want?" to help her make decisions and to give her permission to ask.
- Ask her, "How will you get it?" to help her set goals and priorities.
- Ask her, "How realistic is it?" to help her separate fantasy from reality.
- Ask her, "What will be the consequences?" to teach her to project into the future.
- Ask her, "How would you handle that?" to develop trust in herself.

## **Gender Roles**

- If your daughter is still young enough to enjoy bedtime stories, tell her one in which she is the heroine.
- Encourage your daughter to develop her natural talents, abilities, and interests without narrowing her choices to traditional female roles.
- Provide toys, books, and games which show both males and females in nontraditional roles expressing a full range of human traits and emotions.
- Require both traditional and nontraditional chores of both boys and girls.
- Examine your own sexism and gender-based assumptions. Try to model androgynous behavior.

## Health & Safety

- Help your daughter develop a wellness program. This should include goals for nutrition, exercise and stress management.
- Help your daughter to respect her developing body. Model healthy attitudes towards women's bodies of all shapes and sizes, including your own or that of your partner's.
- Discourage the development of eating disorders by rebutting negative cultural messages about body image and encouraging healthy eating patterns.
- Guide your daughter in creating a plan for making healthy choices about drugs and alcohol.
- Sign your daughter up for a self-defense course. Attend one with her.
- Avoid emphasizing a preference for a certain skin color, hair texture, or eye or lip shape. Show an acceptance of and appreciation for the unique physical appearance of every individual.

## Media

- Help your daughter to make wise choices about her consumption of media, including magazines, television, movies, and music videos. Model wise choices.
- Subscribe your daughter to a magazine created by and for girls her age.
- Find "teachable moments" around media consumption. For example, make use of a TV show that you believe sends the wrong message by saying, "I think that program sends the wrong message," and why. Ask her what message she thinks the program communicated.

## Money Management

- Negotiate a reasonable allowance with your daughter, within the constraints of your family budget.
- Assist your daughter in opening a savings account. Encourage her to place money

in the account on a regular basis.

- Help your daughter learn the value of material goods. For example, have her figure the number of weeks of allowance it would take to purchase her favorite cd, new athletic shoes, or portable stereo.
- Teach your daughter how to balance a checkbook and calculate interest. Go over a recent bank statement with her to explain service fees, etc.
- Model good money management skills by paying bills on time and limiting debt.

## Sexuality & Relationships

- Share with your daughter your feelings, values, and beliefs about sexuality and relationships. Explain why you feel the way you do.
- Be supportive of your daughter through the awkward physical changes of puberty.
- Model a healthy attitude towards menstruation and the reproductive processes of the female body, including your own or that of your partner's.
- Provide access to non-judgmental information and resources in an effort to prevent unintended pregnancies and the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Offer guidance and support to help your daughter make healthy decisions about a range of sexual activity.
- Encourage friendships with boys and group dating rather than traditional dependence on a steady dating relationship.
- Demonstrate respect for people of all sexual orientations.
- From a young age, foster your daughter's sense of entitlement to respectful treatment. Teach her that she can speak out against the behaviors of others that hurt her.
- Prepare your daughter to effectively handle the unwanted sexual advances of

boys and adult men.

- Teach your son and daughter to honor the word “no” when it is communicated in a sexual situation.

## **Spirituality**

- Introduce your daughter to spiritualities that honor and celebrate the feminine.
- Allow your daughter to experience various religious traditions. Let her develop an awareness and sensitivity to others’ belief systems.
- Support your daughter as she actively searches for meaning and order in the universe. Encourage her questions about the gift of life and the reality of death.
- Help your daughter find ways to respect the part of herself that is spiritual.
- Explore your own understanding of your connection to and part in the greater universe. Share this understanding with your daughter, allowing that she may come to a different understanding than you.
- Resist the temptation to provide pat answers to her spiritual questions. Be brave enough to let your daughter search and find her own spiritual truth.

(This list is an edited selection of suggestions from various sources including The National Council for Research on Women, Oregon Community Children and Youth Services Commission, Girls E.T.C., Mary Pipher, SIECUS, Jeanette Gadeberg, Mindy Bingham and Sandy Stryker, and the Women’s College Coalition at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts.)

## Concerned, Caring Adults: What you can do

**A**dult relatives, neighbors, and other caring adults can play an important role in helping girls feel valued and supported. In fact, Mary Pipher identified connectedness to a non-exploitive adult as one of four factors that help girls in our culture navigate successfully through adolescence. This list of suggestions can serve as a springboard for you as a concerned adult as you search for ways to support the adolescent and pre-adolescent girls in your life and greater community.

### General

- Listen to girls' stories.
- Notice when the girl in your life is acting differently.
- Present options when she seeks your counsel.
- Play outside together. Include her in planning hikes, picnics, or other outdoor activities.
- Suggest better behaviors when she acts out.
- Send a girl a letter or a postcard.
- Give her space when she needs it.
- Notice her positive qualities and personal successes rather than her shortcomings and mistakes.
- Create a tradition with her and keep it.
- Show up at her concerts, games, and events.
- Apologize when you've done something wrong.
- Listen to her favorite music with her. Discuss the lyrics, the artist, and the accompanying video. Share with her your perceptions. Listen to hers without criticizing.
- Wave and smile to her when you part.
- Display her artwork in your home.
- Point out what you like about her, being sure to not always focus on her appearance.
- Clip magazine pictures or articles that may interest her.
- Give her your undivided attention.
- Introduce her to your friends and family.

- Tell her how much you like being with her.
- Meet her friends.
- Meet her parents.
- Delight in her uniqueness.
- Encourage her to help others.
- Tape record a message for her. Include stories from your childhood or daily life, or your vision for a world that supports her and all girls.
- Share with her your expectations of her.
- Share a meal together.
- Expect her best; don't expect perfection.
- Love her, no matter what.

### Letter Writing

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in support of gender-specific programs for girls or criticizing negative coverage of the issue.
- Write a letter to your legislator urging her or his support for gender-specific programs and services for girls.
- Write an admonishing letter to a television, music, movie, or magazine executive when you find that their material promotes sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise biased representation of the experiences of girls and women.
- Write a thank you letter to an artist, politician, publisher, or advocate whose actions had a positive impact on the lives of girls and women.

- Write a letter of encouragement to a girl in your life who is having a tough time.

### **Volunteer Possibilities**

- Staff a hotline dealing with girls' issues.
- Coach an athletic team for girls.
- Be a mentor to a girl, especially if you are a woman. Follow through on your commitment.
- Speak to a service, women's, business or church group about girls' issues in your community.
- Donate your time to a girl-serving program in your community: be on call to make mechanical or electrical repairs; help raise funds; landscape or help maintain the grounds; provide child care for teen mothers; teach a class; or tutor.

### **Other Actions**

- Attend or organize a meeting to increase understanding about the needs of girls in your community.
- Donate household or personal items to a girl-serving program. Call the program to ask about specific needs.
- Make a financial contribution to an organization in your community that serves girls.
- Encourage your service group, employee's association, or employer to help support a girl-serving program.
- Report suspected incidences of sexual or physical abuse to child-protective service agencies.

(This list is an edited selection of suggestions from various sources including the Search Institute and Oregon Community Children and Youth Services Commission.)



## *Educators: What you can do*

**S**chools provide a critical context for girls' healthy development, sense of achievement, and optimism about their futures. Safe, supportive school environments that encourage girls' wholeness and academic success can create lasting effects for girls as they move towards adulthood. This list of recommendations can serve as a guide for how you, as an educator, administrator, counselor or other professional in the field of education, can support the adolescent and pre-adolescent girls in your community's schools.

### **Administrative**

- Encourage governing bodies to ensure that women of diverse backgrounds are represented on their committees.
- Include the experiences, strengths, and needs of girls from every race and social class to shape educational reform.
- Utilize the expertise of female teachers when restructuring your community's educational efforts.
- Give teachers, counselors, and other school staff the time and space to work together to enhance their effectiveness.
- Encourage the evaluation of teachers, administrators, and counselors on the degree to which they promote and encourage gender-equitable and multicultural education.
- Provide teacher release time for teacher-initiated research on curricula and classroom variables which affect student learning.
- Provide equal programs, facilities, equipment, and publicity for girls and boys in school-based athletic programs.
- Hire female coaches for all-boys, all-girls, and mixed-sex teams.
- Insist that coaches and teachers of both sexes model respectful behavior towards females.

### **Curriculum**

- Follow your school district's requirements regarding multicultural and non-sexist curriculum.

- Offer students positive images and balanced information through innovative curricular materials that include the experiences of women and men from all walks of life.
- Support school curricula which deal with issues of power, gender politics, and violence against women.
- Showcase successful women in scientific and technological fields.
- Offer comprehensive sexuality education programs that promote discussions of sexual health and provide students with clear, meaningful information and resources. Acknowledge that there is a range of sexual values.
- Incorporate cooperative, as well as competitive, learning models.
- Provide support systems in vocational education that include transportation and child care for those students involved.
- Support school-links with youth-serving organizations who have developed out-of-school programs for girls.
- Encourage federal and state funding to support research and development of gender-fair curricular models.
- Foster girls' confidence in math, science, and computer technology. Encourage them to tolerate frustration in problem-solving without becoming overwhelmed. Teach relaxation skills to deal with the math anxiety girls often experience.
- Provide conflict-resolution training for students.

## **Professional Development**

- Provide learning opportunities for those in teacher education programs to recognize and modify their gender-based assumptions and practices.
- Encourage educators to pursue ongoing professional development activities that help them to better meet the needs of diverse student bodies.
- Educate yourself and encourage the education of others on gender issues, including new research on women, bias in classroom-interaction patterns, and the ways in which schools can develop and implement a gender-fair curriculum.

## **School & Classroom Practice**

- Model respect for girls and people of all cultures.
- Demonstrate respect for students' cultures and native languages.
- Redirect your attention towards acknowledging girls' strengths and successes rather than focusing on misbehaviors and mistakes.
- Challenge attitudes and behaviors that stereotype or discriminate against groups or individuals.
- Create a safe, supportive space for students to explore issues of gender, race, class, culture, sexuality, and disability.
- Foster student groupings organized around talents, interests, and needs, rather than cliques.
- Support and respect girls' attempts to negotiate the challenges of school, family, and social life.
- Offer girls more leadership opportunities and means for active exploration of their interests and talents.
- Encourage girls to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, including athletics.
- Encourage girls to explore a wide range of subjects and potential careers, especially

those in which girls and women are traditionally underrepresented.

- Work collaboratively with families and communities to understand and support the needs of all students.
- Create a physical environment in which the lives of girls and women are reflected in the posters and display cases that decorate classrooms and hallways.

## **Sexual Harassment**

- Formulate and consistently enforce strong, clear, publicly stated policies against sexual harassment and discriminatory practices. Expand these policies to better reflect the realities of adolescents and girls.
- Protect the rights of students who make claims of sexual harassment.
- Establish norms for conduct toward the opposite sex. Model these norms in your interactions with staff, students, parents, and community members.

## **Testing and Assessment**

- Advocate that general aptitude and achievement tests balance sex differences in item types and contexts so that new tests and testing techniques accurately reflect the abilities of both girls and boys.
- Advocate that tests which relate to real life situations reflect the experiences of girls and boys.

## **Title IX**

- Encourage your legislators to fund the Office for Civil Rights at a level that permits increased compliance reviews and full and prompt investigation of Title IX complaints.
- Challenge your school administrators to regularly assess and report your district's Title IX compliance measures to the Office for Civil Rights.

- Challenge your school administrators to assess and review the treatment of pregnant teens and teen parents, who may be the victims of discriminatory treatment in many schools.

(This list is an edited selection of suggestions from various sources including The National Council for Research on Women, American Association of University Women, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, and Mary Pipher.)

## *Policymakers: What you can do*

**I**nnovative public policies that reflect the needs and experiences of girls and women are necessary to girls' healthy development and meaningful participation in community life. As partners with the greater community, those in policymaking positions can have a dramatic impact on the lives of countless girls. This list of suggestions provides a framework in which you, as a person who makes such determinations, can explore public policy that is in the best interest of girls of all ages.

- Advocate for the forms of citizen engagement and public dialogue needed to empower all individuals, organizations, and systems to address the needs of girls.
- Incorporate an understanding that poverty and related problems are not caused by children and families "at risk," nor is risk an individual phenomenon. Focus policy discussion on eliminating social conditions that promote poverty.
- Monitor the impact of provisions in the new welfare reform law that deny benefits to unmarried adolescent mothers who do not live at home.
- Allocate adequate funding to ensure that all children and adolescents receive needed health care and insurance.
- Create public policy that emphasizes the need to challenge inequities in social institutions and popular culture that may both constrain girls' options and diminish their self-regard, rather than look to raising girls' self-esteem as a cure-all for more complex social problems.
- Challenge restrictive policies that prohibit open discussion of sexuality in schools.
- Support and expand the statewide use of juvenile court liaisons in the schools.
- Allocate adequate funding for local community life skills programs that teach female adolescent offenders anger management, conflict resolution, and pro-social skills and behaviors.
- Allocate adequate funding for delinquency day treatment programs that exclusively serve girls so that girls can remain in their communities while receiving intensive supervision and treatment.
- Increase funding for alternative, single-sex, residential placements located within girls' communities.
- Support and fund mobile assessment, intervention, and treatment in community settings where girls live.
- Integrate into funding decisions the understanding that programs must be comprehensive, integrated, and sustained over time, or linked so as to achieve such criteria, if lasting change is to be created in the lives of girls served.
- Support and fund research on girls' lives that includes longitudinal outcome data.

(This is an edited list of suggestions from the National Council on Research for Women, the Search Institute, and materials from the office of Attorney General Tom Miller.)

## *Juvenile Court Officers and Judges: What you can do*

**I**n order to assure the optimum potential of girls' experiences in the juvenile justice system, the system must take girls' gendered experiences into account. As significant players in girls' treatment plans, juvenile court officers and judges have opportunities to make influential decisions in the lives of those girls with whom they work. This list of suggestions encourages a framework in which you, as a JCO or judge, can serve as an ally for adolescent girls involved with the juvenile justice system.

- Be knowledgeable about the developmental differences between girls and boys. Attend trainings on adolescent development and gender-specific services for girls. Use this knowledge to inform the professional decisions you make that impact the lives of girls.
  - Be sure that your perceptions of each girl extend beyond the sum of her offense record to embrace her as a complete person. Reflect this understanding in your interactions with the girl and in those decisions you make that impact her growth and treatment.
  - Hold the girl accountable for her actions, but always seek to understand the gendered context in which the offense occurred. Use the understanding of each girl's personal history to more fully explain the necessary circumstances within which the girl makes choices in her behaviors.
  - Learn about the services of those organizations to which you make referrals. Understand the organization's range of services provided, as well as the limitations, so that you make informed referrals that are meaningful and productive to the girl.
  - Hold accountable those organizations to whom you refer girls. Follow up to ensure that the services requested are provided in ways meaningful to the girl.
- Advocate for the young women on your case load and for young women in general. Add your voice to theirs.

(This list of suggestions was developed through the input of members of the Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.)

# *Department of Human Services Personnel: What you can do*

**A**n understanding of the needs and experiences of girls and women is essential to quality service provision at the state level. As partners in key decisions that affect many girls' lives, Department of Human Services personnel can have a dramatic impact on the lives of the girls they serve. This list of suggestions provides a framework in which you, as a person who shapes service delivery within the Department of Human Services on some level, can better serve girls of all ages.

## **Administration**

- Incorporate an understanding that poverty and related problems are not caused by children and families “at risk,” nor is risk an individual phenomenon. Focus policy discussions on eliminating social conditions that promote poverty.
- Monitor the impact of provisions in the new welfare reform law that deny benefits to unmarried adolescent mothers who do not live at home.
- Integrate into funding decisions the understanding that programs must be comprehensive, integrated, and sustained over time, or linked so as to achieve such criteria, if lasting change is to be created in the lives of girls served.
- In budget decision making processes, advocate for programming that is sensitive to girls' unique development and needs.
- Adopt licensing standards that reflect the gender-specific approach.

## **Field Staff**

- Be knowledgeable about the developmental differences between girls and boys. Attend trainings on adolescent development and gender-specific services for girls. Use this knowledge to inform the professional

decisions you make that impact the lives of girls.

- Be sure that your perceptions of each girl extend beyond the sum of her offense record to embrace her as a complete person. Reflect this understanding in your interactions with the girl and in those decisions you make that impact her growth and treatment.
- Hold the girl accountable for her actions, but always seek to understand the gendered context in which the offense occurred. Use the understanding of each girl's personal history to more fully explain the necessary circumstances within which the girl makes choices in her behaviors.

( This list of suggestions was developed through the input of members of the Iowa Gender-Specific Services Task Force.)

## *Businesses: What you can do*

**I**n order to create meaningful, lasting change that supports the healthy development of girls in our communities, all players need to be invested. The business community can play an important role in contributing to the lives of girls who may be potential employees or customers or whose parents or caregivers are employees or customers. This list of suggestions can serve as a springboard for innovative business practices that support adolescent and pre-adolescent girls in your community.

- Welcome girls to participate in job-shadowing experiences so that they can learn about a career field in which they may be interested.
- Invite employees to participate in *Take Our Daughters to Work Day* on the fourth Thursday each April.
- Hire a graduate of a teen parent or girl-serving program.
- Make job training more accessible to girls and their families.
- Form partnerships with schools, girl-serving programs, and community groups through which concerned adults can share insights and work collaboratively to support the needs of girls. Learn from the experiences of those more directly involved in serving girls about ways the business community can best provide support for girls.
- Encourage employees to be mentors to girls by developing a partnership with a girl-serving program. Provide training to mentors on female development and ways to provide meaningful experiences for girls.
- Incorporate the insights of girls into any initiative your business may take to serve girls. Solicit their collaboration in authentic and meaningful ways, through involvement with design and implementation, so that girls can gain leadership skills, develop supportive intergenerational relationships, and experience themselves as active

participants in social change.

- Provide in-kind support to a girl-serving program. Donate office equipment, confidential meeting space, transportation, child care services, or other supplies.
- Implement workplace policies that counter hiring practices that discriminate against women and girls.
- Provide an affordable, quality, on-site child daycare program for your employees.

(This list is an edited selection of suggestions from the National Council for Research on Women and Oregon Community Children and Youth Services Commission.)

**P**ART THREE is intended to provide a range of resources for those who seek to use a gender-specific approach in providing programs and services to girls. First, it includes a list of national and state organizations that provide resources relevant to gender-specific programs and/or that provide grants to such programs. Next, it provides descriptions and contact information on successful gender-specific programs for girls throughout the United States. Finally, it includes a comprehensive bibliography, lists of curricula for girl-serving programs, and contact information of magazines written by, for and about girls.



## Resource Organizations

(*\$*) indicates a grant funding organization

### **National Organizations**

#### ***American Association of University Women Educational Foundation (\$)***

1111 Sixteenth St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: (202) 728-7613

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation is a national membership organization of 135,000 college graduates dedicated to promoting equity and education for girls. Publications include Gender Gaps: Where Schools Still Fail Our Children, Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America, and Separated by Sex: A Critical Look at Single Sex Education for Girls.

#### ***Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sports***

203 Cooke Hall  
1900 University Avenue SE  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Phone: (612) 625-7327  
Website: <http://www.kls.coled.umn.edu/crgws/>

The Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sports, in collaboration with The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, issued a report called Physical Activity and Sports in the Lives of Girls. This groundbreaking report, produced by leading experts in the physiological, sociological, psychological and mental health aspects of women's sports, illustrates the profound impact that physical activity and sports can have on many interrelated aspects of a girl's development.

#### ***GAINS Center***

262 Delaware Ave.  
Delmar, NY 12054  
Phone: (800) 311-GAIN  
Fax: (518) 439-7612  
E-mail: [gains@prainc.com](mailto:gains@prainc.com)

The National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System gathers information about mental health and substance abuse services provided in the justice system, tailors materials to the specific needs of localities, and provides technical assistance to help them plan, implement, and operate appropriate, cost-effective programs. Publications include Adolescent Girls with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System and Improving Policy and Practice for Adolescent Girls with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Juvenile Justice System.

#### ***Girls Count***

225 East 16th Avenue, Suite 475  
Denver, CO 80203  
Phone: (303) 832-6600

Girls Count seeks to expand girls education and career opportunities by increasing awareness and impacting policies and actions of those who influence girls, including parents, educators, employers, community leaders, policy makers, and the media. Girls Count publishes curricula for classroom or extracurricular-based instruction from a variety of approaches aimed to strengthen adolescent girls. Curricula include Parenting Our Daughters, Focus on Your Future, and the guide Educator Inservice on Gender Equity.

***Girls Incorporated National Resource Center***

441 West Michigan Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3233  
Phone: (317) 634-7546  
Fax: (317) 634-3024  
Website: <http://www.girlsinc.org>

Girls Incorporated is a national youth service, research, and advocacy organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. In the past 15 years, Girls Incorporated has invested more than \$20 million in understanding the strengths and needs of girls and developing an effective programmatic response. Publications include Prevention and Parity: Girls and Juvenile Justice and Girls Re-cast TV Action Kit.

***Greene, Peters & Associates (GPA)***

1018-16th Ave. N.  
Nashville, TN 37208  
Phone: (615) 327-0329  
Fax: (615) 327-1422  
E-mail: [greenpet@worldnet.att.net](mailto:greenpet@worldnet.att.net)

GPA is a behavioral science organization that focuses on program design, implementation, and evaluation in many of its consulting activities. A multi-disciplinary team provides consultation to agencies, community-based programs, and organizations on local, regional, and national levels. In 1996, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention entered into a cooperative agreement with Greene, Peters & Associates to stimulate, expand, and strengthen the development and implementation of gender-specific programming for female juvenile offenders and female adolescents at risk. As part of this three year agreement, Greene, Peters & Associates will conduct a national needs assessment on the issue of gender-specific programming for adolescent females; develop a technical assistance package on

gender-specific programs; develop a training of trainers curriculum; implement a national public education initiative focused on the need for gender-specific programming for girls; and, develop a curriculum for program line staff.

***Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse***

P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
Phone: (800) 638-8736

The Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse serves as an information warehouse for a diverse array of materials related to youth. Representatives are available to assist with literature and information searches. Many of its publications are free and available to the general public.

***Ms. Foundation for Women (\$)***

120 Wall Street, 33rd Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: (212) 742-2300  
Fax: (212) 742-1653

The Ms. Foundation for Women has been working to promote institutional and adult support for girls over the past several years. In 1991, determined to raise public awareness of the complex realities of girls' lives and help develop programs aimed at fostering girls' health, strength, and resiliency, the Foundation launched the National Girls Initiative, a series of efforts to serve the needs and amplify the voices of girls. In 1997 Ms. provided \$1.7 million in grants nationwide to 14 groups representing diverse cultures, settings, and approaches. Their programs include the national public campaign, "Take Our Daughters to Work Day."

***National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information***

PO Box 2345  
Rockville, MD 20847-2345  
Phone: (800) 729-6686  
Website: <http://www.health.org>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) distributes the latest studies and surveys, guides, videocassettes, posters, grant and funding information as well as other information and materials on substance abuse from various agencies such as the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

***National Coalition for Sex Equity in Education***

P.O. Box 534  
Annandale, NJ 08801-0534  
Phone: (908) 735-5045

The purpose of the National Coalition for Sex Equity in Education (NCSEE) is to provide leadership in the identification and infusion of sex equity in all educational programs and processes and within parallel equity concerns, including, but not limited to, age, disability, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

***The National Council for Research on Women***

11 Hanover Square, 20th Floor  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: (212) 785-7335  
Fax: (212) 785-7350  
Website: <http://www.ncrw.org>

NCRW is a working alliance of centers and individuals actively involved in feminist research, policy analysis, advocacy, and innovative programs for women and girls. Through its member centers, affiliates, events, and publications, the Council links a community of scholars and practitioners and fosters collaboration among researchers, advocates, policymakers, and national and international organizations. Publications include Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance: Current Research on Adolescent Girls, The Girls Report: What We Know & Need To Know About Growing Up Female, as well as publications related to teenage girls and sexual harassment and women and girls in science, math, and engineering.

***National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges***

P.O. Box 8970  
Reno, NV 89507  
Phone: (702) 784-6012

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges serves as a clearinghouse for juvenile information and statistics, and is recognized as one of the nation's most esteemed research facilities. Research results are integrated into the Council's ongoing educational programs. Technical assistance is available to courts on all aspects of court operation and procedure. The organization is composed of judges, referees, commissioners, and masters who confront a variety of juvenile and family related issues including child abuse and neglect, substance and alcohol abuse, victim assistance, and juvenile delinquency.

***National Girls Caucus***

c/o P.A.C.E. Center for Girls  
100 Laura Street, Suite 100  
Tenth Floor  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Phone: (904) 358-0555

The National Girls' Caucus focuses national attention on the unique needs of girls and young women who are "at risk" or in the justice system, in order to create change. Their goals include to impact public policy, resource allocation, and research to improve the quality of care and services for girls; to ensure fairness in the justice system by eliminating gender, ethnicity, and racial bias; to assure culturally sensitive, gender-specific programming for girls and young women; and, to raise public awareness regarding the need for gender-appropriate programming and services for girls.

***National Women's History Project***

7738 Bell Road  
Windsor, CA 95492-8518  
Phone: (707) 838-6000  
Website: <http://www.nwhp.org>

The National Women's History Project is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to "writing women back into history." They publish the quarterly newsletter, "Women's History Network News;" produced the video series, "Women in American Life," covering the years 1861 to 1977; and, offer an intensive five-day teacher training workshop on teaching women's history. The NWHP also puts out a catalog of books, videos, curriculum, posters, and more related to women's history.

***Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention***

10-7th St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20531  
Phone: (202) 307-5924  
Website: [NCJRS.org/OJJhome](http://NCJRS.org/OJJhome)

OJJDP is the federal agency responsible for the implementation and administration of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJCP Act). The JJDP Act places requirements on the use of secure settings for youth. One requirement of the Act relates to the availability and adequacy of services for girls. OJJDP administers federal funding for a variety of juvenile justice related initiatives (e.g., training, technical assistance, research, and programming).

***SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, Inc.)***

130 West 42nd Street, Suite 350  
New York, NY 10036-7802  
Phone: (212) 819-9770  
Fax: (212) 819-9776  
Website: <http://www.siecus.org>

SIECUS affirms that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of living. SIECUS develops, collects, and disseminates information; promotes comprehensive education about sexuality; and advocates the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. The SIECUS Report is a bimonthly publication that offers information from a variety of disciplines and perspectives about sexuality, including medicine, law, philosophy, business, and the social sciences.

***Valentine Foundation*** (\$)
900 Old Gulph Road
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

The Valentine Foundation is a charitable foundation which makes grants to qualifying tax-exempt organizations. Grants are made for organizations or programs which empower women and girls to recognize and develop their full potential or which work to change established attitudes that discourage or prevent them from recognizing that potential. Grants will be given for endeavors to effect fundamental change—to change attitudes, policies, or social patterns. The trustees are particularly interested in innovative programs that offer a new approach. Publications include A Conversation About Girls.

**Iowa Organizations**

***Chrysalis Foundation*** (\$)
321 E. Walnut, Ste. 360
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 281-0886

The purpose of the Chrysalis Foundation, a Des Moines-based fund for women, is to benefit women, through scholarships and innovative programs, in promoting education and economic independence. Chrysalis funds eight after-school programs in Des Moines middle schools aimed at building girls' confidence, risk-taking, communication and community skills.

***Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP)***

Department of Human Rights
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: (515) 242-5823
Fax: (515) 242-6119

CJJP exists to help state and local officials and practitioners identify and address criminal and juvenile justice issues through research, data, policy analysis, planning and grant administration. CJJP provides staff support to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council and the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning Advisory Council. CJJP assists with implementation of Iowa's Gender-Specific Services Initiative.

***Family Planning Council of Iowa (FIPC)***

1101 Walnut St. #200
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 288-9028

FPCI is a non-profit organization established to assure the availability of family planning services to Iowans. The Council accomplishes this mission through a variety of ways. The foremost is by contracting with the federal government for Title X of the Public Health Services Act. Under this contract, the FPCI is responsible for providing family planning services to low-income Iowans. This is done through subcontracts with family planning clinics across the state. Other activities include a coordination of a statewide screening program to detect chlamydia infections in women and the production of various brochures on health education.

***Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV)***

2601 Bell Ave., Ste. A  
Des Moines, IA 50321  
Phone: (515) 244-8028

ICADV seeks to eliminate personal and institutional violence against women through support to programs providing safety and services to battered women and their children. A statewide resource, ICADV recognizes that unequal power contributes to violence against women and their children. Therefore, ICADV advocates for social change, legal and judicial reform, education and the end to all oppression. ICADV provides extensive training to healthcare providers, batterer intervention service providers, religious leaders, school administrators and faculty and other professionals interested in the rights of all Iowans to live free from fear and violence in their won homes.

***Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault (IowaCASA)***

2601 Bell Ave., Ste. B  
Des Moines, IA 50321  
Phone: (515) 244-7424

IowaCASA coordinates a statewide support and referral service for survivors, their friends and family, and professionals assisting survivors. It supports services to survivors by encouraging networking among centers, providing resources and technical assistance to centers, and representing concerns of centers on a statewide level. IowaCASA also coordinates trainings for community groups and agencies on intervention and prevention of all types of sexual assault. There is a resource library of books, films, tapes, brochures, and more related to sexual assault. The materials are available to the anti-sexual assault centers, professionals, and the general public.

***Iowa Commission on the Status of Women***

Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
Phone: (800) 558-4427 or (515) 281-4461  
Fax: (515) 242-6119  
E-mail: [dhr.icsw@dhr.state.ia.us](mailto:dhr.icsw@dhr.state.ia.us)  
Webstie: <http://www.state.ia.us/dhr/sw>

The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women (ICSW) is a state agency that seeks to assure equality for Iowa women. The ICSW advocates for Iowa women, working to equalize women's opportunities and to promote full participation by women in the economic, political, and social life of the state. Currently, ICSW administers a Challenge Grant to address the needs of females in the juvenile justice system. Publications include Female Juvenile Justice, Sexism in Education, Sexual Harassment: It's Against the Law, and the Status of Iowa Women Report.

***Iowa Women's Foundation (\$)***

220 Lafayette Street  
Iowa City, IA 52240  
Phone: (319) 337-4222  
Website: <http://www.avalon.net/~iwf>

The mission of the Iowa Women's Foundation is to bring about a just society by supporting the empowerment of all women and girls throughout the state of Iowa. A public, nonprofit organization, they seek to expand and improve opportunities and choices in all aspects of women's and girl's lives through raising funds, awarding grants, providing education and technical assistance, and bringing women and girls together. Specifically, the Iowa Women's Foundation provides grant monies to informal groups of women and/or girls, grassroots groups or organizations, and formal nonprofit organizations that, among other criteria, focus on changing underlying causes of gender barriers in a way that leads to long-term change for women and/or girls as a group.

***Young Women's Resource Center***

1909 Ingersoll Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50309

Phone: (515) 244-4901

The mission of the Young Women's Resource Center is to enlighten, educate, and empower adolescent women by providing free, voluntary, and confidential counseling and information as they confront the challenges of adulthood. The Center advocates for young women and helps them make informed decisions and develop lifelong skills for self-reliance. "Problem Solving" programs include problem solving groups for survivors of sexual abuse and dating violence, leadership groups, Summer Fun, and individual counseling. "Young Mom's" provides parenting education and support groups as well as other opportunities for pregnant/parenting teens. "It Takes Two" is dedicated to educating teens and adults about preventing teen pregnancy.

# *Successful Gender-Specific Programs for Girls*

## **Programs Serving Juvenile Female Offenders**

### ***Alternative Rehabilitation Communities (ARC)***

Harrisburg, PA

Contact: Daniel Elby (717) 238-7101

ARC is a staff-secure residential treatment facility offering a continuum of care for girls ages 15-1/2 to 18 years. It has a capacity of 15 girls and is funded by individual counties and school districts. The girls served are primarily African-American. The program focuses on relationship building, victimization issues, and nontraditional vocational training. It also provides parenting education and treat female sex offenders.

### ***Boys Town USA***

Philadelphia, PA

Contact: Dawn Weeks (215) 739-3742

Boys Town USA provides staff-secure detention with individualized plans and programming for girls ages 11 to 18 who are awaiting placement by juvenile court.. It has a capacity of 18 girls. It is funded through the city of Philadelphia, private donations, and a national endowment. The girls served are African-American, White, and Latina. The program focuses on relationship building, life skills, and victimization issues. Staff training is emphasized.

### ***Caritas House***

Pawtucket, RI

Contact: Susan Wallace (401) 722-4644

Caritas House is a long-term residential treatment center with gender-specific services for female substance abusers, ages 13 to 17.

It has a capacity of 16 girls. It is funded by Rhode Island Department of Health and supplemented by fundraising and sliding-scale fees. The girls served are primarily White. The program focuses on sexual abuse issues, victimization issues, and relationship building. Staff training is emphasized.

### ***Life Givers***

Fairbanks, AK

Contact: Valerie Naquin (907) 452-1274

Life Givers is a residential treatment program for Native American girls, ages 13 to 18, who are pregnant or parenting while recovering from substance abuse (primarily alcoholism). It has a capacity for seven girls and their infants and toddlers. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and the State of Alaska. The program focuses on prenatal and postpartum care, well baby care and day care while encouraging a positive ethnic identity. Staff training is emphasized.

### ***PACE Center for Girls***

Jacksonville, FL

Contact: Lawanda Raviora (904) 358-0555

PACE Center for Girls is a day treatment program offering comprehensive prevention, early intervention, and high school education to adolescent girls, ages 12-18, who are considered at risk for delinquency. Its total capacity is 1,820 girls at 12 centers located throughout Florida (optimal size per center is 40 girls). It is funded primarily by the Department of Juvenile Justice, with additional resources from school boards and private donations. The girls served are primarily White and African-American. The program focuses on relationship building, life skills, and positive gender identity.



The program also utilizes small all-girls classes and community service experiences. Staff training is emphasized.

***Pulaski County Juvenile Court, Volunteer Probation Officer-Teen Parenting Program***  
Little Rock, AR  
Contact: Judge Rita Gruber (501) 340-6700

This program is an early intervention/probation program that uses volunteer probation officers to supervise first-time and non-violent offenders who are also teen parents. It has a capacity of 15 girls. It is funded by a grant from OJJDP as part of a larger volunteer probation officer supervision program. Girls served are primarily African-American. The program focuses on parenting skills and relationship building. Teens are matched to probation officers by gender. The program requires parental approval.

***Harriet Tubman Residential Center***  
Auburn, NY  
Contact: Ines M. Nieves-Evans  
(315) 255-3481

The Harriet Tubman Residential Center is a residential “step-down” facility (between secure and group home) for girls ages 15 to 18 years who are considered minor or first-time offenders. It has a capacity of 25 girls. It is funded by New York State Division for Youth with additional support from volunteers. The girls served are White, African-American, and Latina. The program focuses on relationship building, victimization issues, self-empowerment skills, and positive gender identity. The program also uses as women’s studies curriculum. Staff training is emphasized.

## **Community-based Intervention/Prevention Programs for Girls**

### ***City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation At-Risk Youth***

Phoenix, AZ  
Contact: Cynthia D. Peters (602) 262-7370

This program is city-funded and operates from several community centers throughout Phoenix. Programs that target preteen and adolescent girls with gender-specific programming include: a women’s issues group, designed to give African-American girls a positive peer group and the opportunity to discuss such issues as substance abuse, relationships, rape and date rape, and sexually transmitted infections; “rites of passage” groups, designed to help girls of varied cultural backgrounds make a positive transition from adolescence to adulthood; “Plan It,” a program in which players from a professional women’s basketball team (Phoenix Mercury) teach basketball skills to high school girls, who then operate a league for elementary school girls; and two dance troupes that also develop life skills and foster positive relationships.

### ***Diineegwashii***

Fairbanks, AK  
Contact: Valerie Naquin (907) 456-6306

Diineegwashii is a substance abuse prevention program that targets Alaska Native girls. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The philosophy is based on native cultural values, and most staff members (89 percent) are American-Indian or Alaska Native. The program uses home visits and case management to strengthen bonds between the adolescent girl and her family and to confront profound risk factors facing many Alaska Native girls. Home visits teach life skills, cultural awareness, and family management skills to teen girls and their

mothers. The program also includes field trips, success ceremonies, and family and community gatherings.

***G.I.R.L.S. on the move!***

Boston, MA

Contact: Zahid Vides (617) 265-7040

Girls Identifying Resources and Life Skills (G.I.R.L.S.) *on the move!* targets adolescent girls, ages 10 to 16 years, in a Boston-area public housing project who are considered vulnerable to risky behaviors. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The program serves a low-income population of African-American and Latina girls, most of whom live in female-headed households. The program emphasizes positive life skills to resist crime and delinquency, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and academic failure. It also utilizes career education, discussion circles, mentoring by adult women, and parenting groups.

***Learning for Life***

Nashville, TN

Contact: Susan Dixon (202) 628-8080

Learning for Life uses an arts curriculum to help preadolescent African-American girls resist drugs and alcohol and embrace positive, creative, social activities. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The program serves 45 girls from local middle schools and two housing projects, using drama, dance, music, and visual arts for self-discovery. The program celebrates Afrocentric holidays, goes on field trips, and introduces girls to female community leaders and role models. It also encourages families to participate in activities and to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviors.

***Naja Project***

Washington, D.C.

Contact: Jerveada Dixon-Addison

(202) 610-3780

Naja, a Kiswahili word meaning “safe,” is a rites of passage/prevention program for African American girls, ages 10 to 14 years, who live in one of the nation’s poorest neighborhoods. The girls are older sisters of children enrolled in Head Start. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The girls are divided into small units called “jamaas,” or families. Adults provide initial direction, then prepare girls to assume leadership roles. The program focuses on positive relationship skills, healthy values and perceptions of one’s self, gender, and race, and effective communication, conflict-resolution, and critical thinking skills.

***Nuevo Dia***

Salt Lake City, UT

Contact: Debbie Gutierrez (801) 521-4473

Nuevo Dia operates from a community-based nonprofit agency and targets Latina girls ages 11 to 15 years who are school dropouts or at risk of dropping out. The program encourages academic skill building for the girl and her mother while strengthening the mother-daughter bond. The 15-month program serves 25 mother-daughter pairs. It focuses on academic skills, life skills, role modeling, sexuality, gender bias, assertiveness training, and relationship skills.

***Project Chrysalis***

Portland, OR

Contact: Stevie Newcomer (503) 916-5840

Project Chrysalis is a two year program for high school girls, ages 14 to 15 years, who have been victims of sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Program support groups and workshops focus on life skills, self-esteem, drug education, and relationships. It also provides self-defense and assertiveness training and a one-day challenge course. High school staff serve as case managers.

***Thank Goodness I'm Female (T.G.I.F.)***

Philadelphia, PA

Contact: Inez Love (215) 851-1867

T.G.I.F. targets African-American adolescent girls living in high-risk city neighborhoods in Philadelphia. It is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The program includes mentoring, life skills education, and a rites of passage ceremony. It addresses conflict resolution, problem solving, hygiene, etiquette, peer pressure, substance abuse, male-female relationships, and risky sexual behavior. The girls also participate in community service activities.

***Urban Women Against Substance Abuse***

Hartford, CT

Contact: Marlene Berg (860) 278-2044

This program aims to strengthen bonds between preadolescent girls and their mothers or significant female relatives to increase girls' self-esteem and prevent their involvement in high-risk behaviors. It targets girls who are predominantly African-American, Caribbean, Puerto Rican, and Hispanic and who live in economically deprived urban neighborhoods. It is funded

by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. The program addresses issues of identity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, substance abuse, and risky sexual behavior. The program culminates in a community substance abuse prevention project led by the girls, who are assisted by their mothers or "other mothers." The project integrates arts curriculum, with artists and community activists acting as mentors and role models.

(All descriptions are from OJJDP's Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programing: An Inventory of Best Practices [1998]).

# Bibliography

## Female Development

*“Although girls’ development takes shape in complex and dynamic social contexts, research often extracts girls from the meaningful contexts in which they are immersed. Research also often examines trends for girls in general, failing to consider the important interplay among gender, race, culture, social class, sexuality, and disability in the formation of girls’ identities.”*

~Lynn Phillips

Belenky, M.; Clinchy, B.; Goldberger, N. & Tarule, J. (1986). Women’s ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind. New York: Basic Books.

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### **Academic Issues**

*"Since most girls spend a great deal of their time in and around schools, educational issues are among the most important to understand, not only for teachers and school administrators, but also for girls' advocates, clinicians, researchers, policy makers, and parents and other caregivers."*  
~Lynn Phillips

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### **The Criminal and Juvenile Justice System**

*"If we are to respond to the challenge of girls' and women's crime, we must seek solutions that are based on the real causes of women's offenses, not on myths fostered by misinformation. We must understand how gender and race shape and eliminate choices for girls, how they injure (intentionally or not), and how they ultimately create very different futures for youths who are born female in a country that promises equality yet all too frequently falls short of that dream."*  
~Meda Chesney-Lind

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## **Cultural Diversity**

*"All girls in this culture—whether they are white or of color, rich or poor, heterosexual or lesbian—struggle against the established story of a white, middle class, heterosexual woman's life, albeit in different ways."*

~Lyn Mikel Brown & Carol Gilligan

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Wilson, M. & Russell, K. (1996). Divided sisters: Bridging the gap between black women and white women. New York: Anchor Books.

## **Family Relationships & Parenting**

*“In a world that has turned upside down from even twenty years ago, isn’t it wonderful to know that we really can do something to help raise our daughters to become strong, confident, happy, independent women?”*

*~Jeanette Gadeberg*

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### **Health-related Issues**

*"A girl who remains true to herself will accept her body as hers and resist others' attempts to evaluate and define her by her appearance. She's much more likely to think of her body in terms of function than form. What does her body do for her?"*

~Mary Pipher

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### **Sexuality Issues**

*"... All girls are bombarded with mixed messages that on one hand exhort them to remain sexually 'pure,' but on the other commercialize their sexuality and urge them to flaunt it. We tell them to treasure their bodies and that they as adults have a right to enjoy healthy sex lives, but the popular culture encourages the notion that it is their body parts that matter. As a society we routinely fail to provide them with a true appreciation of their sexuality—the glory of it, the many ways they can express and enjoy it that are satisfying and safe and self-affirming."*

~Marcia Ann Gillespie

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## **Spirituality**

*"A wise woman turns within for answers, knowing there's a place deep inside, holding her truth. She becomes quiet enough to let the clarity of her inner voice shimmer through. And then she listens."*

*~Melissa Harris*

Carnes, R. (1998). Sacred circles: A guide to creating your own women's spirituality group. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

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## **Violence in Girls' Lives**

*"... Like boys, girls are frequently the recipients of violence and sexual abuse. But unlike boys, girls' victimization and their responses to that victimization is specifically shaped by their status as young women."*

*~ Meda Chesney-Lind*

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## Other Print Resources

### Curricula for Girl-serving Programs

*All That She Can Be: Helping Your Daughter Maintain her Self-Esteem* (1993)  
Written as a guide for parents, this book contains many useful suggestions for activities that could be incorporated into a girl-serving program. The authors explain how parents or other caring adults can help girls regain their self-confidence before they get caught in a cycle of disappointment and failure. It helps the reader to understand that there is a wide range of “normal” adolescent development and teaches adults to become more attuned to girls’ needs so that they can cope with the challenges they confront growing up. Written by C. Eagle and C. Colman, published by Simon & Schuster, New York.

#### *Celebrating Women’s History Resource Book* (1996)

This resource contains 300 activity suggestions organized into 29 chapters covering a variety of interests: Arts and Crafts, Business and Labor, Cinema, Dance, Design, Drama, Education, Fashion, Food and Cooking, Foreign Language, Geography, Government, Health, History, Humor, Interdisciplinary Activities, Journalism, Language, Law and Civil Rights, Library Research, Literature, Mathematics and Computers, Music, Religion, Science, Social Science, Speech and Debate, Sports, and Writing. Activities range from games and contests to bulletin boards, instructional programs, and individual study. Each activity includes a descriptive heading, the name of the originator if the idea came from an outside source, a key to the intended age/grade level or audience, a concise description of the activity, a detailed procedure, suggested budget amount, and sources. Also included are alternative

applications that will allow users to adapt the activities to suit a variety of situations. Order through National Women’s History Project (see Resource Organizations).

*Educator Inservice on Gender Equity* (1995)  
Creating learning environments which are equitable for all students is a challenge for educators and youth program leaders. This guide provides the rationale, research, assessments, change strategies, action plans, and an extensive bibliography to help create those environments. Also includes a framework for conducting inservices on this topic. Suitable for application by individuals, organizations, school buildings and school districts. Order through Girls Count (see Resource Organizations).

#### *Focus On Your Future* (1995)

A comprehensive modular curriculum for classroom or extracurricular-based instruction. Encourages realistic and non-sex-stereotyped futures’ planning with middle and high school students in single-gender or coed settings. Facilitator instructions and masters of student handouts are included. Order through Girls Count (see Resource Organizations).

#### *Parenting Our Daughters, Leader’s Manual* (1995)

The leader’s companion manual to the Participant’s Manual. A guide for adult educators, staff developers, and all others who work with adults who in turn work with, or relate to, girls. The manual prepares the reader to conduct local Parenting Our Daughters classes at their choice of location. Order through Girls Count (see Resource Organizations).

*Parenting Our Daughters, Participant's Manual* (1995)

A must-do for all adults who work with, and relate to, girls. It gives general background about raising girls as well as about adequately preparing them for educational opportunities and adult work experiences. It provides information on how to give girls the appropriate messages to become mastery-oriented learners, to reduce the effects of sex-stereotyping socialization, and to expand the horizons for their futures so that they will become economically sufficient as adults. Order through Girls Count (see Resource Organizations).

*Taking Charge of My Mind & Body : A Girls' Guide to Outsmarting Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking, and Eating Problems* (1997)

Written as a guide for girls, this book provides many useful suggestions for activities that could be incorporated into girl-serving programs. The book explores: problems that alcohol and drug use, smoking, and eating disorders can create for young women; feelings and mistaken beliefs that tempt young women to use substances and/or to have problems with food; and, ways for young women to change their thinking and to make different choices about how they treat their minds and bodies. Its approach is grounded in the belief that young women can make good choices. Published by Free Spirit Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

*Unmasking Sexual Con Games: Helping Teens Identify Good and Bad Relationships* (1997)

This curriculum provides information on helping youth to recognize emotional manipulation and the many faces of sexual con games as well as how to avoid the sexual con game. It includes lessons on dealing with manipulative language in con games,

assessing related media messages, and setting boundaries for healthy relationships. Order from Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, Boys Town Press, Boys Town, NE 68010.

*Young Women's Lives: Building Self-Awareness for Life* (1998)

This is a 21-session, multifaceted curriculum helping young women face problems, identify personal strengths, and locate supportive resources. Intended for girls in grades 6-12, this positive, empowering program gives young women practical procedures for confronting and transforming the negative effects of gender, race, and class-based violence. Young women draw on the realities of their daily experience to develop a powerful network of community and peer-based support. The curriculum offers a safe haven for young women to celebrate and enhance their strengths, experience, creativity, and intelligence; helps them eliminate destructive behaviors, reducing interpersonal and institutional violence; and, gives them concrete, practical skills for problem solving, communication, and dealing positively with anger. Request ordering information from Hazelden, 15251 Pleasant Valley Road, P.O. Box 176, Center City, MN, 55012-0176.

**Magazines By, For, and About Girls**

*Blue Jean Magazine*

P.O. Box 90856

Rochester, NY 14609

Phone: (716) 654-5070

Fax: (716) 654-6785

E-mail: BlueJeanMg@aol.com

*New Moon for Girls*

New Moon Publishing

P.O. Box 3587

Duluth, MN 55803-3587

Phone: (800) 381-4743

Fax: (218) 728-0314

E-mail: [newmoon@newmoon.org](mailto:newmoon@newmoon.org)

Website: [www.newmoon.org](http://www.newmoon.org)

(intended for pre-adolescents; also publishes the companion *New Moon Network, For Adults Who Care About Girls*)

*HUES, The Young Woman's Guide to Power & Attitude*

New Moon Publishing

P.O. Box 3587

Duluth, MN 55803-3587

Phone: (800) HUES-4U2

Fax: (218) 728-0314

E-mail: [hues@hues.net](mailto:hues@hues.net)

Website: [www.hues.net](http://www.hues.net)

*Teen Voices Magazine, Because you're more than just a pretty face*

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