

COMPARISON OF PRE-GROUP AND POST-GROUP MEASURES FOR
THE G.I.R.L.S. PROJECT: A GENDER SPECIFIC GROUP THERAPY
TREATMENT FOR FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Georgia B. Calhoun, Ph.D.)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of a gender specific treatment program. The G.I.R.L.S. Project. The theoretical premise of the G.I.R.L.S. Project is based in the theories of feminist scholars including Gilligan in which females are highly affected by their relationship. This theory suggests that the inappropriate behavior and poor choices of female juvenile offenders is in part due to negative relationships that do not empower the girls. This study will use quantitative data to specifically examine if the group creates change in the attitude the girls have towards their relationships. The study will also examine if these changes are then related to subsequent positive outcomes. It was hypothesized that participation in the program would result in significant changes in relationships that could be measured by comparing pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship change. The BASC-SRP-A (Behavior Assessment Scale for Children, Self-Report, Adolescent) was selected a priori by the program to measure the relationships. It was further hypothesized that changes in the relational measures will be related to recidivism. The study sample included 60 probated female adolescents ages 12-17 from various counties in northeast Georgia. Juvenile offense histories gathered to measure recidivism were accessed via the Juvenile Tracking System. Results of the initial study investigating changes in the four relationship areas indicated that significant pre-

group versus post-group changes occurred in three of the four relationship areas: relationship to self (as measured by the subscale *locus of control*), relationship to parent (as measured by the subscale *relationship to parents*), and relationship to peers (as measured by the subscale *social stress*). A relationship was also found between recidivism of delinquent charges and improvement in relationship to school. Although significant improvements were found in the other three relationship areas the lack of a significant relationship between these improvements and the occurrence of post-group unruly or delinquent behavior could indicate that the need for further research to substantiate this portion of the theoretical premise. Implications of this study suggest that participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project could prove beneficial to improving the relationships of female juvenile offenders and that changes in these relationships could be related to recidivism in this population. Given the need for gender specific programming for female juvenile offenders, the results of this study support further use of this program to further investigate its' effectiveness in treating female juvenile delinquency.

INDEX WORDS: Female juvenile offenders, Gender-specific, Group therapy, Program evaluation, Recidivism, Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC)

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this paper to my family. I have been blessed many times over in many different ways, but the blessing that has and continues to affect my life the most, is that of my family. Throughout my life they have supported me in my many endeavors, even the ones that haven't always made total sense to them. I want to thank them for their continual support and encouragement, and for modeling the strength and courage to hold on to my values and beliefs throughout the different arenas of life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historically, adolescent female offenders have largely been ignored throughout the juvenile justice field. Beginning with the earliest theories, delinquency has been defined as a male issue. Many of the research projects, programs and interventions were designed to address male delinquency. The programs were then generalized to female juvenile offenders with little attempt to determine if these services also met their needs (Chesney-Lind, 2001). The efficacy of these programs becomes increasingly important as reports indicate a rise in the rates of female juvenile delinquency (Snyder, 2005). In recent years the rate of increase in troubled adolescent girls' antisocial behavior surpassed that of boys, with the largest increases occurring in simple assault, drug abuse, and liquor law violations (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). This trend has led to an increase in the research examining female juvenile delinquency. These studies indicate that significantly different risk factors for delinquency exist between boys and girls. (Calhoun, 2001, Cauffman, Piquero, Broidy, Espelage, & Mazerolle, 2004).

Juvenile Justice Policy and Female Juvenile Offenders

Early juvenile justice policies were written for male juvenile offenders, citing the low number of females, and their high proportion of status offenses as reason to be ignored. However, although female juvenile offenders and their offenses were not being targeted for treatment, they were being incarcerated at rates disproportionate to their male counterparts. This pattern reflects the attitude of policy makers and society at the time to focus on girls' (offenders and non-offenders) sexuality and obedience to parental authority (MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001). Girls committing status offenses such as running away were being placed in detention to "save them from themselves" (Grossberg, 2002, Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). The Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 required that states receiving federal funds for delinquency prevention begin to divert and deinstitutionalize status offenders. This led to a dramatic decrease in the incarceration of young women in training schools and detention centers.

In the 1992 reauthorization of the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act specific provisions were included that required that states receiving federal funds must include: “an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency, including the types of such services available and the need for such services for females and a plan for providing needed gender specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency” (OJJDP, 1992). To date the majority of research thus far has focused on further defining female juvenile offenders and the development of gender specific programs. A need now exists for the evaluation of these programs. In addition, evaluations that have widely been conducted up to this point have been qualitative in nature with quantitative portions of the evaluations limited to examining the outcome measures (i.e. recidivism). The resulting program evaluations have provided insight into how participants (both the female juvenile offenders and their services providers) feel about the programs and measured success on level of behavioral change. While this information is essential to improve program development, there remains a particular need for quantitative program evaluation that includes examining the validation of the core theoretical premise on which the group was developed.

Purpose of Study

This study will examine the efficacy of a gender specific treatment program. The G.I.R.L.S. Project. The theoretical premise of the G.I.R.L.S. Project is based in the theories of feminist such as Gilligan in which females are highly affected by their relationship. This theory states that the inappropriate behavior and poor choices of female juvenile offenders is in part due

to negative relationships that do not empower the girls. This study will use quantitative data to specifically examine if successful group participation creates change in the attitude the girls have towards their relationships. The study will also examine if these changes are then related to subsequent positive outcomes.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation has been defined as “a collection of methods, skills, and sensitivities necessary to determine whether a human service is needed and likely to be used, whether the service is sufficiently intensive to meet the unmet needs identified, whether the service is offered as planned, and whether the service actually does help people in need at a reasonable cost, without unacceptable side effects”. The overall purpose of conducting a program evaluation is to contribute to the provision of quality services to people in need. The information gathered during a program evaluation is provided back to the program so that changes can be made to increase the efficacy of the policy makers to service their constituents. The “changes” can range from making small changes to existing programs to termination of ineffective programs (Posavac & Carey, 1997).

In the United States the premise of the juvenile justice system is that of “rehabilitation”. This implies that we are actively seeking to somehow change the individual so that he will be able to be an active and participating member of society. This system of “rehabilitation” then creates a need for some form of assessment or evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the system to enact/enforce their portion of the change process. Although there is not one singular definition of program evaluation, Jones (1987) defined program evaluation in the correctional sciences as “the process by which questions concerning the *value* or efficacy of correctional programs are answered.”

There are several different program evaluation models that illustrate a guide to conducting a program evaluation. Which model one selects is dependent on what questions one hopes to answer by conducting the evaluation. The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine the efficacy of the gender specific treatment program, the G.I.R.L.S. Project, by attempting to determine if program participation effectively correlates with relational changes in the participants, which was in turn be examined for correlation with behavioral changes (Posavac & Carey, 1997).

The G.I.R.L.S. Project (Gaining Insight into Relationships for Lifelong success)

The G.I.R.L.S. Project was created in 1999 to address the specific needs of female adolescents involved in juvenile court. The impetus of the project was the increasing number of female adolescents engaging in offending behaviors. The project seeks to address issues such as problematic relationships, experiences of abuse and neglect, as well as gender specific issues such as adolescent motherhood. The founders of the G.I.R.L.S. Project hypothesized that typical anger management and social skills typically used with male juvenile offenders were not sufficient for aiding in the rehabilitation of female juvenile offenders, stating that understanding the girls in their relational context and working collaboratively with the girls to create positive changes in their relationships and therefore their identities would be more beneficial. The theoretical basis of the project therefore rests on the importance of the role of relationships in the development of female adolescents, which it turn provides understanding to the role of problem behaviors in the lives of female adolescents (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). The stated purpose of the G.I.R.L.S. Project is: “to provide a gender specific treatment intervention program utilizing a relational group therapy model for females adjudicated delinquent” (G.I.R.L.S. Project Manual, 2005).

This model is based in Gilligan's theory that relationships are at the very core of women's identity. This theory states that it is through dynamic social interactions, that women and girls' create a story of themselves that determines how they interact with others (Gilligan, 1984). Positive healthy relationships foster girls' abilities to nurture both themselves and others. Conversely, negative relationships obstruct the ability to learn to form genuine connections and relationships (Miller, 1976). Based on early research of female juvenile offenders it was hypothesized that a lack of meaningful relationships with others may lead to the development of psychological difficulties or even psychological pathology in female adolescents (Miller, 1976). This hypothesis is supported by the statistics indicating that the majority of female adolescents' initial involvement with the juvenile justice system stems from charges and offenses such as "runaway" that are at the least suggestive of relational difficulties (MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001). The G.I.R.L.S. Project focuses on four relationship domains of the female juvenile offender: their relationship to self, their relationship to their family, their relationship to peers, and their relationship to school (G.I.R.L.S. Project Manual, 2001).

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this study is two fold: to determine the efficacy of participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project to effectively impact relationship factors of participants and to determine if a change in these relationship factors could be related to positive changes in the participants' behavior, as measured by recidivism. Specifically, the present study seeks to investigate one gender specific treatment program, The G.I.R.L.S. Project, to determine if changes in the participants' outcome measure indicate relational changes in the participants that support the theoretical premise used in the original development of the program. The results of the present

study could be used both to further develop the G.I.R.L.S. Project as well as to inform other psychologists involved developing treatment programs for female juvenile offenders.

General Hypotheses

Does the data collected indicate that participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project influences relationship measures? Additionally, is there a correlation between changes in the relationship measures and recidivism?

Null Hypothesis 1: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to self change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 2: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to parent change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 3: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to peer change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 4: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to school change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 5: Participants will not have incurred any additional charges within a period of 1 year following successful completion of the program.

Null Hypothesis 6: No significant relationship will exist between significant changes found in pre-group vs. post-group scores and recidivism of unruly charges incurred within a period of 1 year following successful completion of the program.

Null Hypothesis 7: No significant relationship will exist between significant changes found in pre-group vs. post-group scores and recidivism of delinquent charges incurred within a period following the successful completion of the program.

Delimitations

This study will evaluate the effectiveness of the G.I.R.L.S. Project to change participants' attitudes regarding their relationships to self, family, peers, and school. The study is cross-sectional in design, assessing a snapshot of a group of juvenile offenders within a particular juvenile justice system. The study is intended to evaluate the ability of the intervention to change attitudes regarding relationships within participants, and then further investigate if these changes correspond with behavioral change. The results of this study can then be used as evidence to either support or refute the theoretical premise of the project stating that relationships are a key component to delinquency behavior in female juvenile offenders. This study will utilize the Behavior Assessment for System for Children (BASC) because, of the five instruments used in the pilot study, the BASC-SRP-A was one of the two, the other being the MSCS, used to measure all four relationships. The BASC-SRP-A was chosen over the MSCS both because it has a broader number of subscales, with which to theoretically disseminate information, and because the BASC-SRP-A has been the most consistently completed instrument used in the G.I.R.L.S. Project. The BASC also provides age and gender specific norms.

The theoretical position that will frame interpretations of the data from this study will come from Relational/Cultural theory. Relational/Cultural theory is a collaboration of several different sources and has roots in feminist theory (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, Miller, 1976). Relational/Cultural theory proposes that relationships are core to how women develop a sense of identity. Relational/Cultural theory cites relationships ranging from personal to systemic as

important to identity development. This theory is useful for understanding female juvenile offenders because it allows for the high levels of victimization common in the population to play a part in explaining their own behavior (Acoca, 1999). This study will follow guidelines for program evaluation citing addressing the theory on which a program was developed as key to evaluating efficacy and providing external validity.

Definition of Terms

Comparative evaluation - comparative evaluations answer questions such as how well the program is working or how much better or worse one program is in comparison to another or compared to the absence of a program.

Descriptive evaluation - descriptive evaluations answer absolute or descriptive questions such as describing the demographics of the population being serviced or the cost per participant.

Formative evaluation - An evaluation in which the evaluation is being conducted on an ongoing program and the purpose of the evaluation is to provide data that can be used to make adjustments or guidelines for the program.

Impact evaluation - the purpose of an impact evaluation is to determine if and how much the intervention “package” affected or impacted the dependent variable(s).

Independent evaluation – evaluations conducted by an outside source.

In-house evaluation – evaluations conducted by the program itself.

Juvenile Offender – An adolescent under the age of 18, involved in the Department of Juvenile Justice for committing an act deemed illegal according to local, state, or federal statutes, including those laws constructed specifically to impinge upon the

behavior of youth, i.e. status offenses. All of the participants in this study meet the above criteria.

Locus of control – an individual's perception of who or what controls the various events of one's life.

Process evaluation - the purpose of a process evaluation is to determine whether and how well the specific, intermediate objectives of the intervention were accomplished.

Recidivism - A tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior, especially relapse into criminal behavior.

Self-esteem – an individual's self-satisfaction, with reference both to physical and to more global characteristics.

Self-Reliance – self-confidence and assurance in one's ability to make decisions.

Sense of Inadequacy – a lack of belief in the ability to achieve at expected levels, a tendency not to persevere, and a perception of being unsuccessful.

Social Stress – the level of stress experienced by participants in relation to their interactions with others.

Status Offenses – Those illegal acts for which adolescents may be judged delinquent, but which are not behaviors that would be illegal for an adult. Examples of such behaviors include truancy, curfew violations, runaway, fornication, incorrigibility, minor possession of alcohol and unruly child.

Summative evaluation – an evaluation conducted at the end of a program to describe the effects of a specific, usually demonstration level, project or program.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A Brief History of the Relationship between Social Reform and Juvenile Justice Policy

Since its' beginnings juvenile justice in the United States has both influenced and been influenced by society. The definition and purpose of juvenile justice continues to attempt to balance rehabilitating the delinquent youth and protecting society from these youths. Which of the two aspects receives the emphasis has fluctuated back and forth through the years. Theories explaining the cause and effects of delinquency have also influenced juvenile justice. For example, when society felt that delinquency was the result of bad parenting efforts were made to remove children from their home to "re-educate" them. Conversely, when children were believed to be biologically predisposed to delinquent behavior they were placed in detention to protect society. A general review of the relationship between social reform movements and juvenile justice policy will identify how policies reflect the attitudes of their eras. One of the attitudes of note is the amount of reference, or lack there of, of female juvenile offenders in the earlier periods. Also of note is the paucity of program evaluations available for review.

The 19th Century – Child Welfare to Child Saving

The early 19th century has been labeled a period of humanitarianism in United States history. In New York City the first juvenile reformatory was established in 1824. The reformatory was built by reformers who believed that the almshouses and orphanages that had been being used to house dependent and disorderly children were only "dumping grounds". They stated that in contrast, their reformatory would provide the structured environment that could "remold youthful characters". The founders of the reformatory stressed rigorous discipline, education, and work as the principal means of reformation. This reformatory also symbolizes the

increase in civic responsibility that was growing in society. The building of the reformatories influenced the development of juvenile justice in two important ways. Juvenile offenders were able to be incarcerated separately from adult offenders, and the broad jurisdiction granted these initial institutions over criminal, vagrant, neglected, or even unruly children combined child welfare and juvenile justice into a single set of practices and institutions. Reformatories continued to be built in the state of New York and other areas of New England such as Boston. By 1861, 75 Children's Institutions were in existence in the United States, and by 1890, 600 institutions would exist (Grossberg, 2002).

In 1853 the Reverend Charles Loring Brace founded the New York Children's Aid Society in opposition to the reformatories. Brace was a staunch opponent of institutionalization. He supported having children raised in a firm household. He was also a proponent of sending urban children to live with rural families starting orphan trains in 1854. The orphan trains lasted for 25 years removing more than 50,000 children from New York City. Brace's work was a pre-runner of the foster care system. Brace's Children's Aid movement created a trend away from institutionalization towards placing children in homes (Grossberg, 2002).

The early programs established for reformation in the juvenile justice system were directly affected by the theories that explained why a child became a juvenile offender. While the reformation movement was motivated to "remold youthful character", Brace's contributions were thought to have been driven by fear of children rather than fear for children. He is quoted as saying: "there are no dangers to the value of property of the permanency of our institutions, so great as those from the existence of ... a class of vagabond, ignorant, or ungoverned children." Boy's club organizer J.F. Atkinson warned: "if we do not pull him up, the street waif will pull us down". The child saving programs of the late 19th century also reflected a shift away from faith

in the family to raise their children to greater faith in the public authority and the authority of the experts of the time. This was in part due to post civil war changes in families. In the 1870's there appeared to be documentation supporting an increase in the breakdown of the American family, rising divorce, increased participation of women in the workforce, low marriage rates among educated women, falling birth rates among the middle and upper classes, coupled with rising birth rates among the working class and immigrant families, growing poverty, and escalating juvenile delinquency. This sense of the family in crisis led to fears that individual family troubles might undermine society. Industrialization and the increase in immigration also effected the perception that the American family was in crisis. Working-class and immigrant families and their neighborhoods were labeled a contagion that threatened the rest of society. Though little appears to have been done to help the parents of these families a movement was begun to "save their children" (Grossberg, 2002).

By the end of the 19th century two critical elements combined to make children a growing concern: women took an increasingly prominent role and philanthropists and organizations also took a bigger role leading organized experts, particularly psychologists and social workers, to carve out their own space in the public sphere based on claims of disinterested expertise. Child saving not only shifted the focus of social welfare; even more, it rested on a new psychology, a series of major strategic innovations, an enhanced role for government, and a reordered set of relations between families and the state. All this combined to the establishment of the first juvenile court by the Illinois legislature in 1899 (Grossberg, 2002). The first juvenile court was established under the British legal doctrine of *parens patriae* - "the State as parent" which was interpreted to mean that it was the state's duty not only to protect the public interest in juvenile offender cases, but also to intervene and serve as the guardian of the interests of the children

involved. Because its goal of rehabilitation was not considered to be punitive, the court did not have due process protections, although it had jurisdiction over both criminal and status offenders. Judges played a paternal role, and were afforded tremendous discretion in order to achieve the goal of individualized rehabilitative justice. By 1925, all 48 states had established a juvenile court system (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

Female Offenders and Juvenile Justice Policy in 19th Century

Although always present, female juvenile offenders have been largely ignored by the juvenile justice system. This is particularly true in the early history of juvenile justice. Reports indicate that the early institutions conformed to gender and racial beliefs of the era by establishing separate departments for females and African Americans, and in the focus of child welfare directors stressing the prevention of sexual immorality as the primary reason for institutionalizing girls (Grossberg, 2002). Female juvenile offenders would fare no better under the Child-saving movement which was a celebration of women's domesticity, although, ironically, women were influential in the movement (Platt, 1969, Rafter, 1990 in Chesney-Lind). Ultimately, many of the activities of the early child savers revolved around monitoring the behavior of young girls, particularly immigrant girls, to prevent their "straying from the right path". Girls, particularly working class girls, were the clear losers in this reform effort. Studies of early family court activity reveal that virtually all the girls who appeared in these courts were charged for "immorality" or "waywardness", and met with extreme punishments with over half of the girls (but only 1/5 of the boys) being sent to reformatories between 1899 and 1909 (Grossberg, 2002).

The 20th Century: Child Saving to Today

In 1912 the United States Children's Bureau was founded. It was a product from the first White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children. The Children's Bureau was a fact finding organization, President Theodore Roosevelt and others championed knowledge as a weapon to combat child delinquency and dependency. The Children's Bureau was authorized to investigate and report on "all matters pertaining to the welfare of children and child life among all classes of our people, and shall especially investigate the questions of infant mortality, the birth rate, orphanage, juvenile courts, desertion, dangerous occupations, accidents and diseases of children, employment, legislation affecting children in the several states and territories". Childhood became identified as a distinct phase of life and children became defined as individuals with special needs and interests. Several policies were created to reflect these attitudinal changes: an increase in the number of juvenile courts, higher marriage ages, and age graded bans on access to substances such as alcohol and tobacco. Compulsory schooling, another product of the new prolonged view of childhood (and mistrust in immigrant and working families ability to raise their own children), made the classroom the new venue for pursuing a variety of social remediation, from the Americanization of immigrant children to disease control. Child welfare reform in the industrial era thus modified without transforming an inherited tradition of dealing with delinquent and dependent children. Each alteration was premised on the assumption that childhood was a distinctive and vulnerable state of life and that public regulation of child rearing had to be expanded. These changes both introduced the modern welfare state while retaining long-familiar judgments about poverty, the working class, and race. By the 1930's, child welfare had become the changing but persistent way of addressing the needs

of disorderly and dependent American children. Child welfare supplied critical roles for the court as well as many of its most fundamental policies and practices (Grossberg, 2002).

During the 1960s, civil libertarians began to raise concerns about the progressive era's model of juvenile justice. They argued that despite rhetoric to the contrary, juveniles within the system were not actually being rehabilitated, but rather warehoused in institutions similar to adult prisons. If juveniles were going to be treated as adults in the sentencing phase, advocates argued, they should also be accorded the due process protections afforded to adults in court. They also challenged the broad discretion given to juvenile court judges. In a series of rulings during the 1960s and 1970s, The U.S. Supreme Court agreed; "There is evidence, in fact, that there may be grounds for concern that the child receives the worst of both worlds: that he gets neither the protections accorded to adults nor the solicitous care and regenerative treatment postulated for children," (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). The Supreme Court ruled that juveniles must be afforded due process protections including: formal hearings when facing waiver to criminal court; protection against self-incrimination; the rights to notice of charges, counsel, and cross-examination of witnesses; and adherence to the "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" judicial standard (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

In the early 1970s, several class-action lawsuits attacked the conditions and policies of the juvenile institutions, alleging cruel and unusual punishment. Advocates for deinstitutionalization argued for more preventative and community-based programs to combat the roots of juvenile delinquency, particularly in urban areas. In 1974, Congress passed the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, which still governs the juvenile justice system today. The act required the separation of juvenile offenders from adult offenders, and the deinstitutionalization of status offenders. A 1980 amendment mandated that juveniles could not

be placed in adult jails, with a few exceptions. The 1974 act also created the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and offered grants to encourage states to develop community-based programs as alternatives to institutionalization. Law enforcement experimented with the introduction of community-based correctional facilities, such as group homes and halfway houses. However, this preventative approach to the delinquency problem was short lived. In the mid-1970s, as the media began to highlight rising violent crime rates, the American public demanded the conservative "get tough" approach to crime still widely endorsed today. State legislatures reacted to the public's demands for accountability by passing more punitive juvenile justice laws. The conservative trend continued into the 1980's and 90s, a time in which more states began treating juvenile offenders as criminals, almost every state passed laws making it easier to try juveniles in adult criminal courts; 31 states passed laws expanding sentencing options; 47 states modified confidentiality provisions for juvenile courts; and 22 states passed laws increasing the victim's role in juvenile court processing. Towards the end of the century States began adding purpose clauses to their law code in efforts to balance offender accountability, offender competency, and community protection. These purpose clauses include statements such as: hold juveniles accountable for criminal behavior, provide effective deterrents, protect the public from criminal activity, balance attention to offenders, victims and the community, and impose punishment consistent with the seriousness of the crime (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

Female Offenders and Juvenile Justice Policy in the 20th Century

Large numbers of reformatories and training schools for girls were established during the early part of the century with 23 facilities opening during 1910-1920. While female participation in the juvenile justice system has been a reflection of society's concerns with both adolescent

criminality and moral conduct; it has also reflected the gender-based double standards held by society defining “appropriate behavior”. The offenses listed for female juvenile offenders show a unique and intense preoccupation with girls’ sexuality and obedience to parental authority (MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001). Inconsistency between the standards for males and females were noted as early as the 1940’s. In his 1947 report, *Delinquent Girls in Court*, Paul Tappan identified “serious problems with a statute that brings young women into court simply for disobedience of parental commands or because they are in “danger of being morally depraved” (Tappan, 1947). The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 required that states receiving federal delinquency prevention funds begin to divert and deinstitutionalize their status offenders had a huge impact on the incarceration of young women in training schools and detention centers across the country (OJJDP, 1992).

To investigate more recent trends Macdonald and Chesney-Lind (2001) reviewed a 12 year period (1980-1991) of the juvenile justice system in Hawaii specifically looking for discrepancies based on gender, ethnicity, and geographic location (which was then used to classify the adolescents into a social class stratification system). The cases were reviewed across three stages of the juvenile justice process: petition, adjudication, and disposition. The sample consisted of 85,692 cases that had been referred to Hawaii family court. Of the sample 30% (n=25,902) were cases in which the individual being charged was a female. The study found that in the earlier stages (petition and adjudication) of the juvenile justice process the seriousness of the charge significantly affected the decision to petition or adjudicate both males and females equally; however, at the stage of disposition, seriousness of offense no longer equally predicted being formally disposed and females were more likely to be disposed for less serious offenses compared to males. Ethnicity was found to have a significant impact at all three stages. White

males and females were least likely to have their cases result in formal petitions, least likely to be found delinquent, and least likely to be formally disposed. Given their results Macdonald and Chesney-Lind called for gender-specific programming that includes considerations for both living in a gendered society and the specific cultural identities of the girls. This is consistent with the 1992 reauthorization of the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act which includes specific provisions requiring that states receiving federal funds must include: “an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency, including the types of such services available and the need for such services for females and a plan for providing needed gender specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency” (OJJDP, 1992).

Defining Female Juvenile Offenders

In 1993, prompted by the increasing incidence of female juvenile delinquency, not only in the area of status offenses, but also more serious crimes such as armed robbery, gang activity, drug trafficking, and burglary, Calhoun, Jurgens, and Chen (1993) conducted a literature review of the research that had been conducted on female juvenile delinquency. At that time they found the research to be somewhat limited and inconclusive, but noted that the theories regarding the etiology of female juvenile delinquency centered around dysfunctional families, intellectual ability, self-perception, gender role, and parental neglect. Researcher has since continued regarding female juvenile offenders and in October 1999, OJJDP’s journal Juvenile Justice focused an entire issue on the subject of gender specific programming for female juvenile offenders (U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). Acoca (1999) conducted a qualitative study in which 200 female juvenile offenders were interviewed while being detained in county juvenile halls in California. One of the strongest patterns found in the study was a history of violent

victimization, including ninety-two percent who reported that they had been the victims of some form of emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse. The study reported that an even higher number reported being physically abused. It is not surprising that the study also found that for a high proportion of the girls interviewed, runaway was the initial charge that began their involvement in the juvenile justice system. Analysis of the data revealed correlations with multiple risky behaviors such as: truancy, unsafe sexual activity, alcohol and drug use, and gang involvement. The study also found several patterns in the family systems of the girls interviewed including stressors such as poverty, death, and intergenerational patterns of arrest and incarceration.

Male vs. Female Juvenile Offenders

Studies have also been conducted that compare risk factors for delinquency between males and females. Calhoun (2001) compared a sample of 44 male juvenile offenders to a sample of 44 female juvenile offenders to investigate possible differences in the emotional, behavioral, and psychological needs of each group. The study used the self-report version of the Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC-SRP-A), an assessment designed to evaluate behavior and personality in children ages 4-18. The instrument includes both positive (adaptive) and negative (clinical) dimensions. Analysis of variance was conducted on all fourteen subscales of the BASC-SRP-A between the two groups. The results indicated that significant differences were found in six of the fourteen subscales, four of which were considered clinical indicators (locus of control, social stress, anxiety, and depression). The female juvenile offenders were found to have a more external locus of control, report higher levels of social stress, higher levels of anxiety, and higher levels of depression. Significant differences were also found on two adaptive scales (relations with parents and self-esteem). The female offenders reported a poorer relationship with their parents and lower self-esteem. Calhoun concluded that female juvenile offenders “travel a

different pathway to delinquency” than their male counterparts and reiterated the need for gender specific programming.

In their study examining the association between social –emotional adjustment and deviant behavior in serious male and female juvenile offenders Cauffman, et al. (2004) found that serious female offenders reported elevated internal levels of distress (i.e. anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem) in comparison to males, and that the internal level of distress was a predictor of deviant behavior for both genders. Although gender differences were not found on the measure of restraint (i.e. impulse control, suppression of aggression), a gender difference was found between the relationship between level of restraint and level of distress, which was only significant for females. It was concluded that social-emotional adjustment did aid in the understanding of deviant behavior in both males and females. It was also suggested that the higher rates of co-occurring behavioral, emotional, and social problems evidenced in the female adolescents compared to male adolescents in the study indicated that more research is needed that focuses on female offenders and their pattern of criminal and deviant behavior over the life course.

Program Evaluation & Juvenile Justice

In the United States the juvenile justice system was based in the premise of “rehabilitation”, implying that we are actively seeking to somehow change the individual so that he will be able to be an active and participating member of society. Program evaluation is therefore needed to assess or evaluate how effective programs used by the system are at achieving the goal of rehabilitation (Grossberg, 2002). Jones (1987) defined program evaluation in the correctional sciences as “the process by which questions concerning the *value* or efficacy of correctional programs are answered.”

Vermeiren, Schwab-Stone, Ruchken, DeClippele, & Deboutte (2002) conducted a program evaluation on a male juvenile offender program in Belgium using recidivism as their dependent variable. The sample consisted of 64 males between the ages of 12-17 years old (mean 16.0 sd 1.01). The sample was ethnically diverse consisting of 56.3% Flemish, 35.9% Moroccan, and 7.8% other). Two thirds (67.2%) came from the two lowest socioeconomic strata). Their results indicated that recidivism showed a trend towards lower socioeconomic status and were slightly significant. Ethnicity did not prove to be a significant factor. Criminal history was a significant factor with those having longer histories of criminal involvement, defined as a higher number of prior offenses and a higher prevalence of juvenile court contact being significantly more likely to reoffend. No significant differences were found the subjects' CBCL self report scores, but on the CBCL parent reports higher scores on externalizing problems and delinquent behavior were significant indicators of recidivism. Review of results from a semi-structured interview designed to determine psychopathology found that higher levels of conduct disorder, trends towards attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, comorbidity of conduct disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity, substance abuse, and major depression were not significantly different between recidivist and nonrecidivist; however, almost all recidivists indicated symptoms of at least one psychological diagnosis.

Review of Existing Gender Specific Program Evaluations

In the mid-1980's faced with an increasing number of female offenders, the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada requested a comprehensive review of the literature to identify those programs which research has found to be effective and to determine which program models and practices appeared to be the best investment (Ross & Fabiano, 1988). The review was designed to determine the nature and variety of programs which had been provided in North

America for female offenders in institutional and community settings, to determine the extent to which such programs had been evaluated and assess the quality of the evaluations, to identify programs which had been demonstrated to be effective, or appeared to have particular promise for reducing recidivism or for ameliorating behavioral problems in female offenders, to compare effective and ineffective programs to identify components of programs which appeared to be associated with success, to ascertain the degree to which programs for female offenders incorporated the principles and practices which research had found to be associated with effective correctional programming, and to identify critical issues in program conceptualization, offender classification and service delivery. After their review of the literature, Ross and Fabiano (1988), made the following conclusions: with very rare exceptions in the development of criminal justice programs and service, female offenders had been neglected; until 1975, female offenders were also largely ignored in the criminological literature; correctional services and programs available for women were fewer, less varied, and of poorer quality than they are for men, the evaluation of programs for women has been largely ignored by researchers, and that typical program reviews are descriptive narratives about a program and the results are impressionistic, based only on personal testimony and anecdote, the vast majority of programs were atheoretical, individual program components had not been evaluated for efficacy, and that there was wide variation in defining program success.

In 1998 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Council for Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) both conducted a survey of gender-specific programs for female juvenile offenders and found that despite federal legislation which linked federal funding to the implementation of gender specific programming only a small number of these programs existed nationwide. In addition the surveys indicated that with the

exception of a few, the programs that were in place were small and found lacking in the areas of organization, management, and use and analyzation of data. The programs particularly lacked components that included an emphasis on family, gender (female) specific physical and psychiatric health, and racial and cultural sensitivity. The surveys also found that the programs did not capitalize on the participants' strengths and resiliency (OJJDP, 1999).

Bloom, Owen, Piper Deschenes, Rosenblum, (2002) assessed gender-specific programs utilized in the state of California in 1997 and 1998. The assessment included both quantitative and qualitative measures. A series of interviews and focus groups were conducted with the female offenders, girls classified as "at-risk" but not yet involved in the juvenile justice system, and professionals servicing the population. Surveys were also administered statewide survey to a variety of agencies and programs. The programs surveyed included both residential and community based outpatient treatment centers. The majority of the programs included individual, family, or group counseling as well as specific skills training in areas such as education, life-skills, and anger management. The qualitative focus groups noted that subject areas that were not addressed in the majority of programs included the problem of victimization, pregnancy prevention, STD education and substance use. The interviews also found that health care services were inadequate, particularly for pregnant and parenting teens. The surveys administered to the variety of service providers requested suggestions for improvements and ways in the state could help facilitate change. The majority of the respondents indicated that they felt they needed more information about what works for girls. In addition half of the respondents indicated a need to identify best practices and the provision of program models. The need for additional funding and resources were also requested. Improvements in communication and collaboration, workshops, training, and staff development were all suggested are primary areas for change.

A study in Washington state evaluated the effectiveness of a Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Program administered to incarcerated female juvenile offenders. DBT is a behavioral approach that utilizes a combination of skills training, problem solving, and validation in efforts to enable patients to reduce self-destructive, impulsive, and aggressive behaviors (Linehan, 1993). The study examined three groups when comparing pre-program measures to post program measures. One group consisted of incarcerated female juvenile offenders who had been identified as having mental health needs and who participated in the program (MHC), another group also received the DBT training but were not identified as needing mental health services (GPCD), and the third group was a matched control group (MC) that did not participate in training and the girls had not been identified as in need of mental health services. Due to between group differences prior to treatment the groups were not compared to each other. The groups placed in separate locked cottages. All the cottages were self-contained, meaning the girls received all of their services (housing, board, education, vocational training, and recreation) in their cottages. The DBT training was also conducted in the cottages. The length of stay for this rehabilitative program was ten months. An instrument (the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children) was used to measure presence/absence of psychiatric diagnoses. Functional impairment was measured using a standardized chart completed by cottage staff to measure: room confinement, school suspension, suicide precaution, parasuicidal acts, classroom disruption, and aggressive behavior. The results indicated that for the MHC group the level of behavioral problem pre vs. post decreased significantly; however, results did not indicate a significant difference between the improvement made by the MHC group and the improvement made by a similar group (identified as in need of mental health services) the previous year. Results for participant in the GPCD group did not show a significant reduction in behavior

problems during the DBT training. Participants in the MC group did not exhibit severe problem behavior that met the operational definition the behavior being measured. The authors concluded that among the MHC participants, the DBT treatment had been effective in reducing certain behaviors, suicidality, extreme aggression, and non-compliance; however, lack of consistency in implementation and training of the staff had proven a confound in their study (Trupin, Stewart, Beach, & Boesky, 2002).

More recently, Leve, Chamberlain, and Reid (2005), conducted a quantitative evaluation a version of the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) model that had been adapted to target the proximal antecedents of female juvenile delinquency. Their sample included 81 girls involved in the juvenile justice system, and who were considered chronically delinquent. The participants were randomly assigned to either MTFC program or a control condition in which they were sent to community based group care programs located through out the state. The groups were measured prior to treatment to validate random assignment. Results indicated that MTFC participants spent significantly fewer days in locked settings. Results also indicated that the higher number of days in locked settings prior to treatment continued to be predictive of a higher number of locked days during treatment. A trend was also found for MTFC participants to receive fewer criminal referrals than control group participants, and significant differences were found between treatment groups for delinquent behaviors as rated by their caregivers, with those in the MTFC group reporting lower levels of delinquent behavior. The evaluators concluded that their results suggest that the MTFC intervention was more effective than the control condition in reducing incarceration and delinquency rates.

The G.I.R.L.S. Project (Gaining Insight into Relationships for Lifelong success)

In program evaluation there are numerous steps that are universal to conducting a program evaluation, which then guide one to the steps that more specifically answer the questions of a particular evaluation. This evaluation utilized both the “Objectives-Based Evaluation Model” and the “Improvement-Focused Model”. The steps required for the Objectives-Based Evaluation Model are mirrored in the Improvement-Focused Model, with the addition of looking beyond the outcome measure of if the stated goals were met to include examination of why programs succeed or fail, and to consider additional positive or negative effects, it may also include examination of the goals themselves. There are basics steps that should be taken when conducting a program evaluation these include: identification of the program, identification of the stakeholders, and identification of informational needs (i.e. which stakeholder(s) will receive the evaluation) (Posavac & Carey, 1997).

Identification of the Program

The G.I.R.L.S. Project was created in 1999 to address the specific needs of female adolescents involved in juvenile court. The impetus of the project was the increasing number of female adolescents engaging in offending behaviors. The project seeks to address issues such as problematic relationships, experiences of abuse and neglect, as well as gender specific issues such as adolescent motherhood. The founders of the G.I.R.L.S. Project hypothesized that typical anger management and social skills typically used with male juvenile offenders were not sufficient for aiding in the rehabilitation of female juvenile offenders, stating that understanding the girls in their relational context and working collaboratively with the girls to create positive changes in their relationships and therefore their identities would be more beneficial. The theoretical basis of the project therefore rests on the importance of the role of relationships in the

development of female adolescents, which it turn provides understanding to the role of problem behaviors in the lives of female adolescents (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). The stated purpose of the G.I.R.L.S. Project is: “to provide a gender specific treatment intervention program utilizing a relational group therapy model for females adjudicated delinquent” (G.I.R.L.S. Project Manual, 2005).

This model is based in Gilligan’s theory that relationships are at the very core of women's identity, stating that it is through dynamic social interactions, that women and girls' create a story of themselves that determines how they interact with others (Gilligan, 1984). Positive healthy relationships foster girls’ abilities to nurture both themselves and others. Conversely, negative relationships obstruct the ability to learn to form genuine connections and relationships (Miller, 1976). Based of early research of female juvenile offenders it was hypothesized that a lack of meaningful relationships with others may lead the development of psychological difficulties or even psychological pathology in female adolescents (Miller, 1976). This hypothesis is supported by the statistics indicating that the majority of female adolescents’ initial involvement with the juvenile justice system involves charges of offenses such as “runaway” that are at the least suggestive of relational difficulties (MacDonald & Chesney-Lind, 2001). The G.I.R.L.S. Project focuses on four relationship domains of the female juvenile offender: their relationship to self, their relationship to their family, their relationship to peers, and their relationship to school.

The Four Factors of the G.I.R.L.S. Project

Relationship to Self

Researchers have long hypothesized that depression may influence a girl’s propensity towards antisocial behavior (Kataoka, Zima, Dupree, Moreno, Yang, & McCracken, 2001). Early adolescence marks a time when the rates for depression clearly diverge between males and

females, with a sharp onset of depression in girls (Obeidallah & Felton, 1999). There are several different hypotheses regarding the relationship between depression and antisocial behavior in girls. Depressive feelings may feed adolescent girls' indifference regarding their own personal safety and the consequences of their actions, increasing the likelihood they will gravitate toward delinquent activities. Many chronic, serious, female offenders may, in fact, have experienced depression during early adolescence (Hughes, & Cavell, 1999). Obeidallah and Felton (1999) found that adolescent girls who scored in the mild to moderately depressed range were more likely to commit property crimes, crimes against others, and engage in higher levels of aggressive behavior than their peers who did not indicate depression. Their analyses controlling for SES yielded the same results. Racial and ethnic differences were also controlled and yielded no differences in regard to levels of depression. Low self-esteem, a construct shown to be related to depression has also been found to be a primary problem displayed by many delinquent girls (Bloom, et al. 2002). Also, as stated above, Cauffman, et al. (2004) found that serious female offenders reported elevated internal levels of distress (i.e. anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem) were predictive of deviant behavior.

Studies researching the presence and absence of psychopathology in female juvenile offenders have found rates of psychopathology higher for offenders when compared to non-offenders. Specific diagnoses found to be high within the offender population include: conduct disorder, substance abuse disorders, depression, and PTSD. Co-morbidity has also been found to be present in the female juvenile offender population. (Dixon, Howie, & Starling, 2004, and Kataoka, et al., 2001, Goldstein, Arnold, Weil, Mesiarik, Peuschold, Grisso, & Osman, 2003) In one study (Dixon, et al., 2004) 78% of their sample, met the criteria for three or more diagnoses.

The results of this study also found that the number of psychiatric diagnoses to be the most significant factor associated with offender status.

In their literature review Calhoun, et. al (1993) found that many researchers reported findings that female delinquents tend to exhibit poor self-perception when compared to nondelinquent cohorts (Bour, Young, & Henningsen, 1984, Power & Beveridge, 1990, James & Meyerding, 1978), but stated the difficulty in separating this construct from several of the constructs connected with self-perception, particularly the impact of parental abuse or neglect and sexual victimization.

Relationship to Parents

Calhoun, et al. (1993) reported that the research indicated a persistent positive correlation between female juvenile delinquency and a dysfunctional family. In reviewing the case files the study found ninety-five percent of the girls were categorized as “lacking a stable home environment”, which included: incidences of witnessing the death of a member of the family, moving back and forth between relatives, or being placed in foster care or a group home (Acoca, 1999). In their review of gender-specific programming used in California, Bloom’s, et al. (2002), quantitative and qualitative measures identified family as both the primary risk and protective factor for female juvenile offenders. Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse were significant factors in relationship to risky and delinquent behavior among the offenders.

McKnight and Loper (2002) investigated the relationship between several potential risk factors, poverty, single parent status, and sexual abuse report and resiliency factors such as school involvement, drug abstinence, and religious beliefs with the ability to predict delinquent behavior in adolescent girls. The results identified a reliable list of environmental and behavioral conditions that tend to be predictive of juvenile delinquency in adolescent girls. These conditions

include environmental influences such as poverty, community disasters, and homelessness as well as familial factors such as serious caregiving deficits, parental psychopathology, death of a parent, family break-up, single parent households, and perinatal stress.

In their study examining comorbid symptom patterns in incarcerated female juvenile offenders Goldstein et al, (2003) found a significant relationship between family discord and externalizing symptoms such as lying, stealing, arrests, and/or hyperactivity, but did not find a significant relationship between family discord and internalizing symptoms (e.g. anxiety and/or depression). They hypothesized that this may indicate a disconnect within the families of female juvenile offenders, stating that parents and peers of the offender may not take note of her anxiety and/or depression until she acts out externally. This could also be an indication of potential differences between incarcerated and probated female juvenile offenders.

Relationship to Peers

For female juvenile offenders internal psychological distress can also interact in their relationships with their peers. Depressed adolescents tend to be withdrawn, have limited interests, and suffer from low self-esteem. Previous research also indicates that such youth are at risk of being rejected by prosocial peers (Hughes, & Cavell, 1999). Rejected youth, in turn, tend to cluster together with other rejected youth and form networks of deviant peers – a consistent predictor of delinquency. Gang involvement and conflict with peers also contributed to delinquent status for several of the young women, and school difficulties and negative attitudes toward school contributed to truancy and dropping out of school (both status offenses) (Bloom, et al. 2002).

Koon (1997) examined older adolescents (age 16-18 years) perceived levels of attachment to parents and peers and the relationship between the level of attachment with the

participants self-image. The population included participants from four different high schools. Attachment to parents yielded significant results for both males and females, with no significant difference found between genders; however, while a significant overall effect was also found between self-image and relationship to peers, the relationship between self image and attachment to peers in females was significantly stronger attachment to peers than boys.

Relationship to School

Acoca's (1999) qualitative study of incarcerated female juvenile offenders found that ninety one percent of the girls reported having been either suspended or expelled, repeating one or more grades, and/or being placed in a special education classroom. They report that many of the participant described school as a "battleground" filled with sexual harassment, racism, and interpersonal rivalries with peers. Research suggests that some antisocial youth exhibit depression and weakened attachments to prosocial institutions, which in turn promotes a lack of interest and difficulty in concentrating. Youth may withdraw from prosocial activities and institutions (e.g. schools, athletics). This results in a possible rift in their attachment to these institutions, which in turn increases their likelihood of engaging in antisocial behaviors (Obeidallah & Felton, 1999). McKnight and Loper's (2002) finding that "perceived teacher fairness" as a resiliency factor concurs with research indicating the importance of the student-teacher relationship to school success. Wallace (1995) found that teachers' various approaches to subject teaching were less important to students than the interactive relationships established with students. Students' relationships with teachers continue to surface as one of the most salient features of the educational experience (Pomeroy, E. 1999). A secure relationship with one's teacher promotes the child's active learning within their environment, their positive affect, and their socially competent interactions with others. Children with insecure attachment relationships

with teachers often elicit less contact from their teachers, which in turn starts a cycle of negative interactions between the student and the teacher. This can also effect the reactions the students elicit from their peers. This is especially true in younger children who often look to the teacher to model their reactions (Pomeroy 1999). Hayes, Ryan, & Zsellar (1994) reported that adolescents reporting supportive relationships with parents and teachers showed better school adaptation and academic motivation. School success and adaptation has in turn been shown to be related to depression and anxiety in children. Children who experienced more supportive relationships with teachers were more socially competent and mature. (Hughes, & Cavell, 1999).

Hughes and Cavell (1999) hypothesized that a close and accepting relationship with a teacher may exert an ameliorative influence on the development of children at risk for behavioral problems. Hughes and Cavell specifically looked to see if positive teacher relationships had a greater ameliorative influence with children whose mothers reported rejecting parenting histories. Results found that children and teacher reports of relationship were found to predict the child's level of aggression for the following year. They concluded that the findings suggest that a positive teacher-student relationship can exert an ameliorative influence on subsequent aggression. A secure relationship with one's teacher promotes the child's active exploration of the environment, positive affect, and socially competent interactions with others. Children with insecure attachment relationships with teachers elicit less contact with teachers, elicit more angry and less positive reactions from both teachers and peers, and exhibit less school engagement and more learning problems. Teacher-student relationship characterized by high levels of conflict and controlling interactions and low levels of warmth and acceptance may serve to increase a child's risk for school maladjustment (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Group Therapy Modality

The G.I.R.L.S. Project utilizes a semi-structured group therapy modality to capitalize on the importance of interpersonal relationships in girls' development. Group therapy has been identified as a natural way that girls might address problematic issues and foster growth (Butler & Wintram, 1991). The program states that it utilizes both process and psycho-educational group therapy models. Group process models contend that they provide an opportunity for group members to come together in a therapeutic environment to experience positive and healthy relationships and support from other girls and women (Yalom, 1995). It is hypothesized that as girls begin to relate to one another and share themselves in their new relationships, their self-confidence and self-esteem can flourish (Pipher, 1994). The psycho-educational group modality emphasizes the use of educational methods to acquire information and develop related meaning and skills (Brown, 1998) and is thought to therefore be preventative, growth oriented, or remedial in their purpose and focus. Utilization of both models was established to enable group facilitators the means of both presenting information to the girls while processing how the information can be incorporated in their lives. It is thought that armed with a new sense of self, support, and confidence, the group members can then begin to repair the effects of previously harmful relationships and address the hurt, and repair the negative consequences of these relationships (Yalom, 1995). Thus, it has been reported that working together within a therapeutic group allows diverse girls to come together in a supportive manner to address and challenge their experiences, to develop a sense of female pride, and create new possibilities for their future (Denmark, 1999). The primary stated goals of utilizing a relational group approach with adolescent females involved in juvenile justice is to help them develop positive relationships and healthy connections to foster a sense of support, understanding, and self-pride.

The group process is meant to provide an environment in which the girls can come together and confront issues that are common to each of their experiences while creating new opportunities for their futures (Brown, 1998). Way (1998) suggested that decreasing the mistrust, anger, and isolation commonly experienced among these girls, can also lead to a decrease in aggression. It was hypothesized that by improving the relational abilities and confidences of these young women, would provide the knowledge, skills, and experiences to make more positive choices for their futures.

Referral Process

Prospective group members are first identified by either judges or court services workers. After they have been referred by the court system to the program the girls and a parent are asked to complete a battery of assessments that are then reviewed by program facilitators and directors for appropriateness of participation. The G.I.R.L.S. Project is not intended to service girls with severe psychopathology; therefore, in the event that these assessments indicate psychosis or high suicidal ideation or intent the girls are referred to another program (under the same directors) for individual counseling. The referral is discussed with the participant, a parent, and the referral source. Also, due to the differences in experiences between high school and middle school, the participants are separated into separate group based on age and/or grade (the final determination is made by the facilitators after they have met with the participants and consulted with program directors). Once the groups have been formed the participants and their parents are asked to meet with the facilitators to discuss group procedures. The program operates utilizing confidentiality guidelines consistent with the codes of ethics of the American Psychological Association, American Counseling Association, and American Society for Group Work (these groups represent the professional associations of all group facilitators and the program directors), and

the expectations and limitations of confidentiality are explained to all parties at this time. In addition to the limits of confidentiality set forth by the professional organizations of the facilitators, the participants are informed that their court services workers will be notified of their attendance to the project, as their participation is considered a stipulation of their probation. The program does not participate in any decisions regarding punitive measures that may result from lack of attendance; however, if a participant misses more than two sessions she will not meet the program's requirements for successful completion; however, she may continue to participate in the group. The group then meets once a week for two hours for 16 consecutive weeks.

G.I.R.L.S. Project Curriculum

The project is designed to be semi-structured. A curriculum is provided; however, the amount of time and emphasis placed on each subject is designed to be determined by the group facilitators. This flexibility was incorporated into the program to allow the facilitators to utilize their expertise to establish which topics are most salient for their group members. Therefore, with the exception of the suggestion that the first two sessions be utilized to introduce the participants and facilitators to each other and the group process, and the suggestion that the last two sessions be used for termination, a guide for when or how long to discuss other topics listed is not provided. The curriculum provided in the manual has been categorized under three main umbrellas: Getting to Know Me, Emotional Awareness, and Decision Making. All three categories are thought to contribute to the health of all four relationship factors identified in the theoretical premise; thereby more specifically aiding the participants to: become aware of healthy alternatives to their current offending behaviors, learn to make healthier decisions that will promote positive self-concept and relationships, increase the adaptive skills necessary to

create and fulfill future goals, and foster a sense of social belonging as a contributing member of their community.

Pilot Study

In 2001 a pilot study was conducted to review the initial efficacy of the G.I.R.L.S. Project. In the study the independent variable was group participation. Pre vs. post scores were compared in all four relational areas: relationship to self, relationship to family, relationship to peers, and relationship to school. Relationship to self was measured with subscales of three different instruments: the Behavior Assessment Schedule for Children, Self Report of Personality (BASC-SRP-A), the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI), and the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS). Results on the BASC-SRP-A indicated statistically significant improvements for the sub-scales: Sense of Inadequacy and Locus of Control. Statistically significant improvements were not found using the MACI or the MSCS. Relationship to family was measured using subscales of the BASC-SRP-A, the Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (AIR), the Family Assessment Device (FAD), and the MSCS. Significant differences were not found on the BASC-SRP-A, AIR, or the FAD; however, significant improvement was identified on the family sub-scale of the MSCS. Relationship to peers was measured using subscales of the BASC-SRP-A, AIR, MACI, and MSCS. Significant findings were found on the BASC-SRP-A subscale of Social Stress, while on the AIR significant improvement was found on the subscale measuring relationships with male peers. Statistically significant differences were not found using the MACI, and on the MSCS significant difference was found on the Social subscale. Lastly, relationship to school was measured using subscales of the BASC-SRP-A, AIR, and MSCS. Significant improvements were found on the Attitude to School subscale of the BASC-SRP-A and the Relationship to Teachers subscale of the AIR.

In addition to these results the study identified logistical difficulties encountered in the gathering of the psychometric data such as the dependency of data collection on participants external to the project, such as probation officers and sought to implement a training program to increase the awareness of gender specific issues among court personnel. Qualitative reports indicated that after the training a shift in perception was noted among court personnel. Their concerns broadened from worrying mainly about the female offenders' home life, self-esteem, peer pressure, drugs, and pregnancy to also include: concerns about their relationships with older men, their mothers, and their peers (beyond just peer pressure).

Identification of the Stakeholders

A large number of individuals and groups can be identified as stakeholders for this program evaluation. Beginning with the individuals most directly affected would be the group participants themselves. While the program is designed to promote positive changes in behavior from which others may also benefit, the program strongly feels that creating an internal change is very important for the participants, an increase in self-esteem and/or self-efficacy would be seen by the program creators as a positive. The group facilitators and program are also stakeholders in this evaluation. The group facilitators consist of masters and doctoral clinicians in training. They have a varying level of experience, all have completed at least one course in group therapy. The program facilitators provide weekly supervision to all group facilitators in addition to being available on an as needed basis. As this program is utilized for training the results of this evaluation may influence future training experiences. The local juvenile court may also be considered stakeholders as they currently use the program as a resource for their offenders. There are also other individuals and groups who could be considered stakeholders although they are not directly involved with the program. The family and friends of the participants will be effected as

changing one individual in a system inherently changes that system. Continuing with this thought, a ripple effect than creates changes in schools and communities. A group that is also a stakeholder is the female juvenile offender population at large, as there is currently only limited research regarding the efficacy of treatment programs for this population it is hoped that this program evaluation will add information that will provide information that can be utilized for rehabilitation.

Identification of Informational Needs

In determining the informational needs of a program evaluation several different questions are asked. To begin with, who wants the evaluation and why is the evaluation wanted? The need for this program evaluation was identified by both group and program facilitators to provide information regarding the effectiveness of the program and to identify potential changes that could be made. Next, what type of evaluation is appropriate? This evaluation has two purposes, first to investigate the theoretical premise and objectives of the program, and secondly to provide information that can be utilized for adjustments; therefore, both an objectives evaluation model and improvement evaluation model will be used. Another question that provides information regards the timing of the evaluation. The G.I.R.L.S. Project began in 1999, and a pilot study was done in 2001. Some changes have been made since the pilot study, predominantly in the area of the instrumentation being used to measure participant personality and progress. Due to both the fact that changes were made and that it has been 5 years since the pilot study, it was determined that a program evaluation was required to ascertain if the positive results indicated in the pilot study have continued with the changes made. The final question to be asked before starting a program evaluation regards an assessment for evaluability. Having followed the steps to evaluate the appropriateness of the G.I.R.L.S. Project it has been determined the

project does qualify as a program that can be evaluated, as the results of an evaluation could provide useful information both for the program itself as well as contribute to the field of juvenile delinquency.

Conclusions

Weiland-Bowling, Zimmerman, and Daniels (2000) present a curriculum for a feminist based adolescent girls group designed to redefine societal messages, validate female attributes, create options, and increase feelings of competence among its participants. In their work with female juvenile offenders they cite that many therapists have identified specific problems that adolescent females struggle with during therapy such as loneliness, eating disorders, poor self-image, violent relationships, sexual assault experiences, and teen pregnancy. Recognition and rejection of unhealthy societal messages can be a powerful force in successful treatment for many of these symptoms (Davidson 1995). Weiland-Bowling et al.(2000), felt that feminist education could: (a) help put words to the experience of being female (b) make conscious the subtle societal messages young women receive (c) empower and encourage female adolescents to reject oppressive messages.

Abstinence from alcohol, perceiving that teachers are fair, endorsing a feeling of being loved and wanted, parental report that the youth is trustworthy, and religious belief have been identified as resilience factors for female juvenile offenders (McKnight & Loper, 2002), and a positive self-image, problem solving skills, conflict resolution skills, and relationship building skills are listed as primary protective factors for young women (Bloom, et al. 2002).

International research suggests that the antecedents of problems differ for male and female offenders. To be effectively responsive, program content must therefore be adapted to meet the differing needs of women. Research also implies that young women are harder to work

with than men (Alder, 1995) hence the actual therapeutic process may also require modification. To have an impact on recidivism, rehabilitation programs must help these women understand how victimization has affected their social and psychological functioning. Assisting women to develop a self-worth separate from criminality may reduce their temptation to revert to a criminal lifestyle (Pollock, 1998). Correctional policy needs to look beyond recidivism rates to recognizing the various obstacles preventing female offenders from living balanced and fulfilling lives. Within correctional centers, a comprehensive, hierarchically intensive and culturally sensitive treatment program incorporating various models would be useful (Sorbelllo, Ecclesotn, Ward, & Jones 2002).

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The research question of the present study investigated whether successful participation in the gender specific group was related to improvement in the outcome measure of recidivism. The study investigated the efficacy of the group as well as its corresponding theoretical principle. Specifically the study compared pre-group measures to post group measures of participants who had successfully completed the program investigating for indications that group participation influenced nine of the participants' relational subscale scores. The results were then compared with the outcome measure of recidivism to investigate possible patterns in how the group intervention impacted scores. This study adds to the research regarding the use of gender-specific programming for female juvenile offenders.

Participants

Participants in this study included 56 female juvenile offenders from a juvenile justice system located in northeastern Georgia who had successfully completed the psycho-educational gender specific program entitled the G.I.R.L.S. Project. The participants were referred to the project by a member of the court system, either a probation officer or a judge. The participants' ages ranged from 12 to 17 years old age ($M = 14.86$, $SD = 1.332$), and the sample consisted of predominantly African American (69.5%) and Caucasian (20.3%) females with a smaller representation of Hispanic (5.1%) females, 3 of the participants (5.1%) chose not to provide racial identification. Each participant completed a BASC-SRP-A self-report both prior to group participation and at the end of group participation. Completion of the research instruments was not a requirement for the successful completion of the G.I.R.L.S. Project. Both parental consent and participant assent was obtained for each participant. Demographic information was also

obtained at the time the first BASC-SRP-A was completed. All of the participants in the study successfully completed the G.I.R.L.S. Project group therapy intervention.

This study did not include the 30 participants who began the group, but did not successfully complete the group. Failure to complete the group was attributed to a variety of different issues such as: referral to detention, transportation issues, participation in competing services, and participation in other school related activities. Comparisons regarding the demographics of the 56 girls who successfully completed the group and the 30 girls who did not yielded no differences in race or age. Further comparison of (all) the BASC-SRP-A subscales indicated difference on only two subscales: *atypicality* and *somatization* (neither of these subscales were used in this study as they were not identified as measures for the four relational subgroups), with *atypicality* and *somatization* scores being lower (more adaptive) for the girls who did not complete the program.

Research Instruments

Behavior Assessment System for Children-Self Report of Personality-Adolescent (BASC- SRP-A)

The BASC-SRP-A is designed to evaluate the personality and self-perceptions of adolescents ages 12-18 years old (a separate form is available for children ages 8-11 years old). The BASC-SRP-A uses a multi-method; multidimensional approach to evaluate behavior and self-perceptions and includes both positive (adaptive) as well as negative (clinical) dimensions and was designed to aid in the differential diagnosis of a variety of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and adolescents and to aid in the design of treatment plans. The BASC-SRP-A consists of 186 “True-False” questions. Results on the BASC-SRP-A are presented on ten clinical scales and four adaptive scales. All of the scales are meant to measure a priori constructs. The ten clinical constructs are: anxiety, attitude to school, attitude to teachers,

atypicality, depressions, locus of control, sensation seeking, sense of inadequacy, social stress, and somatization. The four adaptive scales are: interpersonal relations, relations with parents, self-esteem, and self-reliance. Normative scores for each scale are provided in the form of T-scores ($M = 50$, $SD = 10$). Ranges for “At-Risk” and “Clinically Significant” are provided for each scale and are cited as being based on the authors’ clinical experience and review of the literature. For the clinical subscales scores of 60-69 are considered at-risk and scores over 69 are considered clinically significant (with the exception of the Anxiety subscale for which the cut off between at-risk and clinically significant is 65). For the adaptive scales scores from 31-40 are considered at-risk and scores of 30 or below denote clinical significance. In addition to the clinical and adaptive scales the BASC-SRP-A also provides three validity scales and four composite scales (Reynolds & Kamphouse, 1992). The instrument was standardized on a large national sample that is representative of the general population of children and adolescents of the United States with regard to sex and race/ethnicity. The BASC-SRP-A has been widely utilized in Western research and has been found to be a reliable and valid instrument (Sandoval, 1998). It is considered to have good reliability (Kamphaus & Frick, 2002), with median internal consistency coefficients generally in the .80s and test-retest coefficients (taken at a 1-month interval) generally in the .70s.

The G.I.R.L.S Project utilizes a relational group intervention model. The theoretical premise is based on a paradigm of four relationships, the participant’s relationship to: self, parents, peers, and school. Project designers selected the BASC-SRP-A because it contained scales that were believed to relate to all four relationships. The BASC-SRP-A identifies subscales as either “clinical” or “adaptive”. Improvements on the Clinical Scales (cIn) are indicated

by a decrease and improvements on the Adaptive Scales (adpt) are reflected by an increase in score. The subscales of the BASC-SRP-A that were selected to measure these relationships are:

Relationship to Self

Locus of Control (cln)

Sense of Inadequacy (cln)

Self-Esteem (adpt)

Self-Reliance (adpt)

Relationship to Family

Relations with Parents (adpt)

Relationship to Peers

Social Stress (cln)

Interpersonal Relations (adapt)

Relationship to School

Attitude to Teachers (cln)

Attitude to School (cln)

The BASC-SPR Manual (1992) reports that it defines and intends to measure these variables in the following manor:

Relationship to Self

Locus of Control – assesses the individual's perception of who or what controls the various events of one's life. Low scores on this scale indicate an internal locus of control and reflect the perception of being responsible for, or at least having control over, one's own success or failure. High scores denote an external locus of control, which is defined as the perception that success or failure is determined by forces beyond one's control.

Sense of Inadequacy – assesses a lack of belief in the ability to achieve at expected levels, a tendency not to persevere, and a perception of being unsuccessful (primarily in academic endeavors). The person may feel inadequate to meet expectations set either by himself or herself or by others. The scale is related to the concept of level of aspiration, in that a child who sets or accepts unrealistically high goals would be likely to score high on this scale. Individuals with high scores tend to lack persistence and to reject the traditional goals of society.

Self-Esteem – assesses the child's self-satisfaction, with reference both to physical and to more global characteristics. High score are indicative of positive self-esteem. Individuals with high scores may be seen by others as warm, open, venturesome, and self-assured. They typically have good peer relations, a positive sense of their identity, and appropriate levels of ego strength.

Self-Reliance – assesses self-confidence and assurance in one's ability to make decisions. The scale is a strong measure of personal adjustment. High scores indicate a tendency to take responsibility and to face life's challenges. Individuals with high scores tend not to be fearful of their emotions but to be well controlled by internal systems.

Relationship to Family

Relations with Parents – surveys the individual's perception of being important in the family, the status of the parent-child relationship, and the child's perception of the degree of parental trust and concern. High scores indicate positive adjustment.

Relationship to Peers

Social Stress – assesses the level of stress experienced by participants in relation to their interactions with others. Feelings of tension and pressure and a lack of coping resources

(especially of outlets through close friends and social contact) are evident in social stress. The social stress measure, as measured on the SRP-A, is likely to be pervasive and chronic rather than acute and transient.

Interpersonal Relations – assesses the individual's reports of success at relating to others and the degree of enjoyment derived from the interaction. Individual with low scores may be withdrawn and lack the energy for social interaction; they are likely to have significant problems with peers and/or adults.

Relationship to School

Attitude to School – surveys the child's general opinion of the utility of school, along with his or her level of comfort with school-related matters. Low scores indicate a relative satisfaction and comfort with school, while high scores indicate a pervasive discomfort.

Attitude to Teachers – assesses the individual's perception of teacher as being uncaring, unfair, or unmotivated to help their students. Low scores reflect a high regard for teachers and high scores indicate dissatisfaction with teachers.

The G.I.R.L.S. Project (Gaining Insight into Relationships for Lifelong Success)

The G.I.R.L.S. Project is a semi-structured intervention, which utilizes a group therapy intervention modality. The premise of the project is based on Feminist and Cultural/Relational theory which states that for females, relationships are highly salient in forming identity and therefore affects their social and emotional growth and development. The intervention is a closed group, which both psycho- educational and group process components. The group meets once a week for 16 weeks for 2 hours. A curriculum is provided; however, the amount of time and emphasis placed on each subject is designed to be determined by the facilitators as they establish

which topics are most salient for their group members; therefore, with the exception of the suggestion that the first two sessions be utilized to introduce the participants and facilitators to each other and the group process, and the suggestion that the last two sessions be used for termination, a guide for when or how long to discuss other topics listed is not provided. The curriculum provided in the manual has been categorized under three main umbrellas: Getting to Know Me, Emotional Awareness, and Decision Making. All three categories are thought to contribute to the health of all four relationship factors identified in the theoretical premise; thereby more specifically aiding the participants to: become aware of healthy alternatives to their current offending behaviors, learn to make healthier decisions that will promote positive self-concept and relationships, increase the adaptive skills necessary to create and fulfill future goals, and foster a sense of social belonging as a contributing member of their community.

Sample Curriculum

The Three Umbrella Categories:

GETTING TO KNOW ME

The purpose of this subject area is to help the participants identify how they define themselves. This includes increasing awareness of messages that they have received and internalized from society, the media, community, family, and friends and identifying different aspects of their cultural identities. It is thought that by increasing their awareness of how they self-define, the girls will also gain insight into how they interact with others.

FEELINGS/EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

The purpose of discussing emotional awareness is to increase awareness of one's emotions, self-understanding, and subsequently self-reliance. In addition, problem-solving skills are obtained and improved. Being able to appropriately identify feelings informs us of what is important to

us, enabling us to identifying the unmet emotional need and taking appropriate corrective action. Increased emotional awareness can also increase the quality of interpersonal relationships, as learning to express emotions increases communication skills.

MAKING DECISIONS

This subject area provides an opportunity for group members to incorporate the knowledge and insights they have learned about themselves with real world decisions that they face or will face in the future.

(Suggested) Weekly Modules

JOINING TOGETHER (Sessions 1 & 2)

The purpose of this module is to develop a trusting relationship between group facilitators and participants, while creating a positive and empowering (rather than delinquent) identity among group members.

EDUCATIONAL/VOCATIONAL GOALS (Sessions 3 & 4)

The purpose of this module is to help girls identify areas of strength and interest and to encourage their involvement in pro-social activities. This module may utilize career assessment tools to help girls become aware of the numerous vocational opportunities available to them.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE (Session 5 & 6)

The purpose of this module is to increase the girls understanding of drugs and alcohol use including both the short and long term consequences of substance use. This module also discusses how substance use has affected their families, friends, and communities.

ANGER & VIOLENCE (Sessions 7 & 8)

The purpose of this module is to help the girls recognize patterns of anger and violence within their interpersonal relationships, and to learn to identify their feelings of anger, and explore both positive and negative means of expressing anger.

SEXUALITY (Sessions 9 & 10)

This module includes both increasing the girls' awareness of societal gender prescriptions as well as increase their own sense of empowerment to take control of their own bodies and learn positive means of expressing their desires. This module also provides an opportunity for girls to process events of sexual coercion and abuse.

PREGNANCY/MOTHERHOOD (Sessions 11 & 12)

The purpose of this module is to dispel myths of contraception, to empower girls to take responsibility for their sexual behaviors, and to provide insight into how pregnancy as an adolescent can influence their life long decisions and opportunities.

GRIEF & LOSS (Sessions 12 & 14)

This module provides the girls the opportunity to identify and process experienced losses associated with the absence of family members, suicide, and miscarriages/abortions and loss that has occurred as the result of violence. Discussion includes the exploration of both the feelings and behavioral consequences that as associated with grief and loss. Strength and resiliency are fostered through helping the girls develop social support networks and providing an environment in which their multiple losses can be discussed openly.

NEW BEGINNINGS (Sessions 15 & 16)

It is suggested that the last two meetings be set aside for group termination. Session 15 may be set aside as a time for the group members to engage in a private group termination process,

summarizing what they have learned in group and providing the opportunity to discuss the feelings associated with belonging to the group and ways that they have committed to engage in pro-social behaviors. Session 16 may be used as a time for celebration in which their families and other invested individuals (such as their court services workers) may be invited to participate.

Group Facilitators

The groups are facilitated by trained masters and doctoral counseling students. All of the facilitators for the groups providing participants for this study were female. Level of training and expertise among group facilitators varied and were not accounted for in this study. The group facilitators met weekly for group supervision (they were all supervised by the same supervisor).

Recidivism

For the purposes of this study recidivism was measured by calculating the number of offenses committed by each participant, as indicated on their individual record, within a period of one year after they had successfully completed the G.I.R.L.S. Project. The offenses were calculated as either “unruly” or “delinquent” as shown on their record. Only outstanding and convictions were counted (i.e. charges for which the participants were acquitted were not included). Information regarding each participant’s juvenile justice history and recidivism record was gathered from the computer database system of the Juvenile Justice System of the State of Georgia.

Design

This study is a quantitative, within and between subjects study. The study will consist of two parts. For the first part of the study the dependent variables in the study will be the BASC-

SRP-A subscales that correspond to the four relationship factors: self, family, peers, and school. The second portion of the study will examine recidivism utilizing a between subjects design including an examination of the relationship subscales with recidivism - comparing changes in the subscales measuring the relationship factors with recidivism.

Procedure

The data for this study are part of a larger set of data that were gathered during the screening and termination process of participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project. The BASC was chosen a priori to evaluate the progress of the participants due to the match between several of its' scales and the theoretical premise on which the G.I.R.L.S. Project was developed. The G.I.R.L.S. Project has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Georgia, and a separate IRB was submitted and approved for this study.

Statistical Analysis

In the first part of the study the subscales will be analyzed using a general linear model for repeated measures to explore the possible effect of this gender specific intervention within the participants. For the second part of the study the number of charges incurred by the participants after completion of the G.I.R.L.S. Project will be added to the general linear model as between group comparisons to identify if changes in the subscales (the first part of the study) correspond to recidivism rates of the participants.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. Participation or referral to the project was not randomized. The data will not be examined regarding the individual group facilitators. Also, all of the data will refer to girls who successfully completed the therapy group. Comparisons to girls

who did were not able to complete the group will not be included in this study. One should also consider that the program evaluator was also one of the group facilitators.

Assumptions

It is assumed that participants in this study were representative of the typical female juvenile offender currently on probation and being supervised by the Department of Juvenile Justice. It is also assumed that directions and wording for the BASC-SRP-A were understood, and was completed in an accurate and truthful manner. In addition it is assumed that the offense histories provided obtained from the juvenile court system for each offender are accurate.

Research Questions

The G.I.R.L.S. Project is based in a theoretical premise that females are highly impacted by their relationships, and that therefore, a treatment protocol that seeks to improve a female juvenile offender's perceptions of her relationships will facilitate more constructive pro-social decision-making. The questions posed by this evaluation are two fold. First, does participation in the program reflect changes in the participants' relationships? Simply put, does the program complete its stated purpose? Secondly, does analysis of participant responses support the original theoretical premise? Is relationship improvement related to better decision making (i.e. less recidivism)?

General Hypotheses

Seven null hypotheses have been identified for this study.

Null Hypothesis 1: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to self change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 2: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to parent change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 3: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to peer change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 4: No significant change will be indicated in comparison of pre-group scores to post-group scores on scales being used to measure relationship to school change using univariate analysis for pair-wise comparison.

Null Hypothesis 5: Participants will not have incurred any additional charges within a period of 1 year following successful completion of the program.

Null Hypothesis 6: No significant relationship will exist between significant changes found in pre-group vs. post-group scores and recidivism of unruly charges incurred within a period of 1 year following successful completion of the program.

Null Hypothesis 7: No significant relationship will exist between significant changes found in pre-group vs. post-group scores and recidivism of delinquent charges incurred within a period following the successful completion of the program.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The present study examined the efficacy of the G.I.R.L.S. Project to facilitate changes in participants in the areas of relationship to self, relationship to parents, relationship to school, and relationship to peers. The theoretical basis of the project states that the nature of these relationships influences the delinquent behavior of female juvenile offenders therefore; intervention that seeks to improve these relationships would improve the girls' ability to change the behaviors that contribute to their involvement in the juvenile justice system, and lead to more prosocial decision making. For this study examination of the efficacious of the program involved two parts. Part one of the study examined the presence of evidence that indicated that program participation was related to changes in the relational measures. Part two of the study, then investigated if changes in the relational measures were related to recidivism, thereby supporting the group theoretical premise.

General Linear Model Repeated Measures analyzes groups of related dependent variables that represent different measurements of the same attribute. This study utilized the within subject process to note changes in the items selected (by the project) to depict the four relationship areas identified, and then incorporated the between subjects process to note if the within subject changes corresponded with post participation behavioral changes (as measured by recidivism). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the efficacy of the G.I.R.L.S. Project and to determine whether there is support for its theoretical premise.

Univariate Within Subjects Analysis

The G.I.R.L.S. Project has utilized several different instruments as both screening tools and to measure outcome. One of the instruments selected by the project to measure changes in the participants' relationships was the Behavior Assessment Scale for Children – Self Report (BASC-SRP-A). This instrument was selected for this study because, of the instruments used by the program, the BASC-SRP-A was the only instrument which the program identified as being used to measure all four relationship areas. The following subscales were used to measure the relationships: relationship to self was measured utilizing – *locus of control*, *sense of inadequacy*, *self-esteem*, and *self-reliance*, relationship to parents was measured with the *relationship to parents* subscale, relationship to peers was measured by the subscales – *social stress and interpersonal relationships*, and relationship to school was measure utilizing – *attitude to teachers* and *attitude to school*. The BASC-SRP-A identifies sub-scales as either “clinical” or “adaptive”. Improvements on the Clinical Scales (cln) are indicated by a decrease in the T score. Conversely, improvements on the Adaptive Scales (adpt) are reflected by an increase in score. Table 1 lists the pre-group and post-group means and standard deviations for the nine relational subscales, while Table 2 portrays the changes in means between the pre and post group. In reviewing the mean differences, one may note that with the exception of *interpersonal relations* all of the scales moved in the direction that indicates improvement for that subscale.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Relational Subscales (N=56)

	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Relationship to Self				
<i>Locus of Control (cln)</i>	55.196	10.791	51.250	9.690
<i>Sense of Inadequacy (cln)</i>	51.571	12.192	50.589	11.166
<i>Self-Esteem (adpt)</i>	50.286	10.837	51.071	9.264
<i>Self-Reliance (adpt)</i>	50.446	9.923	51.018	9.545
Relationship to Parents				
<i>Relationship to Parents (adpt)</i>	40.357	15.170	46.4821	11.445
Relationship to Peers				
<i>Social Stress (cln)</i>	52.107	10.409	48.393	8.448
<i>Interpersonal Relationships (adpt)</i>	51.286	7.738	50.768	8.745
Relationship to School				
<i>Attitude to Teachers (cln)</i>	51.143	9.579	50.518	9.521
<i>Attitude to School (cln)</i>	51.143	10.800	49.750	10.179

Note: Improvement on the Clinical Scales (cln) are indicated by a decrease and improvement on the Adaptive Scales (adpt) are reflected by an increase in score.

Table 2

Pairwise Comparisons of Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Measures of Relational Subscales (N=56)

	Mean Difference	Std Error	Sig.	Confidence Lower	Upper
Relationship to Self					
<i>Locus of Control (cln)</i>	-3.946	1.397	.007*	-6.746	1.147
<i>Sense of Inadequacy (cln)</i>	-.982	1.290	.543	-4.202	2.237
<i>Self-Esteem (adpt)</i>	.786	.942	.408	-1.102	2.674
<i>Self-Reliance (adpt)</i>	.571	1.607	.724	-2.650	3.793
Relationship to Parents					
<i>Relationship to Parents (adpt)</i>	6.125	1.829	.001*	2.460	9.790
Relationship to Peers					
<i>Social Stress (cln)</i>	-3.714	1.401	.010*	-6.523	-.906
<i>Interpersonal Relationships (adpt)</i>	-.518	1.155	.656	-2.833	1.798
Relationship to School					
<i>Attitude to Teachers (cln)</i>	-.625	1.400	.657	-3.431	2.18
<i>Attitude to School (cln)</i>	-1.393	1.290	.285	-3.978	1.192

Note: Improvement on the Clinical Scales (cln) are indicated by a decrease and improvement on the Adaptive Scales (adpt) are reflected by an increase in score.

Using a general linear model repeated measure, significant changes were found on three of the subscales: *locus of control*, *social stress*, and *relationship to parents* (please refer to Table 3 for results of all nine subscales).

Table 3

Within Subjects Repeated Measures of Relationship Subscales on the BASC-SRP-A (N=56)

	F	Sig.
Relationship to Self		
Locus of Control	7.983	.007**
Sense of Inadequacy	.374	.543
Self-Esteem	.696	.408
Self-Reliance	.126	.724
Relationship to Parents		
Relationship to Parents	11.218	.001**
Relationship to Peers		
Social Stress	7.024	.010**
Interpersonal Relationships	.201	.656
Relationship to School		
Attitude to Teachers	.199	.657
Attitude to School	1.166	.285

*** indicates significance at the $\alpha = .05$ level*

Between Subjects Analysis

For the purposes of this study recidivism was measured by calculating the number of offenses committed by each participant, as indicated on their individual record, within a period of one year after they had successfully completed the G.I.R.L.S. Project. The offenses were calculated as either “unruly” or “delinquent” as indicated on the participant’s official court record. For this study only convictions were counted (i.e. charges for which the participants

were acquitted were not included). Also one participant had been convicted of three traffic offense charges; however, as she was the only participant to have any traffic charges the between subjects analysis was not completed for this category of charge. Of the fifty-six participants included in the within subjects analysis access to the individual participants' court files were limited to forty participants. This attrition was primarily due to the fact that some of the participants in the within subjects study had participated in groups in counties, and their court records were therefore not available to the G.I.R.L.S. Project at the time of this evaluation.

Overall 27 of the 40 participants (67.5%) had not incurred any charges within one year of since completing the group intervention. Nine of the 40 (22.5%) participants had received one only charge. Five of the individuals had received one delinquent charge and four of the participants had received one unruly charge. The remaining four individuals had incurred a combination of unruly and delinquent charges. For a full report of the number of charges incurred after treatment, please refer to Table 4. The unruly charges included acts such as: ungovernable, runaway, truancy, and violation of daytime curfew. The delinquent charges were more varied than the unruly charges and included: several counts of theft by shoplifting, criminal damage to property, simple battery, criminal trespass, and aggravated assault.

Table 4.

Categorization of Charges incurred by participants within a one year period of having successfully completed the G.I.R.L.S. Project (N=40)

Number of Unruly Charges	Number of Delinquent Charges			
	0	1	2	3
0	27	5	1	1
1	4	1		
2				
3			1	

Evidence of relationships between changes in the subscale variables and recidivism within one year of completion were investigated by adding the number of charges incurred following completion of the group intervention as a between groups variable to the General Linear Model used in step 1. Two different analyses were conducted one for unruly charges and one for delinquent charges. In examining for evidence of relationship between changes in relational subscales and the number of unruly charges incurred *interpersonal relationships* was significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level ($\alpha = .011$) (please see Table 5 for results of all subscales). When the number of delinquency charges was used as the between group variable a significant relationship was found between the number of delinquency charges incurred and changes in *social stress* ($\alpha = .028$) and *attitude to teachers* ($\alpha = .020$) subscales (see Table 6 for results of all subscales). In addition a significant relationship was found between *relationship to parents* and number of delinquency charges at the .10 level of significance ($\alpha = .096$).

Table 5.

Relationships between changes in subscales and recidivism as measured by number of unruly charges (N=40)

	F	Sig.
Relationship to Self		
Locus of Control	.979	.386
Sense of Inadequacy	1.122	.337
Self-Esteem	.646	.530
Self-Reliance	2.008	.149
Relationship to Parents		
Relationship to Parents	1.714	.194
Relationship to Peers		
Social Stress	1.085	.349
Interpersonal Relationships	5.091	.011**
Relationship to School		
Attitude to Teachers	.108	.898
Attitude to School	1.149	.239

** indicates significance at the $\alpha = .05$ level

Table 6.

Relationships between changes in subscales and recidivism as measured by number of delinquent charges (N=40)

	F	Sig.
Relationship to Self		
Locus of Control	1.641	.198
Sense of Inadequacy	2.034	.127
Self-Esteem	2.232	.102
Self-Reliance	1.125	.307
Relationship to Parents		
Relationship to Parents	2.283	.096*
Relationship to Peers		
Social Stress	3.418	.028**
Interpersonal Relationships	2.225	.102
Relationship to School		
Attitude to Teachers	3.705	.020**
Attitude to School	1.198	.325

** indicates significance at the $\alpha = .05$ level

* indicates significant at the $\alpha = .10$ level

Summary

The analysis sought evidence of that participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project group therapy treatment program would result in changes in the participants' relationships to self, parents, peers and school, and that these changes would in turn be related to recidivism. These findings

confirmed that the program was fulfilling its stated purpose as well as offering support for the theoretical premise of the program. The results of the initial study investigating changes in the four relationship areas indicated that significant pre-group versus post-group changes occurred in three of the nine subscales analyzed: *locus of control*, *relationship to parents*, and *interpersonal relations*. These three subscales represent three of the four relationship areas: relationship to self (as measured by the subscale *locus of control*), relationship to parent (as measured by the subscale *relationship to parents*), and relationship to peers (as measured by the subscale *social stress*). Significant changes were not found in either of the subscales chosen to measure relationship to school (*attitude to school* and *attitude to teachers*). The results of the second part of the analysis researching the existence of relationships between pre-group and post-group changes in the subscales and occurrence of either post-group unruly or delinquent charges found a significant relationship between changes in the relationship between recidivism of unruly charges and changes on the *interpersonal relations* subscale, as well as significant relationships between post-group incurring of delinquency charges and changes in both the *attitude to teacher* and *social stress* subscales (a less significant was also found between the number of post-group delinquent charges and changes in the *relationships to parents* subscale). These results suggest that the G.I.R.L.S. Project has had some success at fulfilling its' stated purpose of improving participants' relationships in three of the four areas stated: relationship to self, relationship to parents, and relationship to peers. In addition the results of the second part of the study analyzing the relationship between changes in relationship factors and recidivism suggest that improvements in a female juvenile offenders' relationships could also be related to their recidivism of both unruly and delinquent charges.

Hypotheses Status

The general hypotheses of this evaluation questioned if the data collected indicated that participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project influences the relationship factors listed by the program's theoretical premise: relationship to self (hypothesis 1), relationship to parents (hypothesis 2), relationship to peers (hypothesis 3), and relationship to school (hypothesis 4). The results indicate that the first three hypotheses stating that no differences would be found in the areas of relationship to self, relationship to parents, and relationship to peers, should be rejected. As no significant changes were found on either subscale measuring relationship to school, the fourth hypothesis should be accepted. The fifth hypothesis stated that program participants would not incur any additional charges (recidivate) within a period of a year from successful completion of the program. As charges were incurred during this period this hypothesis should be rejected. Hypotheses six and seven stated that no relationship would exist between changes found between pre-group and post-group participation and the occurrence of either unruly (hypothesis 6) or delinquent (hypothesis 7) charges within a period of 1 year after having completed group. A significant relationship was found between changes one relationship subscale (*interpersonal relations*) and recidivism of unruly charges, and significant relationships were found between two relational subscales (*attitude to teacher* and *social stress*) and delinquency. Therefore, both hypotheses six and seven should also be rejected.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Summary

As the number of females involved in the juvenile justice system increases, the need for better understanding of this population also increases, and as historical and ongoing research continues to indicate differentiation between male juvenile offenders and female juvenile offenders the need for rehabilitation programs to meet these differences also increases (Calhoun, 2001, Cauffman, et al. 2004). There is growing concern and doubt regarding the ability of early programs, designed on the assumption that delinquency was a male issue, to meet the needs of the growing female juvenile offender population (Chesney-Lind, 2001). The efficacy of these programs becomes increasingly important as reports indicate that the rise in the rates of female juvenile delinquency has begun to surpass that of boys, particularly in anti-social behavior such as simple assault, drug abuse, and substance violations (Snyder, 2005). Noting this growing problems policy makers have tried to address the problem by mandating that states investigate female juvenile delinquency or risk obtaining federal funding. The 1992 reauthorization of the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act places specific provisions requiring “an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency, including the types of such services available and the need for such services for females and a plan for providing needed gender specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency” (OJJDP, 1992); however, to date the majority of research thus far has focused on further defining female juvenile offenders and the development of gender specific programs. As the number of females who have completed these programs increases the need now exists for the evaluation of these programs. Are these gender specific programs indeed addressing the unique

needs of this population and does this lead to prosocial changes in the girls. Program evaluation is an important and necessary step in determining whether a service is in fact meeting the needs of its' participants, and includes not only examination of outcomes, but also the validity of the theoretical premise of a program and its' compliance to it own theoretical basis.

This study examined the efficacy of one gender specific treatment program. The G.I.R.L.S. Project. The theoretical premise of the G.I.R.L.S. Project is based in the theories of Gilligan in which females are highly affected by their relationship. In particular the theory identifies four relationship areas: relationship to self, relationship to parents, relationship to peers and relationship to school. This theory states that the inappropriate behavior and poor choices of female juvenile offenders is in part due to negative relationships that do not empower the girls. This study used quantitative data to specifically examine if the group creates change in the attitude the girls have towards their relationships. The study will also examine if these changes are then related to subsequent positive outcomes. The purpose of this study was two fold: to determine the efficacy of participation in the G.I.R.L.S. Project to effectively impact relationship factors of participants and to determine if a change in these relationship factors could be related to positive changes in the participants' behavior, as measured by recidivism.

Discussion of Findings

The results of the initial study investigating changes in the four relationship areas indicated that significant pre-group versus post-group changes occurred in three of the four relationship areas: relationship to self (as measured by the subscale *locus of control*), relationship to parent (as measured by the subscale *relationship to parents*), and relationship to peers (as measured by the subscale *social stress*). Interestingly, in the second part of the study investigating if changes in the relational subscales were related to recidivism of unruly or

delinquent charges, of the three subscales found to have a significant relationship, only one of the three, *social stress* (found to be significantly related to delinquent recidivism) was also found to have had a significant level of change (although a relationship between delinquent recidivism and *relationship to parents* was also significant at a less rigorous level). Comparison of pre-group and post-group changes in both the *attitude to teacher* (which was significantly related to delinquent recidivism) and *interpersonal relations* (found to be significantly related to unruly recidivism) were not found to be significant. As the *attitude to teacher* subscale was being used to measure the relationship to school relationship area, it can be concluded that all four relationships were found to have been potentially effected by group participation; however, given the small number of participants and many confounds (e.g. group facilitator(s) and number and nature of charge(s)) within the data, clear statements regarding these relationships are difficult to make. Recommendations for the program as a result of this evaluation are provided below. The recommendations were made with the assumption that the G.I.R.L.S. Project will continue providing services to female juvenile offenders, and were written to suggest possible improvements that would aid in further evaluation and service provision.

Recommendations to the Program

Sorbello, et al. (2002) offers four best practice principles for offender rehabilitation programs. They state that recidivism rates are lower when offender programs include the principles of risk, need, responsivity, and professional discretion. They define the risk principle as matching the offender's risk-level with the amount of treatment warranted. The need principle targets identification and facilitation of the needs of the offender that are promoting their criminal behavior. Responsivity refers to the link between program content and program participants, and professional discretion is included to allow facilitators the ability to use their

clinical judgment to adapt programs to meet the needs of their individual participants. The recommendations resulting from this program evaluation relate to these four basic principles. While a number of the recommendations are a direct result of the quantitative analysis conducted, other logistical recommendations are also provided to address some of the confounds that should be considered limitations of this evaluation.

Principles of Risk and Need: Increase the Consistency of Obtaining Data

As the data were gathered for this program evaluation, it became apparent that there was some lack of consistency regarding how the pre and post instruments were obtained. This appeared to be due mainly to attempts to increase the efficiency of gathering this data by attempting to utilize or meet the needs of other program stakeholders such as probation officers or the parents of the juvenile. Increasing the consistency of the data collection would provide opportunities for more research and would increase the quality of the research as well.

Principle of Responsivity: Increase the continuity of the Program Curriculum with the Theoretical Premise

Along these same lines it is also recommended that the manual and training of the group facilitators (and group participants) reflect a tighter link between the program curriculum and the theoretical premise. Currently the curriculum is separated into three separate umbrellas categories: getting to know me, feelings/emotional awareness, and making decisions, while the theory consists of four relationship areas: self, parents, peers, and school. The curriculum could include for example how identifying how the participants define themselves (the stated purpose of the “getting to know me” umbrella) relates to the four relationship areas. Increasing the participants’ awareness of how they might benefit from participating in the group and could increase their understanding of the group process. This could be beneficial given that having an

“existing rationale” is one of the four key components identified in Frank and Frank’s (1991) common factors model. Increasing the girls awareness of the premise of the impact of relationships on their lives could also address the additional three components: an emotionally charged, confiding relationship with a helping person, the client’s belief in the professional to provide help and can be entrusted to work on the client’s behalf, and a ritual or procedure that requires the active participation of both client and therapist that is based on the rationale, and could be especially useful in helping build therapeutic alliance between participants and facilitators, which often suffers from the mandated nature that can be unavoidable when dealing with juvenile offenders.

Principle of Professional Discretion: Assess for Facilitators: Case Conceptualization and Program Utilization

The variable of group facilitator(s) was also not available at the time of this evaluation. Although all the groups’ facilitators have been supervised by the same supervisors, the importance of the therapeutic alliance (Frank & Frank, 1991) suggests that this could be important information, particularly in investigating how and/or why group participation may be effective. This information could also be used to provide additional information regarding relational patterns of the participants by investigating the nature of the relationships that the girls form with their facilitators.

In regards to further analysis of the cultural/relational theoretical premise of the group, it is recommended that some form of assessment be added that could measure how both the facilitators and participants feel the theory applies to the group. This information could be useful for several reasons. As the facilitators have some autonomy in which areas are emphasized in the curriculum, obtaining information that indicates their conceptualization of their group members

will help differentiate possible differences between groups despite consistency of curriculum. For example, it is possible that the significant improvements found in the three subscales could in part be explained by the facilitators' emphasizing these attributes based on their own conceptualizations of what would be most helpful for their particular group members. If this were the case, it would appear based on the analysis that facilitators did not place as high importance on the participants' relationship to school. This could be very significant, especially given that in this study relationship to school was shown to be related to recidivism of delinquent behavior. This could be done both at the beginning of the program to evaluate case conceptualization and at the end of the program to provide information regarding a description of what actually took place for the group. Along these same lines it could be informative to obtain the girls perspectives regarding their thoughts on how their relationship may or may not impact their involvement in the juvenile justice system. This could also include an investigation of the orientation process, which is the time when the rationale behind the G.I.R.L.S. Project is presented to both the participants and their parents.

Additional Recommendation: Assess/Review additional Stakeholders

The G.I.R.L.S. project did not appear to have conducted any formal assessment of the additional stakeholders. Giles and Mullineux (2000) found that several different factors influenced probation officers decision making when choosing treatment programs, such as offender's personality, crime-related constructs, personal characteristics, victim awareness, and the offender's criminal history. Therefore, assessing the other stakeholders' conceptualizations of the girls and their understanding of premise of the program, could provide useful information such as: who they are identifying as appropriate referrals to the program. Obtaining information from the other stakeholders would also provide opportunities to analyze feedback which would

inform the program of the stakeholders concerns, their level of satisfaction, and their perceived role as an outside stakeholder, all areas which could influence how the stakeholder interacts with both program members and program participants.

Limitations to External Validity

The sampling procedure used in this study was not randomized. The participants' in this study had already been referred to and completed the treatment program being evaluated. Referral to the program was conducted by stakeholders outside of the program and the decision making process utilized was not provided in this evaluation. Therefore this study reflects the results of these participants who may or may not reflect the female juvenile offender population in general. Participation in the program was limited to girls who were on probation and not incarcerated while they participated in the program (some of the participant had been incarcerated prior to program participation).

Call for Further Research

While the results of this study support both the efficacy of the G.I.R.L.S. Project and its theoretical premise, they also prompt more areas of inquiry and suggest the need for continued research both regarding the G.I.R.L.S. Project specifically and female juvenile offenders in general. Continued evaluation of the G.I.R.L.S Project could include examination of several of the variables that were confounds for this study, i.e. comparisons between girls who complete the program and girls who either did not complete program, were not accepted for referral, or were not referred to the program. While this study did not include the participants who began the group, but did not successfully complete the group, cursory comparisons between the two groups (completers vs. non-completers) did indicate differences on the BASC-SRP-A subscales *atypicality* and *somatization* in which the non-completers indicated more adaptive scores on both

scales. These results initially appear to be a counterintuitive; however, as the reasons provided for why the girls did not complete the group (i.e. referral to detention, transportation issues, and participation in competing services or activities) were highly varied, further research could help clarify this issue. For example, if it were found that the majority of non-completers did not finish the group because they chose to join a pro-social group such as a school athletic team or community youth group, the more adaptive score would be considered a consistent reflection of these behaviors. It would also be unlikely that they would incur a penalty from their court service worker for not completing the group if this were the case. On the other hand, if the reasons for non-completion were more negative such as being referred to detention or transportation issues, further research could provide information regarding how these two subscales might be related to non-compliance for treatment or other delinquent behavior. The BASC-SRP-A *atypicality* subscale has been shown to correlate moderately with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) *schizophrenia* scale (Reynolds & Kamphouse, 1992). While lower scores on the *schizophrenia* scale are likely to reflect individuals who are cheerful, good-natured, friendly, trustful, and adaptable, they might also reflect a tendency to be overly accepting of authority, restrained, submissive, unimaginative, and avoidant of deep and involved relationships with others (Groth-Marnat, 2003). This might suggest that the girls who did not complete the program could have been reluctant to participate in a treatment that involved forming relationships with other girls or might be less likely to problem solve transportation issues. It is also possible that being more cheerful or friendly affected how they were perceived by their court services worker, for example, they might be less likely to receive penalties as they might be perceived as in less need of services. The program could also be compared to other interventions for non-detained, female juvenile offenders.

Further investigation of the six sub-scales that did not show significant change, as well as possible interactions between the nine relational measures could also yield important information. It was interesting that *interpersonal relations* was the only relational subscale shown to move in the direction that would normally be considered negative, especially given that the other subscale chosen to represent the construct of relationship to peers, *social stress*, was the only subscale to both improve significantly and be related to (delinquent) recidivism. Given the many theories that discuss the possible influence of negative peer pressure (Smith-Adcock & Kerpelman, 2005, Galbavy, 2003, Laundra, Kiger, & Bahr, 2002, and Erickson & Jenson, 1977), it would be interesting to examine how these two subscales might be related. For example, how is the assessment of the construct of peer relations affected by the potential for the initial (pre-intervention) peer group to be a negative rather than a positive influence. In other words, if a participant is involved with a “bad crowd” when they begin treatment would improved peer relations be indicated by improving her relationships with those peers or by removing herself from that peer group? Another set of factors missing from this study are the mental health constructs that interact with the relational subscales such as mood and anxiety. In addition to providing useful information regarding defining and understanding female juvenile offenders investigating the interactions between mental health symptomatology, the relational subscales, and recidivism could provide additional information to the program regarding the profile or characteristics of the participants that either seem to benefit the most from participation or conversely, for whom the program does not appear to be as effective. For example, although *relationship to parent* and *locus of control* were not shown to be independently related to recidivism further research is needed to investigate both the lack of a significant relationship as well as how they interacted with the other subscales. It could also be useful to investigate how

the four relationship areas interact with each other. How do the girls balance the four relationship areas? Do they consider the relationship areas to be overlapping and collaborative or competitive, i.e. do they feel that improving one relationship area aids in improving the other relationship areas or do they feel that improving one requires making sacrifices in the others?

Based on the results of this study it is also clear that further research is required to investigate possible relationships between delinquency and how the girls view their relationship to school (especially their relationships with teachers). In this study the results provided evidence that despite the lack of a significant level of change between their pre-group and post-group relationship to teacher scores, a significant relationship was found between recidivism of delinquent charges and improvement in relationship to teachers. This could suggest then that even small (non statistically significant) improvements in the participants' relationship to teachers may improve their ability to refrain from engaging in delinquent behavior. Given that this relationship was not impacted by the school related charge of truancy, which is classified as an unruly charge, further research could provide insight into the how delinquency and school are related. It could also be important to research the comparison between the relationship to teacher and the relationship to parent, particularly given that, although the number of delinquent charges for girls have increased recently, unruly charges continue to account for the higher percentage of charges incurred by females. Given that the BASC-SRP-A's definition of attitude to school includes feelings of alienation one could also explore the possibility of a relationship with the improvement in social stress. Research in these areas might then result in implications for other arenas such as school based intervention, the role of teachers, and school climate.

Conclusion

The present study sought to conduct a program evaluation of the G.I.R.L.S. Project, a gender specific group therapy treatment program. The purpose of the evaluation was to investigate the ability of the program to facilitate change consistent with its' theoretical premise. The evaluation also included analysis to substantiate the theoretical premise as a means of effectively meeting the needs of female juvenile offenders. The combination of the separate analyses yielded results that indicated that the program did promote significant changes three of the four relationship areas identified by the theory (self, parent, and peer), and that relationships to peers and relationships to school substantiated possible links between the theory and pro-social behavior change. Although the results of this study could not provide clear indications of the efficaciousness of this program, they did indicate that this program warrants continuation of the program with further investigation to add to the information gathered in this evaluation.

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