

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH OUR GIRLS? SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ARE OCCURRING WITH THE FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDER POPULATION WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED.

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Abstract

The Juvenile Justice System is experiencing a historical change which cannot be ignored, notably, a change in the actions, behaviors and roles of the female juvenile offender. For the last few decades we have seen an alarming rise in the arrest rates of female juvenile offenders. This trend is causing experts in the field to begin to pay attention. Research hypothesizes many factors that might explain this rise in the female crime rate. In an attempt to recognize some of the possible causes, information and data was collected from female delinquents, pre-delinquents and offenders in all stages of the Florida Criminal Justice and Juvenile Justice Systems. Other data sources included various stakeholders within the Florida Juvenile Justice System who work with and come in contact with female offenders. The gathered data offers possible explanations why this historical trend is occurring with our girls. As law enforcement professionals we must respond and work in coordination with other juvenile justice professionals to reverse this trend and get our girls back on track.

Significance of Research

For the last ten years, statistical data concludes that the juvenile crime rate is declining within the United States. Although the overall juvenile crime rate is declining, there are areas of concern which are verified by data that cannot be ignored. Over the past two decades, a trend has surfaced which has brought attention to the Juvenile Justice System, notably the female juvenile offender. Since the 1980's the number of delinquent acts committed by females has steadily risen causing a startling difference in the historical crime trends between female offenders and their male counterparts. The research data concludes that the numbers of acts committed by male delinquents are steadily declining while the numbers of acts committed by female delinquents are steadily increasing. Female offenders are becoming more violent and entering the Juvenile Justice System at ages earlier than ever before (Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), 2007).

So, what can we infer as the cause for this historical change with our girls? Is it the decline of the family? The changing views of morality and ethics? Is it the popularity of the Hip Hop/gang culture and the glorified "thug life"? Could the answer be found within the changing roles of women within today's society? There is also generational criminality to consider. Of course there is physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, domestic violence and victimization of women to take into account as well. Is the drug culture a contributing factor? Historically, the majority of juvenile offenders have been male delinquents so

therefore the system has evolved to handle the male offender. Is the Juvenile Justice System partially to blame for the change in our female delinquency rates?

Unfortunately, there is no hard concrete evidence or data to explain why this is occurring at such an alarming rate. It is just now that experts in the field of juvenile justice are beginning to pay attention, study female trends, societal influences, contributing factors for delinquency by gender and examine what needs to happen to reverse this trend. Even though these questions cannot be answered with certainty, it is evident that something is going on with our girls as their delinquency numbers have reached a threshold which we cannot afford to overlook.

Literature Review

Early Female Criminality Theories

Until recently, the study of crime and delinquency treated the role of the female delinquent with indifference. Many criminality studies have been conducted throughout history and neither female adult or juvenile offenders have been afforded the attention given male offenders. Instead women and girls have been forgotten about or been the recipients of early criminality studies hypothesizing male envy, sexuality and morality based causation factors for their crime, criminality and criminal thinking. These early theories fail to recognize the true causes of female offender behavior and base their data on male behaviors and early societal views of women. These early theories inadequately account for gender differences, gender specific needs and male/female thought patterns.

Historically, the overall early criminologist's views and theories of the female offender were unimportant. Most female criminal acts are status offenses that are emotional and family based. (Siegel, Welsh, and Senna, 2006) Although early actual female criminals were rare some early conceptual theories of female criminology developed.

One early theory hypothesizes that women commit criminal acts because of sexual deviancy. (Thomas, 1923) Another theory, "Masculinity hypothesis", (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1895) explains female criminality as; females will commit criminal acts because they have biological and psychological traits similar to those of male criminals. In other words, women commit crimes because they look like men and act like men. Another well known theory hypothesized by Sigmund Freud explains the core reasons for female criminality as this; female offenders commit crimes because they suffer from a male inferiority complex and compensate by becoming exhibitionistic and narcissistic (Penis envy). (Flowers, 1995)

Past research has proven itself to be inapplicable as there are many variables today that influence female criminal behavior, which were not causative factors in early studies. Current research in female criminality is infantile in comparison to male criminality studies. There are many professionals in this field of study who recognized that more research needs to be done to account for many of the variables mentioned in this paper.

Changing Society

Changing social and economic conditions, generational influences and trends, environmental influences, family dynamics, cultural traditions, technology, sociological changes, physiological changes in girls and psychological changes are all factors which must be considered when studying the variables responsible for this growing female crime trend (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2007) Our society has changed so drastically within the last few decades that it is logical to state that any unexplained trend must be studied and cannot be correlated with any one causative factor.

Consequently, it has only been over the last forty to fifty years that women have empowered themselves and fought for equality within all our society, which has forced changes to traditional roles in society. Today's girls have so many more choices than generations of girls before them; it would be naïve to think that what is going on with our girls can be rationalized with one short explanation (Tracey, M. personal communication, July 25, 2007) .

The Current Juvenile Justice Systems

Since the onset of juvenile crime and criminality, the Juvenile Justice System has evolved and developed into a male oriented system designed to focus on the needs, rehabilitation and punishment of the male juvenile offender. Historically, the system was designed to accommodate young male delinquents as female delinquency was very rare. Female delinquents are expected to succeed when placed into the male oriented system; even through research indicates that females have different needs and reasoning patterns than males (Ravoira, L., 1999). Consequently, what we see from current studies, trends and statistics is the female offender will not and cannot thrive in a male oriented system (Miller, T., personal communication, August 14, 2007).

The current Juvenile Justice System is designed to punish delinquents, but is that enough? The current Juvenile Justice System can be counterproductive for girls. For example, the current system may incarcerate a girl stemming from her emotional behavior, label her as incorrigible and place her back into a home where abuse is occurring; never realizing she is a victim and often teaching her that she does not matter. This typical reaction of the system occurs well before a determination is made regarding the core cause of her delinquent behavior. Rather than assuming responsibility for the core cause of the delinquent behavior (such as abuse, depression, isolation, sense of loss or early trauma) and providing intervention services, the system further punishes the female offender and sends her deeper into the system (American Bar Association and National Bar Association, 2001).

It is without debate that from arrest to disposition and commitment to release there is a recognizable gender bias with female delinquents. These biases' can be attributed to the current systems design as well as the stakeholders within the system; the police, probation, prosecutors, judges,

teachers, parents, etc. Currently juvenile girls are disproportionately charged with status offenses, such as running away, truancy and probation violations(Siegal, Welsh and Senna, 2006). This often happens because the stakeholders within the Juvenile Justice System lack an understanding of a girl's needs, emotions and behaviors. So, the easy fix of the system is to arrest, punish and incarcerate her. Her dramatic behavior opens the door to the Juvenile Justice System which often times is the first step into the Criminal Justice System.

Pathways into the Juvenile Justice System

Research indicates that a very large number of girls entering the system have histories of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Some studies indicate that these numbers are as high as eighty percent (80%). (Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), 2007) Statistically these delinquent girls also experience academic failure, truancy, family conflict and issues, mental health disorders, control from older males, and domestic violence. Female delinquency is often tied to familial and social conflicts, (American Bar Association and National Bar Association, 2001) so one pathway to the Juvenile Justice System is tied to her drama and her acting out behavior stemming from her victimization. In fact, most of the pathways for girls into the Juvenile Justice System are tied to her need to be noticed, wanted and safe.

Attention, Family and Peers

Understanding the correlation of girls and delinquency entails knowledge and an understanding of female adolescent development and an examination of the female offender's history and past. One key component to a girls' development is the relationships and connections she will develop with others. Dr. Marty Beyer, a clinical psychologist, notes that girls enter adolescence with lower self-competence (perceived self-worth, physical appearance, social, academic and athletic competence) than boys, which may influence a girl to associate with antisocial peers as she does not feel adequate to be accepted by other positive peers and role models in her life. (American Bar Association and National Bar Association, 2001) During adolescent development the behavior of girls tends to be strongly influenced by her need to "fit in" and "be liked". Therefore, girls will often stop excelling, become less outspoken, and chose to be followers because they are searching for acceptance from their peers. They are often preoccupied with perfection and personal and social appearances. Adolescent girls tend to seek attention and acceptance and this attention can be negative or positive.

Typically adolescent girls are emotional and may react as such with outside authority figures like the teachers, police or probation officers. These emotional outburst and behaviors are often self defense mechanisms against past trauma, and may be perceived by the outside world as aggressive, oppositional or attention seeking. It is notable that families of delinquent girls

have high rates of emotional mother-daughter conflict. (American Bar Association and National Bar Association, 2001) Notably, incidents of domestic violence are very common in families with female delinquency. Often, these delinquent girls will look for attention from older males who are viewed as a safe haven from the dysfunctional turmoil of the family relationship.

Mental Health Issues and Substance Abuse

Notably most delinquent girls have been victimized by abuse and violence and will often choose to numb their pain of childhood trauma with alcohol and drugs. Mental health issues such as psychiatric and conduct disorders like depression, anxiety, physical and sexual abuse are key risk factors for substance use and abuse. (Office of National Drug Policy, 2006) Depression in female delinquents is common but often not recognized as a core cause of delinquent behavior. Girls who have been victimized are often more likely to run away to escape the abuse, thus creating their pathway into the system.

Trends

Recent historical and statistical trends have developed interest in the correlation between gender and delinquency. Although the female delinquency rates are still much lower than their male delinquent counterparts, much attention is focused on the growing trend of female delinquency. Interestingly, this trend is in total contrast to male offenders where statistical data indicates arrest rates of male juvenile offenders are tapering off or declining.

- The female proportion of delinquency cases increased from 19% in 1991 to 29% in 2003 (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006)
- In 2004, females accounted for 30% of all juvenile arrests, 19% of juvenile violent crime arrests, and 34% of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests (Snyder, 2006)
- A greater proportion of female than male delinquents are detained while girls are often detained for less serious crimes than boys (American Bar Association and National Bar Association, 2001)
- Females were more likely than males to be detained for simple assault, technical violations and status offenses (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006)
- Girls were more likely than boys to be sexually victimized (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006)
- Girls are getting arrested at younger ages: 40% of all girls reported committing their first offense before the age of 13 (Patino, Ravoiro, and Wolf, 2006).
- Female gang membership, although difficult to ascertain, is up as much as 28 % in the last 30 years (Moore and Hagedorn, 2001). "It is reasonable to conclude that girls represent a substantial proportion of gang members, probably somewhere between one-

fourth and one-third of all gang members.” (Maxson and Whitlock, 2002)

- There has been approximately 140% increase in crimes committed by females since 1970 (Broidy and Cauffman, (2006)
- Females are more likely than males to become poly drug users and experiment with hard drugs such as heroin (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2006)

The fundamental question and concern the entire Juvenile Justice System must examine is “what is happening with our girls?” Why are we seeing such a trend in female delinquency and criminality? This paper will provide an insight and an understanding of why this trend is occurring by examining gender specific trends, gender specific pathways and gender specific programming within the current Juvenile Justice System. The paper will attempt to provide an understanding of the correlation of girls, delinquency and current societal influences which might explain what is happening to our girls.

Several stakeholders and offenders within the current Juvenile Justice System were asked to help explain this trend and find a correlation between what we are doing wrong and what we need to do to reverse the growing female delinquency trend. This study did not reveal any revolutionary answers or concrete hypotheses answering why this is happening but the study did suggest that the entire system needs to pay attention to common factors for why this is happening. Secondly, it reveals that what is currently going on within the juvenile justice system is not working for girls. The system must examine its needs and focus on a change.

Methods

As evident by current research there is no hard and fast answer to what is happening to our girls. Therefore, capturing data from experts including judges and gender specific program professionals as well as the girls within the system (from at risk to incarceration) was essential to answering the research goal. In order to acquire the needed data, surveys and personal interviews were conducted.

Several variations of a questionnaire were sent to different stakeholders in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System. These questionnaires were similar, yet specific to their intended audience. Each variation of the questionnaire attempted to answer questions relevant to this research document.

First, a questionnaire was developed for judges within the Fifteenth (15th) and Twentieth (20th) Judicial Circuits of Florida. The questionnaire was simple, yet succinct, requesting data and information collected or observed as members of the judiciary with years of experience in hearing juvenile cases and observing female juvenile behaviors and trends. The questionnaires contained a cover letter explaining the research project, intent of the data and an understanding of what the paper would attempt to accomplish. The document attempted to collect

the core causes of the growing trend. Several follow up phone calls and conversations were helpful in the data collection process.

Secondly, several personal interviews were conducted with professional gender specific practitioners who work in the female gender specific programming community. These professionals were given details of the intent and purpose of this research and were asked the same questions as the judges. Their insight was invaluable.

Thirdly, a questionnaire was developed for the “at risk” population of teen girls. This questionnaire was specific to data collection for common reasons why this might be happening. Personal questions were asked about abuse, drugs, society influences, family and criminal history, and gender specific issues and stereotypes. With the assistance of the gender specific PACE program, a group interview and discussion was conducted with this at risk population. The discussion was candid and pertinent to this research as the girls felt comfortable and safe within the discussion and environment.

Finally a questionnaire was developed and delivered to seventy-nine (79) incarcerated adult and juvenile female offenders currently involved in the justice system. The offender survey instrument was personally delivered to female offenders within three separate jail facilities. Upon arrival at each jail facility, a Correctional Officer escorted me into the female housing blocks and all the incarcerated female offenders within the housing blocks were invited to confer in a common area of the block to discuss the goal of this survey. A short explanation of the goal of this research, limitations of the study and qualifications of the offenders needed to complete the study were discussed with the female offenders prior to any survey instruments being distributed. Each of the participating offenders were asked only about their juvenile histories and requested to answer the questions only about their juvenile histories and experiences. All the female offenders were assured of anonymity with the data and instrument used. The questions on this survey document were personal and included some criminal, abuse, family and drug history related questions. The survey also required the offenders to hypothesize about their personal juvenile behaviors, experiences and explain why they feel they began to commit delinquent behavior. This method of data collection was chosen to allow an open environment where delinquents and offenders would feel comfortable with the survey instrument and realize that the data could not be used against them, reveal any confidential or personal information, nor violate any juvenile confidentiality laws to the readers of this paper. It should be noted that all of the female offenders surveyed were very cooperative and forthcoming.

Results

Respondent Information

- Twenty (20)-Judges from the 20th and 15th Judicial Circuit of Florida
 - Five (5) surveys returned from the 20th Judicial Circuit
- Five Gender Specific Programming Professionals
 - Two (2) Professionals from PACE Center for Girls

- Three (3) Female Mental Health Professionals
- Fifteen (15)-“At- risk” female juveniles
 - Nine (9) PACE Center for Girls juveniles
 - Six (6) diversionary program juveniles
- Six (6)- Female juvenile delinquents
 - Three (3)Manatee County juvenile delinquents
 - Three (3) Orange County juvenile delinquents
- Seventy-three (73)- Young incarcerated female adult offenders with juvenile delinquency history from three separate Florida county jail facilities (Collier, Orange and Manatee Counties)
 - Two (2) of the three (3) jail facilities allowed all females offenders the opportunity to participate, the other was selective in the population of female offenders to be surveyed
 - Ten (10)-Collier County adult female offenders involved in a drug offender program-“Project Recovery”
 - Twenty-one (21) Manatee County general population adult female offenders
 - Thirty-six (36) Orange County general population adult female offenders

In view of the fact that four separate versions of the survey were sent to four separate populations within the system, there were many similarities within the returned data. Compiling the data from each of the surveys was somewhat timely however very noteworthy. The data collection process was compiled in two separate ways. First, the data collected on all returned survey instruments was utilized to compile the hard data included in the tables below. Second, the personal conversations with the female offenders, the interviews with the program professionals and the follow up telephone calls from the judges surveyed were documented with notes and comments. Some of these personal comments are included in the text of this paper.

Since the chosen method of data collection for the majority of the surveys was personal contact and personal interviews, the survey response rate from the juvenile delinquents, young adult offenders, “at-risk” girls, and the gender specific programming professionals was one-hundred percent (100%).

The response rate from the judiciary was not as remarkable, as a twenty-five (25%) return rate was yielded from the judicial questionnaires. The surveys returned from the judiciary were returned by judges within the 20th Judicial Circuit currently assigned to the juvenile bench or judges who had served a considerable amount of time in the juvenile court. Most of the judges asked to participate in the survey expressed through follow up phone calls that they did not spend enough time on the juvenile bench to feel comfortable in participating in the survey. This limited the data, the respondent field and the number of returned surveys from this group of respondents.

Notably, this data did reveal many similarities which parallel and verify what current research states are contributing factors to female delinquency and are pathways for girls into the Juvenile Justice System. Focusing on the seventy-nine (79) delinquent female offenders (noting that the adult offenders were asked about their juvenile histories only) Table One (1) indicates the demographics on the population surveyed. Table One (1) reveals data which is relevant to offender similarities and the contributing factors or pathways for girls into the Juvenile Justice System. The percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 1.OFFENDER DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	Percentages
Number of arrests as juvenile delinquents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never arrested as a juvenile-although involved in delinquent behavior • Arrested only once • Arrested between 1 and 3 times • Arrested 4-5 times • Arrested 5 or more times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29.1% • 22.8% • 29.1% • 10.1% • 10.1%
Age of first delinquent act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 13 • 13-14 • 15-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4% • 58.2% • 25.3%
Most serious delinquent act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-violent felon • violent felony • misdemeanor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4% • 22.3% • 61.1%
Victims of Abuse-physical or sexual	• 70.8%
Drug and Alcohol involved as juveniles	• 79.7%
Family dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lived with both parents • live with one or neither parent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31.6% • 68.3%
Generational Criminality-	• 32.9%
Gang involved	• 12.6%
Societal influence-hip hop culture/thug life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influences criminal behaviors • Does not influence criminal behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59.4% • 40.5%

The data indicates that approximately seventy-one percent (71%) of the respondents were victims of abuse, and eighty percent (80%) were alcohol or drug involved as juveniles. Only thirty-two percent (32 %) of the respondents

lived with both parents, and approximately thirty-three percent (33%) lived with parents who were involved in the Criminal Justice System. Thirteen percent (13%) were gang involved, and interestingly sixty percent (60%) of the respondents believe that the hip hop culture encourages girls to become crime, gang and drug involved as society has glorified this culture. In addition, all of these are known contributing factors and pathways for females into the criminal justice system.

Respondents’ Hypotheses and Opinions

The question “why do you think girls are becoming more criminally involved?” was posed to the entire population of the study research group. The responses and reasons revealed by the respondents to this question are summarized and documented within Table Two (2). It should be stated that most respondents indicated several reasons why they believe this trend is occurring. It should be noted that this question was an opinion of all the respondents and was not necessarily the personal reasons why the offenders became criminally involved. Table Two indicates the first two reasons stated by each respondent and it should also be noted that if a respondent only indicated one reason for this trend then only a single reason was compiled in the chart.

Table2.INDICATORS OF GROWING FEMALE CRIMINALITY AND BEHAVIORS

Indicators	Percentages
BOYS -impressing, seeking attention and following their lead	52.2 %
FAMILY -decline in traditional values, two parent home, good moral role models, religious affiliations, time spent together, time with parents, attention from parents	49.7 %
Indicators	Percentages
DRUGS - personal drug use or dealing drugs was a way to monetarily support the family.	31.3 %
SOCIETY -hip hop sub-culture, thug life, changing roles of women, gang “blood in blood out” mentality	28.3 %
PEERS - to fit in	20.8 %
ABUSE - physical and sexual	13.4%
THE SYSTEM -not recognizing the gender differences and needs of delinquent girls.	11.9 %
MENTAL HEALTH - depression, stress	5.9 %
SURVIVAL - feed the family	3 %

The data revealed that the three leading indicators of growing female criminality are the influences of males, the family and drugs. First, it is evident that boys have a strong influence on girls’ choices and behaviors; this is verified by current gender specific research. Second, familial influences tend to be a factor in criminal behavior as seen in the chart listed above and this can be compared to the influence of the changing family. Third, drugs and societal norms tend to influence the female offender as seen in the rise of drug use by

females. All this data correlates with relevant gender specific studies correlating girls' needs and behaviors.

Personal Interviews and Communications

While speaking to the "at risk" population and the offender population, many discussions developed from the survey questionnaire. The most consistent discussion with all the respondents surveyed was the influence of males and drugs on females and their behaviors. One thing became evident within that discussion; although girls and women are strongly influenced by men and boys, women want to be treated as equals. The need to attain attention and impress boys often is in conflict with the need to protect themselves from abuse and being victims of men or society. As discussed with the group of young "at risk" girls, females are tired of being victims of abuse at the hands of men and society. During one discussion, one young "at risk" girl stated, "It's not ok to be a victim, I want to be strong. I'm tired of being less than a man" (Anonymous Youth, personal communication, September 6, 2007). Another girl exclaimed "its girls' turn to change" (Anonymous Youth, personal communication, September 6, 2007). Regarding her thought on female crime, an adult offender stated that women feel "pressure to stand by their man, peer pressure to be the strongest most daring girl, pressure to impress their man and not to be scared of anything, all the while being soft, feminine, a good lover and a good mother" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 11, 2007). Consequently, this is what is happening to girls, they are changing and moving away from historical stereotypes and roles. Many girls feel personal conflict with the change and don't know how to adapt or respond to the changes.

Another consistent topic of discussion with the respondents was drug use and abuse. As the purpose of this study was being posed to a group of incarcerated offenders, one young offender immediately yelled from her cell her thoughts on the growing trend, she stated "DRUGS, DRUGS, DRUGS" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 11, 2007). This comment caused another woman to immediately yell from her cell and state that "IF IT WASN'T FOR DRUGS I WOULDN'T BE IN HERE (jail)" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 11, 2007). Further discussions indicated that the offenders agree that most juvenile girls begin their drug use for one of two reasons: 1) as a mask for their problems and pain (victimization); and 2) because they were seeking attention.

Discussion

Conclusions of Research-Changing Roles, Changing Society, Changing Girls

Since the 1960's there have been significant changes for women in our society. Changes have occurred in the woman's role in society, drug usage, family and societal values have changed. We can examine all these changes and equate each as a contributing factor to the rising female arrest rates. There

are many other factors that play a role in the growing trend of female delinquency. Gender differences in cognition, socialization and behavior between males and females play a large role in the trend of growing female delinquency as well (Segal, Welsh and Senna, 2006). What can be stated with certainty is that there are many reasons why this is happening to our girls. This data reveals that societal influences, family influences, drugs and attention seeking are large determining factors to female juvenile criminality.

The data revealed that female crime is greatly influenced by societal norms and conditions, as today's youthful "gangsta" culture is very influential on our adolescents. The cultural messages sent to our female youth are causing a change in our girls and what we expect of them. "It is logical to believe that a teen cannot be exposed to gangster rap, violent movies, MTV, pornography, and lawlessness in video games for hours and hours a day, seven days a week, month after month, year after year and not expect a be influenced by it" (D. Schurman, personal communication, August 16, 2007).

In this gangster rap sub-culture girls are portrayed as "hoes" and "bitches" and it is accepted. Consequently these are messages which belittle and degrade female roles in our society. In this "gangsta" subculture our girls are bombarded with messages of degradation and stereotypes which humiliate and belittle them. Furthermore, within this sub-culture, there are few female role models who reject this image and portrayal of women. One offender wrote, girls begin to commit crimes more and more "because of the whole hip hop sub-culture, all the music is centered around 'hoes', '\$' and sellin' drugs and guns and how it's cool to be dependent on the Gov. and not be independent and what can I get attitude." (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 12, 2007). The power of the gang-thug culture has begun to change our girls.

It is no secret that overall drug usage is up within the entire population. The data revealed that eighty (80%) of the surveyed population was drug involved as juveniles. This is consistent with national statistics.

An offender who has been using drugs since age eight (8) states she used drugs because of "sexual, physical and emotional abuse growing up" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 11, 2007). Another young offender stated "I turned to drugs to cover my feelings of sexual abuse" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 12, 2007). One adult offender stated, I used drugs because they "lightened my fears" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 11, 2007). Still another offender stated I used drugs because of "peer pressure, I got high with my schoolmates and then by myself and then became an addict" (Anonymous Offender, personal communication, October 11, 2007). All of these young women's statements are consistent with the national data and research on female drug use. It should be pointed out the drugs are one of the consistent pathways women chose into the Juvenile Justice system. Since this data is not revolutionary, it appears that the focus of drug usage and prevention should be on investigating the reasons why girls use drugs.

The traditional family as we once knew it has changed and evolved over time. The "Leave it to Beaver" family is just a memory. Most of the surveyed

population of young offenders was open about their families and their situations growing up. About 31% of the offender population grew up in a two parent family, but this does not necessarily mean the traditional two parent family of a biological mother and father living together as a unit. Even though thirty-one percent (31%) of the offenders lived with two parents in their home, still many of the offenders expressed concerns about their parents not being there for them. In general the offender population stated they did not have the discipline at home they wanted, because Mom and Dad or their guardians were busy working, were not there for them, felt their parent did not care or were involved in drugs and crime themselves. Some also felt they did not get the attention they craved, so they went seeking attention from others. Reviewing the data further reveals that many of the offenders have realized that their decisions to become crime involved stemmed from rebellious and attention seeking behaviors directed at either their parents or a boy whom they liked. Early female criminologist concluded that female delinquency was linked to sexual deviancy or male envy. These theories, now ignored have the current research indicating that female delinquency is very complex and should not be paralleled with male delinquency. Girls are complicated and should be afforded the attention boys have been.

As discussed, gender differences do have an effect on crime patterns and their impact on the way girls are treated within the Juvenile Justice System. Regardless of their origin, gender distinctions may partly explain the significant gender differences in the delinquency rate. It's elementary to state girls are different than boys, but the most simplistic concepts are the ones often overlooked.

Girls still suffer injustice within the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System. Research indicates girls are more likely to be incarcerated than boys and taken into custody by police. (Siegel, Welsh and Senna, 2006) Although girls are still committing less violent crimes than boys they are more likely to be immersed in the system. While in the system girls will receive fewer benefits and services than their male counterparts (Siegel, Welsh and Senna, 2006).

In addition there appears to be a correlation between societal standards of women's roles and sexual deviancy. Girls are at a disadvantage when their behavior is viewed as morally deviant and are viewed as incorrigible. Even though girls are less likely to be arrested than boys, those arrested fail to measure up to stereotypes of acceptable female behavior.

Recommendations

Several issues need to be addressed and discussed throughout the system to help turn the growing female arrest rates around.

- More research should be done on what are the causative factors to this trend on growing female delinquency;
- More Research should be done on female juvenile and adult offenders regarding pathways into the juvenile justice system;
- Educate all entities and stakeholders within the current Juvenile Justice System on female needs and why girls do what they do;

- Develop more gender specific programs for “at risk” and offender populations;
- Create more gender specific drug treatment opportunities for female youthful offenders;
- Legislate legal discretionary opportunities for law enforcement, probation and the judiciary to react to girls behaviors by creating alternatives to incarceration that fit their crime;
 - (Some current laws require law enforcement, probation and the judiciary no discretion or zero tolerance for certain offenses or criminal violations. Girls are emotional and often experience law enforcement encounters because of violent familial or peer encounters. Current domestic violence laws do not allow for officer discretion in any situation, an arrest is mandated for any violent encounter. Consequently, incarcerating a young female because she is acting out with emotion does not help her; in fact it teaches her that her pain and past victimization do not matter. In this instance, the laws, policies and procedures of the current system has created her pathway into the Juvenile Justice System. Changing the law to allow for discretion by stakeholders, and create opportunities for intervention without a pathway into the Juvenile Justice System seems to make sense. Alternatives to incarceration in some instances might help, allow her to express herself and meet her needs but would not allow her pathway into system.)
- Create legal alternatives to incarceration for appropriate offenses which now have no discretion within the law.

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**APPENDIX A
OFFENDER QUESTIONNAIRE**

PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THE BEST YOU CAN

1. How many times were you arrested as a juvenile?

None	Only once	1-2	3-5	more than 5
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2. At what age did you commit your first crime?

Under 13	13-14	15-17
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3. What was the most serious crime you committed as a juvenile?

Violent Felony	Non-violent Felony	Misdemeanor
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4. Were you physically abused as a child? Y N

5. Were you a victim of sexual abuse? Y N

6. Were you drug or alcohol involved as a juvenile offender? Y N

7. Who did you live with as a child?

One parent	Both parents	Neither parent
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8. Were either of your parents/guardians criminally involved? Y N

9. Did you go to a juvenile facility? Y N

10. If so, were there gender specific programs which helped you? Y N

11. Were you in a gang? Y N

12. Do you think that the current culture (hip hop) encourages girls to use
Drugs or commit crime? Y N

13. Why did you begin to commit crimes?

14. Why do you think girls are becoming more criminality involved?

APPENDIX B
“AT RISK” QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please tell me about your family. I was born in _____
and live in _____ with my

_____.

2. I go to PACE and I am in the _____ grade and I am _____ years old.

3. When I finish school I would like to _____

_____.

4. The best thing I like about myself is _____.

5. The worse thing I dislike about myself is _____.

6. Why is there such a place like PACE? _____.

7. Why do people need to recognize that girls are different than boys?

_____.

8. Why do you think that girls get into trouble?

_____.

9. What makes a girl do things that gets her in trouble?

_____.

10. Why are more girls getting into trouble lately?

_____.

11. What kinds of things do girls do to get into trouble?

_____.

12. Do as many girls use drugs as boys?

_____.

13. Why do girls join gangs?

_____.

14. What things should change to help girls stay out of trouble?

_____.

15. If you could change anything what would it be?

_____.

16. Why do you think that the crime rates in boys are going down when the crime rates in girls are going up?

_____.

_____.

17. Does the world treat you different than boys? (The school, the court system, your boss, your family?)

_____.

_____.

APPENDIX C
JUDGES QUESTIONNAIRE

What's going on with our girls?

Significant changes are occurring within the Juvenile Justice System
which cannot be ignored.

For the last ten years, statistical data concludes that the juvenile crime rate is declining within the United States. Although the overall juvenile crime rate is declining, there are areas of concern which are verified by data that cannot be ignored. Over the past two decades, a trend has surfaced which has brought attention to the Juvenile Justice System notably the female juvenile offender. Since the 1980's the number of delinquent acts committed by females has steadily risen causing a startling difference in the historical trends between female offenders and their male counterparts. The research data concludes that the numbers of acts committed by male delinquents are steadily declining while the numbers of acts committed by female delinquents are steadily increasing. Female offenders are becoming more violent and entering the juvenile justice system at ages earlier than ever before. So, what can we infer as the cause for this historical change with our girls? Is it the decline of the family? The changing views of morality and ethics? Is it the popularity of the Hip Hop/gang culture and the glorified "thug life"? What about concept of generation "me". Could the answer be found within the changing roles of women within today's society? There is also generational criminality to consider. Of course there is physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, domestic violence and victimization of women to take into account as well. Is the popularity of the drug culture a contributing factor? Historically, the majority of juvenile offenders have been male delinquents and consequently the system has been designed to handle the male

offender. Hence, is the juvenile justice system infrastructure and lack of gender specific programming partially to blame for the change in our female delinquency rates?

Unfortunately, there is no hard concrete evidence or data to explain why this is occurring at such an alarming rate. Although these questions cannot be answered with certainty, it is evident that something is going on within the female juvenile population as their delinquency numbers have reached a threshold which we cannot afford to overlook.

Questions to be answered:

- Why is a small segment of the juvenile population (female offenders) becoming more criminally active?
- Why are girls committing more crimes and becoming more violent, and committing more violent crimes than ever before?
- What are the core causes of this growing trend?
- Please comment on the statement above...

APPENDIX D
GENDER SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL

Thank you for taking the time to express your expertise

1. Why is there such a place like PACE?
2. Why do people need to recognize that girls are different than boys?
3. Why do you think that girls get into trouble?
4. What makes a girl do things that gets her in trouble?
5. Why are more girls getting into trouble lately?
6. What kinds of things do girls do to get into trouble?
7. Do as many girls use drugs as boys?
8. Why do girls join gangs?
9. Why does a girl struggle to survive in “the system?”
10. What things should change to help girls stay out of trouble?
11. If you could change anything what would it be?
12. Why do you think that the crime rates in boys are going down when the crime rates in girls are going up?
13. Why does the world treat girls different than boys? (The school, the court system, employers and family?)
14. Please respond to the problem statement for which this paper is based.

For the last ten years, statistical data concludes that the juvenile crime rate is declining within the United States. Although the overall juvenile crime rate is declining, there are areas of concern which are verified by data that cannot be ignored. Over the past two decades, a trend has surfaced which has brought attention to the Juvenile Justice System notably the female juvenile offender. Since the 1980's the number of delinquent acts committed by females has steadily risen causing a startling difference in the

historical trends between female offenders and their male counterparts. The research data concludes that the numbers of acts committed by male delinquents are steadily declining while the numbers of acts committed by female delinquents are steadily increasing. Female offenders are becoming more violent and entering the juvenile justice system at ages earlier than ever before. So, what can we infer as the cause for this historical change with our girls? Is it the decline of the family? The changing views of morality and ethics? Is it the popularity of the Hip Hop/gang culture and the glorified “thug life”? What about concept of generation “me”. Could the answer be found within the changing roles of women within today’s society? There is also generational criminality to consider. Of course there is physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, domestic violence and victimization of women to take into account as well. Is the popularity of the drug culture a contributing factor? Historically, the majority of juvenile offenders have been male delinquents and consequently the system has been designed to handle the male offender. Hence, is the juvenile justice system infrastructure and lack of gender specific programming partially to blame for the change in our female delinquency rates?

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