



# Girls in Minnesota Correctional Facilities:

## Responses to the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey

December 2011



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS



# Girls in Minnesota Correctional Facilities: Responses to the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey

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# Acknowledgements

## Acknowledgements

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## Juvenile Correctional Facilities Participating in the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey

- Anoka County Secure Juvenile Center, Lino Lakes, Pines School
- Anoka County Non-Secure Shelter Facility, Lino Lakes, Pines School
- Arrowhead Juvenile Center, Duluth, Arrowhead Academy
- Boys Totem Town, St. Paul
- Dakota County Juvenile Services Center, Hastings, Riverside School
- East Central Regional Juvenile Center, Lino Lakes, Pines School
- Hayward Group Home, Albert Lea
- Heartland Ranch, Benson
- Hennepin County Home School, Minnetonka, Epsilon Program
- Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center, Minneapolis, Stadium View School
- ITASKIN Juvenile Center, Itasca, ITASKIN Education Center
- Kids' Peace Mesabi, Buhl, Mesabi Academy
- Mille Lacs Academy, Onamia
- Minnesota Correctional Facility: Red Wing, Walter Maginnis High School
- Minnesota Correctional Facility: Togo, Alice O'Brien School
- Northwestern Minnesota Juvenile Center, Bemidji, First City School
- Prairie Lakes Juvenile Detention Center, Willmar, Prairie Lakes School
- Ramsey County Juvenile Services Center, St. Paul
- Red Lake Juvenile Detention Center, Red Lake Nation
- Southwest Youth Services, Magnolia
- Village Ranch, Cokato
- Washington County Juvenile Detention Center, Stillwater
- West Central Regional Juvenile Center, Moorhead
- Woodland Hills, Duluth, Woodland Hills Academy

For a map of participating and non-participating facilities in Minnesota, see Appendix B. In order to participate in this study, sites had to provide residential detention or correctional services and have an education program onsite.

# Executive Summary

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) is a 127-item questionnaire administered every three years to 6th, 9th and 12th graders in Minnesota public schools. The survey includes a wide variety of questions related to youth attitudes, behaviors and health indicators. Questions reflect a range of protective factors including connectedness to school, family and community, as well as risk factors such as drug and alcohol use, violence and victimization. The survey originated in 1989 with the most recent administration occurring in 2010. In 2010, 88 percent of school districts participated. In total, 71 percent of 6th, 9th and 12th graders (roughly 131,000 students) completed the 2010 MSS. Twenty-four residential juvenile correctional facilities with onsite education programs also participated in the 2010 MSS.

This purpose of this report is to explore the unique experiences and responses of girls in Minnesota's juvenile correctional facilities (n=103) as compared to boys (n=481). Understanding protective factors and risk factors related to delinquency that are influenced by gender can assist juvenile justice serving entities in providing services and interventions to the unique needs of females. This report seeks to illuminate statistically significant differences in responses between girls and boys in correctional facilities; to explore how these data are relevant to research on juvenile justice risk factors by gender; and to provide research-based recommendations for serving the specific needs of juvenile female offenders.

Girls and boys in juvenile correctional facilities who participated in the 2010 MSS often had statistically significant differences in responses when self-reporting experiences and behaviors. The responses of girls generally support a wide body of research which posits that girls in the juvenile justice system have unique risk and protective factors or have a unique sensitivity to their effects. The following sections are selected content and findings from the report.

## Girls and Boys: Differential Pathways and System Responses

- Females and males often follow different pathways into the juvenile justice system. For nearly every offense, girls engage in less delinquency than boys. Girls are less likely to engage in serious, violent crime and more likely to be involved in non-violent property and drug offenses, as well as status offenses such as running away, truancy, underage drinking and curfew violations.
- Girls and boys have different levels of exposure to certain delinquency risk factors, as well as different sensitivity to their effects. Girls are more sensitive to the effects of family conflict; experience more sexual victimization and mental health-related issues; and are at a heightened risk for delinquency associated with the social changes of early puberty than boys.
- Research indicates that the juvenile justice system has differential responses to girls' and boys' behavior. Girls are more strictly held accountable than boys for violating social norms around fighting, aggression or family conflict. Conversely, some system responses are intended to protect girls more than boys, such as curfew and truancy enforcement, or being detained for running away.

## Data Findings: Differences Between Girls and Boys in Juvenile Correctional Facilities

- Boys outnumber girls in Minnesota correctional facilities. Demographically, girls are younger than boys and are more likely to identify as American Indian or multi-racial.
- Forty percent of girls report being forced to do something sexual against their wishes either by someone inside their family or a perpetrator outside their family, rates which are two and a half to three times higher than boys.

# Executive Summary

- Girls are five times more likely to report being forced to do something sexual in a dating relationship, and four times more likely to be hurt, threatened or made afraid by someone they were going out with. Girls also report nearly twice as much sexual harassment at school in the form of unwanted looks, comments and gestures.
- Girls are statistically more likely to report feeling angry and irritable; unhappy or depressed; worried or nervous; discouraged and hopeless; under stress or pressure; and have difficulty concentrating. Girls report more physical sickness, including headaches and stomachaches, which are potentially physical manifestations of emotional health problems.
- Girls are more likely to report the presence of an ongoing mental or emotional health disorder and having received mental health treatment.
- Girls are nearly twice as likely as boys to report hurting themselves on purpose, and over twice as likely to report a suicide attempt.
- Over half of girls in correctional facilities report running away at least once in the past year; nearly three in 10 ran away three or more times. Running away from home puts all youth, and girls especially, in a position of being further victimized or exploited.
- A greater percentage of girls report using alcohol and other drugs than boys. Girls also report starting to use substances at age 13 or younger more often than boys. Despite more chemical use by girls and more reports of having negative physical social and emotional consequences associated with chemical use, girls are not statistically more likely than boys to have received alcohol or drug treatment.

Girls do not differ from boys in some areas that are considered to be protective factors for youth. Girls are statistically as likely as boys to report that their parents, teachers and other adults at school care for them, and feel safe at school and in their neighborhoods. Girls articulate higher educational aspirations but do not report significantly higher academic performance than boys. Girls also report more truancy than boys.

## Practice Implications: Gender-Responsive Interventions

Research and data on risk and protective factors related to female delinquency reveal that girls in the juvenile justice system have unique experiences and needs as compared to boys. Gender-responsive interventions are those that address the unique risk factors of girls as well as build upon girls' assets, strengths and protective factors. The following are key ideas in policy and program development in serving adolescent female offenders:

- **Appropriate Risk Assessment:** Often tools designed to assess risk, or the presence of mental health or chemical health issues, are created and validated for boys or men. Assessment of risk for girls should use tools that have gender-based development and validity. This process may include separate validation on female populations; gender-specific questions; separate versions for girls and boys; and scoring adjustments related to boys' and girls' unique response patterns. When risk assessment instruments are used on girls that do not accurately predict risk, misclassification can result in an ineffective level of services.
- **Full Continuum of Services:** Not unlike boys, girls need programs and interventions along the entire juvenile justice service continuum. Prevention efforts can precede the onset of any specific risk and be focused on knowledge, skills and healthy relationship development. Intervention and treatment identify concerning attitudes or interrupt established patterns of behavior. Aftercare supports girls who have received a treatment intervention to practice new skills in their lives and prevent recidivism. Parity and fairness in programming and access to services is an issue relevant to girls' delinquency. Fewer resources, especially community-based options, exist for justice system-involved girls.
- **Gender-Responsive Programming:** Gender-responsive programs are those that are designed to meet the unique needs of female offenders; that value the female perspective, and work to change

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established attitudes that prevent or discourage girls from recognizing their potential. The following are key elements of gender-responsive programming:

- Physically and emotionally safe spaces, separate from boys.
- Staff trained to understand female development and the issues that most affect girls in the justice system, including victimization and trauma.
- Case plans that are based on each girl’s individual service needs and assets in the context of their complete social history.
- Content that emphasizes the importance of healthy relationships for girls, female development and sexual health, pregnancy and parenting, and self-care.
- Provide education related to social and cognitive-behavioral skills, academic achievement and vocational skills.
- Strength-based with an empowerment focus to assist girls in increasing self-esteem, perceptions of self-worth and increase resiliency to adversity.

Data from the 2010 MSS support the need for gender-responsive services for girls in the juvenile justice system. Gender-responsive programming acknowledges girls’ unique pathways into the juvenile justice system; high prevalence of physical and sexual victimization among girls; underlying reasons for girls’ chemical use; and that girls have mental and emotional health issues related to depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder at rates significantly higher than boys.

While gender-specific programming exists in Minnesota, it has yet to be integrated into all aspects of service delivery. As practitioners, gender-responsive approaches must be integrated into all level of service and treatment for girls. As policy makers, we must review our arrest, detention, prosecution, and placement laws and policies to ensure that the system response does not result in an unintentional overrepresentation of girls in the juvenile justices system or create different levels of accountability for girls and boys due to gender-bias of system professionals.

# Introduction

## Minnesota Student Survey Overview

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) is a 127-item questionnaire administered every three years to 6th, 9th and 12th graders in Minnesota public schools. The survey includes a wide variety of questions related to youth attitudes, behaviors and health indicators. Questions reflect a range of protective factors including connectedness to school, family and community, as well as risk factors such as drug and alcohol use, violence and victimization.<sup>1</sup> The survey originated in 1989 with the most recent administration occurring in 2010.

Content of the MSS is collaboratively determined by the Minnesota departments of Education, Health, Human Services and Public Safety. Many of the questions are dictated by state or federal data collection requirements. Participation in the survey is voluntary such that school districts elect to participate and any individual student may refuse to participate for any reason. Participation in the MSS has historically been high: in 2010, 88 percent of school districts participated. In total, 71 percent of 6th, 9th and 12th graders (roughly 131,000 students) took the 2010 MSS.<sup>2</sup>

## Purpose

This purpose of this report is to explore the unique experiences and responses of girls in Minnesota's juvenile correctional facilities to the 2010 MSS. Understanding protective and risk factors related to delinquency that are influenced by gender can assist juvenile justice-serving entities in catering services and interventions to the unique needs of females. This report seeks to illuminate statistically significant differences in responses between girls and boys in correctional

facilities; explore how these data are relevant to research on juvenile justice risk factors by gender; and provide research-based recommendations for serving the specific needs of juvenile female offenders.

This report is the second in a series. The first report, *Youth in Correctional Facilities: Responses to the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey*, explores how the responses of youth in Minnesota correctional facilities compare to those of a matched sample of youth in mainstream school settings.<sup>i</sup> A third report, focusing specifically on youth in correctional facilities who self-report experiencing trauma and victimization, will be released in fall 2011.

## Methodology

In 2010, 24 out of a possible 29 residential juvenile correctional facilities with onsite education programs participated in the MSS. Twenty-three facilities<sup>ii</sup> were licensed by the Minnesota Department of Corrections and one facility operated under tribal authority. This represents an 83 percent juvenile correctional facility participation rate. There are additional licensed residential correctional programs in Minnesota, but the youth in these placements attend public schools where they would have the opportunity to take the MSS along with other youth.

Locked or "secure facilities" were specifically encouraged to participate because youth in secure placements were least likely to have had the opportunity to take the survey in their home school district. In addition, youth who meet the criteria for admission to secure correctional facilities represent some of Minnesota's highest-risk juvenile offenders. While some of the

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<sup>i</sup> Link to report on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs website: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/12010%20Youth%20Corrections%20Report.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Of these facilities, 11 had secure beds only; five have secure and non-secure beds; and eight have non-secure beds only. Responses from youth in correctional facilities represent a mixture of youth meeting criteria for secure placement and those for whom a non-secure setting is adequate to meet their needs. Schools within correctional facilities were permitted to administer the survey in a manner that was logistically feasible to their operation. Youth held in detention following arrest or pending court may not have been surveyed because of the high turn-over rate of these youth. As such, the sample of youth in correctional facilities may also over-represent youth who are in the facilities on longer term, residential placements. For specific information about the characteristics of participating survey sites, please see Appendix A.

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participating facilities have secure programming, it was not a requirement for survey participation or inclusion in this report. As such, participating facilities represent secure and non-secure facilities, as well as facilities with both secure and non-secure programs.

Of the 24 participating facilities, 16 surveyed both girls and boys; seven surveyed boys only; and one surveyed girls only. Some facilities are exclusive to one gender but the majority serves both. Coed facilities may have surveyed only boys because girls were not housed in the facility on the day of the MSS or because girls elected not to participate.

This report compares the responses of boys (n=481) to girls (n=103) within the juvenile correctional facility population. Using an analysis tool known as a “chi-squared test of independence,” true statistical differences between girls and boys in correctional facilities can be identified.<sup>iii</sup> This report preserves the demographic characteristics of youth in correctional facilities on the day the MSS was administered. It is not a matched sample where the age, race and ethnicity of each population is the same, nor are the number of girls and boys surveyed equal.

## Data Limitations

### Youth Representation and Generalizability

While the juvenile correctional facilities that participated in the 2010 MSS have statewide representation, not all facilities participated. There may be some regional representation lacking that may affect demographic distributions in the data. These data reflect a small percentage of youth who experience detention or residential correctional placements in any given year.

### Racial and Ethnic Distinctions

Due to small numbers, it does not examine the responses of racial or ethnic groups separately for differences between unique racial populations. It also does not control for response differences between males or females that might be affected by their race, ethnicity, age or other population differences.

### Effect of Youth Placement on Survey Responses

The MSS is designed to be taken by students while in their community. As such, some questions are asked with short time parameters such as “in the last seven days” or “in the last 30 days.” When youth in correctional facilities respond to such questions, they may be reporting on their behaviors and experiences while in the facility, rather than in the community. As such, most questions with short time parameters have been excluded from analysis. Effort has been made to identify responses that may be impacted by youths’ placement when included in the report.

### Survey Question Limitations

Many responses given by the students naturally lead to additional questions by researchers and readers. This report is limited to providing responses to questions that were asked in the MSS and does not generally provide additional data from outside sources unless it is required to provide context about the question itself. If there appears to be a gap in some content areas or a focus on others, it is the result of the MSS questionnaire content.

Many MSS questions are asked from a problem-oriented perspective rather than one of youth strengths. Problem-oriented questions tend to result in interventions that are problem-driven rather than strength- and solution-focused. For each risk factor, there may also be a protective factor at work keeping youth safe, healthy and connected. In addition, survey data may show what youth are doing or how they are feeling, but it does not capture the why behind them.

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<sup>iii</sup> Unless otherwise noted in the text, data in this report will be presented when there is a statistically significant difference based on the Pearson Chi-Square Coefficient ( $\chi^2 < .05$ ).

## Girls and Boys: Differential Pathways Differential Offending

A wide body of research supports that males and females often follow different pathways into the juvenile justice system. Generally, girls and boys both start to engage in delinquent behavior at about the same age, but research demonstrates that girls' delinquent acts are typically less chronic and often less serious than boys'.<sup>3</sup>

Girls are the minority in the juvenile justice system because, for nearly every offense, girls engage in less delinquency than boys.<sup>4</sup> Girls are less likely than boys to engage in serious, violent crime and more likely to be involved in non-violent property and drug offenses.<sup>5</sup> Status offenses such as running away, truancy, underage drinking and curfew violations continue to be a key factor in girls' justice system involvement.<sup>6,7</sup> In Minnesota for example, males under age 18 typically account for about two-thirds of juvenile arrests. Conversely, girls account for roughly half of all arrests for status offenses.<sup>8</sup>

Longitudinal research finds there is no "typical offense" that initiates justice system involvement for girls. Girls begin and stop offending at various ages and engage in delinquency at various rates and intensities.<sup>9</sup> One way that girls and boys differ is that girls are more likely than boys to "age out" of delinquent behavior in adolescence and not continue criminal behavior into adulthood.<sup>10</sup> Even more serious female offenders tend to revert back to a lower level of status offending or a non-delinquent status over a short time.<sup>11</sup> Despite pervasive media coverage in the past 15 years that girls are becoming more violent, data show that boys continue to have more violent offenses and that the percentage of arrests for serious violent acts for both girls and boys has been declining.<sup>12</sup>

## Differential Risk and Protective Factors

While many risk factors for anti-social and delinquent behavior are the same for males and females, research also demonstrates that girls and boys can have different exposure to certain risk factors, as well as different sensitivities to their effects.<sup>13</sup> As a simplified example, exposure to violence is a risk factor for both girls and boys to engage in violent behavior themselves. Boys are more likely to experience and perpetrate violence in their communities among strangers, whereas girls are more likely to experience and perpetrate violence in the home and within the context of their personal relationships.<sup>14</sup>

Research data consistently point to a strong link between victimization, trauma and girls' delinquency. Research on youth in detention supports that childhood abuse and neglect play a significant role in girls' involvement in the juvenile justice system, especially if the abuse occurs within the family.<sup>15</sup> As such, arrests for minor offenses, such as running away, can obscure serious problems that girls are facing including physical and sexual victimization.<sup>16</sup> This report will highlight where risk factors and sensitivities are shown by research to be different for girls as compared to boys.

The same principle of exposure and sensitivity applies to factors that protect against delinquency. As an example, relationships with caring adults are protective factors for both girls and boys. A caring relationship with a teacher at school has been shown to have a greater protective effect for girls than boys. This report will highlight where protective factors are more common among, or have a greater effect for, girls than boys.

# Introduction

## Differential System Response

The increase in the number of girls in the juvenile justice system since the 1990s is less about a change in girls' behavior and more about changes to policy and enforcement.<sup>17</sup> Mandatory arrest policies in domestic disputes disparately affect girls who are more likely to have conflict in the home; certain behaviors that used to be status offenses such as "ungovernability" or "incorrigibility" have been elevated to delinquency charges such as simple assault; and zero tolerance policies in schools may have increased school referrals to law enforcement for physical altercations between girls.<sup>18,19</sup> These enforcement changes increase arrests for both girls and boys, but have a greater effect on girls because they have a greater proportion of status offenses and conflict in the home.<sup>20</sup> The extent to which these policies and enforcement thereof affect Minnesota arrest rates requires further exploration and is beyond the scope of this report.

There is also evidence that girls may receive a different response from the juvenile justice system than boys. Parents often ascribe different standards of behavior for girls and boys and these expectations may affect how the system responds to girls who "act out" at home.<sup>21</sup> Gender-bias in the juvenile justice system itself is often related to gender norms, or behaviors that society accepts and tolerates from girls and boys. System professionals, as well as families themselves, respond more harshly to defiant or unruly behavior by girls than by boys or can take a more "protective" approach with girls by removing them from dangerous environments.<sup>22,23</sup> Younger girls are more likely to be detained than boys and are detained for less serious offenses. Girls are also more likely to have their case referred to court where they are also handled more punitively.<sup>24</sup> Differential behaviors between girls and

boys and the ways juvenile justice systems respond to these behaviors are important components of understanding girls in the system. The extent to which differential justice system responses based on gender occur in Minnesota requires additional investigation.

Because girls and women are the minority in both the juvenile and criminal justice systems, assessment tools, programs and strategies are often designed for males or derived from interventions that have been intended for, and proven effective, for boys and men.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, girls often receive services that are only proven effective for boys, or that make minor changes or accommodations for girls. Gender-specific programming (GSP) using methods designed for, and demonstrated effective with, female populations is a best practice. Basic tenets of GSP will be presented in this report following the data analysis.

# Data Findings

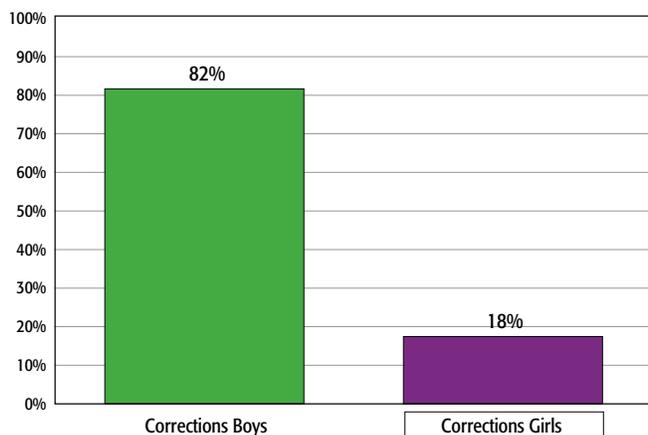
## Demographics

### Gender

Youth in Minnesota correctional facilities are more likely to be boys than girls.

On the day the MSS was conducted, youth in Minnesota correctional facilities self-identified as 82 percent male and 18 percent female. This gender distribution is the same as when the MSS was last administered in correctional facilities in 2007. While these data support that more boys than girls are involved in the juvenile justice system, many factors can potentially affect the gender distribution in correctional facilities, including targeted programming and facility capacity.

**2010 Youth in Correctional Facilities:  
Respondent Gender**

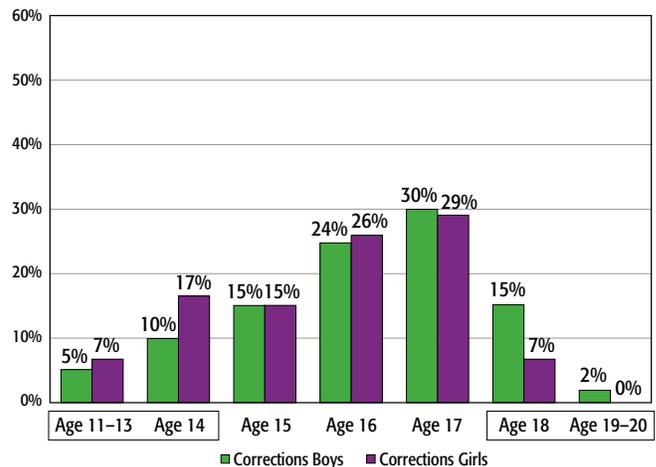


Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

Participants in the 2010 MSS are somewhat younger than those who took the survey in 2007, possibly because of the participation of more non-secure facilities that typically serve lower-risk youth. In 2007, 16 percent of girls were age 14 or younger, compared to 24 percent in 2010. Boys' ages overall are more comparable between years; however, they too are slightly younger in 2010 with 15 percent age 14 or younger, compared to 11 percent in 2007.

Again, some facilities may target certain offenses (such as sex offenses) or risk levels that may be influenced by gender and age. MSS data alone do not allow one to draw any conclusions about boys' and girls' offending patterns in Minnesota based on age.

**2010 Youth in Correctional Facilities:  
Respondent Age**



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

### Age

Girls in Minnesota correctional facilities are younger than boys.

Girls in correctional facilities who completed the 2010 MSS are younger than boys in the facilities. One-quarter of girls (24%) self-report as ages 11 to 14, compared to 15 percent of boys. Conversely, boys are more likely than girls to be age 18 or over (17% versus 7%). The Minnesota Correctional Facility at Red Wing only houses males and often holds juveniles until age 21, which is likely contributing to the upper-end age distribution for males. Youth between the ages of 15 and 17 have a comparable gender distribution in correctional facilities.

### Race

Youth from communities of color are over-represented among both girls and boys in Minnesota correctional facilities. Girls are more likely to self-identify as American Indian or bi- or multi-racial.

Youth participating in the MSS are asked to self-identify their race/ethnicity by selecting from six racial groups. Youth may select more than one race. Statistically significant differences exist in the races selected by boys compared to girls in correctional facilities. Boys are more likely to self-identify as Black or Hispanic, whereas

# Data Findings

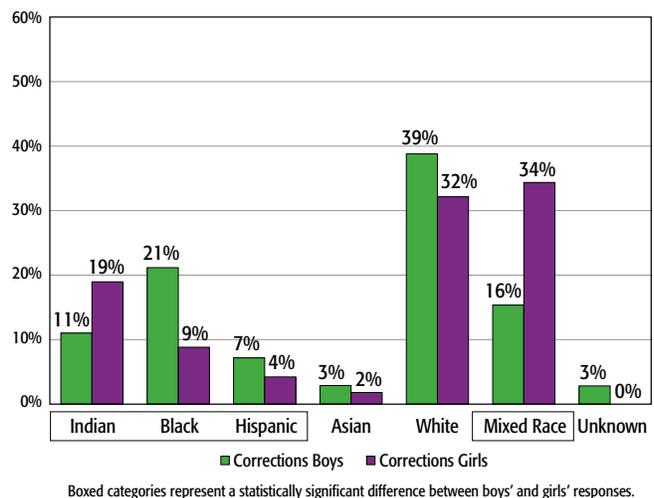
girls are more likely to self-identify as American Indian. There is no significant difference between girls and boys who identify as White or Asian. Interestingly, girls self-identify as bi- or multi-racial twice as often as boys (34% versus 16%).

During the 2007 MSS administration, there was a slightly different racial distribution in correctional facilities. While the distribution of Hispanic and Asian youth was close to the same, 10 percent more males identified as African American in 2007 (31% versus 21% in 2010). In 2007, fewer females self-identified as more than one race (27%) as compared to 2010 (34%).

Racial distributions in correctional facilities can be affected by numerous factors, including the geographic location of the facility and the surrounding area served, as well as if the facility specializes in any culturally specific programming. Individual facility participation in the MSS can potentially affect the overall racial distribution of participants.

It cannot be said that boys or girls of any particular race or ethnicity are more or less likely to be in a correctional facility in Minnesota based on MSS demographics alone. Other data collected specifically to explore race distributions in Minnesota's juvenile justice system do affirm significant overrepresentation of youth from communities of color at most system processing points.<sup>26</sup> Nationally, the overrepresentation issue applies to both girls and boys<sup>27</sup> and there is evidence that girls from communities of color receive more severe sanctions than White girls.<sup>28</sup> The interplay of race and gender in the Minnesota's justice system requires considerably more information and evaluation than the MSS provides and is beyond the scope of this report.

## 2010 Youth in Correctional Facilities: Respondent Race



## Living Arrangement

**There is no difference between girls and boys in their reported living arrangement.**

While research on family structure suggests that youth living in two-parent biological families fare better on a range of developmental outcomes than those in single-parent or alternative living arrangements, the connection to delinquency for youth is not strong.<sup>29</sup> When research controls for socioeconomic conditions of the family, differences in delinquency are minimized.<sup>30</sup> Single-parent families have greater challenges associated with finances, poverty and supervision of children than two-parent households, which are largely responsible for the different outcomes.<sup>31</sup> As an illustration, poor parental supervision practices are a risk factor for youth regardless of if they live in a one- or two-parent household. One of the most consistent protective factors against delinquency for youth is a positive relationship with a parent, irrespective of family structure.<sup>32</sup>

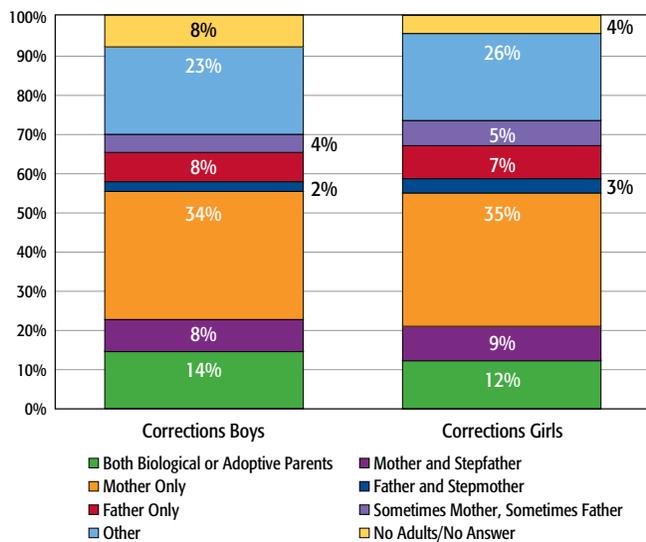
There is no statistical difference between girls and boys in correctional facilities when reporting their living arrangement on the 2010 MSS. Roughly equal percentages of girls and boys report living with both biological/adoptive parents ( $\approx 13\%$ ); living with mother only ( $\approx 34\%$ ) or father only ( $\approx 8\%$ ); and living with a parent and a step-parent ( $\approx 11\%$ ). "Other" living

# Data Findings

arrangements, which can include other adult relatives, grandparents, foster parents, or other adults to whom they are not related, comprise about one-quarter of responses for each gender.

In 2007, boys were statistically more likely to report living with both parents, and girls were statistically more likely to report having an “other” living arrangement. These differences were not present in the 2010 analysis.

**2010 Youth in Correctional Facilities: Respondent Living Arrangement**



## Free or Reduced Priced Lunch

Girls and boys are equally likely to report receiving Free or Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) at school. A significantly greater percentage of youth in correctional facilities overall receive FRPL than mainstream school students.

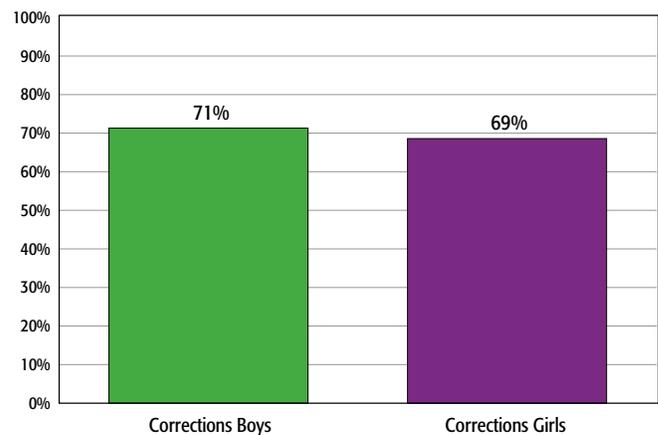
The only question on the MSS that provides information about youths’ socioeconomic status is whether they report receiving Free or Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) at school. Youth are eligible to receive FRPL based on their household income level or if they meet

other categorical eligibility criteria. Youth in families receiving Food Stamps (SNAP), Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), are automatically eligible for FRPL, as are foster children and youth receiving certain federal homeless and runaway services.<sup>33</sup>

Girls and boys in correctional facilities are equally likely to report receiving FRPL at 71 percent and 69 percent, respectively. A comparable percentage of youth in correctional facilities reported receiving FRPL in 2007. Youth in Minnesota correctional facilities are far more likely than mainstream youth to receive FRPL at school.<sup>34</sup>

Low socioeconomic status or poverty is an established delinquency risk factor for both girls and boys. Again, positive relationships with parents can mediate the negative influence of poverty for youth.<sup>35</sup> It does appear that lower-income youth are more prevalent in Minnesota’s correctional facilities, consistent with research.

**2010 Youth in Correctional Facilities: Free or Reduced Priced Lunch Recipients: Percent “Yes”**



# Data Findings

## Victimization

### Abuse and victimization are key components to understanding girls' delinquency.

Evidence suggests that girls experience a greater number of negative life events in adolescence than boys and they may be more sensitive to the effects of these events, especially when they occur at home.<sup>36</sup> Girls in the juvenile justice system are more likely to have a history of abuse than girls who are not involved in the juvenile justice system, and girls experience more of certain types of trauma than boys.<sup>37</sup> Girls and boys in the juvenile justice system experience physical and sexual abuse at rates higher than in the general population.<sup>38</sup>

### Early onset of puberty is a significant risk factor for girls to engage in delinquency.

While no questions on the MSS gauge the physical development of respondents beyond self-reports of height and weight, early puberty is such a well-established risk factor for girls that it bears inclusion in this report.

Girls who experience puberty early are more likely to experience a variety of stressors and risk factors as compared to girls who go through puberty later. To begin, the onset of puberty is connected to heightened conflict within the family. Disparities between physical and social maturity cause family conflict related to behavioral expectations, peers and early dating.<sup>39,40</sup> Puberty for girls is more often associated with adverse effects on girls' emotional development. Conversely for boys, early puberty is a risk factor for delinquency, but it also contributes to higher self-esteem and self-confidence which tends to be the opposite experience of girls.<sup>41</sup>

Girls who experience puberty early are more likely to associate with a male peer group, an older peer group, and to begin dating older boys or men. For girls, a male peer group and an older dating partner is connected to delinquent behavior in a way that is

not true for boys who have female peer groups or older dating partners.<sup>42</sup> In turn, they are more likely to engage in risky behaviors to establish autonomy, status and maturity, including sexual activity, and alcohol or drug use.<sup>43</sup> As such, girls who mature earlier are at higher risk for substance abuse, intimate partner violence and running away. The biological changes associated with puberty can also exacerbate mental health disorders and worsen their effects on behavior.<sup>44</sup>

## Family and Dating Partner Abuse

### Girls and boys are equally likely to report exposure to abuse in their homes. Girls are considerably more likely to report experiencing abuse in their dating relationships.

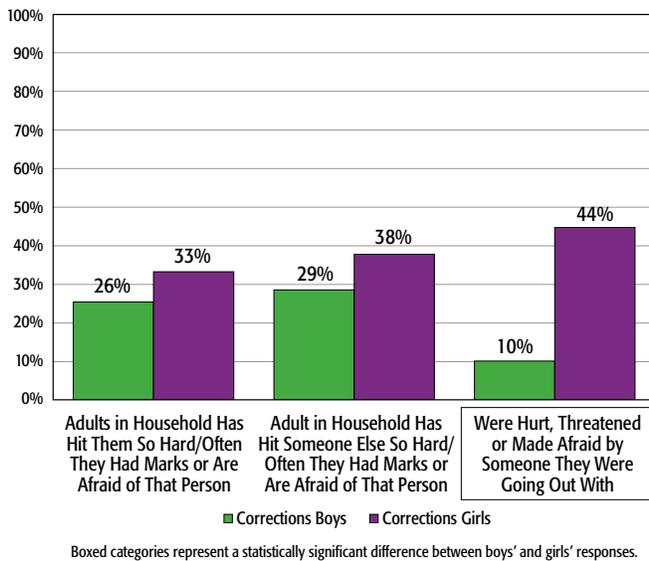
Girls and boys in the juvenile justice population typically report experiencing comparable levels of physical abuse in the household. This may have a greater effect on girls because girls appear to be more susceptible to the stressor of dysfunction and trauma in the home than boys.<sup>45</sup> A greater percentage of both girls and boys in correctional facilities report household abuse than mainstream youth.

The responses of girls and boys in Minnesota's correctional facilities to the MSS appear to support the finding that there is comparable exposure to household abuse. Both girls and boys in correctional facilities report experiencing and witnessing physical abuse in their households at statistically similar rates. Overall, over two-thirds of girls in correctional facilities have experienced or witnessed domestic violence (33% to 38%), as have over one-quarter of boys (26% to 29%).

For girls, self-reports of physical abuse in the home declined from 2007 when just over half of girls reported experiencing or witnessing physical abuse in their household. Response rates for boys are essentially unchanged between 2007 and 2010. The younger population of girls in the 2010 sample as compared to 2007 could affect these responses.

# Data Findings

## Whether Youth Have Been Exposed to Physical Abuse: Percent “Yes”



Girls are over four times more likely than boys to report experiencing dating violence.

Over 40 percent of girls in correctional facilities report that someone they were going out with threatened them, hurt them or made them feel afraid. This was the case for one in 10 boys.

In 2007, half of girls (50%) reported having been hurt, threatened or made afraid by a dating partner, down to 44 percent in 2010. The younger population of girls in the 2010 sample could affect these responses as they may have fewer dating experiences. Reported victimization rates by boys have remained essentially the same.

These data support that intimate relationships with partners can be an elevated risk factor for girls. Again, early puberty may lead to earlier dating, and older partners and peers. Youth who experience multiple victimizations are at higher risk for additional victimization.<sup>46</sup>

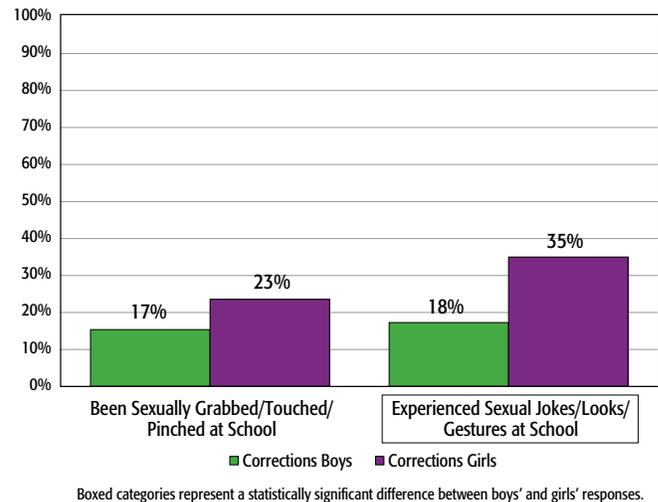
## Sexual Harassment

Girls report more sexual harassment at school related to unwanted jokes, gestures and looks.

Another area where girls report more victimization than boys is sexual harassment at school. While girls and boys report being sexually grabbed, touched or pinched at school at comparable rates, nearly twice as many girls than boys report experiencing unwanted sexual looks, jokes or gestures at school (35% and 18%, respectively).

Rates of sexual victimization at school are considerably lower for girls in 2010 than 2007 when 55 percent of girls reported unwanted jokes, looks or gestures. The rate for boys has remained about the same. Again, a younger population of girls in 2010 could affect these findings.

## Whether Youth Have Experienced Sexual Harassment at School: Percent “Yes”



## Sexual Abuse

Girls report significantly more sexual abuse by family members, non-family members and dating partners.

All types of family dysfunction and maltreatment: neglect, physical abuse and sexual abuse increase risk of delinquency and criminal behavior for both girls and boys, however girls experience more sexual abuse and maltreatment than boys including harassment, assault

# Data Findings

and rape.<sup>47,48</sup> Sexual victimization is pervasive among youth in correctional facilities, especially for girls. Girls who exhibit anti-social behavior, especially violent behavior, are more likely than males to have a history of sexual abuse.<sup>49</sup>

Most often, abuse is perpetrated by family members or close family friends who are perceived as trusted adults. Sexual abuse can have a profound impact on a girl during adolescence, resulting in lessened self-esteem, inability to trust, academic failure, eating disorders, teen pregnancy, and other serious concerns. If sexual abuse is not addressed, girls may run away or turn to alcohol or other drugs to numb their emotional pain.<sup>50</sup>

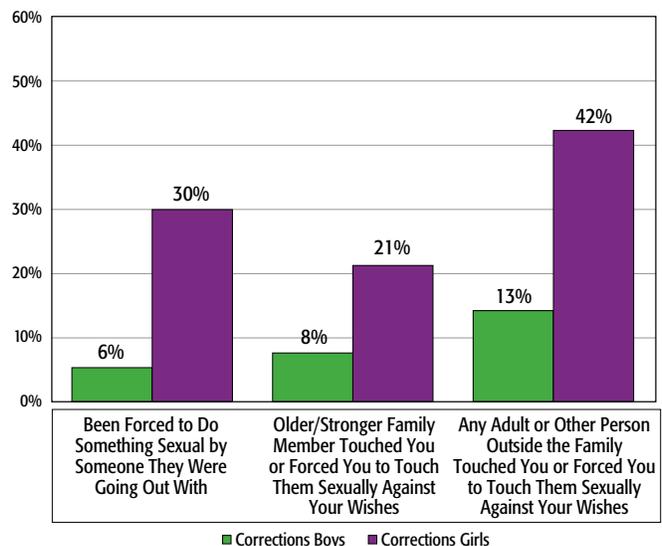
Children and adolescents who have been sexually abused can suffer a range of psychological and behavioral problems. These problems typically include depression, anxiety, guilt, fear, sexual dysfunction, withdrawal and acting out. Depending on the severity of the incident, victims of sexual abuse may also develop fear and anxiety regarding the opposite sex or sexual issues, and may display inappropriate sexual behavior.<sup>51</sup>

The negative effects of child sexual abuse can affect the victim for many years and into adulthood. Many victims also encounter problems in their adult relationships and adult sexual functioning. Re-victimization is a common phenomenon among people abused as children. Research has shown that child sexual abuse victims are more likely to be the victims of rape or to be involved in physically abusive relationships as adults.<sup>52</sup>

The 2010 MSS data demonstrates that girls experience sexual abuse at a rate much greater than boys. Two in 10 girls (21%) report being forced into sexual contact by an older or stronger family member; three in 10 girls (30%) report being forced into sexual contact with a dating partner; and four in 10 girls (42%) report being touched sexually against their wishes by an adult or other person outside their family. Over four in 10 girls in the correctional facility sample (42%) report having been sexually abused either by someone in the family or outside the family. Of those, 15 percent experienced both types of sexual abuse. In 2007, 50 percent of girls reported either type of abuse with 17 percent reporting both.

Girls' victimization rates are three to five times higher than boys'. That is not to say that this is not a concern for boys as close to one in 10 boys in correctional facilities report unwanted sexual contact with someone inside their family (8%) or an adult outside their family (13%).

## Whether Youth Have Experienced Sexual Abuse: Percent "Yes"



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

Rates of sexual victimization reported by boys in 2010 are nearly identical to those of 2007. Girls, however, report less sexual victimization by dating partners in 2010 (down from 37%) and family perpetrators (down from 28%). Rates of non-familial victimization in 2010 are slightly higher (up from 39%). Again, victimization rates could be affected by a younger population of girls in the 2010 sample.

## Running Away

**More girls than boys ran away from home in the past year. Girls report running away from home with greater frequency than boys.**

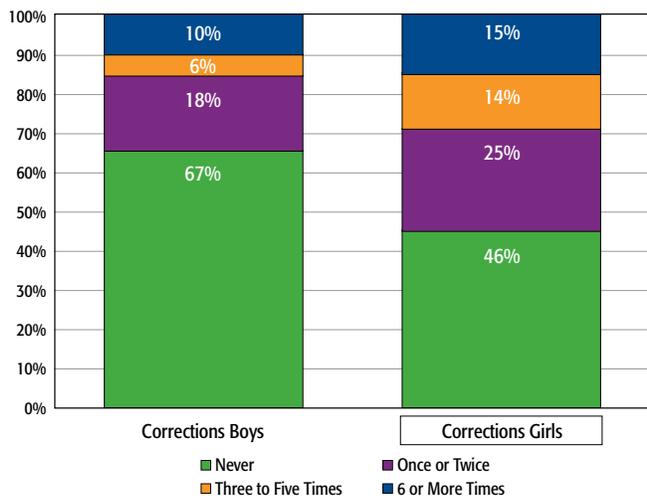
Running away from home is a high-risk activity for all youth regardless of gender. Girls, however, are more likely than boys to run away and be arrested for running away. Running away from home and other status offenses (such as truancy) are major components of girls' delinquency. Studies of girls who are chronic

# Data Findings

runaways document significant levels of sexual and physical victimization. This suggests that these girls may be fleeing from serious problems and victimization, which in turn makes them vulnerable to subsequent victimization and engaging in other behaviors that violate the law such as prostitution, survival sex and drug use.<sup>53</sup>

Girls in correctional facilities were statistically more likely than boys to have run away from home in the past 12 months. Over half of girls (54%) report running away from home at least once in the past year as compared to one-third of boys. Nearly three in 10 girls (29%) ran away three or more times as compared to 16 percent of boys. These rates are nearly identical to those reported by girls and boys in correctional facilities during the 2007 MSS administration.

**How Often Youth Have Run Away From Home in the Past 12 Months**



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

## Mental and Emotional Health

Girls report more agreement with a wide range of indicators intended to gauge mental health issues than boys. Girls' responses support the prevalence of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress diagnoses among justice system involved girls.

Youth with diagnosable mental and emotional health conditions are pervasive in the juvenile justice population as compared to the general youth population. Girls and boys as a whole often differ in the types of diagnoses they receive. As an example, boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD and conduct disorders; girls are more likely to be diagnosed with depression, PTSD and anxiety disorders.<sup>54</sup>

Depression and anxiety disorders have been associated with delinquency, and girls receive these diagnoses more than boys.<sup>55</sup> During childhood, males and females have similar, relatively low levels of depression. In early adolescence, rates diverge with girls experiencing a sharp increase. Depression may influence girls' propensity for anti-social behavior because the condition is associated with loss of interest in pro-social activities and institutions, withdrawal from peers, indifference to personal safety, and consequences for actions.<sup>56</sup>

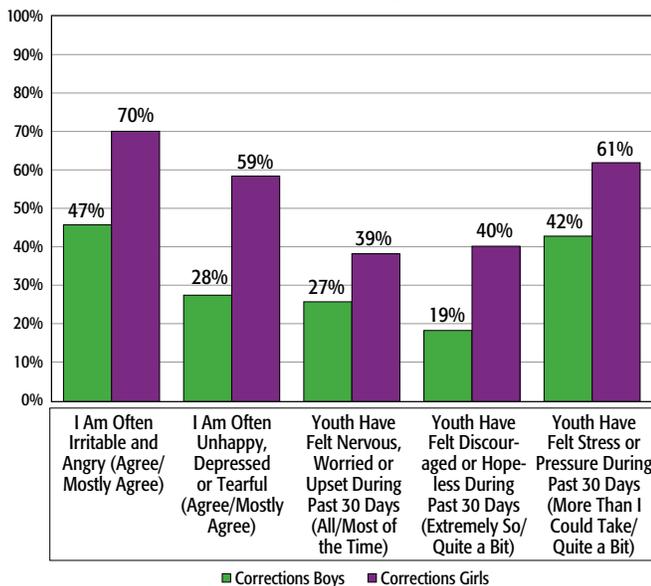
For both genders, exposure to severe and cumulative stressors is strongly associated with risk-taking behavior and delinquency.<sup>57</sup> Stressors are those events that elicit strong, negative responses and are perceived by the individual as uncontrollable to unpredictable. These events alter the body's stress responses (adrenaline and cortisol levels) and can disrupt cognitive and emotional processing, especially when these stress hormones remain high over time.<sup>58</sup>

# Data Findings

The area in which there is the greatest statistical disparity between the responses of girls and boys in Minnesota correctional facilities is among the questions related to mental and emotional health.

Girls were statistically more likely to report anger and irritability (70%), depression (59%), nervousness (39%), hopelessness (40%) and feeling substantial stress or pressure (61%) than boys. Boys consistently report lower agreement with all these questions than girls by 20 percent to 30 percent except for feeling nervous or worried. Statistically significant differences to these questions were also present in 2007.

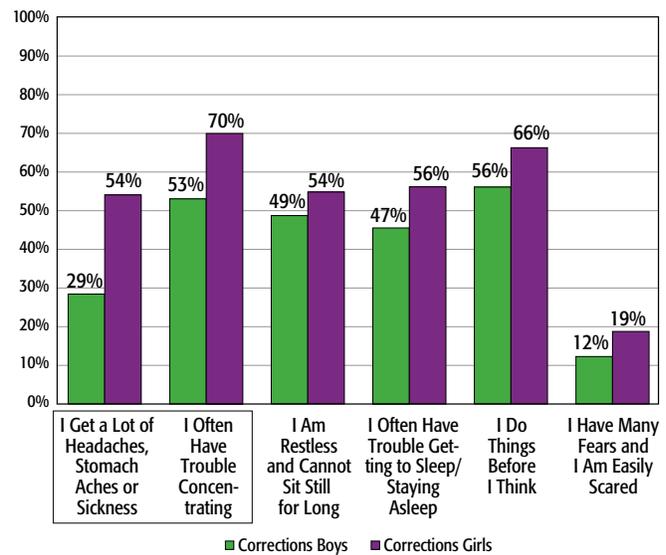
## Emotional Well-Being Indicators



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

Girls were statistically more likely to express frequent headaches or stomachaches than boys, which can be emotional health issues presenting as a physical complaint. Girls were also more likely to report problems concentrating than boys. Some of the other ways in which stress and emotional health issues manifest (restlessness, sleeping problems, impulsivity and irrational fears) were not statistically different between girls and boys. At least half of both girls and boys in correctional facilities report contending with disruptions to concentration and sleep, as well as restlessness and impulsivity.

## Emotional Health Indicators: Percent "Agree" or "Mostly Agree"



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

## Self-Harm and Suicide

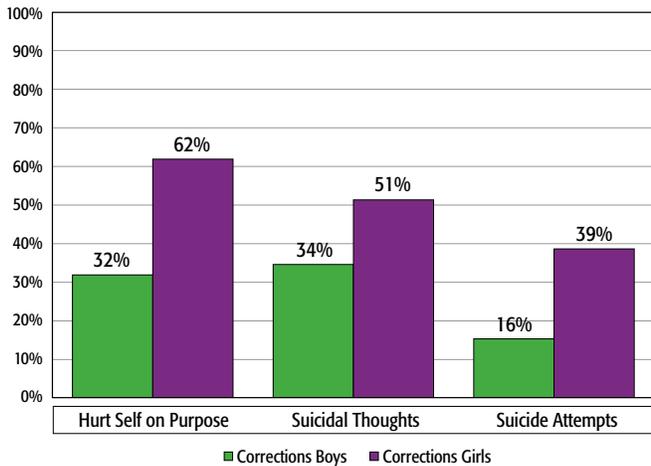
Girls are more likely than boys to report engaging in self-harm, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts.

Another area in which girls are statistically more likely than boys to report a problem is self-harm and suicide. Half of girls in correctional facilities (51%) report having suicidal thoughts and well over half of girls (62%) report engaging in self-harm, including burning, bruising and cutting. The suicidal ideation and self-harm rates for boys are lower than girls' at 34 percent and 32 percent, respectively. This is a concerning level for both groups of children.

Girls are also over twice as likely as boys to report an actual suicide attempt (39% versus 16%). In 2007, girls were also statistically more likely to report self-harm and suicide indicators; however, boys are reporting higher rates in 2010 than they did in 2007. Self-harm and suicide attempts for boys are 6 percent to 8 percent higher in 2010 than in 2007; self-reported suicide attempts have remained essentially the same.

# Data Findings

## Self-Harm, Suicidal Ideation and Suicide Attempts: Percent “Yes”



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

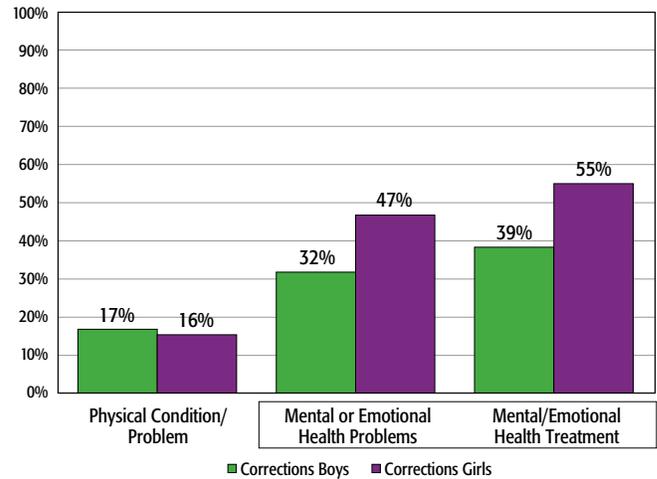
## Mental Health Treatment

Girls are statistically more likely than boys to self-report a mental health problem lasting at least a year, and having received treatment for a mental or emotional health problem.

There was no statistical difference between girls and boys in correctional facilities regarding an ongoing physical health problem. Girls are, however, statistically more likely than boys to report that they had a mental or emotional health problem lasting longer than 12 months (47% versus 32%). This was also a statistical difference in 2007 when 41 percent of girls and 27 per-

cent of boys reported an ongoing mental or emotional health problem. Recall that these are youth self-reports and do not include youth who have diagnosed mental health issues that they choose not to disclose, or those who may have an undiagnosed mental health issue.

## Whether Youth Identified an Ongoing Physical or Mental Health Problem or Have Received Mental Health Treatment: Percent “Yes”



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

Over half of girls (55%) report that they had received mental or emotional health treatment as compared to just under four in 10 boys (39%). This is a statistically significant difference between girls and boys that also appeared in 2007 (56% of girls versus 38% of boys).

# Data Findings

## Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use

Adolescent use of alcohol and other drugs have consistently been shown to be associated with violent behavior, academic failure, criminal activity, unemployment<sup>59</sup>; data from longitudinal studies with teens show that adolescent substance use is a risk factor for the persistent use and development of adult substance use disorders.<sup>60</sup> Studies also show that as substance use among adolescents continues over time, so does the risk for multiple drugs involvement.<sup>61</sup> Recent studies also suggest minimal difference between girls and boys in patterns of substance use, especially in early adolescence. Studies have also found that youth tend to ignore the risks associated with drug and alcohol use.<sup>62</sup>

Substance abuse exacerbates other problems that might put a girl at risk of delinquency. Many girls, for instance, report being intoxicated or under the influence of illegal substances while committing criminal acts. When girls runaway from an abusive or dysfunctional family, they are more likely to become involved in drug use and/or drug trafficking. Alcohol and other drugs may lessen inhibitions leading to risk-taking that may result in unplanned pregnancy or exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Research shows that among female populations, substance abuse coexists with other problems such as mental illness at a significantly higher rate than among males.<sup>63</sup>

Studies suggest that girls with low self-esteem are more likely to drink than boys with low self-esteem, and that girls are more susceptible to peer pressure to drink than boys. Girls are also more likely to drink to self-medicate feelings such as sadness, anger or frustration. Again, physical and sexual abuse put girls at higher risk to drink alcohol, as does the early onset of puberty.<sup>64</sup>

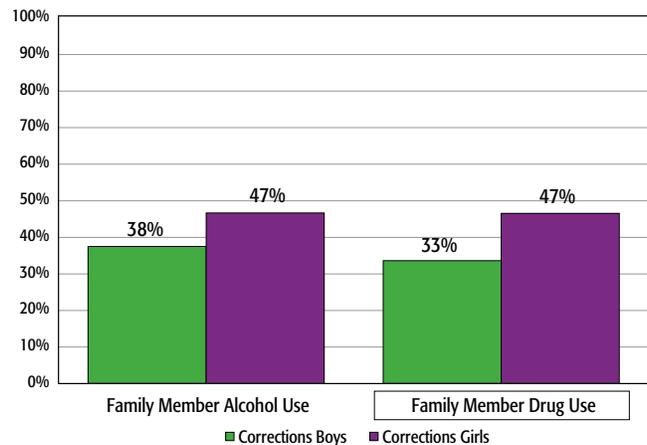
### Family Drug and Alcohol Use

**Girls are statistically more likely than boys to report that a family member's drug use has caused ongoing family, health, job or legal problems.**

Girls in correctional facilities are more likely than boys to perceive that a family member's alcohol or drug use was causing ongoing problems. Nearly half of girls (47%) report that alcohol or drugs were repeatedly causing family, health or legal problems. Closer to a third of boys perceive a family member's alcohol use (38%) or drug use (33%) as problematic. There is a statistical difference between the two groups on the perception that a family member's drug use is repeatedly causing family, health or legal problems.

In 2007, girls were also statistically more likely than boys to report that alcohol use in the family was problematic. While the perception of boys has remained roughly the same, more girls reported alcohol as a problem (63%) and drug use as a problem (56%) in 2007 as compared to 2010.

**Whether Alcohol or Drug Use By a Family Member Has Repeatedly Caused Family, Health, Job or Legal Problems: Percent "Yes"**



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

Research suggests that girls have stronger connections to family throughout their life than boys. This connection that girls have to family is a protective factor. However, it is suggested also that family disruption or dysfunction has a greater consequences on girls than boys and contributes to greater risk-taking and delinquency among girls.<sup>65</sup> It is possible that because of differential expectations for girls and boys within a household, girls are more perceptive to family problems

# Data Findings

caused by alcohol or drugs than boys. That is to say, it has a greater effect on their lives and role in the family, or that girls are home more to observe the consequences of a family member. Girls also are more relationship-based than boys such that they may have a greater level of concern or a lower threshold of problematic behavior by a family members using.

Data support that children growing up in family environments where a parent or caregiver is chemically dependent are at greater risk than youth who do not have substance abusing parents. Chemical abuse by parents is often associated with inconsistent parenting of youth; inadequate supervision; chaotic home life; exposure to harm associated with using such as smoke or needles; and easier access to chemicals for children. If a parent is dependent on chemicals, there is greater risk of chronic neglect, lack of basic necessities including food, clean environment and routine health care. Youth with dependent caregivers are also more likely to experience physical and sexual abuse in the household, especially if a parent has multiple partners.<sup>66</sup> While a parent's drug or alcohol use is a risk factor for both girls and boys related to whether they also use chemicals, parental use appears to put girls at a slightly greater risk than boys.<sup>67</sup>

## Abstinence and Age of Onset

**Boys are more likely than girls to report they have never tried alcohol or other drugs.**

**Girls are more likely to report trying chemicals at a younger age than boys**

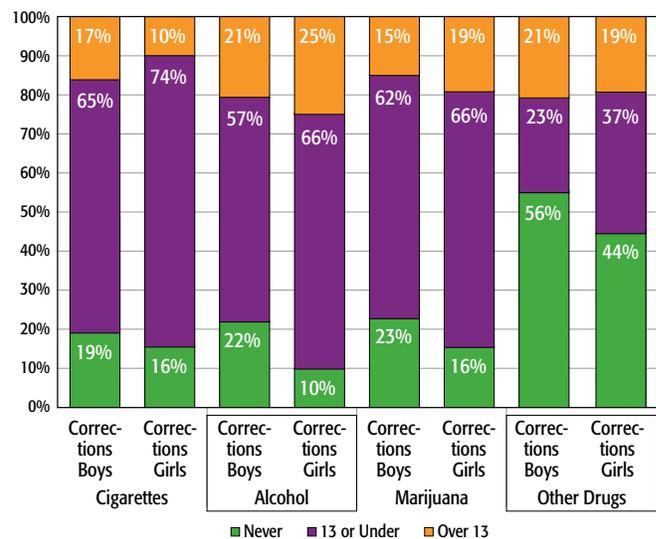
Boys in correctional facilities are statistically more likely to report that they have never tried alcohol or "other drugs" than girls. There is no statistical difference between girls and boys as to whether they have tried cigarettes or marijuana.

Youth taking the MSS are asked to indicate the age at which they first tried alcohol and other substances. The age responses were coded into two groups, "13 or under" and "over 13." While the age grouping is somewhat arbitrary, age 13 and under is most likely to capture youth who are still in middle school or junior

high. The data reveal that girls in correctional facilities are more likely than boys to report having tried cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and other drugs at age 13 or younger. Girls are statistically more likely to have used alcohol and other drugs at a younger age than boys.

Overall, three-quarters of girls first smoked cigarettes at 13 or under (74%), two-thirds of girls first drank alcohol or smoked marijuana at age 13 or under (66% each), and nearly four in 10 (37%) tried "other drugs" at age 13 or under. First use of cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana at age 13 or under applies to about two-thirds of boys. Less than one-quarter of boys (23%) report that they tried "other drugs" at age 13 or under.

**Age at First Use:  
Alcohol, Cigarettes and Other Drugs**



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

## Abuse and Dependency Indicators

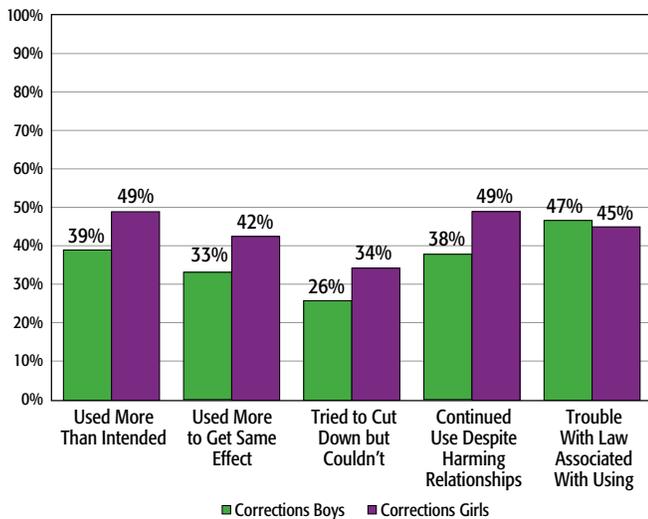
**While girls report more consequences associated with drug and alcohol use than boys, it is not a statistically significant difference between the two genders.**

Some of the MSS questions are geared towards exploring chemical abuse and dependency indicators. While girls responded affirmatively to these questions at a higher rate than boys, these were not statistically significant differences that can be attributable to gender.

# Data Findings

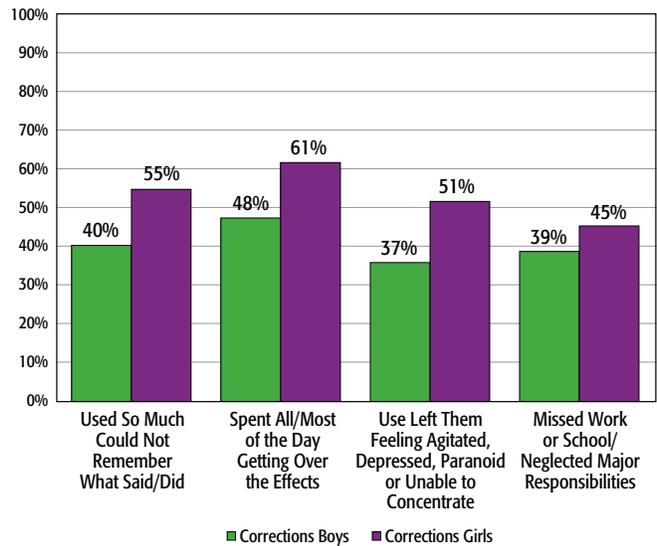
Nevertheless, just under half of girls (49%) report using more drugs or alcohol than they intended to, or using despite knowing it is harming their relationships. Over four in 10 girls state they had to use more drugs or alcohol to get the same effect or that their use was associated with trouble with the law. Boys are slightly more likely to report problems with the law associated with their use. Both girls and boys in correctional facilities report agreement with many chemical abuse and dependency indicators.

## Indicators of Drug or Alcohol Abuse and Dependency in Last 12 Months: Percent "Yes"



The MSS also asks youth to respond to questions about other consequences associated with drug and alcohol use. Again, in this group of questions there was no statistical difference in the responses of girls and boys in correctional facilities. Nevertheless, girls report problems in these areas with 10 percent to 15 percent greater frequency than boys. Over half of girls (55%) state that chemical use had affected their memory; left them feeling agitated or depressed (51%); or they had to spend the next day getting over the effects of drugs or alcohol (61%). Roughly four in 10 of both girls and boys report missing major responsibilities because of their use.

## Consequences of Drug and Alcohol Use: Percent "Yes"

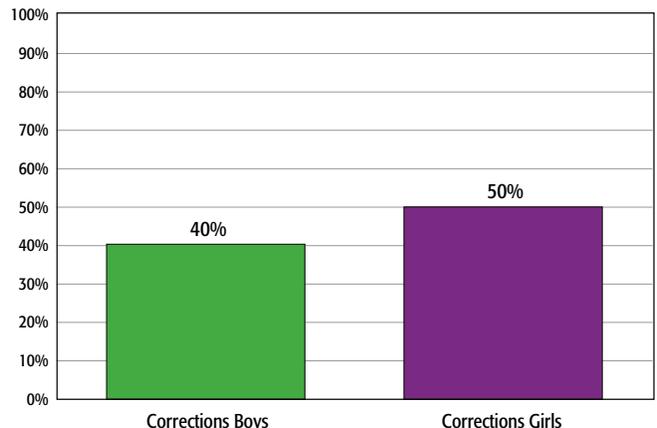


## Drug and Alcohol Treatment

The difference between girls and boys who have received drug or alcohol treatment is not statistically significant.

Half of girls in correctional facilities (50%) and four in 10 boys (40%) report that they have participated in alcohol or drug treatment. There is no information on the MSS as to whether they completed treatment, whether it was effective, or for what substance(s) the youth were referred. These responses are nearly identical to those from 2007, (50% girls and 43% boys). This is not a statistically significant difference between males and females in 2007 or 2010.

## Whether Youth Have Been Treated for Alcohol or Other Drug Problem: Percent "Yes"



# Data Findings

## Family and Community Connectedness Family Supports

There is no statistical difference between girls and boys as to whether they report feeling cared for by their parents or other adult relatives. Girls and boys in correctional facilities report feeling most cared for by their parents and adult relatives, followed by their peers.

Connection to caring adults is a protective factor for both girls and boys. Positive relationships with ones' parents are key protective factors, and many best practices interventions are related to repairing, strengthening or establishing parent-child bonds through family-based therapy; clear and consistent rules and expectations; and appropriate monitoring, supervision and discipline.<sup>68</sup>

As was mentioned in a previous section, girls' connection to a teacher at school has a significant protective effect, more so than for boys. One hypothesis around this is that girls are more likely to have family-based strain or conflict with parents, making school an important environment in which girls find support and validation. As youth make developmental transitions towards adolescence and adulthood, the influence of caring adults can change. For example, younger adolescents may derive a greater protective effect from a caring adult than older adolescents who may be more affected by a pro-social peer group.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, the most consistent protective factor for girls and boys is the extent to which there is a caring adult in their life.<sup>70</sup>

Peer groups are important to both males and females. Positive, pro-social peers groups can protect youth from delinquency, whereas peer groups that promote anti-social values and delinquency can contribute to delinquent behavior. For both girls and boys, gang membership considerably elevates their risk level to engage in delinquency. For girls, there is evidence that associating with a peer group that includes males is a factor in the onset and course of delinquency.<sup>71</sup> Conversely, rejection by peers in grade school contributes to youth who are more likely to become delinquent, but the risk effect of the peer rejection is

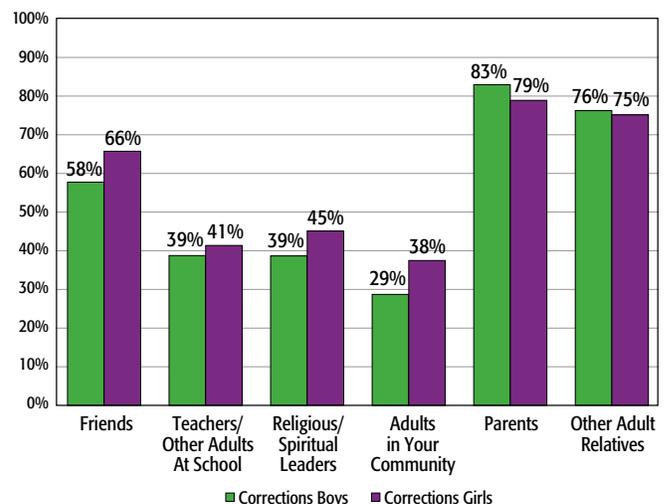
stronger for boys.<sup>72</sup> Social connections with a delinquent peer group can amplify delinquent behavior, model aggression, and insulate youth from the effects of outside disapproval.<sup>73</sup>

## Other Supports

Following family, both girls and boys in correctional facilities feel most supported by their peers.

The MSS shows that there is no statistical difference between boys' and girls' responses regarding whether they feel cared for by peers and adults. The greatest number of youth of both genders feels cared for by their parents and other adult relatives, followed by their friends. Roughly four in 10 youth feel cared for by their teachers or other adults at school, and their religious/spiritual leaders. Girls are somewhat more likely to report that adults in their community and friends care for them "quite a bit" or "very much" as compared to boys, but not at a statistically significant level.

### How Much Youth Feel Adults Care About Them: "Quite a Bit" or "Very Much" Responses



In the 2007 MSS analysis, girls in correctional facilities were statistically more likely to report that they felt their parents cared for them "a little" or "not at all" as compared to boys (18% versus 6%, respectively). While a difference still exists in 2010 with 14 percent of girls and 9 percent of boys feeling like their parents do not care about them, it is no longer a statistically significant difference in 2010.

# Data Findings

Girls and boys are equally likely to say they can talk to their mothers about problems. Approximately 72 percent of each gender feel they can talk to their mother “most” or “some of the time.” Boys, however, are statistically more likely to say they can talk to their fathers “most” or “some of the time” (48%) as compared to girls (34%).

## Community Safety

**Girls and boys in correctional facilities felt equally safe in their neighborhoods and on their way to or from school.**

The community in which a child lives offers risk and protective factors related to delinquency. Specifically, youth are more likely to engage in anti-social and delinquent behavior when they live in neighborhoods with high poverty, high unemployment and high crime rates. Research suggests that neighborhood disadvantage and disorganization has a greater effect on boys than girls. Exposure to violence in the community leads to increased violent behavior by both girls and boys.<sup>74</sup>

It is theorized that families are more likely to enforce protective rules on girls, their peers and their curfew, making them less susceptible to community influences. Also, girls typically are expelled from school at lower rates than boys such that they remain in a controlled environment during the day.<sup>75</sup>

Boys, on the other hand, may have fewer familial controls and be more likely to witness, experience and perpetrate victimization in their neighborhoods.<sup>76</sup> They may select a peer group that reflects delinquent values or they may engage in delinquency to establish themselves as one who is not to be targeted by others. More time spent in the community often provides boys with more opportunity to be exposed to and engage in community violence.<sup>77</sup>

According to the MSS data, girls and boys are equally likely to report feeling safe in their neighborhood. Eighty-four percent of boys and 86 percent of girls “agreed” or “mostly agreed” to feeling safe. Girls and boys in correctional facilities were also equally likely to report feeling safe going to and from school.

## School Connectedness

### Attitude Toward School

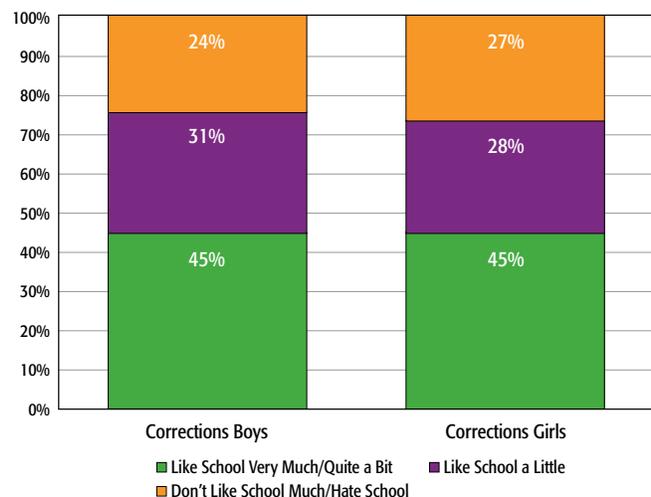
A favorable attitude towards school, school success as measured by academic performance, school attachment including a sense of belonging, and school commitment in terms of energy and effort put into educational goals are protective factors for all youth, but are stronger protective factors for girls than boys. For girls, school success has been connected to fewer status offenses and fewer property offenses in adolescence, and fewer assaults both in adolescence and into young adulthood.<sup>78</sup>

Other school factors such as school size or location, class size, or racial and ethnic composition of a school, has the same effect on girls and boys. School rules that are clearly and universally enforced are a protective factor for both genders but have a greater effect on boys.

School connectedness appears especially important for adolescents who experience adversity in their homes because schools are one of the few contexts where adolescents’ achievements are recognized and celebrated.<sup>79</sup>

Girls and boys in correctional facilities are similar in whether or not they report liking school. Forty-five percent of both girls and boys report that they liked school “very much” or “quite a bit.” Similarly, about one-quarter (24% to 27%) indicated that they “didn’t like school very much” or “hated school.” These are comparable to the 2007 findings.

**How Youth Feel About School**



# Data Findings

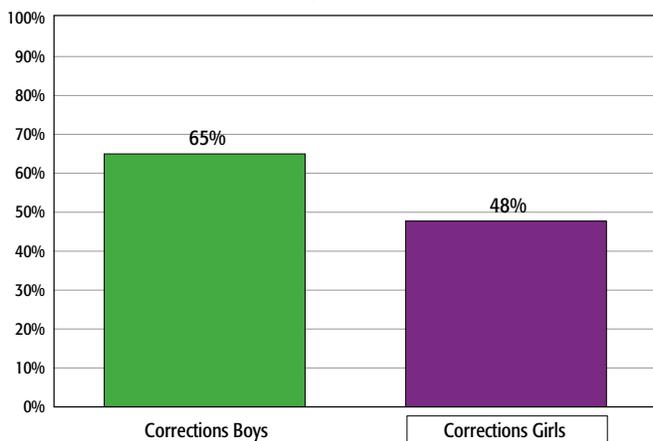
## Individualized Education Programs

Boys are more likely than girls to report having an Individualized Education Program (IEP) presently or in their past.

Two-thirds of boys (65%) report having had an IEP as compared to just under half of girls (48%). There is no information on the MSS as to the nature of IEPs, which can be related to many physical, emotional and behavioral factors that potentially impede learning or development. The number of youth self-reporting having ever had an IEP is higher in 2010 than in 2007. In 2007, 55 percent of boys and 42 percent of girls reported having an IEP, versus 65 percent and 48 percent in 2010.

Research on youth in the juvenile justice system finds that boys outnumber girls 3:1 in the diagnosis of ADHD and conduct disorders. The presence of this diagnosis is a known risk factor for delinquency in boys.<sup>80</sup> It is possible that the IEPs are related to the outward behaviors that coincide with these diagnoses.

### Whether Youth Have Ever Had an Individualized Education Program: Percent “Yes”



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

## Academic Performance

Girls in correctional facilities report slightly higher academic achievement than boys, but not to the level of statistical significance.

Poor academic performance is one of the strongest factors related to the early onset of delinquency as it affects school success, engagement, truancy, remaining at grade level, graduation and subsequent employment.<sup>81</sup>

School success as measured by grade point average (GPA) is a protective factor for girls and boys.<sup>82</sup> Higher GPAs tend to be associated with less delinquency, as they are often indicative of greater time and investment in school work and, presumably, less of a desire to put in jeopardy something that has taken effort to achieve. In addition, high GPAs and school success early on protect against later delinquency.<sup>83</sup> The relationship between low academic achievement and deviance seems stronger for boys than girls.

Girls report somewhat better grades than boys on the MSS. Girls are more likely to report grades of mostly As and Bs, and boys are more likely to report grades of mostly Bs and Cs. Grades of Cs and Ds were comparable between genders but more boys report receiving Ds and Fs. The difference in self-reported grades is not statistically significant.

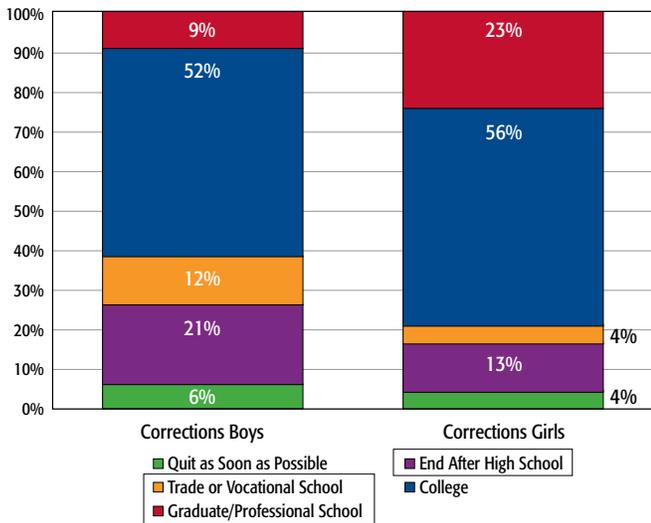
## School Plans

Girls are more likely to have educational goals that extended beyond college. A greater percentage of boys plan to end their education after high school or vocational school.

# Data Findings

Boys in correctional facilities are more likely than their female counterparts to report that they intend to either end their education after high school or pursue vocational schooling. Girls in correctional facilities are more likely than boys to have school plans that extended beyond college. Nearly one-quarter of girls in correctional facilities (23%) indicate that graduate or professional school is their educational goal as compared to one in 10 boys (9%). These findings are nearly identical to self-reports from the 2007 MSS.

## School Plans



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

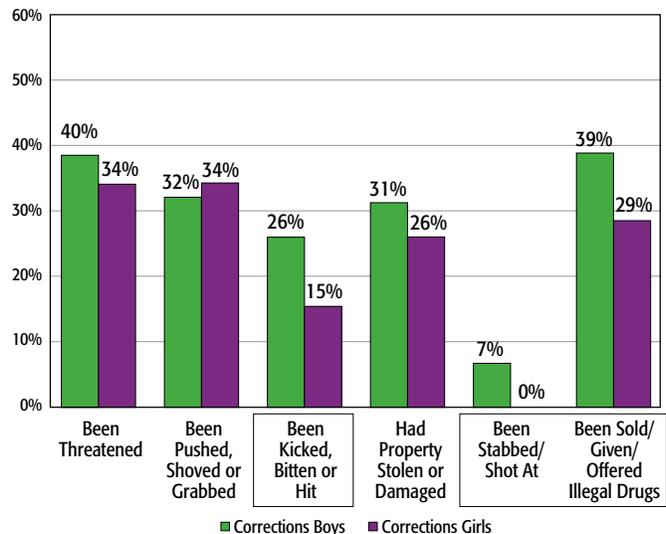
## School Safety

Girls and boys report similar levels of victimization at school. Boys are more likely to report being the victim of more serious interpersonal conflicts involving hitting, kicking and weapons.

As it relates to school environment and experiences, girls and boys have few statistical differences. There was no difference between girls and boys in self-reported truancy or frequency of school changes. They are also equally likely to say that teachers respected them and are interested in them as people. It should be noted that both girls and boys in correctional facilities report more truancy, more school changes, and lesser levels of caring and respect by teachers than mainstream youth.

Girls and boys report feeling equally safe at school. Boys, however, generally report higher rates of victimization at school. Boys are statistically more likely than girls to report having been kicked, hit or bitten at school (26%); having been stabbed or shot at (7%); or having been offered illegal drugs at school (39%). Statistically, girls and boys are equally likely to report being threatened at school; being pushed, shoved or grabbed; or having their property stolen or damaged.

## Victimization at School in the Past Year: Percent "Yes"



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

# Data Findings

## Delinquent Behavior

Boys are more likely to report having “hit or beat up another person” in the past year than girls, and doing so more frequently.

Boys are statistically more likely to self-report driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Girls and boys are equally likely to report becoming violent under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Girls and boys in correctional facilities respond similarly to several delinquency indicators on the MSS, namely that they report comparable levels of property damage and shoplifting in the past 12 months. More boys, however, report damaging property “six or more times” in the past year (15%) as compared to girls (7%).

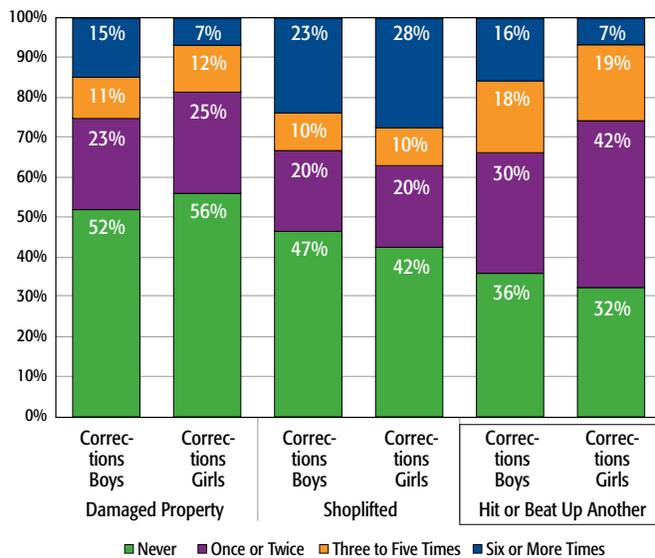
There is a statistical difference between the two groups in self-reports of having hit or beat up another person. Girls are more likely than boys to report this behavior “once or twice” (42% versus 30%) whereas boys are more likely to report such behavior “six or more times”

(16% versus 7%). In 2007, there was no statistical difference between girls and boys on any of the delinquency indicators. Research suggests that being the victim of violence is associated with being a perpetrator of violence, and that girls who perpetrate violence often have a history of violence perpetrated against them.<sup>84</sup>

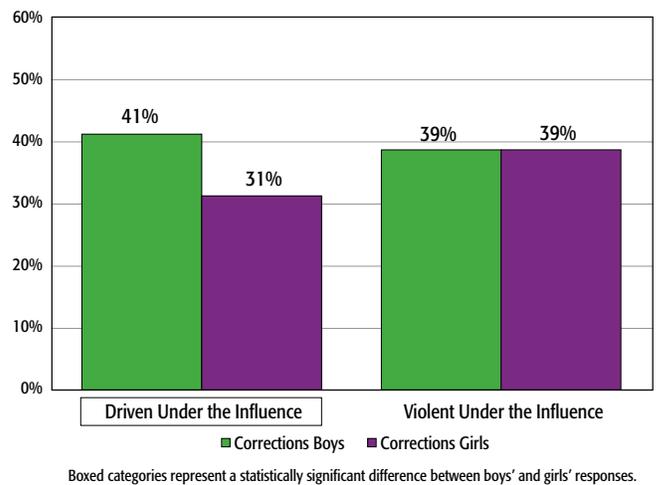
Boys are more likely than girls to report having driven a motor vehicle under the influence in the past year (41% versus 31%). There are equal self-reports of becoming violent while under the influence of drugs or alcohol at 39 percent. In 2007, there was no statistical difference between girls and boys on either of the public safety questions connected to chemical use.

These data support that, as it relates to non-violent behavior, girls and boys engage in similar acts. Boys self-report more chronic behavior than girls, again consistent with research. As it relates to physical conflicts, boys report more frequent fights with a greater level of physicality and weapon use.

**Delinquent Behavior in the Last 12 Months**



**Public Safety Consequences of Chemical Use in the Past Year**



# Data Findings

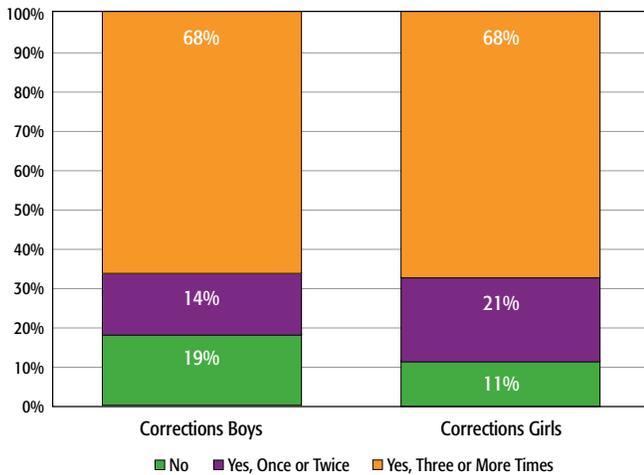
## Sexual Behavior

### Sexual Activity

Girls and boys in correctional facilities are equally likely to report having had sex. The majority of both girls and boys report having had three or more sexual partners.

There is no statistical difference between girls and boys in correctional facilities on the question of whether they have had sex. Eighty-two percent of boys and 89 percent of girls respond that they have had sexual intercourse at least once. Abstinence rates in 2007 were essentially the same as in 2010. Girls and boys are also comparable in the number of sexual partners they have had: over two-thirds of both girls and boys (68% each) report having had three or more sexual partners. Sexual activity is considerably more prevalent among youth in correctional facilities than mainstream students where over half of youth (53%) report they have not had sex.

**Whether Youth Have Had Sexual Intercourse**



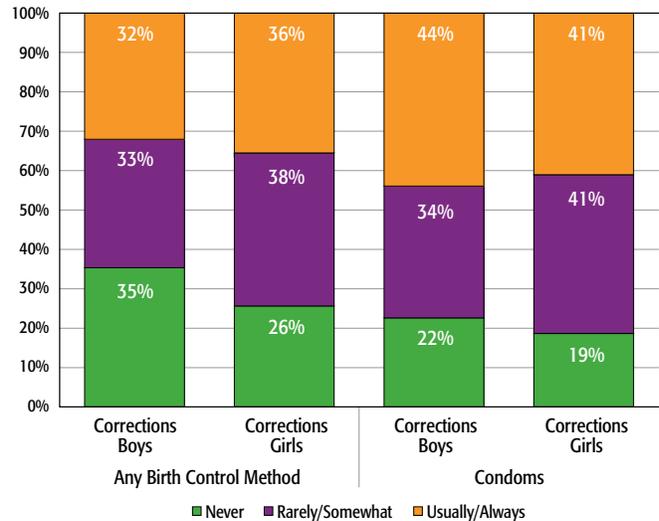
## Use of Condoms and Other Birth Control

There is no statistical difference between sexually active girls and boys in whether they report using condoms or other birth control. Less than half of both genders report “usually” or “always” using birth control or condoms.

Consistent use of condoms and birth control is lacking in the population of youth in correctional facilities. Of youth who report having sex, girls and boys are equally likely to use (or not use) some form of birth control. Only about one-third of each gender report “usually” or “always” using some form of birth control. Four in 10 youth of each gender report “usually or “always” using a condom.

There was no statistical difference between girls and boys in correctional facilities to these questions in 2007; however, reports of “never” using birth control or condoms are higher in 2010 for both girls and boys.

**Youth Who Have Had Sex: Use of Birth Control**



# Data Findings

Youth in correctional facilities are also not very likely to talk to their partners about preventing pregnancy or STDs/HIV. Fewer than three in 10 youth of boys or girls routinely talk to each partner about pregnancy prevention or STD/HIV prevention. Over one-third of boy and girls report that they never talk to their partners about pregnancy or STD/HIV prevention.

There was also no statistical difference on these questions between girls and boys in correctional facilities in 2007. These conversations appeared to be happening with slightly greater regularity in 2007 than are reported in 2010.

## Pregnancy

**Girls in correctional facilities are statistically more likely to report that they have been pregnant than are boys to report they have got someone pregnant.**

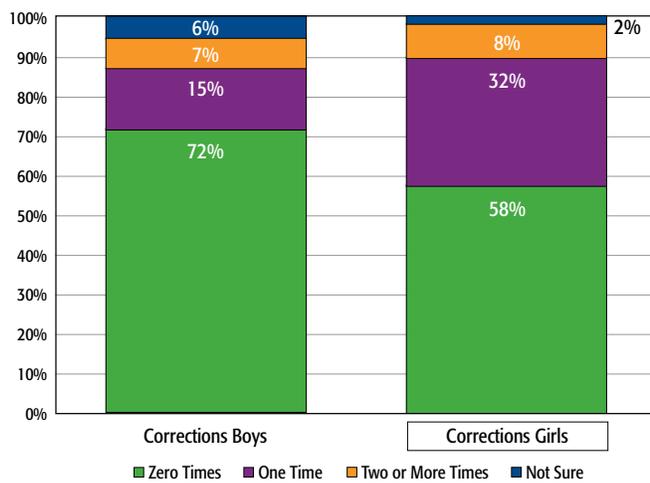
Four in 10 girls in correctional facilities report having been pregnant at least once with 8 percent reporting two or more pregnancies. About one-quarter of boys report having got someone pregnant at least once with 7 percent reporting multiple pregnancies. Boys had a larger percent report that they “didn’t know” if they had got someone pregnant (6%) versus 2 percent of girls who were unsure if they had been pregnant.

In 2007, a larger percentage of girls (71%) reported that they had never been pregnant as compared to 58 percent in 2010. Conversely, in 2007, 65 percent of boys said they had never got someone pregnant which is up to 72 percent in 2010.

The younger sample of girls in correctional facilities in 2010 does not appear to be having a downward effect on self-reported pregnancy rates by girls.

Female juvenile offenders engage in sexual activity at an earlier age than non-offenders, putting them at higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy.<sup>85</sup> Teen pregnancy, often the outcome of early sexual experimentation, creates special needs for both the adolescent and her child. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school, limiting their future chances for employment, and increasing the likelihood they will live in poverty. Additionally, at least half of first-time teen mothers become pregnant again within a year of their first birth. Children of teen mothers are twice as likely to become victims of child abuse and neglect as children of adult mothers. Because girls in the justice system have a history of abuse, this becomes a generational issue.<sup>86</sup>

**Number of Times Youth Have Been Pregnant/  
Got Someone Pregnant**



Boxed categories represent a statistically significant difference between boys' and girls' responses.

# Discussion and Practice Implications

## Gender-Responsive Interventions

Research on risk and protective factors related to female delinquency reveals that girls in the juvenile justice system have unique experiences and needs as compared to boys. Gender-responsive programs are those that address the unique risk factors of girls, as well as build upon girls' assets, strengths and protective factors. Following are key ideas in policy and program development in serving adolescent female offenders.

## Appropriate Risk Assessment

Not unlike juvenile justice programming in general, most tools used to assign risk levels or treatment needs are designed for a male population. These instruments are often intended to assess the presence of mental health issues, chemical dependency issues, and risk to commit future delinquency. Because they are effective and reliable with boys, it does not mean that they can be applied to girls and yield valid results.

Risk assessment instruments for girls should have gender-based development. This process includes separate validation on female populations; gender-specific questions; separate versions for girls and boys; scoring adjustments related to boys' and girls' unique response patterns; and reliability for girls over time.<sup>87</sup> When assessment instruments are used on girls that do not accurately predict risk, misclassification can occur. Misclassification of risk can result in missed intervention opportunities or a more intense level of service than is needed, both of which can be harmful and exacerbate risk in and of itself.<sup>88</sup>

A study of 143 different juvenile risk assessments was completed by the OJJDP Girls Study Group for favorable gender performance. Of those, only about half (73) were considered to have favorable gender performance in that they had content normed for girls, and that the validity and reliability of the tool was not affected by gender.<sup>89</sup> Fortunately, many of the instruments widely used in Minnesota received a Favorable Gender Performance Rating, including the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Version 2 (MAYSI\_II); Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT); and, Youth Level of Service Inventory/Case Management Inventory (YLSI-CMI).<sup>90</sup>

## Full Continuum of Services

Not unlike boys, girls need programs and interventions along the entire service continuum. Prevention efforts can precede the onset of any specific risk and be focused on knowledge, skills and healthy relationship development. Prevention efforts that are strength-based and gender-focused help girls build resiliency.

Intervention and treatment address emerging or established patterns of problem behavior. Aftercare programs support girls who have received a treatment intervention to practice new skills and prevent recidivism.<sup>91</sup> Parity, fairness and access to programming are issues relevant to girls' delinquency. Fewer resources, especially community-based options, exist for justice system-involved girls.

Gender-responsive mental health and chemical dependency treatment options can be especially challenging to find, in part because these resources are not plentiful for adolescence of either gender.

## Gender-Responsive Programming<sup>91,92</sup>

Key elements in creating gender-responsive programming include creating an environment through site selection; staff selection; program development; and content and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of girls' lives and is responsive to their needs and strengths.<sup>94</sup> The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defines gender-specific services as:

*“those that are designed to meet the unique needs of female offenders; that value the female perspective; that celebrate and honor the female experience; that respect and take into account female development; that empower girls and young women to reach their full human potential; and work to change established attitudes that prevent or discourage girls and young women from recognizing their potential.”<sup>95</sup>*

# Discussion and Practice Implications

The following are some basic tenets that should be present in girls' programs:

- **Safe Spaces:** Girls need programming space that is physically and emotionally safe. This means environments free of judgment, harassment or potential for abuse. Community-based interventions are preferred. However, if a girl is in a residential setting, it should be the least restrictive setting necessary to meet the safety needs of the community and as close to the child's home as possible. In coed residential settings, girls are to be housed and programmed separately from boys, and male staff are not to supervise girls during showering, toileting, dressing or sleeping periods.<sup>96</sup>
- **Individualized Treatment Plans:** Programs should use individualized treatment plans that focus on the specific risks, needs and assets of each girl. Each girl's behavior must be understood in the context of her complete social history and relationships with her family, peer group, school and community. Services should be matched to the identified needs and assets of each girl.<sup>97</sup>
- **Appropriate Staffing:** Ideally, gender-specific programming is delivered to girls by women who want to work with girls. The stereotype that girls are more difficult to work with than boys is often perpetuated by staff who are not trained in gender-specific service delivery and do not know how to work with girls effectively. It is important that staff understand girls' developmental stages, trauma and how chemical and emotional health interact with delinquency. Staff should be skilled in positive communication and building relationship skills.<sup>98</sup> Staff should reflect the gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and language of girls served.<sup>99</sup>
- **Participation and Education:** Gender-responsive programs ideally include the voice and participation of girls, beginning with program design. Girls benefit from a culture that encourages their participation in activities and discussions. Treatment should include a range of interventions: cognitive, behavioral, systems perspective, and provide for education, skill building and vocational development.
- **Healthy Relationships:** Girls are highly relational as compared to boys. Gender-responsive programming

emphasizes the importance of relationships, building trust, and establishes interdependence with women in their lives. While both girls and boys need a balance between connection to and differentiation from others, girls are more attuned to connection and boys to differentiation.<sup>100</sup> As such, boys' programming activities are more directed towards rules and autonomy, and girls programming are geared towards establishing healthy boundaries with parents, peers and partners.

Girls in residential settings should have access to parents, important adults, and to their children (if any) to maintain or repair important relationships. Also, female mentors who have experienced the same issues and share the race and ethnicity of the girls served, are crucial program elements.<sup>101</sup>

- **Health:** Girls have unique issues related to their physical development, psycho-social maturation, reproductive health, pregnancy and parenting. Development, healthy sexuality and physical and emotional self-care are important components of girls' programming. Understanding and interrupting patterns of victimization for girls are important aspects of girls' education.
- **Trauma:** Because so many girls in the justice system have been emotionally, physically or sexually abused, programs must acknowledge victimization and provide girls with safe ways to begin recovery. Creating the aforementioned safe spaces is a critical first component of trauma support. Programs should not require that girls' disclose secrets or participate unless they feel comfortable doing so. Care must be taken that staff do not exceed their level of training or education related to trauma, and that skilled mental health workers and clinical staff manage programming when venturing into therapeutic areas.<sup>102</sup>
- **Strength-Based Approach:** Treatment and services for girls are to be based on girls' competencies and strengths, and promote self-reliance and personal empowerment. The empowerment model assists girls to understand themselves and to develop an inherent sense of self-worth. Acknowledging and integrating girls' culture and spirituality are also important.

# Conclusion

Girls and boys in juvenile correctional facilities who participated in the 2010 Minnesota Student Survey often had statistically significant differences when self-reporting experiences and behaviors. Some of these differences may be attributable to boys being older and girls being younger, as well as some differences between the racial and ethnic composition of the two groups. However, other demographic variables such as their living arrangement and whether or not they received free or reduced priced lunch at school were not significantly different.

The responses of girls generally support a wide body of research which posits that girls in the juvenile justice system have unique risk and protective factors and respond differently than boys to these factors. Consistent with research, the most glaring gender difference captured in the MSS is the presence of sexual abuse in the lives of girls.

- Forty percent of girls report being forced to do something sexual against their wishes either by someone inside their family or a perpetrator outside their family, rates which are two and a half to three times higher than the self-reports of boys.
- Girls are five times more likely to report being forced to do something sexual in a dating relationship, and four times more likely to be hurt, threatened or made afraid by someone they were dating.
- Girls report nearly twice as much sexual harassment at school in the form of unwanted looks, comments and gestures.

Also consistent with research, girls self-report more mental and emotional health concerns than boys, especially around indicators that are consistent with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

- Girls are statistically more likely to report feeling angry and irritable; unhappy or depressed; worried or nervous; discouraged and hopeless; under stress or pressure; and have difficulty concentrating.
- Girls report more physical sickness including headaches and stomachaches. These are potentially physical manifestations of emotional health problems.

- Girls are more likely to report an ongoing mental or emotional health disorder and having received mental health treatment.
- Girls are nearly twice as likely as boys to report hurting themselves on purpose, and over twice as likely to report a suicide attempt.

In some areas girls report more risk-taking behavior than boys. Girls in correctional facilities are more likely than boys to report:

- Running away from home in the past year. Over half of girls in correctional facilities report running away at least once in the past year; nearly three in 10 ran away three or more times. Running away from home puts all youth, and girls especially, in a position of being further victimized or exploited.
- A greater percentage of girls report using alcohol and other drugs than boys. Girls also report starting to use substances at age 13 or younger more often than boys.
- Despite more chemical use by girls, and more reports of having negative physical, social and emotional consequences associated with chemical use, girls are not statistically more likely than boys to have received alcohol or drug treatment.

Girls do not differ from boys on some protective factors for youth. Girls are statistically as likely as boys to report that their parents, teachers and other adults at school care for them, and feeling safe at school and in their neighborhoods. Girls do articulate higher educational aspirations, but also report more truancy than boys and do not report significantly higher academic performance.

Data from the 2010 MSS support the need for gender-responsive services for girls in the juvenile justice system. Gender-responsive programming acknowledges girls unique pathways into the juvenile justice system; high prevalence of physical and sexual victimization among girls; underlying reasons for girls' chemical use; and that girls have mental and emotional health issues related to depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder at rates significantly higher than boys. To adequately serve girls, programs should include the following:

# Conclusion

- Use of assessment tools that are validated on the adolescent female population and accurately and reliably assign risk or treatment levels.
- Case plans that are based on each girl's individual service needs and assets in the context of the girl's complete social history.
- A continuum of services from prevention to aftercare, with an emphasis on community-based services.
- Mental health and chemical health interventions which are specific to girls' issues and their histories of trauma.
- Physically and emotionally safe spaces for girls to meet, share and participate.
- Staff and mentors who are trained in working with girls, who want to work with girls, and who reflect the gender, race/ethnicity, language and experiences of the girls served.
- An emphasis on the importance of relationships for girls, and are focused on establishing healthy boundaries and relationships with family, peers and partners.
- Education about girls' development, self-care, sexual health, pregnancy and parenting.
- Strength-based and empowerment focus to assist girls in increasing self-esteem, perceptions of self-worth and increase resiliency.

While gender-specific programming exists in Minnesota, it has yet to be integrated into all aspects of service delivery. As practitioners, gender-responsive approaches must be integrated into all level of service and treatment for girls. As policy makers, we must review our arrest, detention, prosecution, and placement laws and policies to ensure that the system response does not result in an unintentional overrepresentation of girls in the juvenile justices system or create different levels of accountability for girls and boys due to gender-bias of system professionals.

## Coming Soon

Please watch for the final report in the *2010 Minnesota Student Survey: Youth in Correctional Facilities* series coming in 2012. The final report will explore how youth in correctional facilities who report experiencing trauma, such as physical and sexual abuse, respond to the MSS. This report will also provide an overview of trauma and trauma-informed care.

# Appendix A

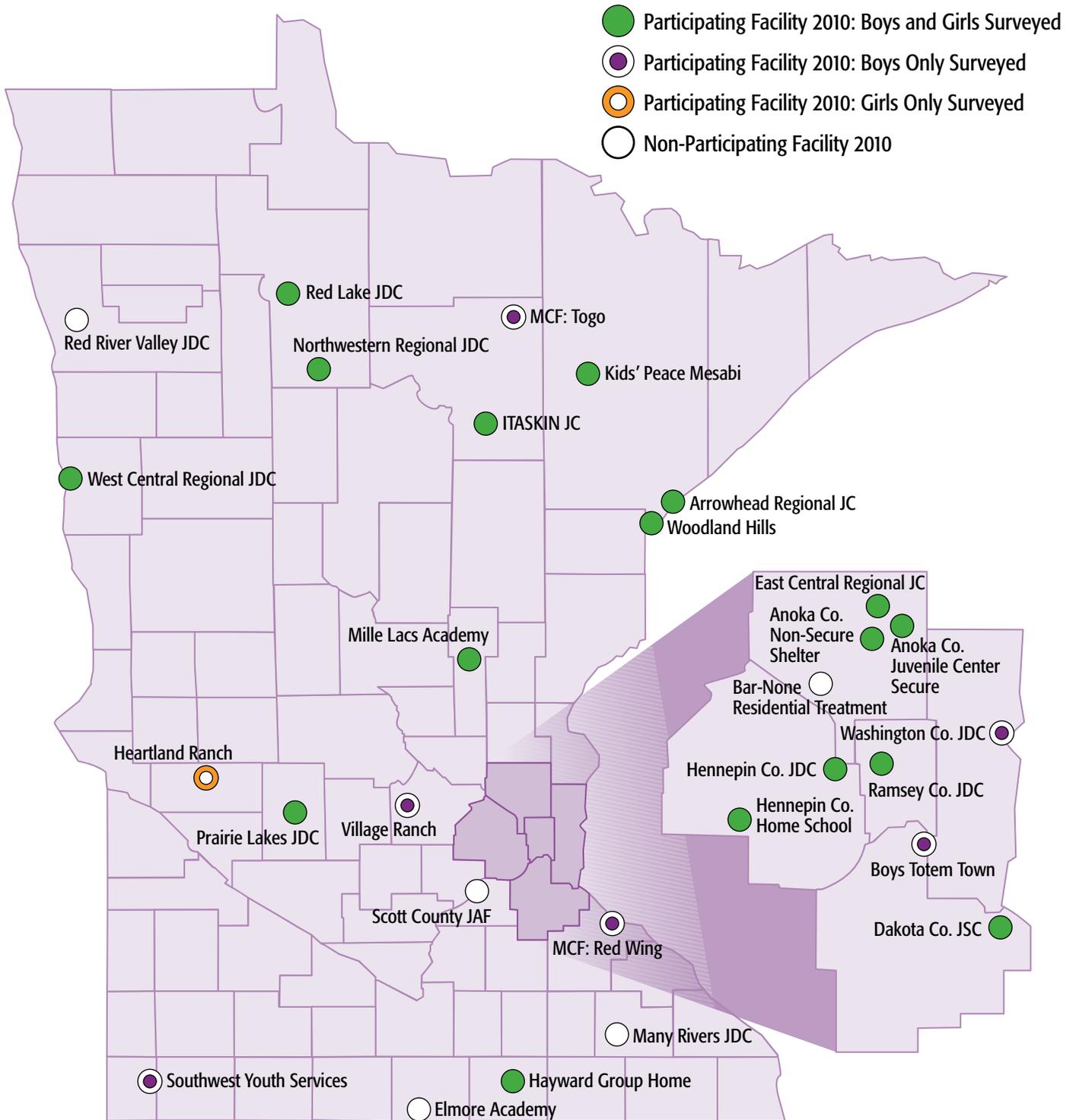
## Characteristics of Participating Facilities

Based on licensing information maintained by the Minnesota Department of Corrections, participating facilities had the following characteristics in 2010:

- Eleven participating facilities have secure beds only; five have both secure and non-secure beds; and eight have only non-secure beds.
- Nine facilities are in the seven-county Twin Cities Metro area; the remainder are in greater Minnesota.
- Eight facilities have maximum populations of fewer than 30 youth; eight facilities have maximum populations of 30 to 65 youth; and eight facilities have maximum populations of over 80 youth.
- Ages of youth in the program vary with admission criteria. Generally, the minimum age of admission is 10 years old and the maximum age is 19. Age criteria are determined in part by the risk level served and programs offered.
- Seventeen facilities house both male and female youth; six facilities house only males; and one facility houses only females. In facilities that accept both males and females, girls and boys are housed and programmed separately, consistent with best practices.
- Seventeen facilities provide pre-dispositional detention and post-dispositional residential placement; six facilities are post-disposition residential placement only. Only one facility offers pre-adjudication detention only.
- The youth length of stay in the facilities can range from a few days to over a year, depending on the treatment services offered and whether youth are pre- or post-adjudication holds.

# Appendix B

## Location of Department of Corrections Licensed Youth Facilities Eligible for MSS Participation



# Appendix C

## The Girls Study Group

The Girls Study Group is an interdisciplinary group of scholars and practitioners convened by OJJDP to develop a comprehensive research foundation for understanding and responding to girls' involvement in delinquency. The study group members provide complementary and multidisciplinary backgrounds and experiences that encompass the range of knowledge needed to understand and explain female delinquency. The group includes sociologists, psychologists, criminologists, and gender studies experts, as well as researchers and practitioners with legal and girls' program development experience.<sup>103</sup>

The Girls Study Group has published a bulletin series on myriad issues related to girls' delinquency and what treatment and intervention programs are most effective for girls. These bulletins are excellent resources to learn more about delinquency in girls and effective interventions

- [Suitability of Assessment Instruments for Delinquent Girls](#) (April 2010). Provides a comprehensive guide to help juvenile justice practitioners determine which standardized assessment instruments should be used when working with delinquent girls. 12 pages.
- [Causes and Correlates of Girls' Delinquency](#) (April 2010). Examines evidence from research studies that have explored the dynamics of girls' delinquency and risk behavior. 20 pages.
- [Resilient Girls—Factors that Protect Against Delinquency](#) (January 2009). Describes how four factors—presence of a caring adult, school connectedness, school success and religiosity—affect girls' propensity towards delinquency. 16 pages.
- [Girls Study Group—Charting the Way to Delinquency Prevention for Girls](#) (October 2008). Provides an overview of the Girls Study Group's research on female juvenile delinquency. The Girls Study Group was created to provide a comprehensive research foundation for understanding and responding to girls' involvement in delinquency. 8 pages.

- [Violence by Teenage Girls: Trends and Context](#) (May 2008). Examines the involvement of girls in violent activity (including whether such activity has increased relative to the increase for boys) and the contexts in which girls engage in violent behavior. 24 pages.

Forthcoming publications from the Girls Study Group:

- **Girls' Delinquency Programs – An Evidence-Based Review** This Bulletin reviews girls' delinquency programs and determines whether they effectively intervene in delinquency trajectories.
- **Developmental Sequences of Girls' Delinquent Behavior** This Bulletin investigates the different patterns of delinquent behaviors that girls become involved in, and provides insight into the life pathways that lead to girls' delinquent behavior.

The Girls Study Group also reviewed many risk assessment tools and treatment instruments for their effectiveness with girls. For a comprehensive list of instruments reviewed, go to [OJJDP's National Training and Technical Assistance Center](#).

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