

Abstract

- In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was an 87% increase in arrests of girls for violent crimes (Schwartz & Steffensmeier, 2012).
- Traumatic victimization is a strong predictor of delinquency for all adolescents, but there is a marked difference in the levels of victimization of girls vs. boys.
- Girls experience more types and increased levels of victimization compared to boys.
- Researchers suggest that female adolescents have moved from internalizing to externalizing symptoms of victimization, thus increasing their interaction with the juvenile justice system.

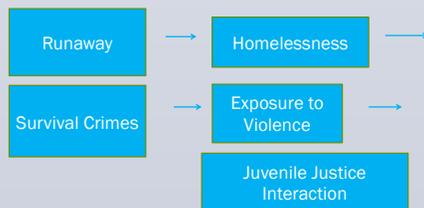
Background

- Female adolescents experience poly-victimization at a higher rate when compared to their male counterparts.
- DeHart and Moran's (2009) research implied that female juvenile offenders experienced "3-5 major categories of violence and 7 of 20 subtypes of violence in their lifetime" (p. 278).
- Poly-victimization includes but is not limited to: sexual abuse, physical abuse, exposure to substance abuse, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, parental neglect and dysfunction, and witnessing and experiencing community violence.

Causes

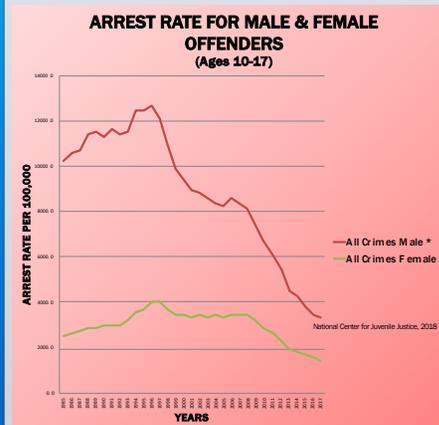


- The female adolescent experiences some form of victimization.
- She does one or two things: She can either abuse substance as a coping mechanism or run away from home.
- If she apprehended by the police it is considered a status offense.
- The status offense is usually the first interaction between a girl and the juvenile justice system.
- A second cause of interaction is an altercation between a girl and a family member.
- At this point the girl is charged with a violent offense, which could have been avoided.
- Persistent maltreatment of the female adolescent perpetuates a continued interaction with the juvenile justice system.
- Additionally, it is a strong predictor of female delinquency.
- Likelihood of a female offender's transition from victim to perpetrator increases as victimization increases.
- Being a runaway increases juvenile justice interaction.

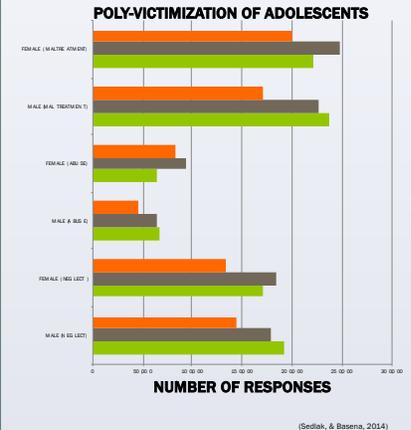


Statistics

- Wolf (2018) suggested that youth who "experienced three or more forms of abuse were 11.2 times more likely to perpetrate" similar behavior.
- Girls between the ages of 9 and 15 years were 2.4 times more likely to participate in a violent activity if they had a history of violence (OJJDP, 2017).
- An estimated 70 to 77% of incarcerated girls had experienced physical and sexual abuse and witnessed domestic violence (Herrera & McCloskey, 2003; Wood et al., 2002).
- Over 2/3 of incarcerated girls had experienced physical abuse and 50% had experienced sexual abuse (Morash, 2016).
- Fifty-four percent of perpetrators were female compared to 45% of males (OJJDP, 2018).
- Seventy-eight percent of perpetrators were parents.
- Eighty percent of perpetrators were between the age of 18 and 44 years.



Statistics



Why This is Important

- Girls are still being arrested at the same rate or higher depending on the stated reason (Kerig, 2018).
- Girls account for 1/3 of all juvenile arrests.
- Judicial system may be reacting more harshly in response to their violent behavior.
- Future outcomes of these girls are not being addressed.
- Poly-victimization along with incarcerations can further contribute to psychological disorders (Van der Molen et al., 2013).
- Research has established the impact of dysfunctional families of female juvenile offenders.
- Offender families were more likely to experience substance abuse, domestic violence, and maltreatment (Dixon, 2004).
- Programs must be in place to recognize and address the victimization of girls prior to their arrest.
- Issues within the home – poor parenting, substance abuse, domestic violence – must be addressed.