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Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: A Profile of Ohio

Juvenile delinquency among girls is a unique research, practice and policy challenge that requires a comprehensive understanding of the problem, including scope, causes and risk factors, and opportunities for effective prevention and intervention. Various child-serving systems, including education, child welfare and mental health services are connected to the juvenile justice system and the young people in its care. The following information and data have been compiled to develop a common source of reference for the experiences and needs of girls in Ohio who have either entered or are at-risk of entering the juvenile justice system. Data collection, maintenance and reporting are not consistent across the state or across child-serving agencies, and ease of data accessibility varies considerably as well. Thus, while significant gaps in data exist, this summary serves as a starting point for background on vulnerable girls.

THE SCHUBERT CENTER FOR CHILD STUDIES in the College of Arts and Sciences at Case Western Reserve University strives to bridge research, practice and policy and to promote educational initiatives across disciplines. Our focus is on children and childhood from infancy through adolescence and in local, national, international and global contexts.

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NATIONAL CONTEXT FOR GIRLS DELINQUENCY

A brief overview of the national data provides some context for girls' involvement in Ohio's juvenile justice system. In 2008, out of 14 million arrests in the United States, 2.1 million involved juveniles, of which girls comprise 30% (Puzzanchera, 2009). As Figure 1 illustrates, overall there were 3% fewer juvenile arrests in 2008 than in 2007, and juvenile violent crime arrests fell 2% continuing a recent decline. The vast majority of juvenile arrests are for less serious offenses – non-index and status offenses account for three-quarters of all juvenile arrests.¹ Juveniles comprised about 15% of arrests for all offenses, about 16% of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses, and about 26% of arrests for Property Crime Index offenses.²

Girls are considerably less violent than boys and, despite some media accounts to the contrary girls are in fact less violent now than in previous years, particularly as compared to the mid-1990s (see Figure 3). Girls continue to be arrested for prostitution, running away, disorderly conduct, curfew and loitering at higher rates while they are a fraction of arrests for violent juvenile crime. Specifically, in 2008, compared to boys, girls accounted for 17% of the juvenile Violent Crime Index but 31% of arrests for curfew and loitering, 33% of disorderly conduct arrests, 56% of arrests for runaway, and 76% of arrests for prostitution.

Figure 1

The 2.11 million arrests of juveniles in 2008 was 16% fewer than the number of arrests in 1999

Most Serious Offense	2008 Estimated Number of Juvenile Arrests	Percent of Total Juvenile Arrests		Percent Change		
		Female	Younger Than 15	1999– 2008	2004– 2008	2007– 2008
Total	2,111,200	30%	27%	-16%	-4%	-3%
Violent Crime Index	96,000	17	27	-9	5	-2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	1,280	7	8	-9	19	-5
Forcible rape	3,340	2	34	-27	-21	-2
Robbery	35,350	9	20	25	46	2
Aggravated assault	56,000	24	31	-21	-9	-4
Property Crime Index	439,600	36	29	-20	-2	5
Burglary	84,100	12	29	-14	4	3
Larceny-theft	324,100	44	29	-17	0	8
Motor vehicle theft	24,900	16	20	-50	-33	-17
Arson	6,600	12	56	-24	-16	-8
Nonindex						
Other assaults	231,700	34	37	0	-5	-3
Forgery and counterfeiting	2,600	33	12	-64	-48	-15
Fraud	7,600	35	16	-18	0	3
Embezzlement	1,300	43	3	-31	19	-19
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	20,900	19	23	-23	-10	-6
Vandalism	107,300	13	40	-8	3	-4
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	40,000	10	31	-2	-4	-7
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,500	76	11	20	-14	-1
Sex offense (except forcible rape and prostitution)	14,500	10	47	-18	-22	-5
Drug abuse violations	180,100	15	15	-7	-5	-7
Gambling	1,700	2	14	-51	-12	-19
Offenses against the family and children	5,900	36	28	-38	-14	-2
Driving under the influence	16,000	24	2	-27	-19	-14
Liquor laws	131,800	38	9	-22	1	-7
Drunkenness	15,400	24	11	-24	-3	-8
Disorderly conduct	187,600	33	36	2	-7	-5
Vagrancy	4,000	29	29	-29	-3	6
All other offenses (except traffic)	363,000	26	23	-19	-3	-3
Suspicion (not included in totals)	300	22	24	-86	-74	-29
Curfew and loitering	133,100	31	26	-27	5	-7
Runaways	109,200	56	32	-33	-12	-5

- ◆ In 2008, there were an estimated 324,100 juvenile arrests for larceny-theft. Between 1999 and 2008, the number of such arrests fell by 17%.
- ◆ Of the four offenses that make up the Violent Crime Index, only juvenile arrests for robbery increased in 2007–2008 (up 2%).
- ◆ In 2008, females accounted for 17% of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests, 36% of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests, and 44% of juvenile larceny-theft arrests.
- ◆ Youth younger than age 15 accounted for more than one-fourth of all juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses and Property Crime Index offenses in 2008 (27% and 29%, respectively).

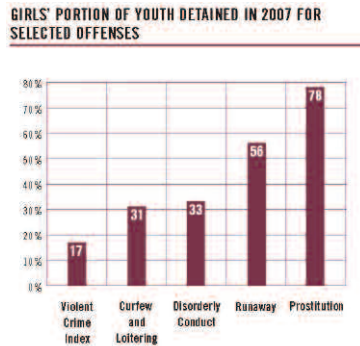
Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Data source: *Crime in the United States 2008* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2009), tables 29, 32, 34, 36, 38, and 40. Arrest estimates were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

SOURCE: Puzzanchera, C. (2009, December). Juvenile Justice Bulletin. Juvenile Arrests 2008. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The incidence of girls arrested for serious violent crimes has remained steady over the last two decades (U.S. Department of Justice [USDOJ], 2008a).

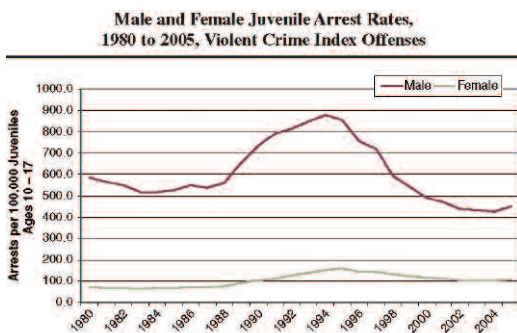
Figure 2



SOURCE: Sherman, F.T. & Irvine, A. (2009). Using JDAI Strategies to Reduce the Detention of Girls: A Practice Guide to Juvenile Detention Reform (5).

The overall juvenile arrest rate has dropped for both girls and boys in the last decade nationwide; however, the decrease was greater for boys than girls (Puzzanchera, 2009). Figure 3 illustrates this sharp decline for arrests involving violent crimes.

Figure 3



SOURCE: Feld, B. (2009). Violent Girls or Relabeled Status Offenders? An Alternative Interpretation of the Data. *Crime and Delinquency*, 55(2), 241-265.

Although girls make up a much smaller overall portion of juvenile arrests than boys, the two groups' arrest patterns have diverged somewhat over the past decade. As the percentage changes in Table 1 indicate, juvenile arrests generally decreased between 1996 and 2005, but the decrease was greater for boys than for girls. The exception to the general trend was arrests for simple assault, which increased 24% for girls while decreasing for boys.

Table 1

PERCENT CHANGE IN MALE AND FEMALE JUVENILE ARRESTS, 1996 TO 2005		
TYPE	GIRLS	BOYS
Total crime	- 14.3%	- 28.7%
Violent Crime Index	- 10.2	- 27.9
Aggravated assault	- 5.4	- 23.4
Simple assault	24.0	- 4.1

SOURCE: United States Department of Justice 2008a

Researchers have examined the changing nature of assaults over the past decades to better understand the increasing arrest rates for girls and the context of girls' violence, despite the overall decline in juvenile arrests (USDOJ, 2008a). Rather than a growth of violent behavior among girls, their analysis attributes increases in assault arrests to changes in law enforcement policies, such as lowering the threshold for reporting an assault or classifying an assault as aggravated; reporting child-parent domestic disputes as assaults; and, increasing school zero-tolerance policies for police referrals (USDOJ, 2008a). For instance, behaviors once deemed "ungovernable" and thus status offenses, such as a domestic dispute between a girl and her sibling or parent, may now result instead in an arrest for simple assault. After peers, family members are the second most common target of assaults by girls and girls' violence is more likely than boys' violence to occur at home, as noted in Table 2.

Table 2

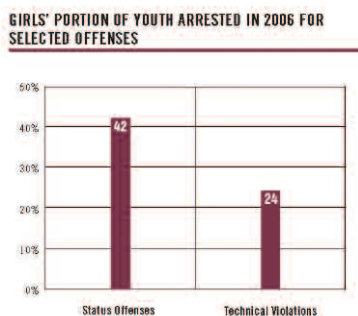
TYPE OF VICTIM IN AGGRAVATED AND SIMPLE ASSAULTS BY BOYS AND GIRLS				
TYPE OF VICTIM	SIMPLE ASSAULT		AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	
	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS
Juvenile family	5%	5%	4%	7%
Juvenile acquaintance	54%	49%	45%	40%
Juvenile stranger	5%	3%	6%	2%
Adult family	17%	23%	12%	21%
Adult acquaintance	16%	17%	21%	24%
Adult stranger	4%	3%	12%	6%

SOURCE: United States Department of Justice 2008a

Girls in Detention

Upon arrest, youth may either be released under the supervision of their parent or guardian or held in detention prior to their adjudication and sentencing. Girls continue to be a minority in detention systems where they are disproportionately detained for less serious offenses. While girls made up 18% of the detained youth nationwide in 2006, they comprised 42% of those held for status offenses and 24% of those held for technical violations of probation and parole (Sherman & Irvine, 2009).

Figure 4



SOURCE: Sherman, F.T. & Irvine, A. (2009). Using JDAI Strategies to Reduce the Detention of Girls: A Practice Guide to Juvenile Detention Reform (5).

GIRLS IN OHIO'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Girls make up 48.7% of the 1,317,063 total child population aged 10-17 years in Ohio. Nearly 82% of these girls are Caucasian, 13.8% are African American, and 2.4% are Latino/Hispanic (*The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Census Data Online, 2000*). Compared to the general population of adolescent girls, females account for 12.7% of the adjudicated youth population in Ohio's juvenile courts (*Ohio Department of Youth Services [ODYS], 2008*). While Ohio does not maintain statewide data on total numbers of juvenile misdemeanors and status offenses, statewide roughly 1,100 girls are adjudicated delinquent of a felony crime annually (out of approximately 8600 total felony adjudications annually, approximately 49% of whom are Caucasian) (*ODYS, 2008*). The total number of delinquency offenses statewide is significantly higher than total felony adjudications. To put the felony number in context, in Cuyahoga County alone for instance, there were 11,254 delinquency and status offenses in 2008,

28% (3,136) of which were committed by girls (*The Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile Division, 2008*). Compared to boys, girls appear more than twice as likely to be adjudicated for status ("unruly") offenses (30% versus 14% for boys) (*2008*). Of those juveniles who were arrested in Cuyahoga County, 55.6% were African American, 43.1% were Caucasian, and 1.2% were Latino/Hispanic. African American youth are twice as likely to be arrested in Cuyahoga County as Caucasian youth and accounted for 94.3% of all minority youth who were arrested (*The Institute for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Kent State University, 2008*).

Girls Transferred to the Adult Court System in Ohio

In Ohio, children age 14 and older can be transferred from the juvenile system to adult court for the commission of any felony, including serious property offenses. In 2008, 319 youth were transferred to adult courts, 4.4% of whom were female. Of these 319 youth, 72.7% were African American, 22.3% were Caucasian, and 5% were Other (*ODYS, 2009*). Even without an increase in serious violent crimes, the number of girls transferred to adult court in Ohio has more than tripled since 2006 from four girls (making up 1.3% of the total juvenile transfer population) to fourteen girls (4.4% of the total transfer population) in 2008 (*ODYS, 2008*).

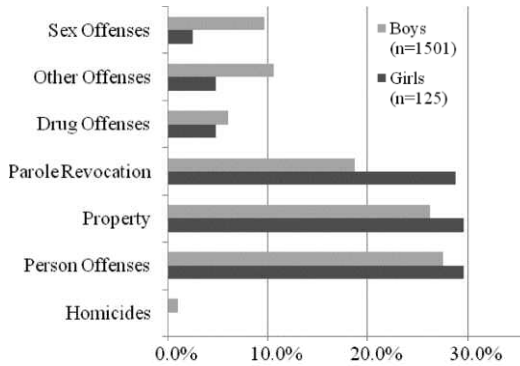
Girls in the Ohio Department of Youth Services

Adjudicated delinquent youth may be sentenced to a range of dispositions, from probation to more graduated sanctions, including residential placement, secure confinement in local facilities or placement in state correctional facilities in the custody of the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS). Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility, located in Delaware county, is the only juvenile prison for girls in Ohio (there are six ODYS facilities); however, there are an additional twelve juvenile community correction facilities and approximately 41 locally operated juvenile detention centers across the state (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2006). Due to data constraints, this summary looks only at females committed to ODYS secure custody.

Girls make up a small proportion (7.7% in 2008) of the total number of youth committed to ODYS correctional facilities and that number has dropped significantly in recent years (*ODYS, 2008*). In July 2006,

129 girls were incarcerated compared to 45 girls in October, 2009 (a decrease of 65%, compared to an overall decrease in ODYS population of 33% during that same time period) (*Hearing on "Girls in the Juvenile Justice System" Testimony of Thomas Stickrath [Stickrath], 2009*). Of the 1,626 ODYS admissions in 2008, 125 were girls and 1,501 were boys. Figure 5 breaks down the 2008 ODYS admissions by type of offense and rate of admission by gender. While girls were committed to ODYS for generally less serious offenses than boys, as Figure 5 shows, both boys and girls were committed for property or person offenses at about the same rate (just under 30% for each). One marked gender difference in ODYS admissions exists in parole revocations; girls are more likely to be committed to correctional facilities for violating parole than boys (29% versus 19%).

Figure 5
2008 ODYS RATES OF ADMISSIONS BY OFFENSE & GENDER



SOURCE: Ohio Department of Youth Services Female Admissions Aggregate Data (2009) and ODYS (2008).

The racial breakdown of the female incarcerated population in 2008 was 52% Black, 38% White, .6% Biracial, and .2% Hispanic and Other respectively (*ODYS Female Admission Aggregate Data [ODYS Female Data], 2009*). Table 3 illustrates annual trend data since 2005 for the types of offenses that resulted in girls being placed in an ODYS correctional facility.

The average length of stay for girls in an ODYS correctional facility is 6.8 months (*ODYS Female Data, 2009*). Girls committed to ODYS are on average 16 years old but their average educational level is 7th grade and 40% are identified as being in need of special education. In addition to the secure correctional population, girls make up 30% of the ODYS placements in state funded community programs, both home-based and out-of-home placements in community settings, including some of the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ) programs and ODYS RECLAIM programs (*Stickrath, 2009*).

According to recent Congressional testimony by ODYS Director Stickrath, girls in Ohio's juvenile justice system present alarming rates of serious mental health conditions, including post traumatic stress disorder, psychiatric disorders and attempts at harming themselves. Specifically, 91 percent are receiving mental health services with 63 percent on psychotropic medications (*Stickrath, 2009*). Over half have attempted suicide and "most have substance abuse issues... Physical, mental and/or sexual abuse is the norm for these girls, and nearly all have experienced some sort of trauma in their lives" (*Stickrath, 2009, p. 1*).

Table 3

ODYS FEMALE ADMISSIONS BY OFFENSE TYPE								
FISCAL YEAR	HOMICIDE	SEX	PERSON	PROPERTY	DRUG	OTHER	REVOKED	TOTAL
2009	0	2	48	24	6	8	27	115
2008	0	3	37	37	6	6	36	125
2007	0	3	50	29	12	10	36	140
2006	1	1	42	50	10	5	38	147
2005	1	3	55	42	9	9	33	152

SOURCE: Ohio Department of Youth Services Female Admissions Aggregate Data (2009).



RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS RELATED TO DELINQUENCY IN GIRLS

According to national research on the causes and correlates of girls’ involvement in the juvenile justice system, while boys and girls experience many of the same delinquency risk factors, some factors that increase the risk more for girls than for boys include: early puberty, especially if they come from disadvantaged neighborhoods; sexual abuse; depression and anxiety disorders (girls receive these diagnoses more frequently than boys); and romantic partners (while boys and girls are equally influenced by their partners for serious crimes, for less serious crimes, girls are influenced more by their boyfriends) (USDOJ, 2008b).

The data on resiliency and protective factors for girls is more mixed and must be considered in the context of the experience of disadvantaged neighborhoods and/or other forms of adversity. For example, while school success serves as a significant protection against several forms of delinquency for girls in the general population, it is less protective for girls who have been sexually or physically assaulted (meaning assaulted by caretaker or partner, distinctly different than sexual assault) or who live in a disadvantaged neighborhood (USDOJ, 2009).

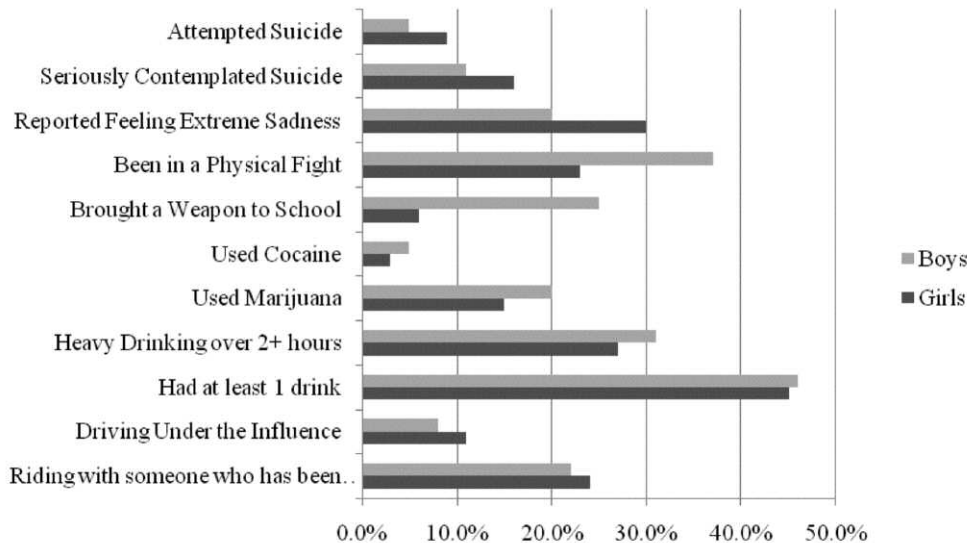
Similarly, while the presence of a caring adult during adolescence reduces the likelihood that girls will engage in several delinquent behaviors (these girls are less likely to commit status or property offenses, sell drugs, join gangs or commit assaults (USDOJ, 2008b)), this protective factor is not consistent for girls at high risk for delinquency, such as physically assaulted girls (USDOJ, 2009).

Risk-Taking Behavior in Girls

According to the latest Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data spanning 1993-2007, there are gender differences in some of the risk taking behavior among teenagers. For instance, while the overall percentage of teens who have seriously considered attempting suicide has significantly decreased by more than half during this period, girls are still more likely than boys to seriously consider and to attempt suicide, and girls are generally twice as likely to require treatment for injuries due to suicide attempts. Girls are also more likely than boys to drive under the influence of alcohol or ride with someone who has been drinking (Ohio Department of Health Youth Risk Behavior Survey [ODH YRBS], 2008a). Figure 6 illustrates some of the Ohio youth reported risk taking behavior by gender within the 30 days prior to the survey.

Figure 6

YOUTH SELF-REPORTED BEHAVIOR IN THE PAST 30 DAYS



SOURCE: Ohio Department of Health (2008a) Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

There has been a notable drop in reported school-based violence overall. Both boys and girls reported decreases in physical fights and in carrying weapons to school (*ODH YRBS, 2008a*). While teenage pregnancy between 2000-2006 has also dropped overall in all teen age groups (10-19 years of age), the teenage pregnancy rate increased slightly for the first time from 2005 to 2006, with a total of 26,805 pregnant girls in Ohio, or a rate of 34.2 out of 1,000 girls between the ages of 10-19 years in 2006 (*Ohio Department of Health, 2008b*).

Girlhood Trauma and Victimization

Childhood trauma and victimization can have lasting effects on healthy child development. The association between exposure to trauma and juvenile delinquency in girls has been well documented (*USDOJ, 2008b*). New research building on this data, looking at exposure to multiple forms of violence simultaneously, suggests that the sheer number of victimizations is a better predictor of delinquency than the type. Girls in the juvenile justice system experience greater levels of violence and have higher rates of direct victimization than the general population (*DeHart, 2009*). Expanding upon the association between victimization and crime among girls, this study found that substance abuse is sometimes a coping mechanism for caregiver violence, sexual violence, and witnessing violence. Fighting correlated with witnessing violence, largely as a retaliatory or protective measure, and prostitution was also found to be linked to victimization through sexual relationships with older men (*DeHart, 2009*).

A history of sexual abuse is prevalent among the juvenile justice population and child sex trafficking is a particular area of sexual victimization that has received recent attention in Ohio. According to a study released by the Ohio Attorney General's Office on the prevalence of human trafficking, a conservative estimate of 1,078 children between the ages of 12 and 17 are trafficked in Ohio every year, with Toledo being fourth in the nation in terms of arrests and rescue of domestic child sex trafficking (*Williamson, 2010*). In Toledo, 77% of the trafficked youth had been involved with child welfare at some point and 52% had been in foster care (*2010*). The study further estimates that approximately 1 in 3 girls between the ages of 12 and 17

who are at high risk due to extended runaway episodes, periods of homelessness, and/or involvement with child welfare or juvenile court will become a victim of child sex trafficking in Ohio (*2010*). Finding that Ohio is "quick to label youth involved in prostitution as delinquents and incarcerate them, rarely looking further into those adults who were involved in their manipulation or force" and that the juvenile justice system has inappropriately been the public system primarily responsible for the care of child victims of sex trafficking, the study commission recommends handling child trafficking cases through the child welfare system rather than the juvenile courts (*Williamson, 2010, p.46-47*).

Child Welfare Involvement

The link between the child protection and juvenile justice systems has received considerable attention for a host of reasons, including how system involvement can unintentionally re-traumatize children and how youth "aging-out" or transitioning from foster care to independence without support are more vulnerable to future involvement in the criminal justice system. The following are a few statistics to help provide some sense of the scope of children involved in the child welfare system statewide. There were a total number of 106,538 new allegations of abuse and neglect in 2007 (34% neglect, 27% physical abuse, 23% families in need of services, 13% sexual abuse, and 3% emotional maltreatment) (*Public Child Services Association of Ohio [PCSAO], 2009*). The number of children removed from their families and placed in temporary or permanent custody has dropped significantly in the last few years from a total of 35,083 in 2001 to 26,853 in 2007. Of these children in custody 64% were in licensed foster care, 16% were in kinship care, 15% were in residential facilities, 2% were placed in independent living programs, and 3% were in adoptive placements (*PCSAO, 2009*). Child welfare data by gender is not accessible at the state level; however, Cuyahoga County data reflect that girls make up slightly less than half of the total number of children entering placements for the first time (*Cuyahoga County Department of Child and Family Services Family to Family Outcomes, 2007*). In 2007, a total of 1,169 youth aged-out of foster care in Ohio (*PCSAO, 2009*).

Table 4

OHIO GIRLS RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT JULY 2005-JUNE 2009							
	SFY05	SFY06	SFY07	SFY08	SFY09	5-YEAR AVERAGE	AVERAGE PCT
Residential	2,227	2,215	2,127	1,922	1,196	1,937	4.48%
All Girls	40,818	41,888	42,889	44,304	46,176	43,215	

SOURCE: Ohio Department of Mental Health Snapshot of Girls in Residential Treatment Aggregate Data (2010).

Education & School Discipline

Educational success is a protective factor for girls; however, school disciplinary practices such as zero-tolerance policies³ can serve as a pathway to the juvenile justice system. Overall, the high school graduation rate in Ohio is 84.7% for both sexes, compared to 85.7% for girls (*Ohio Department of Education [ODE]: Graduation Count (State), 2009*). According to 2008-2009 school year discipline data, 1503 girls were expelled from school in Ohio (*ODE: Discipline Occurrences (State), 2009*). Girls account for 28.3% of expulsions, 33% of in-school suspensions (46,989) and 30.2% of out-of-school suspensions (70,997) (2009). All students are disciplined for what is termed disobedient/disruptive behavior, but girls were more likely to be expelled for fighting (35%) compared to boys (22%) (2009). Also, girls were more likely to be disciplined for having alcohol and boys more likely for drugs (2009). Despite media reports of gun violence among juveniles, data shows a large drop in gun possession by both girls and boys in the 2008-2009 school year (2009). Specifically, there were 15 gun-related disciplinary actions involving girls in Ohio in 2008-2009 (compared to a prior five year average of 63 gun-related incidents per year) (2009).

Mental Health Needs

Mental illness is another risk factor for juvenile justice involvement and, as noted previously, a large majority of girls in the ODYS system has significant behavioral health issues. Mental health services for children not involved in ODYS, both community-based and psychiatric hospitalization, are funded mainly through the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH). From 2005-2009, on average 43,215 girls received community mental health treatment annually and on average, 1,937 (4.5%) of these girls received mental health services while

in a residential placement (*ODMH Snapshot of Girls in Residential Treatment Aggregate Data, 2010*). Of note, the number of girls receiving treatment while in residential placement declined by half over the last five years (2,227 in 2005 compared to 1,196 in 2009) (2010).

Adjustment Disorders (25% of all girls receiving treatment and 15% of residential girls), ADHD/Disruptive Behavior Disorders (31% and 28% respectively), and Mood Disorders (23% and 39% respectively) account for the majority of diagnoses for girls receiving community mental health care in Ohio (2010).

The most striking difference between the residential population and all girls receiving treatment is the greater percentage receiving treatment for mood disorders. Figure 7 at right shows a more detailed breakout of the diagnoses for the 4,466 girls in the total residential sample from 2005 to 2009. Diagnostic categories are labeled by percent of all individuals in the sample.

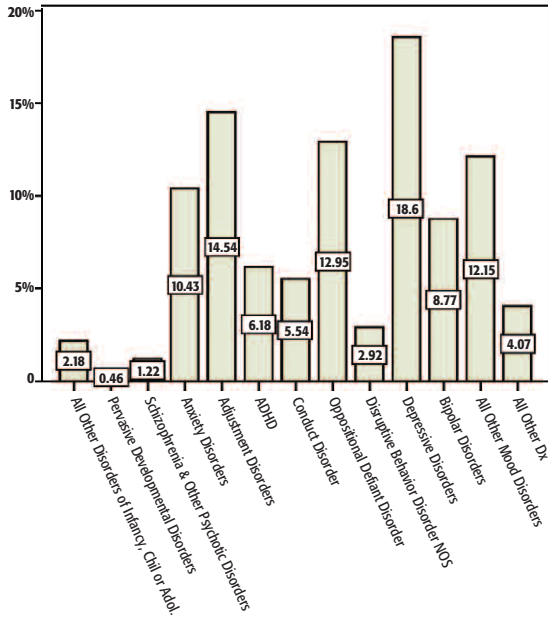
Depressive disorders comprise the largest segment of mood disorders among residential girls and oppositional defiant disorder is the largest category within the ADHD/Disruptive Behavior group (2010).

Treatment and Gender-Based Programming for Girls in Ohio

There are some gender-specific treatment efforts for girls in the juvenile justice system in Ohio; however, they are primarily locally operated and program data are not routinely maintained at the state level. An innovative collaboration for community-based treatment for delinquency-involved youth is the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice (BHJJ)⁴ project. While not gender-specific, the BHJJ project is an evidence-based effort under the Ohio Department of

Figure 7

BREAKDOWN OF DIAGNOSES FOR GIRLS IN RESIDENTIAL SAMPLE 2005-2009



SOURCE: Ohio Department of Mental Health Snapshot of Girls in Residential Treatment Aggregate Data (2010).

Mental Health in partnership with ODYS and implemented in six community-based treatment programs across the state serving, on average, an equal number of court-involved girls and boys. Aside from delinquency, the problems leading to a BHJJ referral showed marked differences between the female and male population. As shown in Table 5, girls were twice as likely to be referred as boys for reasons related to suicide, depression and psychotic behavior. The numbers were even higher for anxiety, adjustment and eating disorders and girls were also much more likely than boys to be referred for school performance problems not related to learning disabilities (Kretschmar & Flannery, 2009).

Table 5

BHJJ REFERRAL ISSUE	GIRLS	BOYS
Suicide-related	17.5%	6.6%
Psychotic Behavior	4.2	1.8
Depression	40.1	18.3
Anxiety	22.6	5.8
Adjustment	23.1	4.4
Eating Disorders	4.2	0.0
School Performance	48.1	28.3

SOURCE: Kretschmar, J., & Flannery, D. J. (2009). An Update on the Behavioral Health/Juvenile Justice Initiative.

By December 2008, 775 total youth had been enrolled in the BHJJ program, 51.8% of whom were female (2009). 65.7% of all enrollees were Caucasian and 27.2% were African American. Nearly 65% of youth enrolled in the BHJJ program had either successfully completed the program or moved away from their county (2009).

In Cuyahoga County, the Juvenile Court received a BHJJ award in 2006 to provide intensive services specifically for girls with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse diagnoses. Services included wrap-around case management, multi-systemic therapy, in-home co-occurring treatment, short-term in-patient and residential care. None of the seventy girls referred to this program since 2006 were committed to ODYS (*The Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Juvenile Division, 2008*).

Among the areas for further study and evaluation are identifying the extent to which gender-specific interventions and treatment exist for girls involved in or at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system in Ohio, and the degree to which those interventions are effective.

¹ Non-index offenses are simple assault, weapons offenses, drug and liquor law violations, driving under the influence, disorderly conduct, vandalism, and other categories not included in the FBI's Crime Indexes. Status offenses are acts that are offenses only when committed by juveniles (e.g., running away).

² The Violent Crime Index includes homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assaults; the Property Crime Index includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

³ Zero tolerance policies were promoted to prevent drug abuse and violence in schools by punishing any student infraction of a rule, regardless of accidental mistakes or extenuating circumstances, with a severe consequence.

⁴ The Center for Innovative Practices, a coordinating center of excellence with support from ODMH and Kent State University, provides technical assistance for the BHJJ and other evidence-based programs for at risk youth. For more information, go to http://www-dev.rags.kent.edu/CIP_web/

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Acknowledgements This brief is part of "Girls and Girlhood—A Series on Contemporary Issues and Controversies" sponsored in part by the Flora Stone Mather Alumnae Association. We would like to acknowledge the assistance of several individuals who provided valuable information and aggregated data: Kraig J. Knudsen, Ph.D., Chief, Ohio Department of Mental Health [ODMH], Office of Research & Evaluation [ORE]; Carol Carstens, PhD, ODMH ORE; Liping Xin, ODMH Office of Information Services; and Bruce Sowards, Ohio Department of Youth Services Researcher. Also, thank you to our graduate students, Hillary Melchoirs, Aura Newlin and Jenny Zabel, and Schubert Administrator Jessica McRitchie for their research assistance.