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'Not worse, just different'?: Working With Young Women in the Juvenile Justice System

Report of Findings 2: Young Women's Juvenile Justice Experiences

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Executive Summary

Summary of Findings

Overall the backgrounds of the young women involved in this study, including their living environment, school and employment histories and family circumstances, was one of disruption and marginalisation. Many of the young women came from disadvantaged backgrounds, where their experiences had been centred around shifting between schools, homes, family members, extended family, alternative accommodation and in and out of institutions. The accounts offered by the girls often involved trouble at home (including abuse), trouble at school and trouble with juvenile justice. Many of the girls had been in and out of closed institutions, as well as having been involved with welfare services.

In general young women in the juvenile justice system agreed with workers that young women would be harder to work with than young men. They believed that young woman would be more demanding, "bitchy", and more likely than boys to feel aggrieved over a longer period.

The strongest and most consistent of the young women's comment was that they needed ***someone to "talk" to*** and that a "good worker" was one that was available for them when they needed to talk to someone. The "good worker" was one who "really listened" to what they had to say, that is, they took what a young women said seriously.

In describing the conditions of being able to "talk" to someone, and the characteristics of the "good worker", young women were in effect indicating that they were looking for a close, personal relationship with someone. They wanted a worker who ***"genuinely cared"*** about them as individuals, who was like a close friend or relative, and who was not just interacting with them because it was their job to do so. They expected to be treated with ***respect and dignity*** by someone who was willing to acknowledge their individual worth and potential.

In general these expectations of a good worker were more important than the sex of the worker. While some girls indicated they preferred female workers, for others the sex of the worker was irrelevant to them and some preferred male workers. It was acknowledged however, that for some girls a male worker would be inappropriate and therefore being able to ***chose the sex of the worker*** was important.

The previous life experiences of these young women were such that they were ***cautious about trusting*** anyone, so while they wanted to "talk" with someone, they were at the same time self protective about who they spoke to and what they would talk to them about. They were particularly cautious about talking to, or trusting juvenile justice workers. In some instances, this was because they were conscious of the role of juvenile justice workers, but most often they were concerned about the extent to which they could trust a juvenile justice worker to maintain their confidentiality. For young women, workers talking with each other about the young

woman's personal story and the sharing of case notes was a ***betrayal of their trust and their privacy.***

Their concerns about privacy and confidentiality, and their desire to develop a personal relationship with their worker, meant that young women were confused and sometimes angry about the number of different workers they were expected to have contact with and the constant changing of workers. ***Continuity of their worker*** was important to girls.

When young women spoke in terms of wanting someone to talk to someone, they also made it clear that this did not mean that they wanted more "counselling" sessions. In fact in a follow up group interview the young women were adamant that such sessions were contrary to what they were looking for. In part because "counsellors" were seen as strangers, not people with whom they had close, ongoing relationships, and in part because they were not interested in people prying into their personal lives. While for some young women being able to talk with someone about personal issues that had been troubling them was important, they wanted to be able to chose the when and the where of this disclosure.

Most young women wanted to talk with someone about how to get on with their lives. "Talking" with someone in fact meant being able to sit down and work with someone to achieve ***concrete objectives***. "Talking with" someone was another way of saying they did not want to be "pushed" into things. In general these are independently minded young women, for whom taking some control of their lives has been important to them, and they want to continue to have significant control of what happens to them, but they want to be able to work with someone they know and trust, and who genuinely cares about their future.

Overall the young women were concerned to change the direction of their lives: they wanted to work, they wanted further training, they wanted to be able to live independently. They nevertheless spoke realistically of the barriers facing them in the achievement of these goals. The young women expressed this in terms of their own biographies: having criminal records, their lack education and work experiences; their unstable family and living circumstances once released. Aboriginal girls were aware of the limitation racism placed on the opportunities available to them.

Despite having left school early, many of the girls were keen to explore ***further training and educational opportunities.*** They were particularly interested in more vocationally oriented courses, course that were "helping them get a start..." (Ora).

However, the young women rarely had positive comments to make about the formal education programs available to them within either of the closed institutional settings of this research. They complained of the level of the work, the teachers approaches to them and in general they found the educational programs in institutions "boring". The exception was Aboriginal young women who spoke positively about ABTAFE.

One of the main complaints girls had about closed institutions was boredom. In one of the follow up group interviews, the young women maintained that it was boredom that contributed the fights between girls. Consequently they were keen to have more

activities to keep them occupied. In particular they were interested in instrumentally oriented activities and physical, in particular, sports activities. They were also keen for such activities to be mixed sex.

Aboriginal girls' comments, expectations and expressed needs in relation to juvenile justice were in general consistent with those of the other young women interviewed. However, they also noted some issues that were significant for them. In particular the extent and strength of extended family relationships was important to Aboriginal young women. Family connections and responsibilities were notable throughout the comments of these young women. Reference to "Cousins" and "Aunts" were peppered through their stories in ways that were not true for non-Aboriginal young women. In some instances this was in relation to offending behaviour. In other instances their stories indicated the ways in which their extended family had provided support for them such as providing an alternative living situation, or visiting them when they were in detention.

In was in relation to understanding these strong family ties in particular that Aboriginal girls thought that it was important that there were ***more Aboriginal workers*** in the juvenile justice system. While some Aboriginal young women indicated that they did not necessarily need an Aboriginal worker so long as the person met some of their other expectations of a good worker, a couple of these young women nevertheless named an Aboriginal worker as the "best" worker they had worked with.

Summary of Recommendations

While many of the girls comments in this report relate to their everyday interactions with workers, the attainment of our overall objectives requires that we also consider broader policy and program objectives. In this regard we would draw attention to the document "Becoming Stronger: An Action Plan for Young Women" produced by the then department of Community Services Victoria (1992). The recommended objectives in this policy are to:

> Help young women become independent in ways which recognise the inequities which have shaped their development as children and young women and have impact on their ongoing opportunities for independent adulthood.
>
> Ensure safe environments for young women while they achieve greater independence and participation in their communities.
>
> Change those conditions (policies, service distribution, administrative and professional practices) which act to exclude young women from mainstream services and supports.
>
> Provide programs promoting personal and social growth and increasing young women's skills in controlling their experiences and utilising opportunities.

> Ensure that programs are accessible and relevant to the experiences of young women, particularly in terms of their geographic location and the way in which they are provided. (Community Services Victoria 1992: 1)

The first Action Area in the document is titled "Supporting broad social change for young women". The important feature here is the identification of subjects of intervention other than the young women themselves. That is, the policy begins by acknowledging any strategy for facilitating young women "becoming stronger" will necessitate broader social structural changes and working with other government departments and agencies.

As a framework for enunciation of the recommendations that arise from this research, we wish to draw upon the recommendations put forward by a U.S. organisation: The National Council for Research on Women (1998: 85-87) in their report *The Girls Report: What we Know and Need to Know about Growing Up Female.*

1. "Girls are multidimensional individuals with diverse perspectives, needs and developmental contexts. People working directly with girls must be sensitive to the complex interactions of gender with other aspects of their identities, and the communities in which they live."

To this recommendation we would add: the staff team must reflect the diversity of the girls served; staff must intentionally deal with gender and race bias within the agency and society; and staff need to assist all girls to recognise and deal with racism.

2. "Girls can benefit from programs and strategies that highlight their strengths and encourage them to explore meaningful possibilities in their futures".

To this recommendation we would add: promote and facilitate further vocational training, academic achievement and economic self-sufficiency for girls.

Since exercise and participation in sports have been associated with a healthier body image; decreased incidence of depression, pregnancy, and smoking in girls, and decreased chances of heart disease and cancer in later life; it is important that girls athletic programs be provided

3. "Programs and policies that foster intergenerational collaboration can be especially effective in developing girls' leadership skills by exposing them to the benefits of mentoring relationships."

4. "Partnerships among family, schools, community programs, and cultural organizations can provide opportunities for girls, and let them know that they are valued community members... (They can) create safe, supportive environments that nurture and encourage girls to develop and pursue their goals". Juvenile

justice policies and programs for girls need to work with a range of other service providers, and agencies in the community."

5. "Adults can learn a great deal about girls' experiences by listening to their perspectives, and incorporating their insights into their work. When girls' collaboration is solicited in authentic and meaningful ways, through involvement in the design and implementation of programs, girls can gain leadership skills, develop supportive intergenerational relationships and experience themselves as active participants in social change".

6. Recognise that the development of caring, trusting relationships is important to girls. Therefore, there needs to be time and opportunity for staff to build trusting relationships with girls. Continuity in the key worker should be a key objective of juvenile justice practice in relation to girls.

7. Juvenile justice staff should be provided training and education in relation to strategies and techniques for working with young women.

Program providers, probation staff and other program developers require additional information about programs and strategies that address the problems and needs of female adolescents.

1. Introduction

Increasing numbers of young women in the juvenile justice system in recent years (Alder and Hunter, 1999), and a growing awareness of their situation has meant that juvenile justice systems are becoming more concerned about the development of services that are accessible to, and meet the needs of, young women (Alder and Baines, 1996). Young men make up the bulk of young people in juvenile justice and consequently most programs and services have been developed with their needs and interests in mind (Cunneen and White, 1996). The relatively small number of young women has always presented a challenge to juvenile justice policy-makers.

There has been very little research on young women in the juvenile justice system in Australia. The major published research is now quite dated, for example Hancock (1980) and Girls in Care Project (1986). The most recent significant research Carrington (1993) was based on data collected in NSW before major legislative reform. As valuable and significant as these works have been, predominantly they consisted of analyses of official documents and statistics - the perspectives or the voices of the young women themselves are missing. The major objective of the research reported in this document was to listen to young women's accounts and comments on their juvenile justice experience.

This report is part of a research project which had two objectives: (1) to investigate the nature of young women's offending (see Alder and Hunter, 1999); and (2) to examine young women's accounts of their experiences of the juvenile justice system. This report describes the findings in relation to the second of these objectives.

Research both internationally (Kersten, 1990; Hudson, 1989) and in Australia (Alder and Baines, 1996) has documented the observation that those working with juvenile justice clients find that girls are "more difficult to work with". In general, juvenile justice workers describe as "verbally aggressive", "hysterical", "manipulative", "dishonest" and "untrusting". Boys, on the other hand, are described as "honest", "open", "less complex" and "easier to manage". These are observations that have implications for the work practices and experiences of juvenile justice workers, the options and services available to young women, and their everyday experiences of juvenile justice.

While there are a few studies documenting the prevalence of the observation that "girls are more difficult to work with", there is very little research examining young women's perspectives on their interactions with juvenile justice workers. In particular, the perceptions and understandings of young Aboriginal women are missing from research on juvenile justice more generally. This is of particular concern given the over representation of Aboriginal girls in the juvenile justice system (Atkinson, 1996) and evidence of the particular difficulties confronting Aboriginal young women in the juvenile justice system (Carrington, 1993).

In conducting the research reported herein, it was hoped that young women's accounts of their experiences in the juvenile justice system would allow for a fuller understanding of the meaning of the observation that "girls are more difficult to deal

with" and would thereby contribute to the development of policies and practices to explicitly address this issue.

The research on which this report is based entailed interviews with young women who were currently on Children's Court sentences either in the community or in detention. A total of 48 girls were interviewed, of whom 12 were interviewed as participants in one of two group interviews. The majority of the girls who were interviewed were on community based orders. The remainder were interviewed in either Parkville Youth Residential Centre in Victoria or Magill Youth Training Centre in Adelaide.

This report provides a description of the findings of this research. The conceptual and theoretical implications will be developed and further elaborated in subsequent publications.

It is hoped that the young women's comments on their juvenile justice experiences that form the basis of this report will contribute to the development of services that are accessible to, and meet the needs of, young women in the juvenile justice system.

2. Profile of Girls Interviewed

In an effort to understand the nature of young women's offending, this research involved interviews with young women in the juvenile justice system. The major thrust of these interviews was the young women's experiences of the juvenile justice system. However, the girls also talked about a range of other issues including their individual circumstances and offending behaviour.

The material for this component of the report draws upon interviews with 36 young women and two group interviews involving 6 girls in each group. Of the girls interviewed individually, 11 of the 36 were in detention at closed institutions; either Magill Training Centre in South Australia or Parkville Youth Residential Centre in Victoria. The remainder of the girls (25) were on community based orders of some sort. In Victoria, girls were interviewed at Juvenile Justice Units: Eastern Metropolitan; Western Metropolitan; Northern Metropolitan; and Southern Metropolitan, as well as Grassmere Youth Services. In South Australia interviews were conducted at the Lochiel Park Community Unit and the Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth Team (MAYT). The two group interviews were conducted at closed institutions. These girls were not asked to provide any demographic information or details of their offending behaviour.

The girls ranged in age from 13 years to 20 years, with most of the girls (89%) aged between 15 and 18 years (Table 1).

Table 1: Ages of girls

Age	Number
13	1
14	0
15	8
16	9
17	3
18	12
19	1
20	1
Unknown	1
Total	**36**

The majority of girls (42%) identified themselves as Anglo-Saxon, while 24% of the girls were Aboriginal (Table 2). Some girls indicated more than one ethnicity so the figures in Table 2 add up to more than 36 (the number of girls interviewed).

Table 2: Ethnicity of girls

Ethnicity	Number
Aboriginal	9
Anglo-Saxon	16
Asian	3
Maori	2
Other	3
Unknown	5
Total	**38**

Offence and juvenile justice background

The offences committed by the girls interviewed in this study covered the full gamut of offending from being drunk and disorderly, to murder. (A more detailed analysis of the girls offending can be found in Report 1 of this research, Alder and Hunter, 1999).

Many girls had engaged in a 'bit of everything', a mixture of drug related offences, offences against property and breaches of existing orders. Generally the girls had extensive histories of offending, commencing with 'petty' offences such as shoplifting and drinking.

> I: The first time you got into trouble, what was that for?
> U: The first was for stealing and drink. And then it was for drugs and stealing, fights and things, and they started bringing me here. (Ulla, age 16)

> EE: When I was little I just used to steal clothes, go to old people and just steal cars, go for job rides and that, but I've sort of moved up. (Eden, age 17)

Some girls were reluctant to discuss their offending.

> A: Well, I'm on remand and I have been for the last fifteen months. I'm actually awaiting sentencing, for my crime which I've no intention of disclosing... (Ashley, age 18)

Consistent with the observations of Sykes and Matza (1957) that people tend to 'neutralise' the seriousness of their offences, the accounts offered by the girls tended to justify and minimise the severity of their actions.

> Z: We used to steal cars, rob houses and use a lot of heroin, steal shop tills, just silly stuff like that. (Zea, age 15)

> I: What sort of things were the offences for?
> EE: Just stealing cars, and robberies, and that. Just stuff like that. (Eden, age 17)

When describing offences involving violence some girls spoke of their 'shame', embarrassment and regret for their actions.

> DD: Well, I won't go right into it, I don't want anyone knowing what I actually did.
> I: You don't have to go right into it.
> DD: I feel ashamed of it. (Denise, age 15)

There was also some uncertainty by some girls about the exact nature of the charges they had faced.

> R: .....I'm on drugs.
> I: Have you ever been charged with possessing drugs?
> R: I'm not quite sure.
> I: Have you ever done any assaults or anything like that?
> R: Yes, I've done a few assault charges. (Rita, age 18)

> AA: My first offence was..... we'd just done some drugs and this girls stole a handbag and I was with her and like I had this other, like this walkie-talkie thing. And because I had that on me I got taken to Magill. That was the first offence, at the Show.
> I: So they picked you up and took you straight to Magill.
> AA: I can't really remember.
> I: It's all a bit mixed up now?
> AA: Yeah. I think I was at the city watch house for a while, till Magill.
> I: What was the last offence that you went to court for?
> AA: I think it was robbery, no it wasn't, assault.
> I: Assault, and you had a robbery with violence too, is that what you said?
> AA: Yes. (Alison, age unknown)

Of the girls interviewed who were in institutions (excluding those interviewed in the two group interviews) about half were on remand and half were sentenced. Of those in the community, various orders were in place including probation, Good Behaviour Bonds and Youth Supervision Orders. Irrespective of where they were when interviewed, many of the girls had had ongoing involvement with juvenile justice, including a number of stints in institutions.

I: So you've been to Magill twice?
H: No, heaps of times!.....
I:.... So how old were you when you went to Magill?
H: Fourteen. (Helen, age 16)

I: And how many times have you been in before?
U: Don't know really.
I: More than three?
U: Yep. (Ulla, age 16)

I: Was this your first visit here [Magill]?
D: No I've been in this place when I was younger.
I: About how many times do you reckon you've been?
D: About twenty times.
I: How old were you when you first came in?
D: Fifteen. (Debbie, age 18)

Generally the girls had not been institutionalised for their first offence, describing a progression in their offending behaviour and a correspond increase in the severity of the sanctions they received.

I: What was the first time you were in here?
D: Well, you come in here, you don't just commit one offence, when you're younger, they put you on warnings and put you on obligations, things like that. You have to repeatedly offend to come in here. Several offences, yeah. (Debbie, age 18)

I: So how long have you been here?.....
EE: I don't know, I'll get out, one two days later, I'll be back in and it keeps going. It kept going when I was a kid until I was older and I sort of matured a bit. When I go back this time I'll be staying there a fair bit of the time. (Eden, age 17)

R: I've assaulted a few police and I've assaulted males and assaulted females and assaulted all sorts of people.
I: So what happened this time? Was there any particular thing the police arrested you for and then charged you with other stuff?
R: Because I was on bail, and every time you re-offend on bail, you make things worse. When you're on bail, it's up to the bail man, or whatever you call him. (Rita, age 18)

The young women spoke of having been 'in and out' of institutions as well as being placed on a number of community based orders, which it seemed they often failed to successfully complete. It was often as a consequence of breaching the conditions attached to an order that the girls were placed in institutions.

> B: Because I broke my conditions again, my bail conditions, because one of the conditions was living with my mum, and I can't do that. That's how I keep breaking it. (Billee, age 18)

> R: I started getting into trouble when I dropped out of school. The first offences... when I was fourteen or fifteen or what.
> I: Did you end up being sent anywhere for that, or what happened?
> R: I was out on a lot of orders been on probation a couple of times, breached them, was put on a new supervision order, and been inside a couple of times.
> I: So this isn't the first time you've been here.
> R: No, it isn't the first time. (Rita, age 18)

> I: And what have you had to do for your undertaking?
> Z: I just had to stay out of trouble for six months, two weeks. I didn't. (Zea, age 15)

> S: First I was on a probation, and that's when I reoffended, I stabbed someone. I got locked up for two weeks. (Simone, age 15)

Overall, the offences committed by the girls interviewed, and the sanctions the girls had received, varied significantly. However, the majority of the girls had extensive histories of 'petty' offending from which some had 'moved up' into more serious offending.

"Living all over the place"

In responding to questions about their accommodation the theme that emerged most obviously was the lack of continuity in many of the girls living arrangements. The girls spoke of living 'all over the place' (Barb), 'here and there' (Barb) and 'in and out' of home (Gael, Billee, Vee).

> BB: I was living all over the place, I was here and there..... (Barb, age 18)

> A:..... I lived in a caravan for a short while.....I lived with some friends, I lived in hostels, in emergency shelters, back to hostels. (Ashley, age 18)

> I: Okay, where were you before you came in here?
> O: Been round everywhere.
> I: No fixed address?
> O: Not at all.
> I: How old were you when you left home?

O: I haven't been at home for many years, I wanted to start moving around. I left when I was eleven and I've been living by myself since then. (Ora, age 19)

I: Where are you currently living?
FF: I'm living with my parents.
I: ....Have you lived there consistently for the last couple of years?
FF: On and off. (Fran, age 17)

Less than one third of the girls interviewed indicated that they currently lived 'at home' or had been living there before being institutionalised. It is assumed that living 'at home' was interpreted as living with either both or one parent. Of those no longer living at home, some girls were living with friends or boyfriends.

AA: Yes. I stayed with her for a while because I haven't been back to my family for about two years. Three years. There's just been, I've been with my friends. (Alison, age unknown)

I: So did you live at home before you came here?
R: I had no home to go to, I was living at my boyfriend's place. (Rita, age 18)

Even those girls who indicated they lived at home rarely said they resided with both parents, most girls living only with their mothers.

I: Are you currently living at home?
W: Yes.....
I: Is that with your parents?
W: Just with my mum. (Wendy, age 17)

Of the girls who had left home many had done so when they were quite young. At least one girl spoke of leaving home when she was nine years old, while others indicated leaving when they were not much older.

I: Did you live on your own or did you live with parents?
E: I got kicked out at the age of nine, I lived on the street. (Ellie, age 15)

At least four girls mentioned having been on home detention unsuccessfully.

D: ....I was on home detention but I broke it.
I: You've only had home detention. Well, what did you think about home detention?
D: Oh, it was all right. It can be easy, but the stage I was going through. I couldn't stay in one place. (Debbie, age 18)

Some girls suggested they 'sort of' lived at home, in that they lived with relatives. This included grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings. In a few cases relatives were the guardians of the girls, while at least three girls referred to living with foster parents.

R: My parents died when I was two.
I: Did they? So where did you live from when you were two?
R: Being in fostercare and refuges and hostels.....
I: Did you ever have a full-time foster-family?
R: Oh, not full-time, I lived with one foster-family for almost ten years. And then after that I shifted to living in hostels, and places like that. (Rita, age 18)

For those who no longer lived at home a number of reasons for leaving were described. Some indicated they had been 'kicked out' while others decided to leave because of 'boredom' or due to family problems.

I: Were you living at home?
D: No. Wasn't living at home. Bored with that life. (Debbie, age 18)

Z: ...I was in and out of home and I was living in a hostel, I left there, but I was living in the hostel for about six months.
I: So do you prefer living at home or in the hostel?
Z: I can't stand being at home. (Zea, age 15)

I: So how old were you when you left home?
B: I was in and out since I was thirteen, because I was sort of kicked out, and then my mum always wanted me back. (Billee, aged 18)

Many girls spoke of having lived away from home for a few years, although for some this included periods where they returned for awhile. This was sometimes linked to conditions imposed under orders, or a lack of alternative options.

BB:.....when I was fourteen, Mum put me in an adolescent community place and kept me there four, about four months because I was just running amuck. I was on the streets, drinking alcohol, taking a lot of drugs, taking pills, and Mum couldn't handle it. She didn't know what to do, she wanted me to go to school. I wasn't going to school, I wasn't doing anything in those days. .....Anyway that didn't work out, none of it worked out, I ended up moving back home, and they dropped out, Human Services..... (Barb, age 18).

Other girls lived in refuges, hostels or other forms of alternative accommodation. A number of the girls had been in and out of institutions, including Lochiel and Magill.

I: Were you living at home before you came in?
CC: No, I was living in a residential, in a refuge.
I:.....So you were living in a refuge, how old were you when you left home?
CC: About thirteen, fourteen.
I: So you've had to look after yourself ever since.
CC: Yes. Oh, I've had a boyfriend and that supporting me. (Chloe, age 18)

I: Had you lived at home all that time before you left or had you been in and out?
GG: Yes, I've been in and out, because since 1993, I started absconding, from there I went to a couple of hostels because I didn't want to live at home and that, after I did go there and it didn't work and that, I decided that it wasn't for me, I wanted to go back home and then things were hard there still, it's just a fact that I can't get along with my mum or whatever, you know. (Gael, age 15)

V: I've been locked up before, but it wasn't sentence, I've been locked up millions of times in secure welfare, which is the same except you get out in three weeks not three months.
I: Were you ever at Windsor?
V: I've been in Windsor heaps, since I was eleven. Last time I was in was earlier this year. (Vee, age 16)

Overall, while there were differences in the accommodation experiences of the girls, the majority were not currently, or had not been before they were institutionalised, living at home. For those who were no longer living with parent(s), relatives and boyfriends/friends were providing accommodation. However, for many there was a history of moving in and out of a range of places, including juvenile justice institutions, hostels and refuges. As the girls talked about the places they had lived, phrases such as "...it didn't work out, I left there..." (Helen) were repeated. Unsettled housing arrangements seemed to be the norm for most of the girls interviewed.

Family

Linked to the living arrangements of the girls was their family circumstances. In many cases the girls lacked at least one parent, often due to a separation, and in some cases neither parent was around.

X: All I need is, I don't know what I need. It's just, ever since I lost my father I've just lost control.
I: Were you close to your father?
X: Yeah.
I: How old were you when you lost him?
X: I was eight. Yeah, eight. (Xavia, age 16)

AA: ....I ran away from my nanna, that's when I started getting in trouble.
I: How old were you?
AA: That was when I was fourteen. I was just living anywhere, wherever I'd go. Just with a friend.
I: So you left school then too, when you left your nanna, you left school?
AA: Yes. (Alison, age unknown)

In other cases the family members who were around were not necessarily providing positive role models for the girls. A number of girls had siblings and/or relatives who were institutionalised or in trouble with the police.

> I: Have they [brothers] been in trouble with the police?
> X: One's in a remand centre and one's out, he's doing community service.
> I: So you say you've been sitting home worried about them.
> X: Yeah, but now, I mean, my brother's locked up, he's right up in the remand centre, one brother's out but he still goes out and does stuff.... (Xavia, age 16)

> AA:....I think they'll [siblings] be growing up the same way because we've grown up with no parents around, we've been with our grandma. It was just in and out because my father's been in and out of jail. Not settled. (Alison, age unknown)

At least six girls spoke of sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse at the hands of caregivers or others.

> DD: ....my parents split up and my dad was very, very abusive towards Mum, and me and my sister and everybody.....it was always Dad that was the arsehole. (Denise, age 15)

> E: ....some children [go] through some bad things...for example people like me, like, I got my brother out of the house, he's younger than me.....but you know I took him out of the house when I chose, left home and got him into a hostel because I didn't want him to get beaten up, abused and things like that like I had been, and he was getting beaten, anyway from a young age.
> I: Is that why you left home?
> E: I got abused, sexually abused, and bashings, from the time I got home from school...like I never used to get put to sleep, I used to get put in the corner with my legs apart facing the wall and if we got caught asleep we copped more beltings. And it was lucky I brought my brother out because my mum was a heroin addict, my brother was a heroin baby, a very sick child and everything, like I was his mother and everything, and so it like it was my, I was obliged to act, take my brother with me and I couldn't take him with me because I wasn't going to go knowing that he'd cop more beltings and everything.....(Ellie, age 15)

> V: ...I got taken away from home because my mum was bashing me up and locking me up in chests and things.
> I: Would you tell me that last part...
> V: Used to bash me and lock me in chests for three weeks. And lock me in toilets and all that sort of shit. And she used to ring up H&CS and say if you don't remove her I'm going to kill her and all that sort of shit. (Vee, age 16)

E: I didn't see it; the girls, now I do, but after it just happens, especially so many times, when I was tampered, that was my stepfather, I told my mother but she didn't want to feel that, because it was her boyfriend she didn't want to accept that, and when I was eight it was [name] who my mum lives with, that's when I was eight and then twelve, and all that and it was by strangers. (Ellie, age 15)

Abusive experiences were linked to getting into trouble by some of the girls.

T: I have recollections at the age of eleven of my father abusing me. And I mean I have vivid memories of him physically abusing me. .....He hit me, he used to pick on my brother a lot, and I used to stick up for my brother, and I remember getting hit. .....I kept it inside and then exploded, run around being as much of an idiot as I could, so that's how I got involved with that kind of guy trying to find someone who'd love me. He always said he loved me, but he was abusive, to his past friends and I don't know why I thought he wouldn't be to me, it was a few weeks but it felt like a lot longer, we ran round doing car thefts and burgs, but during that whole time, he was on heroin, and I tried it a few times, and he wasn't smoking dope excessively, and normally I would have to, but I just didn't all that time, I don't know why, and then after he got locked up...(Tracey, age 16)

T: Well, a lot of the young girls that I've see come through, the majority of them have been sexually abused. I myself have been sexually abused. What gets me into trouble is running around trying to find love.
I: Trying to find?
T: Love.
I: Yes.
T: But the wrong sort of love, obviously, that's how I got into trouble. (Tracey, age 16)

The situation of Zea was typical of that described by many girls. Describing her family as 'stuffed up' she indicated that her father was dead and her mother had raised the family, with her help.

Z: .....it's just weird having to talk to people, about why your family's so stuffed up, why you're not at home, why you don't get along with your family and why you and your mum fight. Having to tell them that your dad's dead and your mum's boyfriend's an arsehole.....(Zea, age 15)

It was family problems, including abuse that in some cases lead the girls to move out of home to live with friends or in hostels and refuges.

I: So you've run away a lot, have you?
G: Yes. A couple of times, twice.
I: Just twice.

G: Probably. A couple of times.
I: What were you running away from?
G: Because of things. I hated the foster parents.
I: So how come you ran away from your foster parents?
G: They treated me really bad.
I: So how come you went to foster parents?
G: Because my dad bashed me.
I: And when did that start, when you were little?
G: Since I was little. My mother left when I was three, my dad started pushing us around and treating us like dirt. Stuff like that. (Gina, age 15)

I: Were you living at home then?
H: Yeah. I left at the age of fourteen.
I: How come you left home?
H: Because my Mum is a violent woman, she used to lash out at me all the time. All my other three sisters have left home at the moment, she's left there on her own. She used to lash out at us kids and belt us. (Helen, age 16)

I: So you'd had a lot of contact with the police before that?
H: Yeah. Even when I was in [place name] we had contact with them then because my mother and father had lots of fights, and I used to get really scared and I used to run out the house and if it was at night they used to see me in the street and they'd come and they knew about me and Mum and they'd stop the car next to me. I used to get very scared, you know, because I didn't know who it was.....I'd never just jumped in the police car because I knew they would have taken me back home, and I would have got a hiding for running away from home that particular night and I told them and they said `I'm taking you back to the police station.' I say `I can walk' I don't trust the police officers. I didn't trust anybody. (Helen, age 16)

In fact some girls made a link between their 'family problems' and the crimes they committed. They spoke of being 'rejected' by their family who they suggested were not the 'perfect family' (Jan, age 16).

BB: It was about me meeting police and them getting to know my face. And after that pretty much my whole life went downhill, and my mum ended up putting an intervention order on me when she found out about the heroin, which pushed me away when I needed her support mostly.
I: So why did she put an intervention order on you?
BB: She said since I was addicted to heroin, she didn't know how to handle the drug or me at the time because of the stuff, because it had failed earlier in my childhood, we had a nothing relationship all my life. (Barb, age 18)

Although the girls mentioned various problems they had had in their past, including a 'history' of 'terrible stuff' (Quella), as expected there was also some reticence about

discussing personnel details. The girls were not explicitly asked about issues such as abuse, so the accounts given can only be considered as providing glimpses into the girls lives.

A few girls also talked about starting their own families, having had children, being pregnant at the time interviewed or having been pregnant previously and miscarried.

> T: ....had a miscarriage, and after the miscarriage, and I wasn't really sure what was happening.....I'd sort of got attached to being pregnant, even though it was only eight weeks. And I had the miscarriage and I kind of went downhill again, I ran away from home and stayed with this man, I didn't even know who he was, I only stayed there for about a week and then he told me to piss off. That was really sad, I didn't care, I just drank the whole time I was with him. I was really out of it, just wanted to get away from all the hurt. I think it was that year that I started, I got home and I kind of started really thinking about things. My dad came down, and he said he was going to take us away on holiday, this was when I was pregnant before the miscarriage, he said he would take us away on holiday and he wanted me to live with him. all these things are very confusing, everything sort of happened at once, and then he just up and left, he didn't take us anywhere and he didn't take me anywhere. (Tracey, age 16)

Negative family experiences were not always the norm, with some girls speaking of the support offered by family members. Despite some family members having been in trouble with the police, family was very important to a number of the girls interviewed. Aboriginal girls particularly talked about the importance of family and their 'strong family ties'. These girls often mentioned associating with extended family, including cousins, uncles, aunts and grandparents, and described 'hanging out' with cousins and other family members:

> EE: ....My best mate, me and her we just used to go out, from little kids, I used to run away from school because I had problems at home, I used to run away from school and go and live other places, go from house to house to house, but we was right because it was family. (Eden, age 17)

Family responsibilities were also important for some of the girls, especially Aboriginal girls, who spoke of having to 'look after' younger relatives.

> M: I don't like to be around a lot of people, I like to be on my own, be with people that I know, but when I was in ABTAFE, my brother was with me. So me and my brother sort of work together, and he's never been to high school, but he's been with me. (Eden, age 17)

> H: He's fourteen this year. He's my youngest cousin so far. I have to look after my young cousin, you know. Anytime he can ring me. (Helen, age 16)

School and work

The school and work experiences of the girls varied. However, the vast majority of girls had not obtained their VCE (some were not old enough to have done so) and many had "dropped out of school" at year nine, or earlier.

> EE: ....I'd like to get my own apartment, I'd like to do things on my own now, learn to do things on my own. But still I don't understand a lot of things. I never went to school. I've never been to high school, I only made it up to Year 7. (Eden, age 17)

However, a significant number of the girls had since returned to some form of study. This included TAFE, adult learning centre courses and other programs. For some girls this was to enable them to obtain their VCE or to complete higher levels of study than they had previously achieved. For other girls courses were more practically orientated, including hairdressing and mechanics.

Overall, the general experiences of the girls was of schooling which had been 'off and on' as in the case of Gael who indicated: "school's been a bit off and on since year eight, see". Some girls had been to a number of schools, sometimes due to suspension or because they had been expelled. Others spoke of leaving school because of trouble or boredom. Zea explained she was not at school "because I'm having some problems with school".

> X: ..... That was before I went to [school name], because when I got suspended from [school name], I just went straight to [school name]. I stayed out of school for a while then I ended up going to another school. (Xavia, age 16).

A few girls did not want to return to study, although some of these conceded that they may do so at a later point, but were not 'ready' now.

> V: Hopefully I'm going to go back, to do a year 10 equivalent' [at TAFE] (Vee age 16).

The experiences of the girls in relation to schooling tallied with other aspects of their lives. Often girls talked of having problems at school at the same time as they experienced family problems and were committing crimes. Helen said she began 'mucking up with school' and being 'naughty at school'. Pattie dropped out of school because it was 'boring' and she 'wasn't learning anything, just getting into trouble all the time'. Some girls suggested they had now changed and wanted to do more schooling, while for others they were looking for "something different" (Quella).

> X: I just stay at home most of the time, try and get back in school but I can't.
> I: Why is that?
> X: Not allowed in, because I got excluded out of [name] High School, for robbery and violence. (Xavia, age 16).

As juveniles it is not expected that the girls would have extensive work histories. Some girls spoke of having had casual jobs, generally domestic or service industry positions. However, the majority of girls interviewed were unemployed and had no work experience. A few young women indicated they would like to work, but faced barriers in obtaining employment.

> I: Have you had any jobs?
> O: No
> I: No jobs?
> O: I've never worked a day in my life. I used to look, but I had nothing to show, I didn't have a stable home to live at. So it's really hard. (Ora, age 19)

> I: That's what the dole is.
> X: Yeah. That's how much it is. And it's hard to get work these days, for us young Aboriginal kids. And that's what I want, work. (Xavia, age 16)

They talked of wanting to work to obtain some money and to avoid boredom as well as being a way to prevent further offending.

> X: I've been trying to keep out of trouble for a long time, but I can't because there's not enough money and there's nothing to do for us girls. (Xavia, age 16)

Overall, the schooling and work experiences of the girls were limited, and like other aspects of their lives frequently unstable. Many of the girls hoped to change this situation by furthering their education, undertaking courses and trying to find work.

Substance Abuse

Nearly all of the girls interviewed spoke of some form of substance use, primarily drug related, but sometimes linked to alcohol consumption.

> B: Last time I was in here, I was hospitalised.
> I: Really, how come?
> B: Because of drugs and stuff, and living on the street. And that's why I can't remember mostly. (Billee, age 18)

> B: No. The only thing I was at was worrying where my next hit was coming form. I was going months without food. Because you don't buy that but any money, you can get straight on that. If it's not enough, you just wait till you've got enough.
> I: And so you never had to go and look for housing or ended up in a ...
> B: I didn't care, I was sleeping on the streets because I wanted to spend more money on drugs. (Billee, age 18)

> J: I'd just be in like street crime, we'd got involved in crime to support our habits of heroin, speed, that kind of stuff so we'd have like ram raids, rip people off, roll people, this kind of shit. (Jan, age 16)

J: ...I was doing speed, I had to steal for my speed, and then speed wasn't working for me no more so I started doing heroin and that's when I started getting into the crime, really bad, like I was doing house breaks more and more ....things..... just to support my habit. (Jan, age 16)

Some young women explained their offending behaviour in terms of being under the influence of drugs or because they needed money to buy drugs.

J: Yes. I've been in a lot of trouble really since I was a little girl. Like my family isn't the perfect family, I started doing crime when I was about nine. Stealing lollies, and during the day I was running away and stuff, and then I started hitting the street, like before I was doing speed, I had to steal for my speed, and then speed wasn't working for me no more so I started doing heroin and that's when I started getting into the crime, really bad, like I was doing house breaks more and more.... just to support my habit. That's when you get junkies, that's how they support themselves. I did that for a year and a half and that's when all the police were being put on, picking people up around town, making sure you weren't coming into town. Remember? That's when I started having trouble with the police.
I: How old were you when that happened?
J: Thirteen. (Jan, age 16)

I: .....Can you tell me what happened?
O: Um. Well, once my girl went into care, I started using. And my father was really stuffing up my life, he had been sitting on his bum and had been for four years, I had to get him out, had to get a restraining order to work, and my family, what I know of, users, drinkers, my nanna's an alcoholic, and I only seemed to have the drugs to turn to, and I started associating with people for it, and once I started getting up to $500 a day, I couldn't, you know, I couldn't get that type of money from the trade, I had to do things, and I'd never done crime before, and at the same time, you don't realise what you are doing, because you just head straight, you don't realise what you are doing, you've just got to focus on getting your drug. And it was break-ins first, a house break in and those charges. They plonked five charges on me for each one. I feel really bad about what I've done, but I've done it. (Ora, age 19)

In other cases using drugs came after involvement in criminal activities or as a response to other problems in the girls lives.

V: When I was eight, I was in and out of Health and Community Services, then when I was eleven, I was officially made custody, because I was in a lot of trouble... I ended up doing criminal stuff and I ended up taking drugs and that's how I ended up today, and I sort of just went from soft drugs to harder drugs, and I'm now on methadone. (Vee, age 16)

Aside from using drugs and/or alcohol, glue sniffing was also an activity engaged in by a few girls.

> N: Aboriginal people came down from Perth and got me and my sister into glue-sniffing, and my sister got pregnant, so she stopped it, and I kept on going. Glue-sniffing and that, and my ex boyfriend was glue sniffing and he just kept on going, still going, and he's going a bit slower now, and he can't speak properly and my ex boyfriend died of glue sniffing... (Nell, age 18)

Some girls spoke about giving up drugs, as Gael indicated: "I don't want nothing to do with drugs, nothing, no more".

> R: ....I'm well and truly past the drug stage. I don't really want to go out and be into drugs again. (Rita, age 18)

Summary

The overall impression gained from speaking to the young women about their backgrounds, including their living environment, school and employment histories and family circumstances, was one of disruption and marginalisation. Many of the young women came from disadvantaged backgrounds, where their experiences had been centred around shifting between schools, homes, family members, extended family, alternative accommodation and in and out of institutions. The accounts offered by the girls often involved trouble at home (including abuse), trouble at school and trouble with juvenile justice. Many of the girls had been in and out of closed institutions and as well as having been involved with welfare services. Although this is not to suggest the experiences of all girls were necessarily the same, a few spoke of the support offered by their families, and other areas of their lives that were satisfactory. Whilst acknowledging these exceptions, stories of disjointed life experiences remained the most common.

In summary, the young women's lives were marked by instability both in terms of their personal relationships and their physical situation. These young women have few fixed points in their lives from which they can either seek support or establish a firm base from which they can begin to change their lives. This context has ramifications for the girls' potential to be able to successfully complete community based orders and for the nature and range of community based orders that can meaningfully be offered to girls.

3. "Girls are Harder to Work With"?

Workers views

A frequently heard lament amongst youth workers and administrators in juvenile justice and related areas is that 'girls are more difficult to work with'. Overall, for those working in juvenile justice, their perception of their clients can be summarised as "upfront" boys and "emotional" girls (Baines and Alder, 1996).

In general juvenile justice workers in Victoria found boys to be "direct", "open" and "honest". Girls on the other hand were described as more "devious", "full of bullshit", "dramatic" and "more sensitive". Girls were found to "take things to heart" and to "brood" more than boys. They were described as tending to be more verbally aggressive, especially in terms of personalised verbal abuse to female workers. Further, boys problems were considered "less complex" than girls. Overall, workers found boys to be easier to "engage" than girls.

Some male workers spoke of concerns relating to physical proximity, touch and the maintenance of an appropriate professional relationship with female clients. The issue of prior sexual abuse and its prevalence in the lives of young women was also frequently mentioned by workers as an explanation for girl's behaviour. Presumed sexual abuse contributed to the understanding of girls problems as more complex than boys. It also meant that workers often expressed a concern that they were not appropriately trained to deal with this issue.

In general, juvenile justice workers believed that in part their difficulty in working with girls related to their own lack of experience and the relative scarcity of resources they had to draw upon in responding to girls' needs.

Girls on Girls

In general girls tended to concur with the judgements of juvenile justice workers that girls would be harder to work with. Girls' justifications for this observation mirrored those of the workers.

Girls thought that girls were "very over-reactive, highly emotional people, they get quite hysterical" (Ashley). They spoke of girls "sly ways" (Eden) and their tendency to verbally challenge workers noting that girls tend to "backchat" (Ulla).

They frequently described girls as "bitches" : "The girls simply bitch and bitch and bitch." (Jan); "you hear a lot of bitching, like, you know." (Eden)

> A: That's what these girls are like. Somebody gets in the shower, and they say something and they start bitching, `You said this behind my back, you're a fucking cow' ...I mean, we had one staff member.... claim stress leave. She only came here for a day, and she wouldn't go back. She hates it that much.... (Ashley, age 18)

> O: We bitch and bitch. I hate it.....girls just bitch and bitch and bitch. And they'll start fighting, and two months down the track, they have another fight, and everything to the past experience comes up again. (Ora, age 19)

Like the workers, the young women felt that girls would be harder to work with because they tended to hold on to their resentments for a long period. Girls noted that:

E: ....girls can be a lot more bitchier. A lot more aggro and once they hold a grudge, they hold it forever, whereas boys, if they have an argument, they have a punch on and then it's over with. Whereas girls can hold a grudge for years, they can punch on and then hold a grudge for years and years. (Ellie, age 15)

I: Because a lot of people say young women are really hard to work with.
BB: I believe that, yes.
I: Why do you believe that?
BB: Because we're bitches.
I: Explain 'bitch'.
BB: Bitch, okay, well, we're not female dogs, but we're what I call, if we don't get what we want, we get nasty, we can carry things out over a longer period of time than boys, boys will have a fight with one another, sort of thing.
I: Over and done with.
BB: Yes, but not like girls, we can carry it on for twelve months if we have to, never resolve anything. I don't know, I find bitchiness, I don't know how to describe it. It's very much about feelings in girls, girls backstabbing one minute and saying one thing to your face one minute and the next minute they're backstabbing to another person and it's getting back to you as a totally different story. (Barb, age 18)

J: The boys, they get on fine, they get angry, they punch each other up, that's not a problem and they don't get their periods but they do get grumpy and if they do get grumpy they just punch someone out, that solves their problem. And with the girls, the arguing goes on so long, if there's an argument they will fight for six or seven months, over the smallest thing, like if someone left a dirty towel out in the bathroom and someone else got blamed. (Jan, age 16)

While workers found girls problems to be more complex than those of girls, some girls believed, for example, that "Women have got big problems, bigger problems that men have" (Francis). It was felt therefore that girls "need attention" (Billee), and that: "we expect too much. Not too much, we expect a lot. We expect shampoos, conditioners, we expect to have certain soaps, we expect certain deodorants, certain creams, whatever, and we complain a lot." (Eden)

Some young women disagreed with the general proposition that girls were harder to work with, pointing out that the key issue was that they were different: "everyone's got different things about them and different points of view" (Karen). As one young woman observed, "Maybe not worse, just different." (Quella)

K:....girls aren't harder to work with than boys, it might look that way, but everyone still has different problems and you can't just say this bunch of girls are worse than that bunch of guys because all the girls in that group are different. They are all so different you can't say that. (Karen, age 13)

4. Girls expectations of staff

"Like that's all a girl needs is like someone to talk to.."

Perhaps the strongest and clearest point made by girls was that what they most needed from their workers in juvenile justice was "someone to talk to":

> I: So what do you think is really important for people who work with young women, what is it important for them to do, to be able to work with young women properly?
> J: Well, the main thing they should really do is like, talk to the girls and not beat our heads in like the really hard ones do, like that's all a girl needs is like someone to talk to, to sort out their problems with...(Jan, age 16)

> I: With your better staff here, what are the good things about the staff that are good here?
> O: They always talk to you when you need someone to talk to. You can play pool with them, just have a talk, go into the sewing room to just take your mind off the place for a while. That's what you need. (Ora, age 19)

"There when I needed them"

At the same time, the girls had some clear expectations of the conditions in which they would talk to someone. A theme across the discussions of "talking with someone" was that they needed to have some control over the conditions of talking. An important condition was that the person would be available to talk with them when the girl needed them, that is the ready availability of someone to talk to was important: "they were there when I needed them.... I'd go and speak to them and they'd do something about it" (Eden).

> I: So what makes a good worker here, do you think?
> E: Understanding, that knows your needs, that can help you, talk with you when you need to talk, just like to be there if you need them...
> (Ellie, age 15)

Sometimes "talking" meant simply having the opportunity to "chat" with someone: "They're really good like that plus they're there if you just want to have a chat. It's really good, I've found since I've been here." (Billee)

"Really Listens"

A further condition of talking with someone was that they "listen to you" (Wendy). Girls were sensitive to those who had not "really listened" and felt that "some

[workers] are more willing to listen than other ones" (Ashley). "Listening" implies taking seriously what is being said:

> T: Some of them....they never hear what your saying. It's so dumb, its very patronising and you just want to punch their face out. I've heard that many times. To me, it's 'I hear what your saying, but I haven't heard what you're saying, I just want to say what I want to say'. (Tracey, age 16)

> I: Do you want to tell me more about staff, in terms of what things work good and what don't?
> U: Staff need to be ready to listen to you, to be ready to listen to you when you want to talk. (Ulla, age 16)

> V: ...they're just nicer than the other ones, they listen to you more. They just like understand a bit more. (Vee, age 16)

> I: So the staff are generally really good here?
> E: Yes, some of them but some of them are just complete arseholes.
> I: In what way?
> E: Well, they won't listen to what they have to say. (Ellie, age 15)

Genuinely cares

"Really listening" to you was an indication that the person cared about you, and this was a significant condition of talking to someone. Perhaps the most revealing comments about their expectations of staff in this regard came out in the interviews in response to questions about what made a "good" or a "bad" worker. It was clear that a "good worker" was one that really cared, and was genuinely interested in and committed to their wellbeing:

> FF: ...[name's] the best I've had. She's pretty grouse.
> I: Why is she good?
> FF: I don't know, she just cares and that. She's nice and she seems young.
> I: So how do you know that she cares?
> FF: I don't know, she just shows it heaps, a lot. We see each other just about every day and that. It's great.
> I: So do you think for a worker, if I had to ask you for a couple of words, to describe the qualities of a good worker, what sort of words would you use to describe them, do you think?
> FF: Someone that cares, that knows... sort of straight.
> I: Straight?
> FF: Yeah. She was pretty straight.
> I: When you say, 'straight' explain that to me.
> FF: She's pretty nice and that. Helpful. (Fran, age 17)

GI: They do go home at night and they do worry about us and they care, you know what I mean? And you can see that heart beating, being put into their job. Being with [name of another service], all you see is a young uni student and that you are a number basically to them (Group Interview).

V: ....since I've been at this unit with this particular worker, my behaviour and my lifestyle have got a lot better. Compared to what I was, I used to be a high-risk category, and all that, and now I'm not, because this worker cares about me. She helps me with everything, but she's also really firm. We have long arguments, but she does understand and that. (Vee, age 16)

I: How do you tell the difference between someone who's just being nice and doing their job?
GG: You can, you can, there's people, all workers are concerned, I know that, all workers are concerned but some are just a bit more concerned than others.(Gael, age 15)

"Bad workers" were described by girls as those who they felt were more interested in the expectations of their job, than the personal wellbeing of the girls: "They just want to get you through your order and be off" (Group Interview)

P: Because normally I reckon that workers just bullshit to me.....They say things like they care and all that but I don't reckon they do. I reckon they get the job just for the money or something. (Pattie, age 15)

GG: ....you have to think, too, they have to be nice, that's their job, they get paid to do be nice and find out whatever.... (Gael, age 15)

J: ...like the staff members who usually say 'Who gives a fuck? It's not my problem it's your problem (Jan, age 16).

T: I'm not sure, a lot of, they're very detached, a lot of them, I suppose it could be called burnout, they seem to me to be always sick of me... (Tracey, age 16)

"She understands where you're coming from"

From the girls point of view a "good" worker was someone who they felt would "understand" them: workers who "just like understand a bit more" (Vee). As one girl indicated: "just because they understand me. They understand my personality, they understand the kind of person I am" (Rita).

I: So what makes a good worker here, do you think?
E: Understanding, that knows your needs, that can help you, talk with you when you need to talk, just like to be there if you need them... (Ellie, age 15)

AA: ...She's been the best..... She understands where you're coming from, she's there for you if I need someone to talk to, I can talk to her. I guess she understands what you're coming from, and what you're doing. (Alison, age unknown)

BB: That's all a matter of understanding and patience really. They're good working with you for an answer. (Barb, age 18)

They expressed anger about workers who they felt, "don't understand nothing about me. They don't understand shit" (Rita).

T: I couldn't really talk to her. She wouldn't get everything I'd say. (Tracey, age 16)

"They treat you with respect"

Good workers not only understand you, but also treat you with respect. Showing respect had to do with the way in which staff spoke to them.

G: Umm... They just tell you to do stuff, and the staff here ask you politely, they say `Will you do this please'. There, they think we do nothing and they start with `Do this, do that, do this, do that'. It's a nightmare. (Gina, age 15)

It also had to do with the way in which they were treated.

I: So why are the staff good?
G: Because they treat you with respect.
I: When you say respect, what do you mean by respect?
G: They treat you really nicely, they don't treat you like shit.
I: It's all right, it's just as you see them.
G: They just treat you with respect. (Gina, age 15)

Treating you with respect meant that you were not treated in a demeaning fashion. Good staff "don't treat you like shit" and "They're not patronising" (Group Interview).

R: They think that we're tom boys the way that they talk to us, sometimes the way they talk to us is appalling... Just because we're locked up doesn't mean like, doesn't meant that we have to be treated like a pack of criminals. (Rita, age 18)

U: There's a person who always puts people down, and she's really [?] or something, she's always making fun of the girls, I don't really like her. (Ulla, age 16)

In a similar vein, the girls were sensitive to being treated "like little kids" (Group Interview): "They're rules are so childish, it's like we're not grown up, it's like we're little kids." (Group Interview). They appreciated settings in which they were "treated like an adult there" (Barb, age 18).

Showing respect also meant recognising and respecting them as individuals. In identifying the characteristics of staff they had not liked, girls spoke of those who "put me into the category of I don't know, the very typical kind of girl" (Tracey), or who treated them "just another number in their bloody book" (Vee). The girls complained ....

> V: Yeah, they just think you're another number in their bloody book. All they care about is the paperwork they have to do, and that's it. (Vee, age 16)

> BB: ...the way they treated the other girls I know when I was out there was 'You're just another number here, you're just another big mouth, you're just another one with an attitude problem, you've got some sort of problem about real life, and that's why you're here. Do your time for your crime in here and take it. You can do it sweet and easy or do it hard.' (Barb, age 18)

Being respected as individuals, entailed respecting their point of view and their position, they did not want to be "pushed" into things. They did not like workers "telling you what to do in a demeaning way as though you don't know" (Tracey). Zea explained: "I don't like pushy people" and "I don't like being told what to do". She defined 'pushy' as "Do this, now! You have to fill in this form, now! I want you to be here, now!", whereas "straight-up people would just say 'Look, you need to fill these forms out. It's important. Do you want to do it now?'".

> T: The approach. The way they come on to you, if they come on strong and try and handle you, or whatever they want to call it, they're just going to fight back. Its kind of getting them to treat you equal." (Tracey, age 16)

> V: ...not try to push you into something if they understand that you don't want to do it. (Vee, age 16)

> GI: Well she didn't try to put things in my mind and say do this, do that. (Group Interview)

"Seen it for themselves, done it for themselves"

The girls believed that to be able to "understand" them, workers needed to have some relevant experience.

> GI: How are we supposed to relate to someone who doesn't know what's really going on? How we feel, you know what I mean? (Group Interview)

> I: What would you say was the most important thing for a juvenile justice worker for you?

T: You tend to take them more seriously if they've had, most young women have had the same degree of experience in these things as what these crime people, whatever you want to call them, have had. If they've had some sort of basic experience, if they've seen it for themselves or they've done it for themselves, they wouldn't be able to work in this place. If they've seen it for themselves and done it... A lot of them you find, they're just doing it out of books, telling you what you should be doing and how you should be acting, and they don't seem to understand. I'm not sure, a lot of, they're very detached, a lot of them, I suppose it could be called burnout, they seem to me to be always sick of me... (Tracey, age 16)

GI: That's another thing with juvenile justice, I mean I was placed on an order, and I was put with this sheila. I mean I'm on heroin, I'm like used heroin and all this and she's from a textbook. I felt like I was getting patronised. If someone who cant walk the walk, you can't talk the talk, unless you walk the walk, you know what I mean? And then you're getting some uni student saying to me do this, do that and "don't use heroin. I don't know what its like but don't use it. I don't have kids myself but do this, and do this blah, blah, blah". How are we supposed to relate to someone like that? (Group Interview)

The relevant experience that was expected of staff could consist also of having children of their own:

A: You can really tell on the staff, which have kids and which don't. They act very differently, you can tell. The older ones that have got kids have more parental skills than the other ones that don't. They think us kids are pain in the arses and we ask for too much, and you can tell that. The ones that have kids are more patient. (Ashley, age 18)

They were however, very sceptical about those who say they "know how you feel, we've been through it all... when they haven't been through all I've been through" (Ellie).

E: ....`We know how you feel, we've been through this.' I just look at them and say `What the fuck, how do you think you know how I feel? .....you haven't had this or that happen to you and then they say `Oh, I'm sorry', but it's just because they don't know what to say, they say `We know how you feel, we've been through it all.' But they haven't been through it all, and that's what us girls say... (Ellie, age 15)

"She's just like my best friend"

When a relationships worked well from the girls' perspective, there was a very personal, close relationship with the worker. Some girls spoke of workers as being like family members as "they looked out for me" (Barb).

A: One person's helped me out, my therapist. Without her I'd be lost, that's how frightened I am. .... I think without her help and all that, I'd be a very lonely person. She's very special...And now, me and her, I think she knows me better than my own mother. Provides a lot of deep, meaningful stuff for me. (Ashley, age 18)

H: ...they'll stay with me and talk to me. Because I feel so lonely in my cell ...and they get me to come back out and start talking to me.
I: So how do you feel about them as people?
H: I feel like [name], she's almost like my mother, man, because she always floored me, she takes me out and stuff like that. (Helen, age 16)

EE: They were there when you needed them, like when I was having a hard time with stuff. The staff members were there when I needed them, I could go and speak to them, and they'd do something about it ... And she did a lot for me ... she's fair to speak to, she's just like my best friend, like my aunt before she died, she reminds me of her, that's who I speak to. She's done heaps for me. She's done lots. (Eden, age 17)

Q: Sometimes she knows things my boyfriend doesn't even know. (Quella, age 18)

I: What makes her so good? What makes her a good worker?
N: I don't know, ..., me and her, like were best friends and that, even though she was staff, and I was a resident. I don't know, just the way she does things and that. She was a good person (Nell, age 18).

"Counselling's not the way."

The conditions of talking are understood as entailing close, personal relationships and therefore, while girls often appreciated being able to talk about issues with others, they were not interested in formal counselling sessions: "Counselling's not the way. We'd rather talk to each other than counselling, you know." (Group Interview)

They were not interested in sessions where they felt others were "prying" or were "pushing for info" (Rita), " I've done it [anger management course]. No way. Its too personal. I don't like that kind of mucky stuff" (Rita). Counselling was seen as something that was imposed, it did not entail the conditions of talk outlined above. It was not about talking to someone *when they needed* to talk, but rather the process was initiated by others. Further such sessions did not meet the condition expected by the girls of a close personal relationship, this was a stranger with whom they were being expected to talk.

GG: I haven't seen too many of them, I've seen one, and that's it. I've got a psychiatrist, and he'll come over to my house and I have to talk to him and he'll sit there, and he'll say 'Yes, that's why, and you've had a really hard time, haven't you?' And I think this is bullshit, we're paying for a psychiatrist, why I have to waste my time seeing a psychiatrist, saying 'I feel bad, this is what I feel bad about, this is what I feel good about'..... And to sit there and tell him 'This is going wrong, that's going wrong, this is going right, this is going right' and him just sitting there and saying 'Yes, yes, that's not good at all.' Just sympathy, sympathy, and that. Him, now that's how I know that he's getting paid to do that. He doesn't really give a shit, he's getting paid and he knows that. (Gael, age 15)

"I don't trust anyone"

While girls wanted to talk to someone who cared about them and understood them, they were also very cautions about confiding in others as this entails a degree of trust that they are wary of expecting in other.

P: I've had that many people close in my life that have said all that shit and then they end up just leaving. I've been hurt too many times to let people get close to me (Pattie, age 15)

BB: Yes, trust is very important....I don't trust anyone. Throughout my life I've never trusted anyone. I trust my mum ninety percent, I don't even trust her a hundred percent. My ex-boyfriend, I would probably have trusted him fifty percent....but I've always kept my facts to myself so that nobody can ever stab me in the back with something they can use against me, or whatever.... [T]he workers here, I find, I've opened up to them, easily, in the sense that I can talk to them about anything. But also there's certain things in my life that I'd never tell anyone. (Barb, age 18).

They are therefore very wary of confiding in anyone. Girls indicated that they started talking "little by little, its taken over a year for me to start".

E: .....she'd helped me open up to all the abuse and sexual abuse I've been through, and I talk to her, little by little, it's taken over a year, for me to start. For seven or eight years they've been trying to get me counselling and that, but I just won't do it. Little by little I tell her little tiny things that may seem nothing to other people but are a big deal to me because I've been through what I've been through. (Ellie, age 15)

So while most young women want to talk to someone, they also try to maintain some control over whom they speak to and what they tell them.

> BB... I find I've opened up to them easily, in the sense that I can talk to them about anything. But also there's certain things in my life that I'd never tell anyone...There are just some dark secrets that will never come out to anyone. That doesn't necessarily mean that I'm a dark person who has done something wrong. But its inappropriate to talk about it to certain workers. They deal with certain issues. (Barb, age 18)

Wary of juvenile justice workers

While girls are interested in developing close working relationships with those in charge of them, they are nevertheless conscious of the nature of the situation and are wary of not to getting "too close" to workers.

> D: You try not to say things to them because you feel bad when you have to get angry at them. Because you get angry at them sometimes....You try not to get too close to them because then you feel bad when you have to get angry at them. You try not to get too close to them. (Debbie, age 18)

Some girls were sceptical about the motives of workers who may "say they care, but don't really" and "workers just bullshit to me". They spoke of workers who did not genuinely care about their welfare but "get the job just for the money or something" (Pattie). "They're not here for the love of the job, they're here for the money or something." (Group Interview).

In looking for someone they could trust, girls valued workers who were "being honest", who they described as "they're genuine", "They mean it." (Group Interview). However, they also felt that some workers were "two faced" (Group Interview).

> A: I've been in that situation where I've been blamed for something, and I hadn't.
> I: So this is the staff blaming you?
> A: Not the staff, they like to play a side. Like they say `so and so said you did this' and they say `no, she didn't'. What I'm trying to say, is, so they're trying to play each resident off against each other, saying, you know, `she's done this and that.' Yet when another girl comes in, she goes `how come you're getting it for what she's done?' That's naughty. I hate that. (Ashley, age 18)

> EE: [Female staff] they're two-faced, there are certain staff members in there that are two-faced. I reckon there was a few staff members that set me up on a few fights from there. They said 'You go down the end and you go bash her.' I've been set up then. (Eden, age 17)

A few young women were adamant that they would not talk about certain personal issues to anyone in juvenile justice.

E: I don't talk to them about rape. I don't talk to none of them about my problems. I don't talk to anyone about my problems, I just keep them building up inside of me. (Ellie, age 15)

Trust and privacy

Some girls are also wary in confiding to people in juvenile justice because they are concerned about the privacy of the information they give. Some girls expressed concern that their conversations were recorded for others to read.

E: No, I don't want to talk to them.
I: Why don't you want to talk to them?
E: I don't like talking to anyone about my problems.
I: Is that because they're here all the time?
E: I talk to my friends about my problems.
I: Are there any members of the staff who can help you in any way?
E: Maybe they could but it all goes down on file you know and it's for everyone to read, and that's what I don't like.
I: So it's that whole invasion of privacy thing.
E: That's right.
I: So do you ever think that you'd find a way for the staff to be discreet enough?
E: I wouldn't talk. I just wouldn't. (Ellie, age 15)

They were also concerned about the extent to which workers shared information about them. Concerns about privacy were related to the extent to which you could "trust" your worker. Trusting a worker meant "Knowing that they're not going to go an tell someone else" (Group Interview).

I: So you feel that you can trust them to talk to and all that sort of stuff?
H: Yes. I trust them because they won't tell no-one, tell the family or tell their friends when they go off. I trust them and [named person], but she's on holidays now. I trust her heaps. (Helen, age 16)

I: What makes her different to the others?
N: She can listen to you, if you have problems and that, she won't tell no-one. (Nell, age 18)

They expressed strong feelings of betrayal when they believed their confidences had been passed on to others. They did not like their personal information to be shared around or having lots of people reading their file, "knowing your whole life, which gets really annoying" (Vee).

A: You feel like you can't trust staff, sometimes, and you can hear them usually, or most of the time, talking about what you've just told them in confidence to the rest of the staff. (Ashley, age 18)

I: So with the female staff, what would the main issues that you've had with them have been?

A: Well, they like to discuss private issues between themselves, and they do it in a confined space, and it echoes a bit, and so a lot of people actually know it, so that's a bit dumb sometimes. You do hear what they say sometimes.
I: Would they see that as an invasion of privacy?
A: Yep. A total lack of trust, you wouldn't put any trust in a staff member again. (Ashley, age 18)

Consistency of key worker

In the context of concerns about their personal information being shared amongst workers, young women frequently expressed concern about having to repeat their story to several different workers.

Z: My old worker, she was really good, she understood where I was coming from with most of what I said... but then I've got another counsellor, he's a dick. Ive got two new social workers and then I'm going to have to tell them in my own words again what's been happening. And I'm not one of those people who warm to people so quickly. I step back for a bit and see what's on, and then talk. (Zea, age 15)

GI: They just ask you the same questions over and over again. They, they go and consult with everybody, then they pass you on to this person and you sit there and then they go tell me your problems, tell me your problems all over again and it just keeps going. They don't, they don't figure out anything. (Group Interview)

The "good worker" is one who "sticks around" over the long haul "even when you're in trouble" (Ellie). The "bad worker" is one who says, "Who gives a fuck!! Its not my problem its your problem" (Jan).

I: Listening.
N: She cares about you, even when you're in trouble and that, she'll come and grab you and take you for coffee. (Nell, age 18)

On the other hand, in institutional settings, for girls who are there for some time, a bit of variability in the people who come in is sometimes appreciated.

A: Each staff is individually different from the others, and it's really good when you have a mixture, sometimes we've got substitute staff, for ones that are sick or they've got courses to go to or they're on leave or something. It's really good when you've got other staff in the other end, you sit around and talk to them. (Ashley, age 18)

Sex of Worker

The characteristics of their relationship with a worker that were most valued by girls, that is, genuinely caring, trustworthy and respectful, were more significant than the sex of the worker, and were not related to the sex of the worker. For some girls the sex was irrelevant

> I: And you didn't see any difference between the male and the female workers.
> N: They're all the same. (Nell, age 18)

Some young women did prefer female workers.

> I: Can I ask why you requested a female worker?
> DD: Just because I find that... I don't know. It's easier, it's easier if you're in trouble and that, it's easier to talk to and easier to get things out. Even now it's like 'Should I say this? I'll keep it to myself. (Denise, age 15)

> I: Would you prefer working with both the people you've mentioned who you thought were good, were women. Does it matter to you, do you think women are better to work with than men? Or do you think it's just happened that it's been women?
> AA: I think it's just happened that they've been women.
> I: Do you think you could also work with a male youth worker?
> AA: Not to sure. I don't think so. You'd probably feel a bit embarrassed. Because, like, I don't tell my dad anything. I don't think he's got time for me. Just going with him, I remember, I didn't tell him what was going on. (Alison, unknown)

Other girls however did not necessarily find that women workers were easier to talk to, or were better workers than men. Some girls preferred male workers.

> A: Most of the girls are a bunch of bitches, I have a real problem with some of the female staff, the male staff I don't have a problem with. The only problem I have with the male staff, is they expect us not to cry. (Ashley, age 18)

> I: It doesn't make any difference whether it's male or female?
> D: I actually get along better with male staff...
> I Do you?
> D: Yeah.
> I: Is that true when you are on the other sort of programs, when you were on obligations and services, stuff like that? Do you like male staff better?
> D: Yeah, I like the male staff better, I turn to them rather than the female staff, they know you too well, they catch on , the male staff, you can butter them up. You can't butter the girls up. You can con the guys, we con the male staff off all the time, to give us things. (Debbie, age 18)

Although at first cautious about talking with a male member of staff, one young woman nevertheless liked a male worker she had confided in.

> I: Would you feel comfortable telling a male about stuff like that?
> H: No. My mother told me not to ask the male kind of person on staff. I've asked one, but he kept it to himself, he never laughed about it, he's good, because he knows about it, he's got a wife and kids too. (Helen, age 16)

There was however recognition that girls who had been sexually abused may prefer a female worker and so the choice ought to be available to them.

> Z: So you've got to take into account that it's a female that's actually been sexually abused by a male. Like me, they may not want a male worker, they may want a female worker. They just need to spread the workers out more, instead of lots of females or lots of males, have fifty-fifty. (Zea, age 15)

> Z: At least then you've got a choice in case you have been sexually abused. (Zea, age 15)

Girls just gotta have fun

In the midst of all of this, girls want to have some fun. In one of the group interviews the girls spoke of playing childish games outside with male worker that they thought was great fun. In contrast to complaints in other parts of the interview about not wanting to be treated like a child, they also spoke of the fact that many of them had missed out on a lot of the childhood fun and games that other children had enjoyed and that they appreciated some time for such foolishness. In an individual interview one girl commented:

> D: There's good teachers over there, they have time for a kid like me, like a teacher, I see a lot of [name], nothing seems to offend him. No matter how rude we are to him, we don't spoil his day. He's a lively sort of bugger. Doesn't take anything personally. We get in some teachers from outside, take everything personally. The things we do go straight over his head, he laughs. (Debbie, age 18)

"Get me rolling and I'd be right"

While girls stressed that what they wanted was someone to talk to, "talking" did not necessarily imply conversations about personally revealing matters. They were not interested in "Just sympathy, sympathy, and that" (Gael). They were concerned about being able to talk with workers in relation to setting things in place so that they could get on with their lives, workers who "would do something about it" (Eden). They want workers to "talk" with them, work with them to attain some concrete

achievements. They wanted workers to help them get on with their life to "Get a job, get me on my feet, get me rolling and I'd be right." (Xavia).

> N: Yes, there was one woman, her name's Kerry, and she's heaps good to me, she does anything. She's the one that got me into the football training, and the football practice. yes, she's heaps good to me (Nell, age 18).

> J: They should, like, give them a talk and say 'This is what you should do, you should make a few phone calls, this is what you are going to do with your life, set a few goals, get your life back on track and maybe get off the drugs. You have problems, how come you keep coming in here, or the glue. (Jan, age 16)

Most of the girls were in fact quite ambitious and this becomes even more evident when we examine their comments on the programs and services offered in juvenile justice.

5. Girls Thoughts on Programs and Services in Juvenile Justice

The future

The young women's comments on the programs and services they would like to see available in juvenile justice have to be considered in light of their thoughts about their future. As noted in the earlier "Girls Profile" section, most of the girls had left formal schooling early, although several had subsequently attempted to gain further education and training, and had little, if any work experience.

However, in general the young women were keen for their futures to be different to their past.

> GG: ...in the time I have been coming here, I've matured a lot. This is where I've stopped and thought about when I've going to be growing older and my little daughter or whatever's going to be going to school, 'And what does your mum do?' 'Oh, she's on the pension' you know. 'And what does your mum do?' 'She's on the dole.' I don't want that. 'What does you mum do?' 'She's a doctor, or a nurse', whatever. 'Works part-time, takes us out after work', you know. Just stuff like that. I want to be able to do that. I want to be able to have lots of money, I want to be able to have a really nice house, because our house has never been crash hot with mum and even my nanna's house isn't that crash hot. And the way I feel, I don't want my daughter or son to feel like me, what I feel inside, really deep down, is that I hate myself, because I don't have what everybody else has, but then, up here, I think well, I have to wait for that, because it all comes in good time. (Gael, age 15)

I: Is there anything you particularly want to do in [placename], a job?
X: Yeah, because it's a big city, you know. I just want to look at it. I want to go for my life. I just want to do everything. I wish it all could come all at once. (Xavia, age 16)

They wanted to be able to live independently in the future, "to do thing on my own" (Eden).

U: Yes. You know SPY? SPY? It's a sort of thing that if I get out on Friday, I start Monday.
I: SPY, yes I know. People have been telling me about that.
U: I'm starting on Monday, they have courses and that, I do budgeting, cooking and all that.
I: Are you looking forward to that?
U: If I get to do that, I get the independent living thing. That's what I'm trying to work with.
I: You'd like to go and live independently.
U: Yes. (Ulla, age 19)

Barrriers

The young women nevertheless spoke realistically of the barriers facing them in the achievement of these goals. The young women expressed these in terms of their own biographies which included: having criminal records; their lack education and work experiences; their unstable family and living circumstances once released. Some Aboriginal young women spoke of their awareness of the limitation racism placed on the opportunities available to them.

FF: I don't know... get a job, they try to look for jobs for you where the bosses don't mind if you've got a criminal record, robbed a bank or whatever, just, you know, just as long as you work and you're straight now, you should find jobs and that. (Fran, age 17)

I: So when you passed the mechanic's course at Magill, did you then try to get any mechanics jobs when you were out?
N: Yeah, I looked, at the CES. You have to have, like, experience, for a couple of years, you've got to be in like a mechanic course or something like that, I tried for a job at [company name], at [place name] here, but I couldn't get in because you need to know literacy and such and you need to know that before you get in. (Nell, age 18)

GI: The problems that got us in here effect our whole lives that's why we don't have jobs, that's why we do what we do, or you know, that's why we run amuck things like that....so once we fix the main problem everything else will just fall into place... (Group Interview)

For some girls this meant that while they were anxious to leave the institution and change their lives, they also felt some trepidation at leaving. For these girls the closed institution became a place where they felt 'secure'.

> O: I feel safe. But it's scary looking at the outside. I'm scared to go out. I shouldn't be that way. It's not how this place should be run, but they're scared to go out. (Ora, age 19)

Further Education and Training

Despite having left school early, many of the girls were keen to explore further training and educational opportunities.

> W: .....next year I'll go back to school and get my VCE hopefully. (Wendy, age 17)

> I: If you were told you could choose a TAFE course tomorrow which would you choose? You have to choose two. What sort of courses would you say you want to do?
> D: Sports federation type of thing. Maybe something to improve my reading and writing, my English. (Debbie, age 18)

They were particularly interested in more vocationally oriented courses, course that were "helping them get a start..." (Ora).

> I: Would you like to do a TAFE course? Are you interested in a TAFE course?
> D: Yes.
> I: What would you be interested in?
> D: Something that I could be doing on the outside. (Debbie, age 18)

> I: So what are you going to do when you are released?
> R: Hopefully do a TAFE course in automotive. (Rita, age 18)

> AA: Well, I was doing a hairdressing course at MATE. It was only a four week one and they had like this program for youth, SPY. And they just do ceramics and artwork [?] like this little thing.
> I: Have you done some of those?
> AA: I've got a certificate for ceramic and hairdressing.
> I: And did you like those?
> AA: Yeah, hairdressing.
> I: Will you do that some more?
> AA: I think they're supposed to have an apprenticeship going, but I haven't heard anything about it for this year.
> I: Would you like to do that, do an apprenticeship in hairdressing?
> AA: Yes. (Alison, age unknown)

However, the young women rarely had positive comments to make about the formal education programs available to them within either of the closed institutional settings of this research.

> I: What about is there anything that you'd like to learn or do that you can't do now?
> G: I'd like to learn how to read and write properly.
> I: Does going to school do that for you or...no?
> G: They don't do nothing.
> I: No?
> G: Not teaching me.
> I: No?
> G: I'll just go back to my own school. (Gina, age 15)

> I: What about the educational stuff? The education centre in there?
> EE: They should have more, get more, and change education, like change maths around, one day have this and the next day have the other one, and they should keep reading time tables. I don't know my times tables. That's the only thing I wanted to learn in there, and I didn't have the time. When I was in maths I was reading it off the back of my book, and the next minute it's 'Eden, do your work!' And I'm, like 'What? I'm just doing my work.' I was trying to learn something, but that's one thing I didn't have time for, and I don't think I'll ever have time for that now. (Eden, age 17)

They complained of the level of the work and the teachers understanding of them.

> Girl 1: I think that they [teachers] just don't understand cause they're not in here twenty-four hours a day, you know they get breaks and that...
> Girl 2: No they understand all right, they just don't want to take it in. (Group Interview)

> GI: It's their whole attitude towards us, and you know and I think they just go a little overboard trying to be a proper school as in you know shit loads of work but they still try to talk to us like a four year old. (Group Interview)

> EE: Yeah, they should give you more opportunities in school for what you want to do, not put you in that spot and then make you do it, that's how trouble starts. It's like in the system you're teaching monkeys or whatever, if you do things wrong, sort of thing. Do you get where I'm at? Oh, I can't explain it now. (Eden, age 17)

They also complained that they found the educational programs in institutions "boring".

GI: The teachers....they need a fun positive attitude, you know, like instead of just sitting at a desk just writing and writing, they need something like doing activities....play a game...just different ways. (Group Interview)

I: What sort of things do you think should happen? What sort of things would be helpful to have in a place like Magill?
AA: They should have some programs so the girls don't get bored, instead of just having them like schools. Because you go to school during the day.
I: And that's boring?
AA: Yeah. (Alison, unknown)

Aboriginal young women were generally enthusiastic about ABTAFE.

I: You said ABTAFE. Another Aboriginal young girl said she'd done ABTAFE when she was in Magill. She said it was the best thing that she did.
EE: It is, it's really good. (Eden, age 17)

Programs and Activities in Closed Institutions

One of the main complaints girls had about closed institutions was the boredom : "It's the boredom..." (Group Interview). It was boredom they believed that contributed to some of the fights between girls: "I'd just pick on her over little, stupid little things like that...." (Group Interview). Consequently they were keen to have more activities to keep them occupied: "We just bored real easy and want to get up and go..."(Group Interview)

I: If you're going to have places that girls are going to be locked up for periods of time, what are the things that you think have been helpful?
D: Keeping our minds occupied.
I: Okay.
D: Keeping us as busy as possible so we don't sit down and feel sorry for ourselves. (Debbie, age 18)

As with education, some of the activities they were interested in were instrumentally oriented.

I: ....which do you think the best program is?
N: The MATE program, and this program.
I: Why is that? Tell us a little bit about it, too.
N: Well, you get to muck about with the tools and that, and the engines, and that's what I like doing, I like mechanics. And you get the day out, and I say it's good. (Nell, age 18)

I: What sort of stuff do you reckon it would be good to have for girls?

EE: Camps, and courses, because when I got released before in May I was doing a hairdressing course, with MATE now, and, yeah, that kept me going, I really liked that, and I'd like to do something like that again. (Eden, age 17)

However, more often than not, they spoke of wanting more physical activities such as sports.

E: I'd love to be going to the gym, but like, I work out on dumbells and bench press, I do my own exercises, and that, but I'd love to be going to the gym. (Ellie, age 15)

I: Is there anything that you'd like to do while you're here that you can't do? Anything that you'd like to do that you need?
G: Yeah, go for walks on my own. (Gina, age 15)

A: Karate. I'm dying to do karate. Martial arts. It's not to defend myself, it's more or less, I've heard it's good for you. It's a bit like tai chi. It's not as though I'm going to go ahead and start kickboxing somebody, because they see the wrong thing, it's not that. They actually see that as a form of violence and they won't bring it in here. But I actually think along the lines of a very relaxing thing. (Ashley, age 18)

O: There's a lot of the things that the girls could try that they should have more of. But the only bloody thing, it's you're stuck inside like the pool table. You're stuck inside. We don't want it. We want to get out, get out and have a game of basketball.
I: So you'd really like to play sport.
O: Get out. Get us exercise or something, get us used to out there. It's just useless keeping us here. We are locked up, but get us used to the outside world, and don't keep us under your wing, I don't want to be under their wing. (Ora, age 19)

I: Is there anything you're not able to have here that you think that you'd like to have that would help you? That you think you really need?
K: Sometimes I think people need a punching-bag. Because sometimes if someone gets really angry it's a punching-bag they need. You're probably talking about stuff like... I don't know. I think people need different ways to deal with their anger, different strategies.. (Karen, age 13)

Even after their release, the need for more activities was noted.

I: So what sort of services do you think are most needed for when you get out? Say you've been here fifteen, sixteen months?
D: Activity programmes. We have activities in here, we're always doing activities, you go to the pool, you go swimming, you do school, then suddenly you get out, bam! You do nothing. You get a bit bored. Course, you're angry or whatever.

I: There's activities and you've got no money to do activities.
D: It should be free, all the activities. People to help you when you've been outside for a while. Get you on your feet. Then gradually you can do it yourself . (Debbie, age 18)

Mixed sex

When asked about whether or not they would prefer mixed sex settings, most often the girls indicate that they would prefer to have some mixed-sex activities.

I: So you think there should be more mixing with the boys.
EE: Yes. I reckon you should have them. Not all the time... (Eden, age 17)

D: Maybe not together all the time, but get some time where you can learn to talk to boys. Different times when we can get together, can talk together. Can go to movies together, can play soccer together. (Debbie, age 18)

I: Would you rather have a place where the boys were separate to the girls or would you rather have a service with boys.
U: I'd rather not mixed. With some things mixed. Like the boys here, you're not even allowed to look at them. You get in trouble for looking at boys. Over here I reckon we should have some mixed things with them. Usually we'd have games with the boys, like a game of basketball or something,
I: That's good.
U: I think like we should have mixed school with them. Sport or something. (Ulla, age 16)

Some girls however were not so keen to have mixed sex activities and spoke of pressures and fights that could result

K: I think there should be. No, not really.
I: No?
K: Everyone's got individual problems and they have different needs and that but some people, I'm not necessarily saying it's the girls or the guys, try to pressure people into the stuff they want to do like to have a relationship or something, and it doesn't work out and someone says to a person 'Oh don't want this to happen any more' or something, try and pressure people into some stuff like having sexual intercourse or saying 'If you don't go out with me, I'm going to bash you.' Something like that. I think there should be all girl units and all boy units. (Case 9)

I: If you had boys coming in with girls would you get more of that bitchiness?
EE: Well, there could be two girls and then one person will be going 'he likes me' 'No, he likes me' you know. And there's such fooling around. (Eden, age 17)

Another girl however suggested that sometimes some mixing of the sexes could offset the fighting amongst girls.

> N: I'd rather be in programs with men! Because if you're in a program with girls and that, the girls start bitching, and pick on you for what you've done and that, and so a mix is better than just all girls or all boys, because that's how you start a fight and that, and if it's all girls they always fight. (Nell, age 18

In making the case for mixed sex activities, girls noted that boys were part of their lives, both in the family and amongst peers, when they left the institution.

> I: So you'd go in with the boys again. You're not worried about boys standing over you.
> D: No, boys don't. Because you have to put up with that in your family anyway. Most of the boys are our cousins anyway. First cousins and so on. And then boy might get rude with you but another boy will tell him to shut up. And you'll get degrees of that depending on what they are to you. We know how to handle them. (Debbie, age 18)

> I: When you mess around with your friends, is it mixed groups of boys and girls?
> X: Yeah. With me, yeah, me and the girls don't say nothing to me, they just let me walk, let me go, because I was always friends with all the older boys, you know, like all the older brothers, that's who I cruise around with.
> I: So more boys than girls.
> X: Yeah. Me and this other girl are the only two girls that hang round with the boys. (Xavia, age 16)

6. Aboriginal Young Women

Aboriginal girls' comments, expectations and expressed needs in relation to juvenile justice were in general consistent with those of the other young women interviewed. However, they also noted some particular issues that were significant for them.

Young Aboriginal women noted in a Group Interview, that they have "strong family ties", that "There is a difference between white families and black families..." and "The influence of our family is really strong".

The strong family connections and responsibilities were notable throughout the interviews. Reference to "Cousins" and "Aunts" were peppered through their stories in ways that were not true for non-Aboriginal young women. In some instances this was in relation to offending behaviour.

> D: In my family there's heaps of them done that [robbery]
> I: And what do they think about you doing those sorts of offences?

D: They think basically I'm doing the same thing they did, seen us all through it, my brother's been in jail, now my friend. (Debbie, age 18)

I: You were hanging out because they were family?
EE: They were first, second cousins. We used to go out but they never let any other girls go out with them. (Eden, age 17)

Consequently some girls noted that male relatives of theirs were also in juvenile justice programs.

EE: I don't like to be around a lot of people, I like to be on my own, be with people that I know, but when I was [named service] my brother was with me. So me and my brother sort of work together, and he's never been to high school, but he's been with me. (Eden, age 17)

N: No. The other people that were in there were my cousins, doing the [named service]. (Nell, age 18))

I: You mentioned one of your cousins.
D: In here?
I: Yes, in here.
D: He's been over here, and we happened to run into each other at school. (Debbie, age 18)

In other instances their stories indicated the ways in which their extended family had provided support for them such as providing an alternative living situation, or visiting them when they were in detention.

In general there was a sense of connectedness and responsibility for family.

H: I need to stick up for my younger sister. I need to stick up for my older sister now because she's pregnant at the moment. Because she can't fight like me, she's pregnant, she might hurt the baby. I stick up for my sisters... (Helen, age 16)

Sometimes, their criminal offending arose out of circumstances relating to defending their family.

D: If you don't like each you, fight, that's what you do. Specially if you're like me, you're Aboriginal. Different families, you fight over the things that my sister did or my mother did. Often people will say things other people tell them to. (Debbie, age 18)

In light of the significance of these relationships to Aboriginal young women, One particularly insightful Aboriginal young woman noted the following in relation to the development of policies and practices:

GI: Go to source of the problem and try to help the whole family, not just that one, by making that one feel like an outsider to their family, they're feeling guilty thinking oh I'm OK but now my family are not, so I have got to try and help my family you know....help our whole family not just help us because we're the ones locked up. (Group Interview)

In was in relation to understanding these strong family ties in particular that Aboriginal girls thought that it was important that there were more Aboriginal workers. In a group interview Aboriginal girls made the following comments:

"Aboriginal workers can relate to your upbringing, they know how it is with family, they know the family influence, they understand..."

"...you can't walk away from your family and being an Aboriginal you have a lot of strong ties with your family and you can't walk away from them no matter what they're saying....the Aboriginal workers understand that."

"They understand it's easier said than done to get up and leave [your family] or whatever."

In general they felt that "we should have some Aboriginal workers here too...because they're are a lot of Aboriginal kids in here that can't speak to any of these white fellas in here."

I: Do you think there's any particular thing that young Aboriginal women need?
N: I reckon they need more Aboriginal workers in Magill because the white workers in there, they don't know how to relate to Aboriginal people, they don't understand our behaviour and that, because we get angry heaps quick, and I reckon they should have some Aboriginal workers in there, so the Aboriginal workers can relate to the Aboriginal kids. (Nell, age 18)

However, some Aboriginal young women indicated that they did not necessarily need an Aboriginal worker so long as the person met some of their other expectations of a good worker.

X: We need someone to help.
I: That's what I was wondering, when it comes to someone to talk to for you, to tell them what has happened.
X: Yes.
I: Is it better with an Aboriginal person?
X: Not really, I talk to anyone. I used to have this teacher at school...I used to tell her everything, I used to sit in her office all day and every day and just talk.....She was a white teacher. She got along with all the Aboriginal kids. All the Aboriginal kids went in there and sat there, she was the best.
I: It didn't matter then that she wasn't Aboriginal.

X: Yeah. Anything you said to her was just confident. I'd be saying things, no, no one knows, just between me and her. So yeah, anything that anyone said it was just... (Xavia, age 16)

I: You were saying before that you liked the AbTAFE staff because they could understand.
EE: This person, he wasn't Aboriginal. It was just a teacher that come in to study Aboriginal TAFE classes.
I: And he wasn't an Aboriginal person?
EE: No. He seemed like one though.... (Eden, age 17)

I: What about, does it make a difference to have Aboriginal workers?
AA: No, it doesn't. It doesn't really matter who you work with as long as you get on with each other and cooperate and communicate. (Alison, age unknown)

Nevertheless the two workers named by this young woman as good workers were both Aboriginal women.

A couple of the Aboriginal girls were very conscious of the racism and "stereotype" that confronted them in society. One young woman spoke of facing the expectation that, "Oh your black ...you should just drop out of school, you'll be nothing you know" (Group Interview). She went on to offer this as an explanation for why "...it's getting more and more rare for Aboriginals to be going to school.". Another Aboriginal young woman offered the insight "It means your losing confidence in yourself and you race, and you think you and your cousins, your whole family is going to be nothing you know and it's easy to give up under that pressure." (Group Interview) Another young woman commented:

Girl 3: "What's put us in here that needs to be changed because it's still there when we go out, you know. It's OK when we're in here, but when we go out those problems are still here and that's what makes us reoffend."
I: So what are the problems? Give me some stuff about that...
Girl 3: The racism, stereotypes. (Group Interview)

7. Summary

In general young women in the juvenile justice system agreed with workers that young women would be harder to work with than young men. They believed that young woman would be more demanding, "bitchy", and more likely than boys to feel aggrieved over a longer period.

The strongest and most consistent of the young women's comment was that they needed someone to "talk" to and that a "good worker" was one that was available for them when they needed to talk to someone. The "good worker" was one who "really

listened" to what they had to say, that is, they took what a young women said seriously.

In describing the conditions of being able to "talk" to someone, and characteristics of the "good worker", young women were in effect indicating that they were looking for a close, personal relationship with someone. They wanted a worker who "genuinely cared" about them as individuals, who was like a close friend or relative, and who was not just interacting with them because it was their job to do so. They expected to be treated with respect and dignity by someone who was willing to acknowledge their individual worth and potential.

In general these expectations of a good worker were more important than the sex of the worker. While some girls indicated they preferred female workers, for others the sex of the worker was irrelevant to them and some preferred male workers. It was acknowledged however, that for some girls a male worker would be inappropriate and therefore the possibility of nominating the sex of the worker was important.

The previous life experiences of these young women were such that they were cautious about trusting anyone, so while they wanted to "talk" with someone, they were at the same time self protective about who they spoke to and what they would talk to them about. They were particularly cautious about talking to, or trusting juvenile justice workers. In some instances, this was because they were conscious of the role of juvenile justice workers, but most often they were concerned about the extent to which they could trust a juvenile justice worker to maintain their confidentiality. For young women, workers talking with each other about the young woman's personal story and the sharing of case notes was a betrayal of their trust and their privacy.

Their concerns about privacy and confidentiality, and their desire to develop a personal relationship with their worker, meant that young women were confused and sometimes angry about the number of workers they were expected to have contact with and the constant changing of workers.

When young women spoke in terms of wanting someone to talk to someone, they also made it clear that this did not mean that they wanted more "counselling" sessions. In fact in a follow up group interview the young women were adamant that such sessions were contrary to what they were looking for. In part because "counsellors" were seen as strangers, not people with whom they had close, ongoing relationships, and in part because they were not interested in people prying into their personal lives. While for some young women being able to talk with someone about personal issues that had been troubling them was important, they wanted to be able to chose the when and the where of this disclosure.

Most young women wanted to talk with someone about how to get on with their lives. "Talking" with someone in fact meant being able to sit down and work with someone to achieve concrete objectives. "Talking with" someone was another way of saying they did not want to be "pushed" into things. In general these are independently minded young women, for whom taking some control of their lives has been important to them, and they want to continue to have significant control of what happens to

them, but they want to be able to work with someone they know and trust, and who genuinely cares about their future.

Overall the young women were concerned to change the direction of their lives: they wanted to work, they wanted further training, they wanted to be able to live independently. They nevertheless spoke realistically of the barriers facing them in the achievement of these goals. This included: having criminal records; their lack education and work experiences; their unstable family and living circumstances once released; and racism.

Despite having left school early, many of the girls were keen to explore further training and educational opportunities. They were particularly interested in more vocationally oriented courses, course that were "helping them get a start..." (Ora).

However, the young women rarely had positive comments to make about the formal education programs available to them within either of the closed institutional settings of this research. They complained of the level of the work, the teachers approaches to them and in general they found the educational programs in institutions "boring". The exception were Aboriginal young women who spoke positively about ABTAFE.

One of the main complaints girls had about closed institutions was boredom. In one of the follow up group interviews, the young women maintained that it was boredom that contributed the fights between girls. Consequently they were keen to have more activities to keep them occupied. In particular they were interested in instrumentally oriented activities and physical, in particular, sports activities. They were also keen for such activities to be mixed sex.

Aboriginal girls' comments, expectations and expressed needs in relation to juvenile justice were in general consistent with those of the other young women interviewed. However, they also noted some issues that were significant for them. In particular the extent and strength of extended family relationships was important to Aboriginal young women. Family connections and responsibilities were notable throughout the comments of these young women. Reference to "Cousins" and "Aunts" were peppered through their stories in ways that were not true for non-Aboriginal young women. In some instances this was in relation to offending behaviour. In other instances their stories indicated the ways in which their extended family had provided support for them such as providing an alternative living situation, or visiting them when they were in detention.

In was in relation to understanding these strong family ties in particular that Aboriginal girls thought that it was important that there were more Aboriginal workers in the juvenile justice system. While some Aboriginal young women indicated that they did not necessarily need an Aboriginal worker so long as the person met some of their other expectations of a good worker, a couple of these young women nevertheless named an Aboriginal worker as the "best" worker they had worked with.

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8. Recommendations

This report is founded on the assumption that it is important to provide young women with the opportunity to comment on, and participate in the development of programs and services in which they are involved. However, before considering the ways in which their comments can be incorporated into policy and program development, we need to consider the overall aims and objectives for working with young women in the juvenile justice system.

I have argued elsewhere that a key objective should be to facilitate young women being able to lead safe, secure and independent lives that provide them with a sense of personal worth, and allow them to participate in and contribute to the society in which they live. In order to achieve this we need to be prepared to think reflexively about our actions and ask ourselves "how we can honour and support girls individual talents, will and volition?" (Robinson 1994:92). We need to recognise and acknowledge girls' strengths and potential as independent actors in ways that will allow us to rethink our definitions of problematic behaviour, and reframe our responses from the coercive and punitive to the positive and developmental. In the past, juvenile justice responses to young women were based on the assumption that to protect girls we had to constrain their independence. Hopefully, in contemporary Australia , it is recognised that to the contrary, facilitating their independence may be the best way to protect girls.

While many of the girls comments in this report relate to their everyday interactions with workers, the attainment of our overall objectives requires that we also consider broader policy and program objectives. In this regard we would once again draw attention to the document "Becoming Stronger: An Action Plan for Young Women" produced by the then department of Community Services Victoria (1992). The recommended objectives in this policy are to:

> Help young women become independent in ways which recognise the inequities which have shaped their development as children and young women and have impact on their ongoing opportunities for independent adulthood.
>
> Ensure safe environments for young women while they achieve greater independence and participation in their communities.
>
> Change those conditions (policies, service distribution, administrative and professional practices) which act to exclude young women from mainstream services and supports.
>
> Provide programs promoting personal and social growth and increasing young women's skills in controlling their experiences and utilising opportunities.
>
> Ensure that programs are accessible and relevant to the experiences of young women, particularly in terms of their geographic location and the way in which they are provided. (Community Services Victoria 1992: 1)

The first Action Area in the document is titled "Supporting broad social change for young women". The important feature here is the identification of subjects of intervention other than the young women themselves. That is, the policy begins by acknowledging any strategy for facilitating young women "becoming stronger" will necessitate broader social structural changes and working with other government departments and agencies.

As a framework for enunciation of the recommendations that arise from this research, we wish to draw upon the recommendations put forward by a U.S. organisation: The National Council for Research on Women (1998: 85-87) in their report *The Girls Report: What we Know and Need to Know about Growing Up Female.*

1. "Girls are multidimensional individuals with diverse perspectives, needs and developmental contexts. People working directly with girls must be sensitive to the complex interactions of gender with other aspects of their identities, and the communities in which they live."

   To this recommendation we would add: the staff team must reflect the diversity of the girls served; staff must intentionally deal with gender and race bias within the agency and society; and staff need to assist all girls to recognise and deal with racism.

2. "Girls can benefit from programs and strategies that highlight their strengths and encourage them to explore meaningful possibilities in their futures".

   To this recommendation we would add: promote and facilitate further vocational training, academic achievement and economic self-sufficiency for girls.

   Since exercise and participation in sports have been associated with a healthier body image; decreased incidence of depression, pregnancy, and smoking in girls, and decreased chances of heart disease and cancer in later life; it is important that girls athletic programs be provided.

3. "Programs and policies that foster intergenerational collaboration can be especially effective in developing girls' leadership skills by exposing them to the benefits of mentoring relationships."

4. "Partnerships among family, schools, community programs, and cultural organizations can provide opportunities for girls, and let them know that they are valued community members... (They can) create safe, supportive environments that nurture and encourage girls to develop and pursue their goals" Juvenile justice policies and programs for girls need to work with a range of other service providers, and agencies in the community."

5. "Adults can learn a great deal about girls' experiences by listening to their perspectives, and incorporating their insights into their work. When girls' collaboration is solicited in authentic and meaningful ways, through involvement in the design and implementation of programs, girls can gain leadership skills, develop supportive intergenerational relationships and experience themselves as active participants in social change".

Each of these recommendations resonates with the findings of the present research. Our interviews with young women, the fact that Aboriginal young women are significantly overrepresented in juvenile justice, and the probability that increasing numbers of young Asian women will be part of the female juvenile justice population, all indicate that we can no longer talk and think about young women in juvenile justices as an homogenous group. The diversity of young women in the juvenile justice has to be recognised and acted upon in the development of policies and practices.

Young women in the juvenile justice system in particular, most often have few stable supports in the community. The ongoing relationships other girls may have not only with family, but also with school, sports clubs, and other community activities, are often not in place for young women in the juvenile justice system. Reaching outside of the juvenile justice arena, bringing together a range of community agencies and services, and connecting young women with them has to be a key objective of working with young women in juvenile justice.

The young women in this research in various ways expressed an interest in further vocational training, expanding the opportunities for girls to do this needs to be a significant objective for juvenile justice. Of particular concern in the interviews was that despite the fact the girls generally expressed an interest in further training, they generally had negative comments about the education services available to them in closed institutions.

The young women were also particularly interested in sports and the opportunities for physical activities. Since exercise and participation in sports have been associated with a healthier body image; decreased incidence of depression, pregnancy, and smoking in girls, and decreased chances of heart disease and cancer in later life; it is important that girls athletic programs be provided

The need expressed by young women throughout the interviews for someone to "talk" to, to work with them, to support them in their efforts to change their lives, reflects this relative lack of adult support and advocacy. In working with young women in the juvenile justice system we need to be "collaborating" with them to develop these supports and connections within their communities.

The situation of Aboriginal young women is different to that of non-Aboriginal young women on this dimension. In general Aboriginal girls indicated a deeper sense of involvement, commitments and responsibilities in relation to extended family and community. There is considerable potential in this set of relationships for working with Aboriginal girls, their families and their communities that could be further developed.

While it is important that we recognise their need for personal, supportive relationships with staff in the juvenile justice system, it is also important that we facilitate the development of such relationships in the community because our ultimate objective should be to sever their ties with juvenile justice.

In the United States in recent years, considerable success has been reported in relation to "mentor" programs (The National Council for Research on Women, 1998). It is suggested that mentors from girls' own communities "can help girls to grapple with the painful effects of sexism, racism, and classism; negotiate among the sometimes competing gendered and cultural expectations placed on them; and develop positive images of themselves and their communities." Further, Rhodes and Davis (1996) found that the most effective and enduring mentoring relationships are typically formed with adults from the girls' own communities. Their research suggests that when mentors share girls' cultural experiences and are committed to their communities, they are better able to related to the girls' struggles, and to offer feedback that is consistent with the girls' realities (The National Council for Research on Women, 1998).

Consistent with these findings, the Valentine Foundation in the United States has recommended that girls be connected with at least one ongoing adult for an ongoing support relationship. They note that mentors need to "exemplify survival and growth, as well as resistance and change. Such role models must be drawn from the girls' particular communities as well as from the wider world of women."

The fifth recommendation above has to be understood as more than an outmoded platitude. The lives of young women in the juvenile justice system have not, and are not, easy. They have a strength of spirit and resilience that needs to be recognised, respected and understood as a resource to be drawn upon in working with them to move on in their lives. Further, if the proposed benefits of programs are to have any relevance for girls, or for them to be acknowledged by girls, girls have to have a voice in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs.

With particular reference to juvenile justice, and in consideration of the comments of the young women in this research, we would also recommend the following:

6. Recognise that the development of caring, trusting relationships is important to girls. Therefore, there needs to be time and opportunity for staff to build trusting relationships with girls. Continuity in the key worker should be a key objective of juvenile justice practice in relation to girls.

In general staff find working with girls more difficult than working with boys, this observation needs to be acknowledged and addressed. It is clear from the girls' comments that they expect a strong personal commitment from those working with them. This could be experienced as very "demanding" by staff. Given that most staff have little experience with girls, staff need not only time, but further staff development so that working with girls is understood as "different" not "worse".

7. Juvenile justice staff should be provided training and education in relation to strategies and techniques for working with young women.

Program providers, probation staff and other program developers require additional information about programs and strategies that address the problems and needs of female adolescents.

We would like to end on a broader note and draw again on an observation from the National Council for Research on Women (1998) report. While it is intended as a general recommendation, we believe that it would be helpful as an overall position from which to develop programs and services for girls in juvenile justice.

> Girls need opportunities to become active, vocal and valued members of their communities. Adults can support girls' development through programs that allow girls to explore their talents, exercise their creativity, find encouragement, and take on leadership roles. Committed adults can provide safe places for girls' to study, talk, work on projects and play. (National Council for Research on Women, 1998: 16)

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