

**Gender-Specific Rehabilitation for Justice Involved Youth:  
Is this Treatment Warranted?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines how juvenile justice professionals working in Colorado view the differences between male and female youth offenders and their opinions on whether gender-specific programs are warranted given these differences. The research also attempts to determine if there is a correlation between a professional's occupation and how he or she views the programming needs of males and females. The findings reveal that the implementation of gender-specific programs remains a controversial issue amongst scholars and practitioners and that attention should also be placed on individuals who do not conform to the traditional male-female gender binaries, as well as female youth offenders.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, the number of females who enter the juvenile justice system each year has increased substantially. Between 1980 and 2010, out of all juvenile arrests, female arrest rates rose from 17% to 29%, with much of the growth occurring during the 1990s. This represents an increase in both violent (from 10% to 18%) and property (from 18% to 38%) crimes (Sickmund and Puzzanchera 2014). This increase has brought attention to females who enter the juvenile justice system and allowed the study of this population to flourish within the field of criminology. Over the years, studies have shown that there are significant differences between male and female offenders, including how a juvenile processes traumatic experiences and the reasons why one decides to participate in delinquent activities. Although scholars and those directly involved in the juvenile justice system have acknowledged these differences, most rehabilitative programs are tailored to treat male youth, ignoring some of the specific needs of females. Many have begun to question why we are treating justice involved girls the same as boys and wonder if this is in the best interests of the girls. This concern brought about the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1992, where gender-specific<sup>1</sup> programs and services for girls were developed. As noted by MacDonald and Chesney-Lind (2001), the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Amendments:

...included specific provisions requiring each state that received federal funds to include “an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency...and a plan for providing needed gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency.” (P. 176)

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<sup>1</sup> Gender-specific programs refer to female-specific, or programs specifically developed for females, as “normal” programming has always been designed for males as that was the target population for many years.

Although the government now enforced the creation and analysis of gender-specific services, what exactly these programs should consist of was not explicitly noted (Yan and Dannerbeck 2010; Gaarder and Hesselton 2012). Thus, what gender-specific programs looked like and entailed has varied across and between states.

Since 1992, there has been a growth in gender-specific programs, but there is still a lack of understanding and implementation surrounding this controversial issue. For example, some argue that there are not enough differences between male and female offenders to warrant specialized treatment, or that we do not know if (or the extent to which) these gender-specific programs are actually helping females. On the other hand, some argue that gender-specific programs are necessary as there are intrinsic differences between male and female offenders, which are not addressed with typical rehabilitative programming. Whether or not gender-specific programs are truly necessary and should be implemented is highly debated within the juvenile justice arena.

In this project, I am interested in (1) how the professionals who work directly with juveniles (a) see the differences between male and female juvenile offenders, and (b) view gender-specific programs, and (2) whether there is a correlation between a professional's occupation and how he or she views the programming needs of males and females. In other words, do these individuals feel that the differences between male and females warrant gender-specific programs, and does one's occupation determine his or her opinion on gender-specific programs? These are the main questions my study attempts to answer.

## A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Up until the 1990s, juvenile justice programming was designed for male youth, as they were the primary population of juvenile offenders. These programming models are known as “what works” models because the evidence suggests that these programs do work. Evidence based programming is essential because the juvenile justice system only wants to employ programming models that are shown to work time and time again in rehabilitating youth. However, this has not always been the case. In fact, into the mid 2000s, “evidence of what works best [was] rarely a factor in implementing new crime prevention programs. Political and policy considerations often [dominated]” instead (Welsh and Farrington 2006:1-2). For example, the DARE (Drug Abuse and Resistance Education) program was utilized for many years at schools, but “the accumulated evidence shows that it has [had] a trivial effect on substance use and crime” (Welsh and Farrington 2006:1). This emphasizes the importance of the movement towards evidence based programming, because scarce resources should only be invested in programs proven to work. As evidence based programming has become more mainstream, programs are now classified into one of four categories. Welsh and Farrington (2006) explain the differences between each category:

*What works.* These are programs that prevent crime in the kinds of social contexts in which they have been evaluated.

*What does not work.* These are programs that fail to prevent crime.

*What is promising.* These are programs wherein the level of certainty from available evidence is too low to support generalizable conclusions, but wherein there is some empirical basis for predicting that further research could support such conclusions.

*What is unknown.* Any program not classified in one of the three above categories is defined as having unknown effects. (P. 8)

The programs that are currently utilized in most states are the programs that have been tailored for male youth and proven to work, and they prevail due to the vast amount of evidence surrounding their effectiveness (Hipwell and Loeber 2006; McGlynn et al. 2012). However, once females began entering the justice system, many questioned whether or not females' needs were being met with the current programming in place. Gender-specific programming emerged as an attempt to address the unique needs of girls.

Zahn and her colleagues evaluated the evidence surrounding the effectiveness of nine gender-specific (developed solely for girls) and six gender-non-specific programs (developed for both girls and boys). In order to identify these six gender-non-specific programs, they used the Blueprints for Violence Prevention database. Interestingly, out of the 392 programs reviewed, only six of these programs conducted analysis by gender and justice involved youth, emphasizing how most programs when reviewed do not differentiate gender and "assumed that when an evaluation showed effects for the entire sample, the program was working equally well for both male and female participants" (Zahn et al. 2009:285). This fact illustrates how although girls are acknowledged in the juvenile justice system, the effectiveness of their treatment is often lumped together with males. In essence, we know what is working for male offenders, but is it equally working for the female offenders as well?

Because the research surrounding gender-specific programming is relatively limited compared to its male designed counterpart, some are hesitant to utilize these programs. As noted by Welsh and Farrington, "crime prevention should be rational and based on the best possible evidence" (2006:1). Because there is a lack of evidence



surrounding the effectiveness of gender-specific programming, and many assume that what works programs are going to be equally effective in treating boys and girls, some believe gender-specific programs are not worth the resources. After all, gender-specific programs would fall under the “what is promising” category.

Throughout this section, I will first identify the significant differences between male and female youth offenders that are found in the literature, which supports the idea that girls’ needs are substantial enough to require specialized treatment programs. Second, I will address the key distinctions in programming between the gender-specific and what works model.

### ***Trauma and Victimization***

Both male and females in the juvenile justice system experience similar types of traumatic experiences in childhood, with a strong correlation between traumatic events and juvenile delinquency (Dixon et al. 2004; Martin et al. 2008). To elaborate, many justice involved youth come from “broken homes,” where they are raised by a single parent who often works multiple jobs to support the family. Thus, parental involvement in a youth’s life is negatively impacted. However, females are seen to process this trauma in a different way than their male counterpart. The “feminist pathways theory argues that childhood events, particularly traumas, are precursors to risk factors for (usually) girls’ and women’s offending behavior” (Foley 2008:263). Essentially, there is a causal relationship between trauma experienced, offending behavior, and entering the juvenile justice system for females. Belknap and Holsinger note how “[girls in their study] explained an understanding of the sequencing or causal nature of the trauma-to-offending

link” (2006:58). Generally speaking, females’ trauma is seen to be more impactful, more enduring, and more often leading to risk factors associated with delinquent behaviors and activities (Howell 2003; Foley 2008; Yan and Dannerbeck 2010), compared to males’ trauma. In other words, while both male and female youth are experiencing the same types of trauma, females’ traumas more often directly link to their pathway to delinquency. The trauma that male youth experience is less likely to be the sole reason they end up in the juvenile justice system.

Furthermore, female youth are more likely to be victimized through verbal, physical, and sexual abuse than male youth (Belknap and Holsinger 2006). Similar to trauma, numerous studies have identified that the victimization of females in their childhood is closely tied with the pathway leading them to the juvenile justice system (Belknap and Holsinger 1998; Chesney-Lind 1998; Bloom and Covington 2001; Welch et al. 2009). In 2000, Katz conducted a study looking at the victimization experiences of justice-involved girls and women using Waves 1 and 7 of the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. She concluded that “the strongest predictor of the delinquency of minority females was having been beaten by a parent,  $p \leq .000$ ,” and “the girls who were sexually abused were also significantly more likely to be involved in general delinquency,  $p \leq .011$ ” (Katz 2000:646). This emphasizes how victimization for female youth plays an incredibly important role in their decision to participate in delinquent behavior, and in turn, enter the juvenile justice system. This is not to say that male youth in the juvenile justice system have not been victimized. Still, it is important to highlight the increased rate and significance of risk factors that lead to delinquency that

victimization has on female youth. To further emphasize, when Belknap and Holsinger asked youth offenders “whether they viewed the abuses they experienced as leading to their trouble with offending, more than half of the girls and two fifths of the boys believed their victimizations had influenced their subsequent offending” (2006:58). Female youth are more likely than male youth to identify the link between their past victimization and pathway to offending.

### ***Relationships***

Relationships and one’s connection with another is significantly important for females in the juvenile justice system. As Foley notes, “while relationships are important for boys as well, the focus on connection is particularly applicable for females, who are socialized to be more concerned with relating to others” (2008:263). The gender socialization that occurs from when a girl is born highlights the importance of focusing on relationships with others. While a main concern for girls is establishing and maintaining close relationships; conversely, boys tend to focus on external achievements (e.g., material success) more than girls (Belknap and Holsinger 2006). Therefore, these relationships that go awry negatively impact girls more than boys. An unhealthy relationship with one’s family and/or boyfriend is a strong predictor of whether or not a female will enter the justice system (Garcia and Lane 2013). Closely tied to trauma and victimization, these unhealthy relationships with others for juvenile justice involved females are critical to their pathway to delinquency and the system.

For example, Belknap and Holsinger (2006) discovered how youths’ relationships with family are essential in exploring delinquency risks. After surveying 281 incarcerated

boys and 163 incarcerated girls, “more than 10% of the sample reported that at least one of their parents had died, about two thirds reported that at least one parent had been incarcerated, and about 7% reported a parent institutionalized in a mental hospital” (Belknap and Holsinger 2006:58). However, when looking at these variables there were no distinct gender differences. What was observed is that girls (56%) were more likely to report desertion or abandonment by a parent compared to boys (45%). Belknap and Holsinger (2006) elaborate writing:

In some ways this may be more troubling to a child than a parent who dies or is incarcerated or institutionalized in a mental hospital, because the deserting parent is choosing to not be with her or his child. It also suggests that parenting daughters is viewed as less important, less of a responsibility, than parenting sons. (P. 58)

This abandonment sends a negative message to female youth, reinforcing the notion that negative relationships play a strong role in girls’ pathways to delinquency.

Moreover, Roe-Sepowitz’s (2009) study further illustrates the differences between the two populations. After examining a sample of 136 males and females charged with attempted homicide or homicide, she found that “female juveniles more often killed friends or acquaintances [and] killed a parent at a higher rate than male juveniles” (Roe-Sepowitz 2009:612). When relationships are particularly negative or unhealthy, girls are more likely to kill that person than boys. On the other hand, boys are more likely to kill a random person with whom they have no personal ties. Relationships play a significant role for female youth offenders.

### ***Behavior***

Male and female youth offenders are seen to execute different behaviors. While males in the juvenile justice system are seen to externalize their behavior, females internalize their behavior. For example, females are more likely to be depressed, while males are more likely to act out in aggressive manners (Postlethwait et al. 2010). Studies by Rosenfield and colleagues and McGee and colleagues help further explain the differences in behavior of justice involved boys and girls.

To start with, Rosenfield et al. (2005) examined 1,380 adolescents from New Jersey in three age groups. Between 1979 and 1981, respondents were tested at the ages of 12, 15, and 18. Three years later they were tested again between 1982 and 1984. Rosenfield and her colleagues were particularly interested in self-salience and its relationship to internalizing and externalizing problems. Self-salience refers to “the relative importance of the self versus the collective in social relations” (Rosenfield et al. 2005:323). Their findings are critical in understanding the differing behavior of girls and boys involved in the system. Girls were found to be “significantly higher than boys in depressive symptoms and phobias,” which are categorized under internalizing problems (Rosenfield et al. 2005:332). This supports the “inwardness” of girls’ behavior as compared to boys’. Likewise, when summarizing, Rosenfield et al. (2005) write:

As part of gender socialization, adolescent boys more often receive messages and construct schemas that elevate the self over others. Girls more often receive messages and develop schemas that put others first. These schemas help explain gender differences in mental health problems. Males and females differ in internalizing and externalizing problems in part because they tend toward opposite ends of self-salience. By pushing males to value the self over others and females to value others above the self, our dominant gender system generates an excess of internalizing and externalizing problems patterned by gender. (P. 334)

Put simply, Rosenfield et al. believe that the gender socialization that occurs within our society perpetuates the internalization and externalization of problems by gender.

Because boys are taught to put themselves first, they are closely associated with externalizing their problems. On the other hand, because girls are socialized to put others first before themselves, females are linked to internalizing their problems. Thus, female youth offenders' behavior is seen to be internalized, while male youth offenders' behavior is seen to be externalized.

Furthermore, McGee et al. (2005) analyzed 202 responses to self-administered questionnaires which were completed by Latino youth, aged 12 to 18, in the state of Virginia. Results from their study further touch on the "inwardness" of girls and the "outwardness" of boys. McGee et al. (2005) note:

Findings from tests of mean differences suggest female adolescents display higher levels of indirect victimization (i.e., witnessing violence) and internal symptoms (i.e., anxiety and depression) compared to male adolescents, who are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of direct victimization (i.e., actual attacks) and external symptoms (i.e., delinquent behavior). (P. 48)

Again, much like Rosenfield et al.'s study, McGee et al. illustrate how girls are more likely to draw themselves inward and internalize their behavior, while boys will act out and externalize their behavior.

In addition, another point that is important to note with regard to youth offenders' behavior is what fuels it. Research has shown that females' delinquent behavior is motivated by emotion, while males' behavior is driven by instrumental needs (Campbell 1993). This fact displays another facet of behavior in which girls and boys differ greatly.

Overall, female and male behavior differs with respect to how it is executed and the motivation surrounding it.

### *Pathways to Offending*

Females follow a unique pathway to offending compared to males. In 1992, after reviewing U.S. court presentation investigation reports, Kathleen Daly discovered five distinctive female pathways to offending. Bloom and Covington (1998) nicely summarize these pathways:

(1) The *street woman*, who was severely abused as a child, lives on the street, and generally ends up in court because she has been supporting her drug habit through selling drugs, prostitution, and stealing; (2) the *harmed-and-harming woman*, who was also abused as a child, but who responded with anger and “acting out,” and who may have become violent through the use of alcohol and/or other drugs; (3) the *battered woman*, who usually reaches court when she has harmed or killed a violent man with whom she is in or has just ended a relationship... (4) the *drug-connected-woman*, who uses or sells drugs as a result of her relationships with others... and (5) *Other women*, who commit economically motivated crimes, either out of greed or poverty. (P. 4)

These pathways directly relate to the differences between male and female offenders. The street and harmed-and-harming woman pathways suggest trauma and victimization has led to their offending. Similarly, the battered and drug-connected woman pathways insinuate negative relationships lead to their offending. These uniquely female pathways to offending further emphasize how the differences between male and female youth offenders play a crucial role in what leads girls to enter the juvenile justice system. Boys simply do not follow the same pathways to offending as girls.

Due to the significant differences between male and female youth offenders in terms of trauma and victimization, relationships, behavior, and pathways to offending,

the gender-specific programs that have been implemented have been designed to target these key differences as a way to help rehabilitate girls. As discussed in this next section, gender-specific programs differ vastly compared to what works programs.

### ***“Gender-Specific” Programming versus “What Works” Programming***

Gender-specific programming and what works programming are fundamentally different in design, intents, and goals. Gender-specific programs are based upon the feminist perspective, arguing that there is a “unique experience of being a girl in the United States and asserts that girls need qualitatively different types of programming and services to adequately address their delinquent behavior” (Hubbard and Matthews 2008:226). Conversely, what works programming is built upon “quantitative reviews of studies on correctional programs and has identified certain principles of effective intervention that are associated with a reduction in recidivism...these researchers assert that these core evidence-based principles are applicable to males and females alike” (Hubbard and Matthews 2008:226).

In terms of analysis, gender-specific programming supports macro-level thinking, while what works programming takes a micro-level approach. For example, girls’ delinquency is attributed to “societal issues such as sexism, racism, and classism that triply marginalize girls and create an environment where they are apt to get involved in destructive behaviors” (Hubbard and Matthews 2008:232). This is taking a macro-level approach where society at large affects girls’ delinquency. On the other hand, boys’ delinquency is ascribed to “literature drawn heavily on social learning, social bond, and general strain theories...their chosen theoretical framework focuses on individual-level



factors such as antisocial attitudes and antisocial peers as the root of criminal behavior” (Hubbard and Matthews 2008:232). What works programming takes a micro-level approach contingent on the individual. Thus, the goals for gender-specific and what works programs differ tremendously. Gender-specific programming is theoretically based on societal and sexual abuse, and the main goal is empowerment; however, what works programming’s foundation is psychosocial and aims to reduce recidivism rates (Hubbard and Matthews 2008). Ultimately, the program goals for each model are drastically different. The important question is whether or not girls’ needs are met with the main goal of trying to reduce recidivism rates.

Moreover, there are different criminogenic needs and therapeutic approaches for each programming model. Criminogenic needs can be defined as “a subset of an offender’s risk level. They are the dynamic attributes of an offender that, when changed, are associated with changes in the probability of recidivism” (Andrews and Bonta 1994:176). In other words, criminogenic needs are the risk factors linked to an individual’s overall risk of reoffending. Conversely, therapeutic approaches refer to what type of therapy techniques should be implemented to help rehabilitate youth offenders.

As noted by Hubbard and Matthews (2008:233):

|                      | Gender-Specific   | What Works  |
|----------------------|---|---|
| “Criminogenic” needs | Programs should target all needs, regardless of the strength of their association with delinquency. Girls have different needs than boys. | Programs should prioritize criminogenic needs (dynamic risk factors) as targets for intervention. Although there are differences in the general needs of boys and girls, the criminogenic needs are similar for boys and girls. |

|                      |  |   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Therapeutic approach | Relational and empowerment models.<br>Strength based.<br>Group therapy—process oriented. | Cognitive-behavioral models.<br>Problem-focused.<br>Group therapy—structured, psychoeducational groups. |
|----------------------|--|---|

From Hubbard and Matthews' research, it is apparent that gender-specific programming and what works programming are inherently different in design and overall function. While what works programming focuses on how to simply fix the problem, gender-specific programming attempts to identify the root of the problem in order to solve it. This relates back to the macro-level versus micro-level approaches, depicting how gender-specific programming is identifying widespread struggles females face, while what works programming is more narrowly focused.

Additionally, Bloom et al. (2002) conducted a study that looked at the services provided to female youth in the state of California. Through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, they came to the conclusion that the programs offered to female youth offenders were inadequate. It is important to note that the female offenders themselves, as well as the program and agency staff came to this conclusion. "Of the 62 programs represented in the surveys, the most common program type was a delinquency prevention program, followed by group treatment homes and counseling centers [with] the majority of programs (77%) [being] coed" (Bloom et al. 2002:534). Because a majority of these programs were coed, it is safe to say that the what works model was employed. Staff elaborated by saying, "the system is designed for boys, and girls are only an afterthought," and that they believed "girls and young women are treated differently than are boys in the juvenile justice system and therefore are lagging way behind males in

terms of programs” (Bloom et al. 2002:535). This displays how the what works programming model does not sufficiently meet the needs of female youth offenders as these females do not fit the mold.

All in all, previously conducted research indicates more attention needs to be placed on the idea of evidence based, gender-specific programs for female youth offenders. Girls differ from boys in terms of how they process trauma and victimization, the importance of relationships, the type of behavior they present, and their pathway to offending. Because of these key differences between the genders, gender-specific programming tailored for females and what works programming intended for males differ on various facets of design. Gender-specific programming models identify some of these distinct differences between the genders and develop programming to address the unique needs of females. Thus, these gender-specific programs are seen to be more effective in rehabilitating girls than what works models. Moreover, the literature provides a foundational basis for my research questions: (1) are the juvenile justice professionals going to (a) acknowledge the same differences between male and female youth offenders that have been identified in the extant literature, and (b) suggest that these differences warrant gender-specific rehabilitative services, and (2) do professionals in certain occupations determine gender-specific services are necessary more than other occupations? Gender-specific services are contingent on the basis that there are differences between male and female youth offenders.

## METHODS

My research was conducted via in-depth interviews with 10 juvenile justice professionals in the state of Colorado. I chose the sample from Colorado for several reasons. First, in-person interviews were feasible. I am currently located in Colorado and having a sample from Colorado allowed me to easily conduct in-person interviews. Second, and more importantly, by limiting my sample to participants in Colorado, my findings can be compared to other states. Much like Hodge et al.'s study (2015), which analyzed in-depth interviews with a county's juvenile court staff to assess the status of gender-specific programs, my study is similar except on a larger scale. Ideally in the future, I would want to replicate my study across various states and compare data to see how the nation as a whole is viewing gender-specific rehabilitative services for girls. To be considered for this study, one had to have worked directly with juvenile justice involved youth, either currently or in the past. My goal was to interview a variety of professionals in this field. It was important to interview an array of professions because I wanted to determine if there is a correlation between a professional's occupation and how he or she views the programming needs of males and females. In other words, are some occupations more inclined to believe there are enough differences between males and females that warrant the use of gender-specific programming than other occupations? All interviews were conducted either by phone or in person between November 2016 and December 2016.

Recruitment began immediately after I found out that my study was exempt from IRB approval. My project was considered exempt (see Appendix A) under category 2:

“public behavior or anonymous questionnaires.” Much like “interviewing business managers about a management style or business growth,” (which is listed as an exempt example under category 2 on Princeton University’s IRB website) the participants in my study merely discussed various observable aspects of their jobs and gave their opinions on gender-specific programming. I had worked with the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. last summer and had a contact who worked with the Department of Homeland Security (based in Colorado) through my former supervisor. This individual provided me with two contacts who worked in the juvenile justice arena, to whom I later sent my recruitment email to (see Appendix B). The rest of my recruitment was done via snowball sampling, as it is difficult to get directly in touch with most of these individuals.

My sample consisted of 10 individuals, 1 male and 9 females. Occupations included licensed clinical social worker (2), probation officer (2), attorney (2), former client manager with the Colorado Division of Youth Corrections (2), and director for youth programs<sup>2</sup> (2). Interviews lasted between 35-60 minutes with a semi-open structure. After the participant signed a consent form (see Appendix C), I divided the interview into four distinct sections. First, I asked questions related to how juveniles enter the juvenile justice system. In the second stage, I asked questions pertaining to juveniles’ experiences while in the juvenile justice system. In the third stage, I asked questions exclusively related to gender-specific programs. Finally, I asked what recommendations the interviewee had for the juvenile justice system in Colorado. This structure allowed me to focus on potential differences between girls and boys before they enter the system,

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<sup>2</sup> Denver Public Safety Youth Programs and the Betty K. Marler Center

which plays a big role in whether or not gender-specific programs are thought to be necessary. I used an interview schedule (see Appendix D) to facilitate the interview, although participants were encouraged to speak freely, and I would ask follow up questions related to the direction they took. I recorded all interviews onto a secure device. I later transcribed and coded the data into the most prominent themes, paying special attention to the key differences between male and female youth offenders and whether gender-specific programs are merited. Throughout my thesis, I will address participants by their gender and profession (e.g., male probation officer) in order to maintain confidentiality and protect their identities.

Limitations arise from the small sample size. Because of time restrictions and how difficult it was to get in contact with some of these professionals, the sample size is limited in number. A former client manager with the NYC provided clarification to why it was difficult to get possible participants currently working for the NYC to respond to me:

I think at this particular time people are really trying to avoid as much fallout as they can. There has been so much upheaval in the administration...there's some [stuff] falling out of the sky over there. I don't know. I think everybody's afraid it's going to land on them.

Professionals who work for the NYC would be my ideal participants as these individuals oversee many of the residential treatment programs and would have been able to provide the best insight to these types of programs. However, despite not being able to interview these types of professionals, I still believe my study is significant and provides useful information.

Another limitation is the fact that Boulder, Colorado is considered to be relatively progressive and has a more liberal perspective about rehabilitation and harm reduction compared to other counties in the state. Although, I do not believe that Boulder's progressiveness skewed my data too much because only 5 of my interviewees were based in Boulder. Still, it is important to note that attitudes surrounding these types of programming in other counties are not necessarily identical to Boulder.

## FINDINGS

After carefully analyzing my interviews with 10 juvenile justice professionals, three primary themes emerged in my data: (1) the genders are different, (2) the need for gender-specific rehabilitative programs, and (3) the need to move away from gender-specific rehabilitative programs.

### *The Genders Are Different*

All of the participants to some degree acknowledged the differences between male and female juvenile offenders. Four sub-themes arose while asking questions pertaining to how juveniles enter the justice system: the significant behavioral differences, the effect of trauma on females, the importance of relationships for girls, and how male and female offenders are simply different.

### *The significant behavioral differences*

To begin with, three participants emphasized the significant behavioral differences between male and female juvenile offenders. For example, a female LCSW elaborated on how these behavioral differences are apparent in the earliest years of life:

I remember an old research study that was done with two-year-olds where they separated the mom and the kid. They would be together and then they'd put the mom on one side of the wall and the kid on the other side of the wall. The girls would inevitably say, "Mommy, where are you? Come back?" The boys would bang on the wall and kick on the wall and yell and scream to try and get to their parent. That for me is an example of even from a two-year-old, difference gender-wise. The girls are more likely to ask for help or talk about their feelings or say they're scared or cry. The boys are more likely to do something violent or aggressive or upsetting act out.



For this female LCSW, the research study she described exemplifies key behavioral differences between male and females. When confronted with a frustrating situation, females are more vocal about their feelings, while males are more likely to act out aggressively. This same LCSW also describes how biology could also be affecting girls' behavior. She explained, "[Girls] have hormones, and they have cycles, and they have other things going on with them that might be adding to the way they present themselves if they're really upset about an issue." This quote presents the argument that the innate biological differences between males and females play a role in the behavioral differences between the two.

Similarly, a female client manager with the DYC spoke about the "outward" behavior of males and the "inward" behavior of females:

[Boys] tend to be more outward with their expressions of anger and frustration in whatever it is. Boys are more outwards. Girls are more inward. Girls' pathways to offending are different than boys... The trauma itself may not be different but the way they respond to it certainly is. You can have a boy that saw somebody get killed, and then have a girl that saw somebody get killed, and their responses to that are entirely different. What I might see a boy doing is acting out in anger and getting diagnosed with conduct disorder because they're antisocial. They trust no one. They're not going to put up with anybody's anything. So they pick a fight to keep the walls up. Whereas with a girl, they may pull inward and cut on themselves, or be very depressed or withdrawn.

She illustrates how boys externalize and girls internalize their behaviors. How youth respond to the same type of trauma is going to differ depending upon their gender.

### *The effect of trauma on females*

In addition, three participants noted how trauma has a greater effect on female offenders than male offenders. A female probation officer stated, "I do believe that

females have a higher history of trauma, and I also think that trauma is viewed in a different way by females and by males.” Elaborating even further, a female client manager with the DYC said:

Girls usually are not the initiators of their pathway into offending. They have a lot more significant trauma in their background, usually sexual trauma, abuse trauma of various types. They often run away to get away from the trauma and find themselves running from trauma straight into a different trauma. They tend to seek shelter in places where only criminal people would be... [girls need help] addressing previous trauma so that they don't repeatedly put themselves into traumatic situations. That's what happens when they don't understand the connection between being locked up and the trauma that they had when they were six, seven, or eight. They don't see that connection, so if we don't teach them how to make better decisions and avoid situations that could become real high risk for them, they'll just go out and repeat the same kind of thing over and over again.

This quote demonstrates the importance of trauma in a girl's pathway to offending and delinquency. Many girls struggle with identifying the connection between their pathway to delinquency and past trauma. On the other hand, boys do not have this disconnect. While boys often experience trauma similar to girls, it is not a driving reason why they enter the juvenile justice system.

#### *The importance of relationships for girls*

Moreover, five participants spoke about the importance of relationships for females. A female director for youth programs emphasized how relationships are essential if an incarcerated girl needs something:

[Boys] don't require as much of a relationship. They get their needs met by whoever. You know, if a girl needs a toothbrush she'll kind of go, 'Oh, he's [the correctional officer] working.' And it's only a toothbrush. But she'll wait until the person that she feels most comfortable with comes.

This example illustrates how crucial relationships are for girls. For something as simple as asking for a toothbrush, a female offender will wait until a person she knows and trusts comes. Otherwise, she feels vulnerable and will not ask for a toothbrush, even if she needs one. Boys do not require this relationship and are able to ask anyone for a toothbrush. There is not the same level of vulnerability experienced for male offenders when they need to get something. A female probation officer who has worked extensively with both male and female offenders summarized how important relationships are for female offenders:

I can speak for both juveniles and adult [females], they are in the system because of relationships. They are in the system because there was a relationship that went wrong. They are in the system because they lacked a relationship...the reason why they're getting in the system and also, the reason why they will be successful in the system is reestablishing that relationship with someone.

This female probation officer explains how relationships for females are as critical in the reasons why they enter the juvenile justice system, as well as how they will successfully exit the system. Boys' pathway to offending and how they leave the juvenile justice system does not heavily rely on relationships like girls' do.

#### *Male and female offenders are simply different*

Lastly, three participants stressed how male and female offenders are simply just different. For instance, a female probation officer said, "Females are different than males...our biology's different, our hormones are different, and all this affects the way that we live in the society." She is highlighting that male and females are inherently different, which in turn, affects how individuals act, think, express themselves, and live life. On that note, a female director for youth programs expressed how acknowledging

these differences and taking them into account does not need to be seen as discriminatory:

I think our whole system needs to embrace the idea that the treatment needs to be different. That doesn't mean they're better, and I always say, "Look they're not better. They're just different, and their needs ought to be treated as such." Certain things that happen to them physically don't happen to boys.

This female director for youth programs is further emphasizing that female offenders are intrinsically different than their male counterparts and how recognizing these differences does not signify that one gender is superior to the other.

### ***The Need for Gender-Specific Rehabilitative Programs***

Each participant viewed the need for gender-specific programs on a continuum. Some strongly believed gender-specific programs were necessary while others saw the potential, but could not fully give their support. However, it is important to note that no participant believed what works programming models should be retrofitted to rehabilitate female youth offenders. In other words, although they did not fully support gender-specific programs, they did not believe what works programs were the solution. Six participants gave continued support for gender-specific programs.

The reasons participants supported gender-specific programs varied among individuals. For example, when asked whether programming is separated by sexes, a female attorney explained, "Most of the time when they've separated kids by sex, they're doing so because of what they say are safety concerns." Alternatively, a female LCSW noted, "Another reason that we don't tend to run [coed groups] is we see a lot of romantic

relationships when they're a coed group, like a lot. That becomes complicated." A female client manager with the DYC further elaborated on this concept:

Well I think it's much better to keep them separated because they get distracted as teenagers do with the opposite sex, so they don't invest in themselves and in their treatment when they're distracted by the opposite sex...hormones [are] running amok.

For some participants, separating male and female offenders is functional for the integrity of the program. Boys and girls are simply separated for safety reasons or to prevent the youth from getting distracted by the opposite sex. Gender-specific programs eliminate these concerns.

Furthermore, participants noted some of the specific needs of girls and how they could benefit from specialized treatment. To elaborate, a female attorney stated, "I do think there are some unique issues [to warrant gender-specific programs], like I think girls face unique issues in self-esteem sometimes, or in body image." On that same note, a female client manager with the DYC said:

We know a lot of females struggle with female friendship relationships so it's an opportunity to learn, you know, a similar shared experience with other females. They're going through more similar developmental milestones and challenges and if done well, maybe the [programs] could be dealt more around female specific interests and needs like parenting or sexual abuse, body image, sorts of those issues.

These are examples of issues that many young girls in particular struggle with. Therefore, programs geared towards these types of issues could be incredibly beneficial for female youth offenders. The same female client manager with the DYC also noted:

I think a lot of institutions are built on a white male presentation model of you know, girls are still putting their hands behind their back in a diamond shape and walking down the hall of a secure facility. This type of state rig about what you do in a secure facility holds true versus maybe if your just on a diversion and

you're attending a group, a girls group might be about CBT [cognitive behavioral therapy] skills and how to sort of challenge your thinking. A boys group might be the same content but the examples, and the challenges, and how it is to be in the world is going to be kind of different. I think as you get more sort of restricted in the setting you get more similar.

This participant highlights how what works programming is overwhelmingly used in secure facilities, while diversion programs are more likely to use gender-specific programming. She further emphasizes the importance of how the content might be the same between genders, but the examples, challenges and how it is to be in the world is going to differ greatly. She is implying that secure facilities should not be using the what works programming model.

The need for gender-specific programming can nicely be summarized by two quotes. First, a female probation officer stated:

Clearly, we were doing something wrong. I think that the main thing that we were doing wrong is that we're treating them the same, when they are not, so they are coming back [into the system] ... [we need to] pay specific attention to their gender roles and how different they are from males, and what they need to succeed and how we make sure they don't come back.

This quote illustrates the concept of how what works programming that is designed for male youth does not adequately address the needs of female youth. She further emphasizes that in order to prevent girls from reentering the juvenile justice system, we need to have programs that are specifically geared to the needs of females. With these gender-specific programs, girls will be more successful in their rehabilitation, as well as be less likely to enter the justice system again. Secondly, when asked, "Do you think there's a difference in the effectiveness of treatment programs between girls and boys," a female client manager with the DYC responded:

Well I do from the standpoint of we're still discovering what the best ones are for the girls. A lot of our programs are noting using gender-specific programs. If you don't have programs that are tailored to that particular gender, then you're going to have a problem... Throughout history, we developed programs for boys and then tried to retrofit those programs to fit the girls. That doesn't work because you're not getting the foundational issues. Now, we're trying to develop programs specifically for girls. We're still in a discovery phase. I'd say we're still in infancy. There are some strategies that we've come up with that work, like doing trauma-based treatment and doing DBT, dialectical behavioral therapy. Whereas with boys, it's more CBT, cognitive behavioral therapy. You have different strategies that work.

This participant is stressing that what works programs do not address the foundational issues (or differences) between boys and girls. The same techniques used on boys are not going to work on girls. She maintains that boys and girls are simply different; therefore, they need to be treated as such.

### ***The Need to Move Away from Gender-Specific Rehabilitative Programs***

The participants that did not fully support gender-specific programs fit into this final theme. These individuals believe gender-specific programs can be limiting. Two sub-themes comprise this larger theme: individual based programming, and moving away from the binaries.

#### *Individual based programming*

Firstly, three individuals firmly believed programming needs should ultimately depend on each individual youth, regardless of gender. The only male in the study that is a director for youth programs embodied this sub-theme:

It depends on the individual. You can't make a blanket statement that every female's needs to be treated differently than every male that comes through...overall what we're really looking for is just an opportunity to kind of sit down on a case-by-case basis.

Some participants see gender-specific programs to be constraining because not every single girl is going to need a specialized treatment program for female youth offenders. Instead the emphasis is shifted away from gender and placed on looking at the needs of *that* particular youth. Likewise, a female LCSW voiced her same concern:

I think it's an individual thing. I'm not even sure whether I would give it a male/female thing because every individual I see, usually there's a different reason why they're participating in delinquent behaviors. The reasons are pretty similar [between genders.] This is a hard question for me to answer. I really think it's based on the individual versus the gender.

This participant voices how programming decisions should be based upon the individual, and not the gender, due to the fact that not every female is going to participate in delinquent behaviors for the same reasons. On the other hand, she argues that the reasons why juveniles participate in delinquent behaviors are usually the same (e.g., family component or trauma) and thus, gender-specific treatment would not be warranted. On the same note, a female attorney explained ideally what programming for youth offenders should look like:

Really, what we're looking for is an overall trauma informed care and individualized assessment in chief planning... I think sometimes programs are trying to fit a specific need of one gender or the other.

She further elaborates on how gender-specific programs are restrictive and can get too caught up on trying to fit the needs of one specific gender. Alternatively, this female attorney suggests having in-depth individualized assessments to determine what programs are best going to fit the needs of each youth offender. Instead of lumping the needs of all male and all female youth offenders, the focus should be placed on addressing the needs of each youth individually.



*The need to move away from the binaries*

Secondly, four participants expressed the sub-theme of needing to move away from gender binaries. When looking at gender-specific programs, it is usually referring to female specific programs as what works programs are based upon the needs of males. Thus, gender binaries are apparent—either a youth needs rehabilitative programs geared towards female or male youth. However, when asked whether gender-specific programs are necessary, a female client manager stated:

I think there's just a real shift away from a perception of young people that are gender binary. There is much more of a sort of fluid sense of gender and that the treatment issues are looking more similar.

She claims that strict gender binaries are not as pertinent nowadays. With the rise of individuals identifying as transgender or not adhering to the traditional gender binaries, gender-specific programs may become outdated and irrelevant. Likewise, a female attorney spoke on this same idea:

To be honest, right now we are recognizing the need for more training and inclusivity and services, supportive and therapeutic, for use in individuals who may not fit into the binary gender identities... We're definitely coming away from a more male-female response to asking real open-ended questions on our forms about gender identity pronouns, and needs surrounding that.

This female attorney is further emphasizing how important it is to acknowledge the youth offenders who do not fit into the traditional gender binaries. In this case, she is referring to transgender youth offenders and how to support their needs. A female LCSW spoke about transgender youth extensively and the need to move away from gender-specific programs and gender binaries:

Generationally speaking, we're moving towards a very different concept of gender, and one of the things when I went to one of the transgender trainings was

it doesn't make any difference whether it was trauma with a male or trauma with a female, because you can also create reparative relationships, but it's still trauma. At the base of it the issues are the same, right?

She is arguing with the shifting concept of gender, gender-specific programs are becoming less of a necessity. Opposite to what some other participants believe, this female LCSW deems male and female trauma at the core the same. Therefore, there is no need for gender-specific programs. Programs should focus less on being gender-specific and instead concentrate on helping meet the often times similar, underlying needs of justice involved youth.

In summary, all participants accepted the idea that there are differences between male and female juvenile offenders. Furthermore, all participants held the belief that what works programming cannot be retrofitted to rehabilitate female youth offenders. However, this is where participants split into two categories: those who fully supported gender-specific programs and those who did not. The individuals who showed full support expressed the idea that girls are different, and therefore, specialized treatment is warranted. On the other hand, the participants that did not fully support gender-specific programs took programming needs a step further. These participants noted the importance of individual based treatment plans, arguing that blanket statements cannot be applied to genders. In other words, an individual offender should not be assigned to a program simply because they are a male or a female.

Despite these findings, a participant's occupation did not correlate to which category they fit in. For instance, one director for youth programs insisted gender-specific programs are necessary and that there are distinct issues only girls deal with, noting how

these issues continually show up amongst the female youth offender population.

However, the other director for youth programs claimed we need to look at youth offenders on a case-by-case basis and that using gender-specific programs assumes that every boy or girl needs to be treated in a certain way based upon their gender. Similarly, one LCSW stated that gender-specific programs could be beneficial due to the significant behavioral differences between males and females. Conversely, the other LCSW argued that gender-specific programs can be troublesome, especially for individuals who do not fit into the typical gender binaries. Nevertheless, there could be parallels amongst occupations that I was unable to see due to the small sample size. To better answer this question of whether a participant's occupation correlates to his or her standpoint on gender-specific programs, a larger sample size is necessary.

## DISCUSSION

Going back to my initial research questions, I wanted to know (1) how professionals who work directly with juveniles (a) see the differences between male and female juvenile offenders, and (b) view gender-specific programs, and (2) whether there is a correlation between a professional's occupation and how he or she views the programming needs of boys and girls. To begin with, all of the participants recognized differences between male and female youth offenders. The four sub-themes of the significant behavioral differences, the profound effect of trauma on females, the importance of relationships for girls, and how male and female offenders are just simply different are all consistent with prior research in this field. Additionally, the fact that every participant accepted the notion that what works programs cannot simply be retrofitted to rehabilitate female juvenile offenders maintains the growing movement towards gender-specific programming. However, some of the participants still generally rejected the need for gender-specific programs, which also fits with previously conducted research.

The findings from this study are largely consistent with the existing literature, but also begin to help fill the noticeable gap. Where I believe some of the gaps in the literature can be filled through this study is with one of the emerging sub-themes: the need to move away from gender binaries. For the remainder of this section, I will examine how these findings relate to, but also add to, the existing literature surrounding gender-specific rehabilitative programming.

To begin with, like Katz's (2000) study that shows the strongest predictor of delinquency for females was having been beaten by a parent followed by sexual abuse, my study further emphasizes how girls are not the initiators of their pathway into offending. A female client manager with the DYC said, "Girls usually are not the initiators of their pathway into offending. They have a lot more significant trauma in their background, usually sexual trauma, abuse trauma of various types." In other words, girls' delinquent behavior is directly in response to some sort of trauma in their lives. This is further emphasized by Daly's female pathways to offending.

In addition, Garcia and Lane's (2013:546) study explain, "the notion that boyfriends play a role in leading girls 'astray' was a common theme in all four focus groups." This is related to what a female probation officer from my study said. She expressed, "[Girls] are in the system because there was a relationship that went wrong." Essentially, relationships are a key feature in a girl's pathway to offending.

Furthermore, very much like previous studies conducted, my findings emphasize the "inwardness" of girls and the "outwardness" of boys. McGee et al. (2005) discuss the internal symptoms of girls and the external symptoms of boys, similarly Rosenfield et al. (2005) argue that girls internalize problems and boys externalize problems. This is comparable to what a female client manager with the DYC said about male/female behaviors, "[A boy will] pick a fight to keep the walls up. Whereas with a girl, they may pull inward and cut on themselves, or be very depressed or withdrawn." Both note the differences in behavior of girls and boys when confronted with traumatic situations.

Because of these unique needs of female youth offenders with regards to trauma and victimization, relationships, and behavior, gender-specific programs may be incredibly useful. For instance, because there is such a significance of relationships for girls, gender-specific therapeutic interventions that target the impact of these bad relationships would be beneficial. Hubbard and Matthews (2008) elaborate:

An essential element of girls' programming is the promotion of healthy connections for girls with persons both internal and external to the program. Within the program, the focus should be on developing a therapeutic or helping alliance. The therapeutic alliance has been conceptualized as the collaborative relationships that develops within a helping relationship and provides the foundation for positive psychological change... interventions also should be aimed at promoting healthy connections with persons and organizations external to the program. Programs for girls should build on the risk and protection framework and emphasize the importance of building positive connections in the domains of family, peers, school, and community. The goal is to surround girls with social support that insulates them from adverse circumstances that may lead to risky or antisocial behavior. (P. 247-248)

In essence, gender-specific programming takes the identified differences of female youth offenders and aims to address and support some of those unique issues faced by girls.

Although many of my findings are consistent with current literature, one emerging theme from my study that has not been explored is how gender-specific programs relate to individuals who do not fit into the typical gender binaries. Four of the participants expressed concerns of gender-specific programs for fear they are too limiting, especially for youth who do not identify as either male or female. To reiterate, a female attorney voiced:

We're definitely coming away from a more male-female response to asking real open-ended questions on our forms about gender identity pronouns, and needs surrounding that.

In a sense, although gender-specific programs are designed to meet the needs specific to girls, when someone does not fit into the female-male binaries, it prompts the question, what programs should these individuals be placed in? Should programs be specifically created for transgender individuals? Currently there are only a handful of trans-specific programs in place; however, evidence surrounding their effectiveness lacks considerably compared to gender-specific programs. Trans-specific programs are also not used nationwide (Development Services Group, Inc. 2014). A female client manager with the DYC touched on this issue:

Well that is interesting because you know as we go forward in this field, we're going to see a lot more of an issue with transgendered issues and all that stuff. That presents a conundrum. So that's where people are coming from when they say, "We just need to treat them as individuals." True enough, but you know not everyone is going to be transgendered...you know probably fewer than 10%.

She is arguing that yes, some individuals do not fit into gender binaries. However, a vast majority of youth offenders do indeed fit into the binaries, and thus, eliminating gender-specific programs is doing a disservice to them. There are unique issues that come up for girls over and over again, and programs designed to treat these issues are essential. Instead, she suggests that trans-specific programs be created as needed.

The findings from this study highlight how much research still needs to be conducted with regard to gender-specific programs and their effectiveness. Because all of the participants expressed how what works programs cannot be simply retrofitted to rehabilitate girls suggests that what works programming is becoming outdated, or at least for females. I found that individuals either supported gender-specific programs (voicing that there are significant enough differences between males and females that warrants

specific programs for the latter) or supported individual-based programming (saying we should look at youth offenders on a case-by-case basis and see what programming needs would best suit them). Additionally, there was resistance to gender-specific programming because like a female attorney said, “I think that sometimes programs are trying to fit a specific need of one gender or the other,” elaborating how gender-specific programs can be too constraining.

Much of the literature explains how more research needs to be done surrounding the effectiveness of gender-specific programs because a big issue that comes up is the lack of evidence to support gender-specific programs. For all intents and purposes, the idea of gender-specific programming is still relatively new. Therefore, I believe it would be beneficial to conduct a similar study to this on a larger scale. I suggest that this study be replicated, with a larger sample size, and samples from various states in the United States. Although my study’s sample is only from Colorado, having samples from across the country is essential for a number of reasons. First, we would be able to compare data across states. This is important because it would provide a better picture of how gender-specific programs are being used in various parts of the country, providing a more accurate representation of gender-specific programs as a whole in the nation. For example, the views on gender-specific programs in Colorado could look very different from ones in Nebraska (a conservative state) or New York (a liberal state). Second, it would be beneficial to have a greater array of juvenile justice professionals including judges, juvenile court staff, and residential facility staff (case managers, counselors, supervisors, and youth workers). This way, we could better see what these professionals



feel is working and what is not in terms of gender-specific programming models. On that same note, with a greater range of juvenile justice professionals, we might be able to observe more of a correlation between a professional's occupation and his or her position on gender-specific programs. Third, and possibly most importantly, I believe we should ask the juveniles themselves how/if they feel their needs are being met by the various programming models. After all, these are the individuals who are most greatly affected by different types of programming models. With this information combined, we will have a better idea of what is actually working and what needs to be done to further the juvenile justice system in terms of rehabilitation. Finally, with the growing prominence of transgender rights, research surrounding trans-individuals and how their needs should be met with programming should be explored as well.

In terms of policy implication, my findings suggest that at the very least we need to stop retrofitting what works programming to female youth offenders. These programs are simply not working the same way for females as males. However, whether or not gender-specific programs should be implemented is still something that is debatable from my findings. Some participants are huge proponents to utilizing gender-specific programs, while others believe it to be too limiting. Thus, for females, evidence based programs that are designed for both males and females or gender-specific programs should be used. For males, what works programming models or programs designed for both genders should be implemented. A female attorney touches on the importance of trauma based programs: "The programs that we use and refer to are all trauma based...using trauma informed care approaches. They're designed to be able to work

with youth and families of both genders.” She is emphasizing how programs designed to work equally for both males and females should be stressed. Ultimately, in terms of policy, more evidence based research needs to be conducted on both gender-specific programs and programs designed for both male and females to determine what is going to work best to rehabilitate female youth offenders.

Moreover, I have identified two major obstacles to this study and studies surrounding these issues: funding and trans-individuals. A male director for youth programs touched on the issue of funding:

I think one of the issues that comes up sometimes is, again, we can push these evidence based programs. These are programs that have been proven to work. On one side, there’s not a lot of those around. On another side, a lot of them are very expensive programs to run. Cost also comes into play. We shouldn’t be using cost as a barrier to doing what’s right, but the reality of it is that there’s a lot of things in our budget...I think when you look at those types of factors of balancing out what can we do versus what we absolutely need, I think obviously, the more research that comes out, it’s helpful.

This participant is emphasizing how evidence based programming is still relatively new and to run these programs is expensive. In addition, he brings to question, are gender-specific programs something “we absolutely need?” He concludes by saying the more research surrounding gender-specific, evidence based programs, the better and more likely they will be implemented. Essentially, there is a lack of funding to see how effective gender-specific programs are because some individuals question whether or not these types of programs are necessary. Consequently, it is hard to obtain funding for the implementation of gender-specific programs if they are not viewed as necessary. In turn, the research surrounding gender-specific programming often gets pushed to the side and seen as secondary. Another obstacle that occurs is with regard to trans-individuals who

do not fit into typical gender binaries. Because some conservative policy makers do not support these individuals or services for them, it becomes difficult to do any research regarding what should be done to best rehabilitate these youth offenders who do not identify as male or female.

Broadly speaking, this study highlights that most justice system professionals believe that there are differences between male and female youth offenders and that gender-specific programs continue to be a controversial issue. More research needs to be conducted to see how to best rehabilitate youth offenders who are female, trans, and those who do not adhere to the typical gender binaries. With evidence based programming becoming the norm, gender-specific, trans-specific, and programs designed for both genders need to be researched more in depth to see if evidence supports their effectiveness. As Foley (2008) notes:

Further development of program curriculum and theoretical orientation will benefit the ongoing GSP [gender-specific programming] research. The programs reviewed in this study do provide information on curriculum, but the descriptions tend to be brief...it can be difficult to understand how the programs actually work, what specific things they are teaching through their lessons, and what the program experience will be like for those who participate. (P. 267-268)

Essentially, more analysis needs to be conducted on the gender-specific programs that are in place in the country currently, and we should expand this analysis to trans-specific and programs designed for both males and females. Successful rehabilitation of our nation's youth offenders is critical, as we want to prevent them from entering the system again. Therefore, it is crucial to have the best treatment options available that are supported by evidence for males, females, trans, and non-binary identifying individuals' alike.

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## Appendix A: IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board  
563 UCB  
Boulder, CO 80309  
Phone: 303.735.3702  
Fax: 303.735.5185  
FWA: 00003492

### APPROVAL

07-Oct-2016

Dear Sophie Viar,

On **07-Oct-2016** the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Type of Submission: | Initial Application   |
| Review Category:    | Exempt - Category 2   |
| Title:              | Gender Specific Rehabilitation in the Juvenile Justice System in Colorado                             |
| Investigator:       | Viar, Sophie  |
| Protocol #:         | 16-0636   |
| Funding:            | None  |
| Documents Approved: | 16-0636 Consent (7Oct16); interview schedule.docx; 16-0636 Protocol (7Oct16); recruitment email.docx; |
| Documents Reviewed: | Protocol; HRP-211: FORM - Initial Application v7;   |

The IRB approved the protocol on **07-Oct-2016**.

Click the link to find the approved documents for this protocol: [Summary Page](#) Use copies of these documents to conduct your research.

In conducting this protocol you must follow the requirements listed in the [INVESTIGATOR MANUAL \(HRP-103\)](#).

Sincerely,

Douglas Grafel

IRB Admin Review Coordinator

Institutional Review Board

## **Appendix B: Recruitment Email**

Dear Ms./Mr. [Name],

My name is Sophie Viar and I am a senior at the University of Colorado Boulder. [Insert name of person who gave contact information] with [insert name of person's employer] gave me your contact information. I am seeking to recruit juvenile justice professionals who work directly with juvenile offenders to interview for my senior honors thesis. For my thesis, I am interested in exploring the similarities and differences in treatment and rehabilitation of, and outcomes for, boys and girls in the juvenile justice system in Colorado. My goal is to identify recommendations for improvement of the system for incarcerated boys and girls based on input from a wide range of juvenile justice professionals. I am contacting you because I believe that you have valuable insight on my topic.

Logistically, I will only need approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time to interview you. I will conduct the interview either in person (I can travel to you) or via the phone, whichever you prefer. If you are agreeable to participating in what I hope will be a valuable project, please contact me at [sophie.viar@colorado.edu](mailto:sophie.viar@colorado.edu) so that I can send over a consent document for you to review and sign. If you have questions and would like additional information, we can arrange to talk by phone at your convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your time.

Best,  
Sophie Viar

## Appendix C: Consent Form



### ***Permission to Take Part in a Human Research Study***

***Title of research study:*** Gender Specific Rehabilitation in the Juvenile Justice System in Colorado

***Investigator:*** Sophie Viar

### ***Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?***

We invite you to take part in a research study because you work directly with juvenile offenders and would be considered a juvenile justice professional.

### ***What should I know about a research study?***

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

### ***Who can I talk to?***

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at (703) 965-5017 or [sophie.viar@colorado.edu](mailto:sophie.viar@colorado.edu). Alternatively, you may contact my faculty advisor, Tim Wadsworth, at (303) 735-0172 or [tim.wadsworth@colorado.edu](mailto:tim.wadsworth@colorado.edu).

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at (303) 735-3702 or [irbadmin@colorado.edu](mailto:irbadmin@colorado.edu) if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

***Why is this research being done?***

The purpose of this research study is to explore the similarities and differences in the treatment and rehabilitation of, and outcomes for, boys and girls in the juvenile justice system in Colorado. Key questions I am interested in include what differences are there in treatment of incarcerated boys and girls, what rehabilitation programs are offered to boys and girls, and to what extent are they effective? I would like to reach conclusions on the above topics that allow for the identification of recommendations on how to improve rehabilitation programs for both incarcerated boys and girls. Finally, I will also work to see what the criminal justice system in Colorado is doing in particular to address differences in treatment between girls and boys.

***How long will the research last?***

We expect that you will be in this research study for approximately 30 to 60 minutes of interview time. The research study will conclude in April 2017, once I have submitted and defended my honors thesis.

***How many people will be studied?***

We expect about 20 people will be in this research study.

***What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?***

If you agree to be a part of this research, I will contact you to set up an interview. I can travel to you to conduct the interview or we can conduct the interview via phone (whichever you prefer.) The interview will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes and the audio will be recorded. I will ask you to answer a series of questions regarding the similarities and differences in treatment of boys and girls in the juvenile justice system. I will also be asking for your personal opinions on different aspects of the juvenile justice system in Colorado.

***What happens if I do not want to be in this research?***

You can leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you.

***What happens if I say yes, but I change my mind later?***

You can leave the research at any time it will not be held against you.

***What happens to the information collected for the research?***

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the IRB and other representatives of this organization.

***What else do I need to know?***

When referenced in my thesis, you will be identified by your gender and profession. For example, I will address you as “a male probation officer.” By signing this consent form, you allow me to identify you in this manner. In addition, if you would like to be informed of the results of the research, I will provide a copy of my final thesis to you.

**Signature Block for Capable Adult**

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| _____<br>Signature of subject                     | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Printed name of subject                  |               |
| _____<br>Signature of person obtaining consent    | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Printed name of person obtaining consent |               |

## **Appendix D: Interview Schedule**

This interview will focus primarily on the differences between males and females who enter the juvenile justice system and how their experiences differ while in the system itself.

### General Introductory Questions

1. Who is your employer?
2. What is your current professional position?
3. How long have you been employed in this position?
4. What is the scope of your responsibilities?
5. Please briefly describe your current work with incarcerated young people.

### Stage 1: To get to the juvenile justice system

1. Are there differences between males and females in the reasons why juveniles participate in delinquent behavior?
2. Are there differences between males and females in the types of crimes juveniles commit?
3. Do males and females end up in the juvenile justice system for different reasons?
4. Do you believe that the gender socialization that occurs when a child is growing up plays a role in the type of delinquent behavior they go to participate in?
5. How many juveniles that you work with suffer from some type of mental health issue? If so, what types? Do these differ among males and females?
6. Do you think the experiences or trauma that these juveniles come in with is different compared to males and females?

### Stage 2: While in the juvenile justice system

1. Are the programs co-ed or are the sexes separated? What are the benefits of having the programs laid out this way? Drawbacks?
2. Do you think there is a difference in the effectiveness of treatment programs between girls and boys? Why do you think that is the case? Would you expect for there to be differences?
3. Do you find one gender to be easier to work with?
4. Do you believe the programs in place adequately address the needs for both males and females?
5. Ideally once a juvenile leaves the facility, what are some of the key things you hope they walk away with in other words, what are the programs' goals?

### Stage 3: Gender-specific programs

1. What is your experience with gender-specific programs?
2. Do you know the goals and intents of gender-specific programs? Can you elaborate on what you think they entail?
3. Do you believe that gender-specific programs are necessary? In other words, do you feel that there are great enough differences between females and males in that

- they should receive specialized treatments?
4. Do you think gender-specific training should be implemented?
  5. Generally speaking in your field, how much understanding and education is there surrounding gender-specific programs and policies?

Stage 4: Recommendations

1. What do you think needs to be done to further the juvenile justice system in Colorado?