

**Iowa Girls Justice Initiative
Meeting Notes
January 8, 2016
10:00am – 2:00 pm**



**Polk County River Place – Room 1A
2309 Euclid Ave.
Des Moines, IA**

Working Group Members

Ashley Artzer, *Juvenile Court Services*
Terri Bailey, *Achieving Maximum Potential Facilitator*
Kristin Corey, *Iowa Department of Human Rights*
LaTasha DeLoach, *Johnson County Social Services*
Kim Denning, *Juvenile Court Services*
Andrea Dickerson, *Youth & Shelter Services, Inc.*
Rita Ferneau
Ruth Frush, *Juvenile Court Services*
Nicole Hart, *Achieving Maximum Potential member*
Stephanie Hernandez, *Family Resources, Inc.*
Nathan Kirstein, *Disability Rights Iowa*
Steve Michael, *Iowa Department of Human Rights, Div. of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning*
Lori Rinehart, *Polk County Juvenile Court*
Tom Southard, *Juvenile Court Services*
Monica Stone, *Iowa Department of Human Rights*
Jennifer Tibbetts, *ITFYW Chair and Catherine McAuley Center*
Patti Wachtendorf, *Iowa Correctional Institutional for Women*
Julie Walton, *Scott County Attorney's Office*

Guests

Tamra Jurgemeyer, *Young Women's Resource Center*
Jeff Regula, *CJJP*
Pat Rogness, *Children and Families of Iowa*
Jen Sievert, *Sequel Youth Services*
Danah Zepeda, *Children and Families of Iowa*

Staff

Gracie Brandsgard, *SPPG*
Indira Karic, *SPPG*
Natalie Koerber, *SPPG*
Arlinda McKeen, *SPPG*

Welcome and Overview of the Day

Arlinda McKeen convened the meeting at 10:11 a.m. She welcomed the group and reviewed the charge with the working group and reminded the group to keep the charge in mind as they go forward with their work. The day will focus on small group discussion around system structures and changes. The small groups have been arranged to allow for a mix of expertise areas and perspectives.

Cultural Considerations in Girls Services

LaTasha DeLoach presented on information and strategies for creating culturally responsive programming for juvenile girls. Communities of color have higher rates of trauma.

Components of culturally responsive programming

- Increases and promotes resiliency factors in girls
- Demonstrates and supports positive cultural and ethnic identities.
- Sets high expectations for girls
- Provides caring and supportive adults
- Takes a holistic approach – addressing needs of the entire individual
- Offers peer support
- Offers multiple pathways to success

Definitions

- Culture: system of interrelated values that influence and condition perspectives
 - Traditional
 - Acculturated: maintaining your traditional culture while adopting aspects of another
 - Bicultural: function in and identify with two separate cultures simultaneously
 - Marginal: excluded from or not participating in a culture
 - **To understand culture is to understand a particular worldview**
- Racism: a combination of prejudice and power; the power aspect is key
- Cultural competence: acknowledging and responding to other worldviews
 - Moves beyond cultural awareness and sensitivity
 - Ex. Public health – different groups and cultures view health differently, is an example of efforts to be culturally competent

DeLoach emphasized that programs or services that are race neutral are not culturally competent. Race neutrality benefits the majority race and exacerbates the race disproportionality at the deep end of the juvenile justice system.

Programs should aim to create a space where individuals feel comfortable expressing and sharing their cultural practices. A focus on capacity building is critical to create and support culturally competent programming long-term. Programs should include cultural responsiveness at all levels, and should be built from the ground up.

What should program administrators do?

- Assess your own individual background, ethnicity, cultural values, attitudes, etc. It is important to understand where you fit in society and the prejudices or biases you may bring into the services you provide and the interactions you have with girls in your programs.
- Conduct self-assessments regularly.
- Acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge.
- Adapt to the cultures of the communities it serves to ensure your programming is reflective of the people served.
- Involve youth in the designing and implementing of programs. Make sure youth involved represent the youth that will be served by the programming.
- Link and partner with community service agencies. Program leaders should be representative of youth served as best as possible.
- Provide ongoing education and training so that staff can move from culturally aware to culturally competent.

DeLoach provided an example of a culturally responsive activity that initiated discussion of cultural differences. Her facility hosted a Japanese tea ceremony and used the activity to start discussions about respect, and how the girls interact with their elders.

Gender and sexuality

- Sexuality is included in culture; there are differences in gender norms, communication styles, religious beliefs and practices across cultures, which can present a challenge to programming.
- It's important that kids have a space to question and explore their identities. Gender roles and identification play in here.

Allow self-identification

- Recognizing bicultural and multicultural identities. Ask individuals how they prefer to identify and then respect and follow their self-identification.

McKeen added that the PowerPoint will be sent out to the working group.

What Makes the Ideal System for Girls in the Deep End?

Small Group Brainstorming – System Creation

Reporting and Discussion System Ideas

- Seamlessness
- Creating a system to facilitate sharing information, communication and interaction between departments, branches, organizations, entities
- Efforts to push cases to other systems to free up their own resources – under new system, one case worker stays with a girl for the duration of her case and can take resources from other departments
- People cherry pick the “good” cases and try to get rid of the bad ones
- Small JCO caseloads
- Girls Court – focus on moderate and high risk girls, focusing on the girls that need it the most, not trying to widen the net
- Adequate resources in rural areas – don’t have resources to do girls-only services, need additional help to overcome this
- Family engagement – courts are empowered to require families to be engaged, similar to the DHS power to do so.
- Strong aftercare/transition supports
- One family, one judge
- More availability of psychiatrists, using telemedicine
- Equipping JCOs with training on female and culturally responsive
- Shackling – consistent best practice standards, balancing public safety with mitigating retraumatization
- Maintain stable relationships with adult professionals as much as possible, even when families move
- Single gender environments
- SROs roles improved/clarified, not criminalizing school behavior
- DHS cases do not get referred to JCS for charges of low level, unless for an aggravated charge against an adult
 - Becoming criminal in care

- Kids with primarily mental health issues should be in primarily mental health care facilities
 - Sometimes people get sent to prison to receive mental health services
 - Kids shouldn't be criminalized to receive services
- Services for female sex offenders
- Expanding confidentiality of juvenile records
 - Hurting kids from the beginning
 - A lot of missing information – don't see how it got resolved, can be misleading in a negative way
 - Reverse waivers
- Raising education standards for the staff, and pay to decrease turnover
- Ongoing assessment (not IDA) while in placement, to assess progress
 - IDA gives misleading conclusions – include different measurements
- Setting high expectations for girls, address substance abuse, relationship issues, core coping skills, and other core skills
- Providing a bridge between juvenile justice and adult system for girls who are close to aging out of the juvenile system
- Therapeutic foster homes
- Finding better ways to prevent pregnancy and ensuring sufficient supports (i.e. childcare) if they do get pregnant
- Secure treatment setting for girls
- Building a fluid system, can flow in and out
 - Step up, step down
 - Built a circular, spiral system
- Do away with distinction between CINA and delinquent girls
- Safe places for non-system girls
 - House parent foster homes
- Sufficient transition supports to ensure
 - We fix the girl, but we don't fix the family
- Eliminate the worry of “are we going to be funded?” – find a secure, reliable source of funding
 - Worrying about funding takes away time and effort from creating effective programming and services
- Team approach to each girl
- Needs-based versus risk-based
 - Focusing on needs first, then risk later in the system
- Start with first entry points – addressing the issues at the very beginning

- Interplay with multiple organizations
- Support networks from birth to adulthood
- Prevention is key, early intervention, early childhood assistance
- Cutting the school-to-prison pipeline
- Spread supports around the entire state equitably
- Eliminate structural racism – need to be very conscientious
- Educators – reaching out early, student-family advocate from the local school reaching out to parents before the child enters kindergarten
 - Makes parents feel more comfortable interacting with school administrators
- Welcome center for each community, everyone has access to family resources
- Transitional services for families on the cliff (not eligible for services, now what do you do)
- Global array of services for families – comprehensive systems of care
- Systems need to be consistent and stable

What elements of the system do you not see in the small group plans?

- A state institution, state training school
 - No utilization of out-of-state institutions
- Co-ed programs
- Current system of funding
 - Decisions are made based on funding, not the needs of girls
- Detention centers

Where do you see commonalities among the groups?

- Seamlessness
- Female responsive
- Early intervention
- Holistic – address the entire individual
- Increased funding to staff
- Role of education system
- Enhanced assessment
- Transition supports, aftercare
- Building relationships with service workers
 - One family, one judge
 - Services (service providers) stick with the individual
- Smaller, specialized foster homes
- Address boundary between DHS and juvenile justice

- Increased access to mental health
- Necessity of legislative action
- Services for specialized groups of women (ex. Female sex offenders)

Review of the Gender Injustice Report Recommendations

Work group members were pointed to the Gender Injustice Report and its recommendations. This report and other resources will be used as the group continues to identify priorities and strategies for a female-responsive system for girls in the juvenile justice system.

Closing Comments

McKeen thanked the working group for their thoughtful discussion and thanked the guests for attending. The meeting ended at 2:00 pm. The next meeting will feature a presentation on qualitative data collected from JCOs.

Next Iowa Girls Justice Initiative Working Group meeting is February 5, 2016, at the Jessie Parker Building, Grant Room (lower level) 1210 East 12th St, Des Moines, IA