

Girls...Moving On Program Description

Girls...Moving On is an intervention program designed specifically for girls and young women between the ages of 12-21, who are involved with the criminal justice system. The overarching goal of this program is to assist participants to mobilize and develop personal and social resources that mediate the impact of risk for future criminal behavior. This program is open-ended and can be offered on an individual and group basis to girls who are detained or living in the community.

Program Philosophy and Guiding Principles

Girls...Moving On is best described by two philosophical and overlapping tenets. First, is a gender-responsive program based on theory and research concerned with girls and women.¹ Second, the overarching goal of the program includes the reduction of criminal behavior as well as, increasing the health and well being of girls, their families, and the community.

The development of Girls...Moving On was influenced by relational theory. Relational theory suggests that the social, emotional and behavioral problems faced by girls can often be traced to disconnections or violations within relationships, whether in their families, with personal acquaintances, or in society at large (Miller, 1986, 1990). The goal of intervention is to increase the capacity for engaging in mutually supportive, empathic and healthy relationships. By building new connections girls and young women have the necessary support to create and then realize a new vision for the future.

In addition to relational theory, this program incorporates Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive-Behavioral methods. These approaches serve to enhance motivation and provide girls with new skills and personal resources. Both methods have demonstrated efficacy in decreasing the risk for criminal justice involvement, increasing life satisfaction, and in giving girls healthy strategies to address issues of trauma related to abuse and neglect.

Consistent with all three methods of intervention, Girls...Moving On is delivered in accordance with the following guiding principles:

Principle #1: Ensure a safe and relational environment by delivering the program in a gender-responsive, respectful, and empathic style.

Principle #2: Provide a comprehensive program that addresses the complex and multiple needs of girls across personal, family, vocational and community domains.

¹ We have adopted the definition of gender responsive services provided by Maniglia (2000)... "services which intentionally allow gender identity and development to affect and guide [all aspects of] program design and service delivery."

Principle #3: Girls...Moving On is based on the underlying premise that all girls entering the program have strengths and resources that can be mobilized to solve problems and mediate the impact of risk. An emphasis is placed on identifying strengths early in the program and building on them throughout the youth's involvement.

Principle #4: The active and collaborative involvement of girls is critical to ensure desired outcomes. Intervention strategies are introduced to assist girls to identify personal goals and to set the agenda for the program. The primary tool used to document the youth's strengths and personal goals is the PORTFOLIO. Each youth uses information from the sessions to build upon their personal portfolio which reflects their vision of success in four domains- personal, family, community and vocational.

Principle #5: To build intrinsic motivation and increase self-efficacy girls need opportunities for success. This program provides them with ongoing and achievable challenges that are continually reviewed, reinforced and updated.

Principle #6: Assist girls to build social capital through connections with individuals and social networks that are reciprocal and mutually supportive. Girls are provided with information and skills to build healthy relationships, to develop new interests and to access resources and services.

Principle #7: Remain responsive to culture, learning style and emotional, social and cognitive development by ensuring the curriculum is respectful of differences and that the material is delivered through interactive, experiential and engaging activities.

Principle #8: Provide a framework for evidence-based practice and ongoing performance evaluation through the use of pre-post assessment and client-centered performance outcomes.

Program Delivery

One of the signature features of this program is that it is open-ended to permit continuous intake. The program can be shortened or extended at the discretion of the facilitator in order to accommodate variations in length of stay or supervision as well as, the unique needs of individual group members. The program is appropriate for delivery to girls and young women between the ages of 12-21. Facilitators are provided with recommendations to address variations in the cognitive, emotional and social needs of the participants.

Girls...Moving On is made up of seven distinct modules. Module 1 and 7 are provided on a 1:1 basis while Modules 2-6 are delivered in a group format. Each of the group modules consist of 5 sessions with approximately 2 hours of program content. The total number of group sessions 25 which can be delivered in 5 weeks for youth in a residential facility or spread out over 12-25 weeks for youth in the community.

The group modules are organized around a specific theme that is delivered on a stand-alone basis. This means that after completing Module 1 participants can enter the group at the beginning of whatever module is being taught. The facilitator can also

introduce modules in whatever order is desired to ensure that participants with less time in the program can complete those elements of the program that they need most.

Program Description

A snapshot of the program is presented in Figure 1 followed by a brief description of each module:

Figure 1: Program Snapshot

TOPICS	DELIVERY
Module 1: Orientation	1:1
Module 2: Listening and Being Heard	Group
Module 3: Building Healthy Relationships	Group
Module 4: Expressing Emotions	Group
Module 5: Making Connections	Group
Module 6: Making Healthy Choices	Group
Module 7: My Transitions	1:1

Module 1: Orientation [1:1 Delivery]

When designing Module 1 we were influenced by the results of focus groups conducted with incarcerated girls. A number of girls complained that they were forced to attend treatment programs without any awareness of why or what to expect. They are rarely acquainted with program expectations and do not feel they have a “voice” with respect to choosing the targets of intervention.

Facilitators echo this sentiment and consistently complain that they spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with resistant behaviors because participants are simply unprepared for the group process. Our own experiences in delivering groups, clearly supports these results. That is, a lack of understanding with respect to “why me” and “what to expect” was directly correlated with attrition and program outcome. This inspired us to adapt the approach used in Motivational Interviewing by Miller & Rollnick (2001) to ensure that the girls are given the opportunity to tell their story, explore their strengths and challenges, and to create a vision for the future.

The primary goals of this segment include:

- Provide participants with a description of the program.
- Establish a safe and relational environment
- Administer the pre-program assessment.
- Provide girls with the opportunity for self-discovery.
- Begin to identify major strengths and challenges across four domains- personal, family, community and, vocational.
- Share a summary of the assessment results with the youth to increase self-awareness and to build commitment.
- Encourage girls to develop a “collage” representing their vision of success.
- Explore and establish goals across personal, family, vocational (work/school) and community domains.
- Begin to work on a portfolio that outlines strengths and resources across the four domains.

Figure 2: Tasks and Schedule for Module 1

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Program Description	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Orientation to the Program” • Review program goals. • Discuss the terms of participation
Assessment	2-3.5 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the assessment process. • Administer and score assessment measures. • Complete the Looking Back Activity • Complete the Summary of Strengths and Challenges Worksheet
Feedback	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback • Complete the Feedback Reflection Diary • Begin to identify targets for change across each of the four dimensions- vocational, family, personal, community
Personal Goals	1 hour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a Collage: Vision of the Future • Establish personal goals for one or more of the four domains: career, family, personal, community

MODULE 2 - 6: [GROUP FORMAT]

The design of this program permits a number of unique implementation options to accommodate delivery in both institutional or community settings. For example, in institutional settings we recommend that the program be delivered in two-hour blocks over five days per week. To complete the entire program, participants would require 7 weeks. In community settings the program can be delivered two times per week over the course of 14 weeks. Each session is subdivided into three distinct parts:

- Part I: Reviewing
- Part II: Discovering
- Part III: Reflecting

PART I: REVIEWING

Reviewing is an introductory segment that was designed to provide participants with the opportunity to process new information, to enhance skill transfer, and to assist in building self-efficacy. This segment is offered at the beginning of each session and requires approximately twenty minutes to complete. Reviewing consists of three distinct activities that are rotated depending on the session (See figure 3 below). For a detailed description of this segment including TIPS for delivery refer to the Facilitator’s Manual.

Figure 3: Tasks and Schedule for Part I: Reviewing (Modules 2-6)

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Welcome	Session 1 (Optional) 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used if welcoming new participants
Review Personal Goals	Session 1 & 5 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme song • Review, reinforce and update personal goals
Reflection Diary	Session 2,3, 4 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme song/story/quotation • Review successes and address problems

Session 1

Welcome [Optional]: Girls...Moving On offers a continuous intake so it is possible that new participants will join the group at the beginning of each Module. Safety and support are a critical component of the program, therefore new members should be welcomed, introduced and provided with the opportunity to review and add to group guidelines.

Session 1 & 5

Review Personal Goals: During the Orientation Phase the girls participate in a number of activities designed to increase awareness of strengths and challenges faced across four major domains: personal, vocational, family and community. After receiving feedback and working on a collage to develop a *Vision of Success* the girls are encouraged to develop personal goals across one or more of the major domains. A review of personal goals is undertaken during Session 1 and 5 of Modules 2-6.

Session 2, 3, 4

Reflection Diary: The Reflection Diary is completed at the beginning of Sessions 2, 3, and 4. Encourage the girls to complete this Reflection Diary to record their successes, thoughts, feelings, and/or whenever they encounter a real-life problem. If they have not had the opportunity to complete one on their own distribute a copy of the Reflection Diary as they enter the group and give them a few minutes to complete it. To debrief this activity see the Facilitator Manual.

Theme Song/Story/Quotation: As the girls enter the group room, a theme song/story/quotation for the session is introduced.

PART II: DISCOVERING

Discovering is the largest segment of each session and is designed to introduce information and provide opportunities for skill acquisition. It is typically offered over 90 minutes and the material is organized around 5 major themes that are summarized under below.

Module 2: Listening and Being Heard

“My dad had this way of shutting us down- he never seemed to hear anything I was trying to say... No one listened to me...” Alicia

“My usual style is just to agree with everyone - I just don’t know how to say NO.” Tamara

In our work with girls we are consistently reminded of the need for self-expression and the power of “being heard”. This message was conveyed in numerous ways during the focus groups and also in the feedback we received from women who participated in *Moving On*.² Given the crucial role that relationships play in the lives of girls and women we feel that it is critical to devote a significant amount of time to developing social and interpersonal skills. The overarching goal of this module is to provide group members with a number of effective communication skills that will help them to initiate and maintain healthy relationships. A snap-shot of Module 2 is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Snapshot of Module 2

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	SESSION TITLES
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am Listening
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing My Wants And Needs
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying “No”
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking the Sting out of Criticism
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win-Win: the Art of Negotiating

Module 3: Building Healthy Relationships

“I would have done anything for him... I did do everything for him.... There were times when I was so jealous- I really thought about killing him and then myself... You don’t know how much I loved him... he was so ‘bad’- everyone looked up to him and I let everyone know he was mine... Oh! There were lot’s of times when some ‘little misguided freak’ would try to take him...but she never stayed around long... ” (Shadi- age 17)

In Module 3 the girls begin to map out their social network by looking at informal supports. This map is then used as a template to focus on intimate relationships and friendships. One of the most powerful predictors of criminal justice involvement for girls is involvement in unhealthy romantic relationships and friendships. Anecdotal accounts from girls suggest that in order to maintain a relationship some girls will over-ride their own moral judgments and participate in the commission of a crime despite strong beliefs that criminal behavior is “wrong”. When charged with violent crimes, girls are more likely to know the victim than boys. Primary victims include parents, children and acquaintances that are seen as a threat to other significant relationships.

² An adult version of Moving On was developed in 1998 specifically for women in the criminal justice system. It is being delivered in various agencies across the US and Canada.

In this module the girls are asked to define a healthy relationship and to explore connections with others within various contexts... intimacy, friendship, gang involvement, etc. They are also asked to explore the impact of unhealthy relationships and social aggression. A snapshot of this module is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Snapshot of Module 3

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	SESSION TITLES
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a Healthy Relationship?
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Do I Really Want in a Relationship?
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship: What I Want and What I Bring
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty, Friendship and Conflict
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Different Perspective

Module 4: Expressing Emotions

“I try not to feel anything- it’s just easier that way...” Andrea

“I get so angry that I don’t even know what I’m doing- it feels good at the time but then I have to repair the damage...and that’s not something you can always do... I’ve lost a lot of friends... and my own parents are scared of me.” Leslie

Module 4 focuses on expressing and celebrating emotions. Throughout this segment the facilitators are encouraged to demonstrate the important role that emotions play for both survival and to enhance overall well-being. Many of the girls we spoke with learned to suppress their feelings in response to social expectations or to protect themselves from risk of harm by others. Girls also learn to “stuff” their emotions because it is just too painful, scary, or unacceptable to feel them. When they try to ignore or suppress their emotions they run the risk of health-related problems or reacting in impulsive or destructive ways when faced with conflict or stress.

In this segment the participants look closely at emotions and how to express them. A number of cognitive-behavioral strategies are introduced to assist girls to express and celebrate their emotions. A snap-shot of this module is presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Snap-shot of Module 4

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	SESSION TITLES
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring Feelings
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reacting to the Outside World
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to My Inner Messages
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging Harmful Self-Talk
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrating Emotions

Module 5: Making Connections

In this module an emphasis is placed on developing formal and informal supports in three important life contexts- family, school and community. The girls are encouraged to identify and then build supports that will assist with various family needs. For example, some of the young women entering this program are mothers who will require information on pregnancy and parenting. Participants may also request an array of family intervention services including access to social assistance or counseling to address trauma, loss, etc.

In addition to family, this module focuses on increasing awareness of vocational and educational opportunities. A number of school-related factors contribute to risk for criminal justice involvement. Poor academic performance and behavioral indicators such as truancy and early school drop-out are among the most commonly reported risk factors for girls. Lack of vocational achievement is also predictive of difficulties throughout the life span and characterizes one of the greatest obstacles for females who enter and return to the criminal justice system. To encourage an interest in school and work the session provides girls with a series of exercises designed to build confidence in accessing and using resources.

The final context that is explored in this segment is the community. Research suggests that for many girls a sense of involvement and connection in community-based activities can help to build competencies and foster the development of important social and physical skills. Girls will be challenged to explore their own communities in order to establish a sense of what, where and how they can begin to connect. A snap-shot of this Module is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Snap-shot of Module 5

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	SESSION TITLES
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Family
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Career: What I Want to Do
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Career: What I Can Do
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Community: What I Like to Do
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Community: What I Can Do

Module 6: Making Healthy Choices

The Module opens with a look at how cultural messages and the media influence self-concept and the way we feel about self, others and the world.

Girls are then given the opportunity to expand their personal resources by focusing on three areas that may lead to ongoing health and emotional problems: (1) Drug and alcohol use; (2) High-risk sexual behavior; and, (3) Distortions in body image. For a snap-shot of this module see Figure 8.

Figure 8: Snap-shot of Module 6

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	SESSION TITLES
Session 1	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging Common Myths and Stereotypes
Session 2	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to Love My Body
Session 3	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at Drug Use
Session 4	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring My Sexuality
Session 5	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's All About Me

Part III: REFLECTING

During the final portion of each session the group members are given time to reflect. They are encouraged to integrate materials and information discussed during the session and to add to one or more of the major content areas of their Portfolio: Personal, Career, Family and Community.

Module 7: Transitions [1:1 Delivery]

Module 7 is delivered on a 1:1 or a small group basis to ensure that participants are prepared to transition into the community or to deal more effectively with community supervision. During this segment the participants complete a number of tasks. See Figure 9 for a snap-shot of Module 7.

Figure 9: Snap-shot of Module 7: Transitions

TOPIC	ESTIMATED TIME	KEY POINTS
Transitions	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth is given the opportunity to provide feedback with respect to the program process and content
Post-Assessment	90 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-assessment measures are administered Results are scored, reviewed and integrated
Achievements	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress Complete the Transition Plan
Endings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a certificate of completion Prepare the youth to leave the program