Adolescent Female Advocacy Network

August 2006
AFAN

State of Utah
Juvenile Justice Services
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What's New

Over the past 10 years, the number of female offenders entering the Division of Juvenile Justice Services has increased. Working with female offenders has brought a number of new challenges to our division. Beginning with programs, such as the Salt Lake Female Observation and Assessment Center and the Cottonwood Unit at Wasatch Secure Care, theories and practices specific to females have been implemented in every-day programming. Recently, the division placed a specific focus on the female offender population and has dedicated time to provide training and program development throughout the state in an effort to better serve this population.

As a division, we have supported the efforts of the Adolescent Female Advocacy Network (AFAN) in conjunction with private providers. With the renewed interest in female programming, AFAN has grown from being a small group of people meeting regularly in Salt Lake, to a much larger organization. There are now organized AFAN meetings that provide training in Ogden and Provo on a regular basis and work is underway to organize meetings in other areas of the state.

As this organization has grown, many have wondered what AFAN is all about. The purpose and objectives of AFAN, which are listed below, were created by the founders of the group over ten years ago and continue to be our driving force.

What is the purpose of AFAN?

To develop and promote a strong network of advocates willing to address policy, resource development and treatment services related to gender-specific issues and healthy opportunities for ALL young women in our communities.

What are the objectives of AFAN?

1. To ADVOCATE for the special needs of young women.
2. To COMPILE a list of gender-specific resources for girls.
3. To EDUCATE the community on the need for gender-specific services for young women.
4. To STRENGTHEN existing gender-specific services through collaboration and training.

Individuals throughout the division have stepped up to help support AFAN throughout the state by participating in the AFAN State Task Force. Each facility and program throughout the state has an AFAN representative to advocate for the needs of female offenders. The creation of the task force has provided an opportunity to share resources between programs and learn from one another.

As we continue down the pathway of improving services to female offenders throughout the state, there will continue to be challenges to work through and overcome. However, the renewed interest and dedication of individuals to this ground-breaking work will provide for the changes as they take place.

Director's Message

We are working diligently in our search for best practice with females. Nanon Talley and others from AFAN are working with a larger group from the division in a dialog about how we best provide services. We are optimistic about the future and plan to bring our programming to the next level.

Dan Maldonado

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
Eleanor Roosevelt

Outstanding Employee

There are many excellent employees working for Juvenile Justice Services, yet at times there are employees that just tend to stand out a little bit more. One of those employees happens to be Heidi Groussman. Heidi has been with the division for about ten years now. She started at Genesis and then moved over to case management as one of the first gender specific case managers. Eventually Heidi switched over to a regular caseload. While Heidi was overseeing a gender specific caseload she dedicated a lot of her time to ensuring that the females she was serving had their as many of their needs met as possible with the limited resources available to her.

Heidi has always taken on new challenges, for example, two years ago she decided to make a huge move from case management to become the senior counselor at the Salt Lake Female Observation and Assessment Center, thus placing her self-back to shift work and weekends. Heidi's decision to make this change was un-selfish, as she wanted to make an impact in the young women who were coming into our system.

Those she has worked with and those who have come to know Heidi have admired her dedication and loyalty to Juvenile Justice Services, as well as to the clients she has served. Heidi's professionalism has always placed her above other employees due to her willingness to find other resources or options in helping females in the State of Utah.

Heidi has been creative with new ideas to enhance the Female O&A, and she has shown great initiative in performing her duties and often goes above and beyond what is expected. Her excellent work has led to her promotion as Program Coordinator in the Female O&A. She has invested a lot of time ensuring that the program is a safe haven for the females and staff she now supervises. Heidi is a team player, she is involved with committees that involved making changes and adding new services to support and help females. Heidi has been an active member of AFAN and a great advocate for girls.

Debbie Roacha

TEAMWORK

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives.

This statement is descriptive of how the Cottage B girls unit at Millcreek Youth Center functions. Surrounding your self with great people with common goals and creating a "family" environment are two philosophies that Don Noseworthy, Cottage Coordinator, works toward in his cottage. He states that he tries to find similarities with the residents and knows that anyone is one mistake away from being here.

As a supervisor, Don gives the staff under him leeway to run their shift within the parameters set by policy and procedures, and supports them in their decisions.
Cottage B also incorporates the residents in this approach. The residents know that together they can go further than they ever could apart.

The residents participate in groups focused on empowerment, assertiveness, and healthy relationships. In conjunction with the groups, staff strives to create a culture fostering these concepts. Don states, "building rapport and relationships with these girls and role modeling healthy relationships will have more of an impact than any group that is ran."

Trust is the emotional glue that holds every team together….in times of trial; it transforms a group of committed individuals into a team of individuals committed to each other.

Chanelle Toyne

What's Happening at:

Salt Lake Early Intervention

The female specific programming at Salt Lake Early Intervention offers the female youth a wide variety of opportunities including: a focus on relationships, body image, self-esteem, and a safe environment to talk about their fears, talents and other topics important to them. One component of our female programming includes involvement with the Girl Scouts of America. Through the weekly Girl Scout involvement, girls are able to explore cooking, sewing, service, stress management through yoga, self-defense, and the importance of respecting yourself and others. The talk circle and sweat lodge are other important components in our programming for the females. These activities are cultural ceremonies from the Cherokee Indian tribe and allow the females to focus on their own spirituality and healing.

The talk circle offers weekly group sessions devoted to letting the girls safely exploring who they are and their intentions in life, as well as an opportunity to discuss trials they are facing and receive support from others. The sweat lodge is a monthly activity that allows the girls to focus on their intentions and empowers them as they realize their strengths and abilities when faced with difficulties. One girl expressed the following, "I liked the sweat lodge because it helped me discover who I am inside. It also made me realize that I need help from others and that I need to control myself more." Another stated, "I learned that I can leave drugs and other harmful things behind me. I learned that I am strong and that other girls are strong too. I would love to do it again." The female specific programming at Early Intervention has been a positive experience for many of the serviced youth and will strive to continue to provide a safe environment for female offenders to learn and develop in.

Jessica Xiaz

Salt Lake Youth Services

Discovering Possibilities is an easy going program, I really liked meeting new friends, and it was a very inspirational journey through myself. I learned new coping skills and strategies to find the root of many problems in my life… I also somewhat learned to accept and embrace my differences rather than hide them. I got a chance to meet girls who I would never have talked to at school and I realized that it's what's inside of a person that really counts. I have more awareness of my bad habits and have discovered the possibility that there is no excuse for failure, there is no one you can blame and no way around reality.

Each girl in this program will discover her own truths and base them on her own life experiences, but every one of us has to discover for ourselves our true inner beauty and the potential that not a lot of people thought we had. I am who I am, but I don't have to be the same troubled girl forever… although my past is not something I can change or erase I have almost complete control of how my future goes, and I am anxious to look back ten years from now, and see how good of a job I've done.

Wendy Hardman

"I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results."
Florence Nightingale

What's Happening at:
Split Mountain Youth Center

Split Mountain Youth Center, a multi-use facility in Vernal, has been working on Gender Specific programming for several months now. Our facility Director, Bill Boyle, has been a driving force. Detention, Observation and Assessment, Shelter, Diversion, and Youth Services/Outreach have put together programming to address the Spiritual (Self-Awareness), Education, Health, Social, Recreation, and Emotional Domains as recommended by the Best Practices Guidelines and the Valentine Recommendations.

We achieved this by meeting weekly with ideas and pooling resources. Our initial facility programming committee consisted of , Teri Hall and Joslin Jensen (Detention), Celestia Gross and Amber Buist (Observation and Assessment), Tina Wolfram, Shelter, Angalee Hatch, Diversion, and Joanne Smuin, Youth Services/Outreach. Each of these women has contributed their time, efforts and creativity to get our female specific programming moving in a forward direction.

The girls we work with have made comments of appreciation for addressing their specific needs and for realizing that what works for males does not always work for females. We have had to get creative in providing a specific `girl's space' in the sections, yet the girls feel

they are in a more physical and emotionally safe `place' to open up and feel empowered about what is `real' for them without the male offenders' present.

Staff work at providing significant relationships with caring adults as role models and mentors and teach respect for self and others. At the same time, the males are getting equal time to address `male' issues away from a female component, which obviously allows the group a different dynamic in their input and the direction the discussions take. Our goal is to teach new skills built on existing strengths, striving for competence to increase positive social behaviors and to help our youth identify and create a positive support system.

We are continually becoming more aware of creating a culture where appreciation and knowledge of gender issues are integrated into our facility programming as well as working to maintain staff diversity and appropriate cultural perspectives reflective of our client population. Our ultimate goal is to relate treatment to larger societal issues that directly affect the quality of women's lives; i.e., violence against women, messages of sexuality, body image, self-esteem, self-confidence and life skills.

Joanne Smuin

BALLAD - About Life

This girl, she had such green eyes
None noticed, all they did was pass by
Hated, no matter how she tries
No one will ever know what she's worth

This girl, she was wise beyond her years
All thought she was seeking attention
She knew how it would end; all in tears
No one will ever know what she's worth

This girl, she's been through so much, yet hasn't died
Such a powerful story could have been told
Despite all her pain she has still never lied
No one will ever know what she's worth

This girl, she wondered when she would feel better
Such a beautiful laughter and smile
But then from the mail she received a letter
No one will ever know what she's worth

This girl, inside her she heard her heart
At that moment she knew that it would end
As it cracked and crumpled inside and fell apart
No one knew what she was worth.

By Hayley (18)
Wasatch Youth Center

Moving On

Liz Yourzek was successfully terminated from the Division of Juvenile Justice Services early this year. Prior to entering JJS at age 14, Liz's mother unexpectedly died, leaving Liz as a caretaker in her home for her younger brother. Throughout her time in placement, Liz was always concerned for the welfare of her brother and often had him spend time with her in her proctor home.

Due to her home situation, Liz was not able to transition back home and remained in custody until her 18th birthday. While this was difficult for her to deal with at times, she continued to work hard in each placement and never went AWOL (quite the record for one of our girls who is in custody for a lengthy period of time). Before being terminated from custody, Liz saved up enough money to move into her own apartment. Since her release, she has graduated from high school, gotten married and is expecting her first child early next year.

In talking with Liz, she said that being in placements helped her to gain empathy for others. She also said that she went from not getting into trouble for fear of being caught, to staying out of trouble to better herself. Liz said that during her time in custody she learned how to build and maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults in authority positions.

When asked what influenced her the most, she said it was the people that supported her. Other things that made a difference for her were being rewarded for doing well and having a stable home to live in. Liz expressed her appreciation for all of the staff and counselors who encouraged and supported her during the difficult times in her life.

Nanon Talley

Resources

Authors: American Bar Association
Title: Justice by Gender: The Lack of Appropriate Prevention, Diversion and Treatment Alternatives for Girls in the Justice System.
Source: American Bar Association, National Bar Association, 2001.
Abstract This is a collaborative report from the American Bar Association and the National Bar Association which looks at the issues regarding the differences between the needs of female and male offenders. Over the last two decades, there has been an increase in the number of girls involved with the juvenile justice system, yet this system seems ill prepared to handle these cases. Efforts must be made to further understand the individual needs of girls in the justice system, to develop gender-specific community based services and alternatives for girls, to develop effective intervention strategies and to reduce recidivism.

Authors: Cauffman, E., Feldman, S., Waterman, J., Steiner, H.
Title: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Among Female Juvenile Offenders
Source: Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry 37(11): 1209-1216, 1998.
Abstract While there is a growing body of evidence that psychotherapy is common among incarcerated boys, relatively little is known about the prevalence and manifestations of mental health problems among incarcerated girls. This study examines the incidence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in a sample of 96 adolescent female offenders and its relation to socio-emotional adjustment.
http://www.ncmhjj.com/resource_kit/special_adol_females.htm

Programming Ideas

Music group:
This group is usually run weekly and is a great way for the girls to express themselves in a creative. I usually pick 3 or 4 songs for the girls to listen to each week. I try to make sure the songs are relevant to issues and feelings that the girls are facing in their lives. Some songs the girls I work with have liked are; `Silent All Years by Tori Amos', `Grey Street' by Dave Matthews, and `I am a Rock' by Simon and Garfunkel'. I give each of the girls participating a sheet with the lyrics to the song on it so that they can follow along. While the song is playing, the girls are asked to journal any feelings and thoughts that the song might bring up. After all the songs have been played the girls have a group to process and talk with each other and staff about what they wrote. Allow the girls to keep lyric sheets that were important to them. This group has been a great way for the girls to talk about issues and feelings that might not be brought out in other groups. The girls have really enjoyed it. To find lyrics to songs I use the website lyricsondemand.com

Personal Strengths group:
This is a great group for girls in helping them to realize their strong qualities and to help them develop a healthy self-esteem. There are a lot of different groups you could run under this category. Here are some examples. Compile a list of strengths for the girls to view and what each strengths means, for example; Empowering Others- the ability to allow others to make decisions, choices, and is responsible for the consequences of their actions. I have a list of strengths that can be emailed out to anyone interested. Ask each girl to write at least 3 strengths that they feel they have. Talk about these strengths with the girls. Then ask each girl to review the list you compiled and write down three strengths that they would like to develop from the list and to write down some steps they can take to achieving each strength. Process with the girls and share and let them share ideas with each other. Another creative way of helping the girls realize their strengths is to let each girl decorate a poster in ways that describes them and their strengths. Give the girls options for decorating; markers, paints, pictures from magazines, etc. After the girls have created their poster, let them hang it on the outside of their door so that they can always be reminded of the positive qualities they have. Questions? Contact: Shanan Cutler, Slate Canyon Youth Center- Glacier unit.

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Central Utah YC	Ronni Grimlie	(435) 893-2366
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This is the first quarterly AFAN Newsletter. If you wish to submit anything for the next newsletter, please send it to Nanon Talley through email by November 1st. This is a great place to recognize the efforts that are being made around the state and to learn of each other's successes!