

Contemporary Issues in Juvenile Justice

Volume 4 | Issue 1

Article 4

2010

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Recommended Citation

Carson, Barbara and Greer, Kimberly (2010) "Analysis of Gender Responsiveness and Cultural Responsiveness," *Contemporary Issues in Juvenile Justice*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pvamu.edu/cojpp-contemporaryissues/vol4/iss1/4>

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Cover Page Footnote

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Analysis of Gender Responsiveness and Cultural Responsiveness

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Abstract

The theories of gender responsive programming in corrections have focused on the importance of relationships, gender roles, and structural barriers for women (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003). They also included a strong recommendation for cultural responsiveness in recognizing cultural differences among female offenders and providing culturally relevant services (Bloom et al., 2003). However, there was little theoretical or empirical guidance on how to respond when the goals of gender responsive programming conflicted with the culture of female offenders. Findings from a program evaluation of a small, gang intervention program working with Hmong American girls, suggested that in such conflicts, cultural responsiveness became secondary to the primary goal of gender responsiveness. This study documented differences in the definition of gender roles and views on the status of women held by the program and the participants' culture by utilizing content analysis of case records, semi-structured interviews with participants and stakeholders, and observation field notes. Analysis found no attempt by the program to assist the participants in understanding the cultural conflicts they were experiencing within their families or as recent immigrants. Implications of this programmatic tension were discussed and suggestions were made for future program administrators and practitioners looking for community resources that were both gender and culturally responsive.

Gender responsive programs in Corrections are relatively new although they have been advocated in the literature for several decades. A synthesis of prior literature suggests an operational definition of gender responsive programming for females as "creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of girls' and women's lives and addresses the issues of the girl and women participants" (Advisory Task Force on Female Offenders [ATFFO], 2002, p. 1). Gender responsive programs are holistic in creating physically and emotionally safe environments that address issues of girls and women in culturally relevant ways (Bloom & Covington, 1998; Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind, 1998; Morash, Bynum, & Koons, 1998; Owen & Bloom, 1998). Cultural responsiveness means "recognizing, acknowledging, and honoring differences and similarities, within the varying cultural communities that the girls and women represent in our systems, it also mean[s] that administrators and direct service staff reflect the ethnicity, race and cultures of the populations served" (ATFFO, 2002, p. 1).

Data presented here are from an empirical investigation assessing the extent a small, girl-gang intervention program was gender responsive. Findings document that many characteristics of gender respon-

siveness are present but the investigation found serious problems in the program's attempt to be culturally responsive. The present analysis focuses on this conflict between gender responsive and culturally responsive.

Most of the participants in the program under investigation are Hmong Americans. The program is located in an urban setting where there are more than 60,000 Hmong Americans whose families emigrated to the U.S. from Southeastern Asia. Most of the girls in the program were born in the U.S., but their parents were not. As will be discussed later in more detail, Hmong Americans gender roles are clearly differentiated and these ascriptions are quite different from those of White, middle class Americans. Yet, much of the content of gender responsive programming, as is the case for the program under study, is based on this latter culture.

The program was found to be gender responsive in terms of exposing delinquent girls to successful female role models, empowerment, self discovery, and promoting respect for diverse cultures. However, there were problems in that it was not holistic. It provided general information about violence against females, but did not provide resources to assist the girls in responding to the violence in their own lives. It also emphasized empowerment of females, but did not include any discussion of their troubled relationships with boyfriends and family members. Additionally, it included no assistance to the participants on issues of being from immigrant families. There was little in the program that addressed the girls' culture which was related to all of these problems in their lives. As exemplified by the following quote, at

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least one participant was experiencing significant troubles in understanding the cultural conflicts within her own life; "My parents are Hmong, they're from Laos. They don't understand how things are here in America. They don't realize that I'm an American, I'm White" (14-year-old participant, Interview I.D. 4).

As will be seen, there was little in this intervention program that addressed either the role of females in the Hmong culture or the conflicts experienced by these immigrant families living in the United States. Analyses find that this is primarily because the program does not agree with the definition of the female gender role in the culture of the participants. As a result, cultural responsiveness is dropped. There is little in the literature that provides guidance for how to resolve conflicts between gender responsiveness and cultural responsiveness. Some might suggest that the two cannot coexist, but here, it is argued that there are ways to integrate both approaches. Suggestions for guidelines that could help this particular program and others are provided in the conclusions. Also included are suggestions to help professionals who are looking for placements for their young female clients.

Gender Responsive Services in Corrections

Prior to the 1990s, there were few discussions about developing specific services for adolescent and adult female offenders. The assumption was that whatever worked for boys and men would be appropriate for girls and women. Through the efforts of many practitioners and scholars, it has been established that the needs of female offenders are different from males and, therefore, intervention programs should also be different.

One well-documented difference was that the socialization of girls and women focused on relationships (Chodorow, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Interagency Adolescent Female Subcommittee [IAFS], 1995; Miller, 1986; Miller, 1991). Research documented that, in addition to attending to relationships, gender responsive services needed to take into account socially defined gender roles and structural barriers encountered by girls and women (Chesney-Lind, 1998), and specifically provide females with opportunities to improve their economic potential (Bloom et al., 2003). The field continued to develop to include focuses on empowerment and developing healthy relationships (Bloom, 1998; Bloom & Covington, 1998; Bloom et al., 2003).

A synthesis of the literature revealed that gender responsive programming should be holistic in addressing the inter-linkages of all aspects of the female offender's life (e.g., physical, emotional, financial, and psychological) (Bloom 2003; Bloom et al., 2003; Maniglia, 2003). For instance, a program that only focused on providing counseling services and did not address economic barriers for girls and women would not be effective at improving their chances for success (Maniglia, 2003).

It has been found that the pathways of females entering the criminal justice system are different than those of males. It was also found that the factors important for females included economic marginalization, drug/alcohol abuse, oppressive/dysfunctional relationships, and physical and sexual abuse (Bloom et al., 2003; Owen, 1998; Richie, 1996). Effective interventions must address these factors. Thus, for example, as many female offenders have been victims of abuse, gender responsive programs for girls and women must occur in settings that are physically and emotionally safe for the female participants (Bloom, 2003).

Finally, as is particularly relevant to the present study, it was stated that because females' lives were affected by both their culture and their gender; girls and women of color had different experiences of their gender and different experiences in institutions (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). Therefore, gender responsive programs must also be culturally responsive and make every attempt to provide specific cultural resources available in ethnic communities (Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind & Pasko; Serious and Chronic Juvenile Offenders Report [SCJOR], 2000).

With clarification of what gender responsive programs should look like, more state departments of correction are beginning to consider such a paradigm shift, but both practitioners and scholars call for more empirical evaluation of these programs (Bloom, 1998). However, it has been noted that the lack of mature programs and the extremely small proportion of offenders who are females (making it difficult to conduct quantitative studies), suggest concrete evidence will be slow in coming (SCJOR, 2000).

Nevertheless, while there are fairly specific models for gender responsive services even if empirical evaluations are slowly being collected, the variety of cultures represented in correctional systems and the newness of this philosophy results in few, if any, conceptual frameworks on which to simultaneously build a gender and culturally responsive program. Culturally responsive programming is a necessary component in gender responsive services. Yet, as will be seen, it cannot be assumed that this goal will automatically be accomplished or that the process of balancing these two objectives will be simple.

Cultural Responsive Services in Corrections

Like gender responsiveness services, there has been a call in the criminal justice system for making programs culturally responsive (Bloom et al., 2003; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). More recently, in its more recent report, (Amicus, 2010) listed culturally competent programming as a suggested standard when evaluating gender responsive programming. Despite the advocacy for such approaches, there has been limited evaluation of the impact of such programs and there was little description and evaluation of which specific com-

ponents should be included in a correctional intervention that was labeled, culturally responsive.

Research that exists is spread throughout a variety of criminal justice contexts and little focuses on females. For example, Weller, Martin, and Lederach (2001) found that needs of Latino families in Family Dispute Courts were different from Anglo families. Ter-rell and Terrell (1984) found that African-Americans were resistant to mental health counseling dependant on the race of the counselor as a result of their views on cultural mistrust. De Leon, Kressel, and Melnick (1997) found that culturally appropriate treatment for addictions improves retention in therapeutic community programs. Similarly, Beckerman and Fontana (2001) discovered that specialized treatment programs for African-American men in Drug Court increased participant retention. Day, Davey, Wanganeen, and Howells (2006) found that failure to acknowledge the historical and political context of Aboriginal men in Australia promoted resistance to treatment.

There is limited research identifying content of effective culturally responsive programming with a few exceptions. In the study cited above, Beckerman and Fontana (2001) reported program effectiveness increased for African-American men in Drug Court when programming included attention to the role of male in the community, spiritual growth and need to master core life skills related to employability. In their study, Wooldredge, Hartman, Latessa, and Holmes (1994) found that programming for African-American boys that focused on improving self-esteem and developing a sense of community had no effect in reducing crime.

A particular interest of the present study was research that focused both on females and cultural responsiveness in correctional programming. Thao, Ari-fuku, and Nuñez (2003) evaluated the effectiveness of a program that addressed both and involves multiple ethnic groups of girls. The Reaffirming Young Sisters' Excellence (RYSE), of Alameda County, California was created in response to the rapidly growing number of girls in the justice system. The program was developed from a predominantly African-American cultural orientation and most of the staff members were African-American with some being able to speak Spanish. Programming focused on teaching life-skills and leadership training; special events were all organized from African-American perspectives. The goal was to reduce crime, but evaluators found that, overall, the recidivism rates of girls attending this program were no different from girls receiving traditional probation. However, controlling for race, it was found that African-American girls in the program fared much better than African-American girls not in the program. The program was found not to impact girls of other racial/ethnic groups. This study supports the value of culturally responsive programming and highlights the challenges when programs contain more than one cultural group.

Caggins (1993) argued that culturally responsive programming must address many dimensions of culture; including values and norms, beliefs and attitudes, types of relationships, communication and language, sense of self and space, appearance and dress, work habits and practices, as well as, food and eating habits. Others have argued that the criminal justice system has been used to ensure the oppression of many cultures within the U.S. (Chomsky, 2003; Street, 2003). Studies of crime found that the domination of White culture in the U.S. was related to criminal behavior of other cultures (e.g., Austin & Irwin, 2001; Inciardi, 1992; Street, 2003). Therefore, we would suggest adding this understanding to culturally responsive programming.

While gender responsive programming and culturally responsive programming reflect positive changes from the White dominated, male-centered historical practices, there is tension between feminism and multiculturalism at a theoretical level outside of correctional programming. In 1999, an edited text entitled, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Okin, 1999) analyzed how multiculturalism may be counter-productive for women because many cultures and religions oppressed women. She speculated that a commitment to a philosophy of group rights, to all minority groups, may sanction the continued oppression of girls and women in those cultures.

Yet, other scholars disagreed and asserted that this perspective was heavily influenced by feminism entrenched in western culture. Pollit (1999) argued the focus on feminism over culture was simply an attempt to disregard non-Western societies. She explained, "In its demand for equality for women, feminism sets itself in opposition to virtually every culture on earth" (Pollit, 1999, p. 27). Brah (2010) argued that sisterhood was not global; in that, the issues that faced women of color were extremely different than those described by White feminists. Collins (2010) argued that the definition of a Black feminist was not simply a change of color but a response to a different historical context of oppression. This debate between feminism and multiculturalism, or more specifically, gender and culturally responsive programming, is a primary dilemma for the case study under investigation where a program developed by a White feminist is directed towards Hmong American girls.

The Hmong

The program studied was designed to be gender responsive for all girls but the majority of the participants referred by their probation officers were Hmong Americans. The Hmong are an ancient Asian ethnic group who lived in China at least 5,000 years ago (Yang, 2001). After centuries of oppression, including the destruction of their written language, the Hmong moved to the mountains of Laos and, later, many became allies of the U.S. military during the Vietnam War. With the

Fall of Saigon, the political and military elite were evacuated to the U.S. comprising the first wave of Hmong immigrants (Julian, 2004). Most of the others fled to refugee camps in Thailand where they lived under desperate conditions until they were allowed to immigrate to France, Canada, and the U.S. around the year 2000 (Julian, 2004). This second wave of immigrants had suffered considerable hardships in the U.S., including lack of transferable job skills, limited education, language barriers, and cultural differences (Grigoleit, 2006). Over the past 10 years, many Hmong have been progressing through the U.S. educational system, gaining economic benefits, and becoming a part of the U.S. political systems (Yang, 2001). However, the families whose daughters participated in the program evaluated here, members of the second wave of immigration, had not yet gained these benefits.

Historically, the Hmong had strongly differentiated gender roles where much of the power was with the males. They believed in polygamous marriages, early marriage for females, and authoritarian discipline of children and women (Hang, 1997; Grigoleit, 2006; Lee, 2001). Many Hmong Americans have moved away from this characterization of gender roles (Grigoleit, 2006), but there are still those who have not. In the U.S., there are Hmong husbands who restrict the movement of their wives, making them stay in their homes and attend to their families (Hang, 1997; Yang, 2001). The family and clan is extremely important to the Hmong, more so than with ties to outsiders (Armstrong, 2000; Fadiman, 1998; Koltyk, 1998). Also, many females are victims of violence within these homes (Yang, 2001). The girls participating in the program being studied were from these types of families.

There has been some research documenting the conflicts between Hmong American teenage girls and their families. Many parents attempt to maintain traditional control over their daughters to ensure the continuation of their culture while living in a foreign land (Hang, 1997; Yang, 2001). Also, parents do not approve of the freedom and independence of teenage daughters in the dominant U.S. culture (Lee, 2001; Yang, 2001). The Hmong American daughters have stated that they are caught in the middle of trying to juggle their parents' expectations and with the culture they are exposed to through non-Hmong friends and classmates (Hang; Lee). As will be seen, the Hmong American girls in this study experienced similar dilemmas and, yet, little was done to assist them with these struggles.

Method

Sample

The program. To protect the anonymity of those studied; we will refer to the program under the pseudonym of Togetherness House (TH). TH is a small, non-

profit organization located in a mid-western, urban community. Programming at TH was designed to assist between six to 10 teenage girls on probation who were, or had been, gang members. At the time of data collection, most of the girls in the program already had successfully completed out-of-home treatment programs and were sent to TH for continued assistance and support while they were returning to live with their families. The girls were between 14 to 16 years of age.

At TH, girls were required to attend programming every week day after school. Activities lasted between 2-3 hours on weekdays, although frequently there were weekend activities where attendance was mandatory. Program activities included tutoring, group counseling, artistic expression, community volunteerism, and visiting with professional women.

TH was created and is operated by the director; a White woman with a degree in Ethnic Studies. She was the only full-time staff person. An ethnically diverse board of directors helped to guide the program. Many were employed within the criminal justice system. In addition to the director, there was a part-time tutor, a part-time book keeper, and a part-time translator (the only Hmong American affiliated with the program).

Due to the geographical area of the country where this program is located the ethnic identities of program participants were somewhat unique. During the history of the program, there were a few African-American girls, a few Latinas, and one girl originally from Africa. However, the majority of the girls were Hmong Americans. We knew little about the criminal background of these participants as our focus was assessing the extent of gender responsiveness in the program. Nonetheless, by the nature of their participation, they had been defined as gang members, had been in out-of-home treatment at least once, and, based on the stories they later shared with us, had brothers and boyfriends who either were or had been in prison.

Design and Procedure

This research was to determine if the programming at TH was gender and culturally responsive. This was not an outcome evaluation determining if the programming was effective in altering the behavior of its participants. Rather, it was a process evaluation comparing programmatic practices with established recommendations for working with female offenders.

Data collection. With the small number of participants in this program, quantitative methods would be inappropriate. In the literature it has been suggested that because most corrections programs for delinquent girls typically have small numbers, it may be inappropriate to evaluate them (SCJOR, 2000). The researchers disagreed, because all programs needed evaluation to document successful strategies, as well as, those that were problematic. The researchers suggested that intensive, qualitative case analysis, using multiple methods of data

collection, could be extremely effective in studying programs with small numbers of participants.

To conduct this comprehensive evaluation, multiple methods of data collection were used: content analysis of documents, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and observation/participation observation. Many documents were reviewed by the researchers including monthly activity plans and reports, individual case notes, grant applications, time-lines, and program brochures. No financial reports were reviewed nor were outcomes of the program as these were not part of the original focus of the evaluation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with many individuals tied to the program. This included the Program Director, program staff, program participants, board members, and probation officers who had referred participants to the program. A total of 13 formal interviews were conducted and each typically lasted about one hour.

Informal conversations with the Director and participants were supplemented by the observation/participant observation methods of data collection. The two principle researchers spent considerable time, individually and collectively, at TH and engaged in activities with program participants. The researchers attended many other activities with the group such as ceramic painting, volunteering at a Weed and Seed after school program, ethnic dinners, and a field trip to visit a woman at her place of employment. The researchers also just hung out at TH, especially during tutoring times. The researchers spent much time informally talk-ing with participants, program staff, and the Director and maintained field notes of all observations. On one occasion, program participants and the Director visited our community, touring our university campus, joining us in boating and swimming at a nearby lake, and having a cook-out and sleep-over. During the interviews, be they formal interviews or informal conversations during field observations, all girls queried appeared quite frank in expressing their opinions; thus, increasing the accuracy of these findings.

Data analysis. Formal interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Data from these transcripts were analyzed looking for common themes and patterns. Field notes were analyzed, similarly, and content analysis was performed on organization documents. All findings reported were substantiated by either multiple informants or by multiple sources of data.

Results

Gender Responsive Services

Using Bloom's (1998) evaluation model, the researchers analyzed the program's theoretical foundations, the backgrounds of stakeholders, program staff and clients, program components, the utilization of community resources, and the program's environment.

The program is housed in a safe, well-maintained condominium located near the neighborhoods where the participants lived. The girls traveled by school bus after school each day to this location. It was a pleasant, safe environment where the participants had helped to decorate.

The researchers observed many indicators that TH focused on concerns of females, both in the theoretical foundations and in actual practices. This was supported by interviews with stakeholders. As one probation officer remarked, "[There are] not a lot of other resources that provide that level of advocacy for girls." This same individual also noted that emotional support and role modeling was consistently provided via the program. A different probation officer stated:

I really wanted them to be around [Name of the Director] because I think that she has a real good idea of what the resources are -that are out there for the girls. I think she relates really well to them. I also know that she runs a really tight ship, so she holds them accountable, but she also offers these girls things that they otherwise would never have been exposed to.

Another stakeholder summarized the program as:

I think the philosophy is just to empower these girls and to expose them to positive influences whether it's with people they go and see or the field trips or the activities. So I would say, I definitely think it is specifically geared towards nurturing young girls and it is specific in that sense.

Evaluation of the curriculum, as documented in both lesson plans and field observations, found many opportunities for empowerment, self-discovery, cultural diversity, socialization, and structural success. Some of the gender appropriate interventions the researchers observed included exposure to restorative justice circles, conflict resolution, introduction to the notion of volunteerism, development of cultural competence skills, appreciation for creative expression, introduction to women professionals, and exposure to women role models. Analysis of client logs revealed a long list of female focused activities; including participating in volunteering at a wheelchair basketball tournament, helping to create a sexual harassment brochure, talking with a female mechanic about her profession, participating in discussions on alternatives to violence, and attending presentations conducted by women professionals. In many respects, TH met criteria of being gender responsive. Even the girls defined the Director as pro woman. They said she emphasized the belief that girls are great and can accomplish anything.

Cultural Responsiveness Services

This program did much to expose the participants to a wide range of cultures and cultural activities. Programming included participating in Hmong Peace Circles, attending a Nigerian play, visiting a Latino Cultural Center, and participating in discussions about racism.

One participant stated: "They [program staff] try to explore every culture and they don't make judgments on them—they handle different cultures good—they try to involve cultures in what we're doing."

Stake holders and probation officers also thought TH was culturally responsive and indicated that the cultural component is one they most highly valued. Examples of their reflections are:

I think [Name of Director] has made a concerted effort. I think she was concerned initially at least having a group of particular children from a background or heritage and wanted to expand on that. I think she's done a good job.

There were a lot of different activities. They got exposed to a variety of cultures. I like culturally specific stuff. [It is an] important ingredient for Hmong girls because they really are living in both worlds...more so than the African-American girls.

Through the programming calendars and field notes the researchers documented that the Director spent a substantial portion of the programming time teaching the girls to respect other cultures and to be proud of their own heritage. For example, she once encouraged a girl to explain to us how soccer games are important cultural gatherings for the Hmong community. Another time, the researchers were invited to a diversity dinner where each girl made a dish that was typical of her culture. However, through the course of data collection the researchers heard critiques of the program.

The Conflicts

As my mother says, I'll never get a husband if I don't know how to clean a chicken. She wants me to go to the farm with her and learn to clean chickens. I say, "Mom, if I want a chicken, I'll get one at the grocery store." She says, "Men don't like frozen chicken. You have to come with me and learn how to clean chickens." I don't go. (14-year-old participant, Interview I.D. 7).

After hearing one participant make this statement, the researchers realized there was nothing in the program that could assist this girl with her struggles of living in two cultures. To make sense out of the above quote, we consulted with a few of our male, Hmong American college students. They explained that chicken tasted the same no matter how prepared, but when a male is looking for a wife, selecting one that knew the traditional methods of food preparation was a means for the male to honor his own family. Nonetheless, there was nothing in the TH program to help the girls make sense of this or of other struggles of living in two cultures. There were other examples of this void in the programming.

The Director told us she frequently observed participants translating between their Hmong parents and their English speaking probation officer. All of the involved adults realized that the translations were inaccurate, but, apparently, there was little they could do

about it. The program made no effort to intervene in this situation.

The part-time tutor stated that he wondered why the Director took the girls to visit universities when most of them were not passing any of their junior high school courses. He questioned if the program was raising false expectations for its participants.

Several of the girls told us that their brothers, cousins, and boyfriends were in prison. They said they missed these people, but, in the program, there was no discussion about the status of these males in their lives. From the Director, the researchers learned that when the girls earned money, as part of the program, they were paid with cash, as none of the participants or their families used banks. The Director told us that often, when the boyfriends would pick up the girls from the program, she observed them giving their boyfriends all of their recently earned money. The researchers found no indication that these behaviors were discussed in the programming of TH.

One participant told us they were not allowed to talk about boys while at TH. When the Director was queried about this she laughed saying there was no such rule. However, she added that while many girls in this age bracket spent an enormous amount of time thinking and talking about boys, she wanted the girls she worked with to think about themselves and their own lives. She found it humorous that one had interpreted this as not being allowed to talk about boys while at TH.

There was no family involvement in the activities of TH. This was somewhat unusual for a program working with juvenile delinquents in general and even more divergent from gender responsive programming for females where relationships were deemed extremely important. Yet, families were not a part of the programming at TH.

As described earlier, this program was extremely successful at exposing the participants to diverse cultures and promoting self-pride in one's own culture. However, in contrast to the guidelines of a culturally responsive program, there was little involvement of the Hmong community in the TH program. There were no Hmong board members, even though the researchers had interviewed a Hmong, female probation officer who had a client in the program. This suggested there was at least one professional who could have been on the Board. One of the part-time employees was a Hmong woman, hired as a translator. The Director often complained about this person stating she took "too much time" translating things to the parents (she was paid an hourly wage). Early on in our observations of the program the researchers suspected the translator was not simply translating words but explaining the whole concept of the program to the Hmong parents. The Director never viewed nor actively utilized this translator as a cultural interpreter.

When the researchers asked the Director about the lack of involvement with the families she explained that she saw the families and their culture as sources of prob-

lems for the girls. She provided multiple examples. For instance, she stated that on one occasion she received a phone call from a girl in the middle of the night asking her to come to their home because she was in a physical fight with her sister and they were hurting each other. When the Director got there, the father, in attempt to stop their fighting, was hitting both of them with a tele-phone cord. The Director received permission to take the participant to her own home for the night. When she returned in the morning, she informed the father that what he was doing was illegal and if he did it again, she would report him to the police. She described how many others had been beaten by their parents or male siblings and how most had been raped multiple times as part of the initiation to become a Hmong gang member.

The Director stated her program was strictly for the girls. She did not want to work with the families because they were abusive of the girls. She was close to the girls in her program and was extremely protective of them. Indeed, the researchers saw many examples where the girls displayed strong trust in the Director. Nevertheless, while the Director instilled a sense of respect for diversity among the girls, as well as, concrete knowledge about other cultures, she refused to include family members in the program. This was due to their use of violence and how the culture defined the status of females as subservient. At no time did the researchers observe or learn from interviews that the Director specifically criticized anyone's family or anyone's culture. However, with her absolute focus on the girls as individuals, she did not include any programming on helping the girls with their struggles with their own families, their boy-friends, nor the related problems of living in two cultures.

There were other indicators that the Director did not like the role of women in the Hmong culture. She talked about how the fathers made all of the decisions for the families. She told us about how difficult it was for the Hmong female juvenile probation officer to work with the Hmong fathers of her clients. One father walked out of the room when the probation officer was visiting and another spat at her during a home visit. The Director talked about how poorly the younger males treated their sisters and girlfriends. While the Director was very open with us about her disapproval, little was said in front of the clients about the role of women in their culture. Instead, she provided much information about how women could strive for any profession, inferring that these options were available to her participants, as well.

Discussion

Togetherness House provides many services to its participants that are consistent with gender responsiveness. It provides a physically safe environment where issues of female empowerment, self-discovery, and success at school are promoted. Participants are exposed to a wide variety of female professionals and they are

exposed to a wide range of career options. Also, there are many activities that promote cultural awareness and celebration of diversity. However, there are several components of gender responsiveness that are missing; it does not adequately address the girls' exposure to violence, it does not attend to important relationships in the girls' lives, it does not provide any assistance for the participants who are living in immigrant families, and as such, it is not holistic. These deficiencies are the result of the program not being culturally responsive.

The Director's concerns about the girls' exposure to violence in their homes are valid. As noted in the literature described earlier, exposure to violence is extremely common in the lives of female offenders and this is especially common among younger female offenders. High rates of violence are often found among first generation of immigrant groups and besides this, within the Hmong culture there are norms about the legitimate use of violence that differ from legal definitions in the U.S. (Fadiman, 1998). The girls in this program experienced violence in their homes that needed to be stopped.

Programming at TH includes education about non-violent conflict resolution and the illegitimacy of violence in personal relationships. Nonetheless, there is much more this program could do for the girls about the violence they were experiencing. TH could link the girls to community services for counseling and guidance, it could help them prepare a plan for future crises (however, it is noteworthy that at least one girl, when faced with a beating by her father, trusted the Director enough to call her for help), and it could provide them a place to talk about the violence they experience. Yet, because the Director did not include the families in any programming and possibly she did not want to vocalize criticism of the participants' parents and family, there was no programming that responded directly to the violence in the girls' lives.

This program places little focus on the girls' relationships with others. While the Director is aware of problems the girls encounter in their relationships with boyfriends, there is no place in this program for the girls to speak about these issues or receive assistance. The girls perceive that they cannot talk about boys at TH. Also, there is little discussion about relationships within the families, be they positive or problematic because the Director does not like how the girls are treated by family members and, more specifically, she does not like the role of women in this culture. Related, there is no involvement of families in this program. All of these factors with the restricted programming on cultural responsiveness.

There was no programming that assisted the girls in understanding the role of women in their culture. The Director was critical of this role but she did not want to criticize the girls' culture. Thus, she basically ignored the culture, even though the option of ignoring their culture was not one available to the young participants in this program. If this aspect of the program were evaluated using the well-known Cultural Competence Con-

tinuum developed by the Director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association (Cross, 1989) it would be categorized as cultural incapacity. On a scale from Cultural Destruction (being intentionally destructive of other cultures) to Advanced Cultural Competence (holds culture in high esteem), this aspect of the program would earn a poor distinction of cultural incapacity lacking in ability to help people of color.

The role of women in any culture is complex and even though outsiders might be critical of some dimensions, there are others that can be honored. For example, the girls' mothers could have been invited to help with the diversity dinner, grandmothers could have been asked to teach their traditional needlepoint skills, or a Hmong community member could have been asked to join the Board of Directors. Finally, problematic aspects of the familial relationships experienced by the girls could have been addressed in the programming, or referrals to other agencies could have been made.

TH did not address any of the problems the girls' experienced having parents who are immigrants and their difficulties in living in two cultures. The researchers learned of multiple incidents of dilemmas and it was apparent that the Director knew of some of these, but there was nothing in the programming that provided any assistance to the girls. For example, in the situation where the young girl was translating between her parents and her probation officer, the Director knew of a translator, the one employed by her program, and, yet, she did not offer this information to any of the involved parties. She appeared to define this as outside of the focus of her program.

The lack of involvement in assisting the girls with the violence in their lives, not including a focus on important relationships in the girls' lives, and not being culturally responsive all indicate that the TH programming is not holistic. Simply exposing the girls' to strong role models, alternative careers for females and celebrations of diverse cultures is not sufficient. This program does not address the complex and difficult components of the girls' lives and does nothing to help them understand the structural processes that operate against their own success. To be gender responsive a program must address all aspects of females' lives and TH did not do this. This may explain a statement made to us by one of the participants in referring to the Director, "... (she) is definitely 'pro woman' but she does not have a clue about what my life is really like" (14-year-old participant, Interview I.D. 10).

As with TH, programs may have some innovative, desired programming, but unless the entire program addresses the gender and culture of the participants, the program, at best, may not be relevant to the lives of its participants. There is a possibility that it could have more damaging consequences.

The missing components of gender responsive programming at TH may cause the following negative consequences for its participants: a) the girls may be confused about the mixed messages of being told that all

should be respectful of each other's culture when their own culture does not receive this treatment; b) the isolation of the girls from their families and culture may create more problems for them, as this is directly contradictory to their culture where the family and the clan are considered more important than the individual; c) the girls receive little support or advice on how to handle conflicts (sometimes violent ones) they are experiencing in their homes except to be pulled out; d) they receive no information about how to cope with being from immigrant families and having to live in two cultures; and e) the girls may perceive subtle racist insinuations that their culture is bad.

The girls in this program have difficult lives and have engaged in serious criminal behavior. The deficits of this program are related to female criminality (Amicus, 2010; Bloom, 2003) and may have the impact of increasing these girls delinquency. The program at TH almost implies that there is nothing that can be done about the problems within their families and, therefore, the girls should adapt to the gender role ascriptions of the White, middle class.

Implications

Conflicts such as cultural differences in defining female roles have no easy solutions. There is much academic literature attempting to provide theoretical solutions to conflicts between multiculturalism and gender. However, for the purposes of creating programs for delinquent girls, it is useful to view culture and gender as two separate continuums that have multiple points of intersection. These intersections are problematic, not because they are unexpected, but because they are inevitable. Based on the current study and literature on the topic, the following are suggestions on how to prepare for times when there will be conflict between gender and cultural responsiveness.

Focus on internationally recognized human rights.

This refers to international treaties in mission statements for correctional programs. An-Na'im (1999) argued that a focus on human rights might assist in solving the debate between feminism and multiculturalism. The author stated, "I say that all cultures must be held to the same standards not only of gender equality but also of all other human rights" (p. 61).

Promote safety. From a human rights perspective, violence must be stopped. While this should be a guiding principle, it must be recognized that at times cultures will differ on definitions of physical injury, such as fasting, scarring, and genital mutilation. Correctional programs need to work with their communities to determine cultural meanings and also refer to internationally agreed upon prohibitions.

Encourage participants' voices. At first glance, this suggestion may seem difficult for any correctional program where the history of the discipline is exactly the opposite; convicted offenders are told what to do.

This is further complicated within programs, such as the one studied here, where adolescents are the participants (an age bracket where many teenagers profess that no one understands what their lives are like), and from immigrant families that may not be well-informed about norms and resources available to them. In this study, when asked, the girls were quite frank that the Director did not understand their home lives and did not understand their cultures. Perhaps, if their voices were a part of the program development programmatic changes could have been made earlier.

Collaborate with community members. One possible way to relieve or reduce the tension between the empowerment goals of gender responsive programming and the respect for cultures different from the dominant population is to include the participation of community members. It was noted that strong Hmong women lived and worked in the community inhabited by many of the program participants. The Director would have been wise to seek the advice and guidance of women from the Hmong culture; that is cultural interpreters, to assist her in creating a program that would reap the benefits of both feminism and multiculturalism. Correctional programs, both in the community and in institutions, would be well served to pull from cultural resources in the community; such an approach would be consistent with a strengths based model and evidence based practices.

Recognize and abandon White privilege. Input from program participants and adult women from various ethnic groups, combined with recognition of oppression and the development of trusted relationships between community members and corrections professionals would have a profound effect. This process would ultimately require professionals to tolerate and support program interventions that minimally make no sense to them and more likely, they would have to engage in practices that lack relevance for them. This is where trusted relationships between individuals of diverse cultures would be critical, as well as, the firm establishment of common goals.

The conflict between gender responsiveness and cultural responsiveness does not require viewing the resolution as a dichotomy, as an either/or choice. The researchers recommend practitioners strive for knowledge of the various cultures represented by program participants and work toward developing programs that are responsive to the needs of girls and women from any culture.

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