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**Panoramic Distortions: Understanding the Culture of Girls in a  
Military Structured Residential Treatment Facility**

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**Panoramic Distortions: Understanding the Culture of Girls in a  
Military Structured Residential Treatment Facility**

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my parents, Lorena and Luis Dominguez. Their love, guidance, and encouragement have given me the strength and determination to fulfill my dreams and realize my potential.

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I would first like to thank the members of my committee for their interest and support in this project. In particular, I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor, David Drum, for taking on the role of a mentor in the development of this dissertation. Through his support and mentorship, John D. King has provided me with opportunity to work in community mental health and the juvenile justice system, and the opportunity to fulfill my dreams and aspirations to help disadvantaged families and youth.

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# **Panoramic Distortions: Understanding the Culture of Girls in a Military Structured Residential Facility**

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Current research on girls and delinquency has brought to awareness the often stressful and traumatic lives of girls. Furthermore, the last three decades have seen an increase in the proportion of girls entering the Juvenile Justice System and an increase in the proportion of girl's court ordered to attend military structured treatment programs. Developed with boys in mind, many researchers in the area of female delinquency believe that military structured treatment programs are less effectiveness for girls. Thus, the goal of the current study is to consider the experience of girls in a military structured residential treatment facility. Additionally, this study sought to answer the following questions posed by the administrative personnel of this program:

- 1) Why do staff members report more difficulties when working with the girls?
- 2) Why are girls more emotionally labile than boys?
- 3) What changes can be made to the program to increase girls' success in the program?

Participants in this study were referred to a military structured residential treatment program. At the time of the study, four girls, ages 14 to 16, participated in the study. In addition to the girls' participation, staff members including drill instructors, program officers, teachers, health professionals, and administrative staff participated in the study. The current study utilized an ethnographic approach to explore and identify information that may be useful in better understanding the research questions. The Listening Guide Method (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) was utilized to conduct a narrative analysis of the interviews with both the girls and staff members.

Results demonstrated that while in the program, services provided were uneven in both scope and quality. For example, lack of training among staff members resulted in missed opportunities to teach the girls necessary skills that would enable them to tolerate emotional distress while in the program and at home. In order to better meet the needs of the girls, it is recommended that this program strive to integrate both military and therapeutic programming, and educate and train all its staff members in the delivery of gender-responsive programming.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In Texas, a youth between the age of 10 and 16 falls under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Justice System. The following is a description of the paths that a youth might take in the Juvenile Justice System; it is accompanied by a metanarrative of Vanessa, a youth whose experiences in detention resemble that of many youth involved in juvenile justice system.

*Vanessa is a 16-year-old, Caucasian female. She lives with her mother and sister in a small two-bedroom apartment. Vanessa is supposed to be a 10<sup>th</sup> grader, but due to missing school more days than not last year, she is a 9<sup>th</sup> grader and is enrolled in credit recovery classes. Vanessa's mother works at a local department store. She works long shifts in order to provide a nice home for her daughter. Vanessa's mother does not want Vanessa to know that she is struggling financially. She will tell you that she managed to pay all her bills last month, but does not know if she can afford the electricity bill this month after a cold winter freeze.*

*Vanessa has three previous referrals to the Juvenile Justice System. At age 12 she began using drugs and drinking alcohol. Soon after she began having problems at home and at school.*

### *Contact with Law Enforcement*

A youth's first contact with the Justice System is through law enforcement. When a youth is stopped by a police officer, the officer will question the youth about his or her actions and will decide whether to release the youth back into the community with a cautionary warning, or to detain the youth and transport him or her to the county

detention facility. If the youth receives a warning, then this will be his or her only interaction with the Justice System. On the other hand, if the youth is sent to a detention facility the process continues and intensifies.

*Most recently, Vanessa took her mother's car without permission and took her friends out for a drive. It was 1:00am when Vanessa and her friends were on their way to buy alcohol for a party. While driving, Vanessa runs through a stop sign. A police officer happens to be in the area and stops the car.*

*When the police officer approaches Vanessa, he asks for her license and registration. Vanessa does not have a license, she tells the officer she forgot her purse at home and does not have the license or registration. She explains to the officer that she and her friends are on their way home. She is not familiar with the area and did not see the stop sign. She gives him her name and a fake last name as she smiles confidently. When the officer runs the license plates and sees that the car has been reported stolen. Vanessa and her friends are detained.*

#### Detention or Release

If a police officer decided to detain the youth, he or she is handcuffed and placed in the back of a police car. The youth is then transferred to the county's secure detention facility for intake. When the youth arrives at the detention facility, the youth is asked to remove all personal clothing and accessories and is given a jumpsuit and shoes.

*Vanessa struggles with the officer as he tries to place her in the back of the police car. She tells the officer she does not like small spaces and does not want to go in the car. The officer tells Vanessa that she will also be charged with refusing arrest if she*

*does not get in the car. Vanessa cries as she gets in the back of the car. She feels her breathing become harder as she sits there, her hands tied, unable to move. When they arrive at the detention facility, the detention staff greets Vanessa. The cuffs are taken off and she is asked to remove everything from her pockets and take off her shoes. The staff searches for any weapons before they give her a jumpsuit and ask her to change in the restroom.*

The intake officer then conducts an assessment of the youth. All youth are assessed for any physical or mental health conditions that may warrant closer attention and observation by the supervising staff. Any medical and mental health needs are immediately addressed. With the information gathered, the intake officer will determine if the youth will be released to his or her legal guardian(s) or if charges will be filed that require continued detention. If the youth is held in detention, he or she remains detained until a decision has been made on his or her case. While a youth is detained, he or she will be provided three meals a day, an education, counseling services, and recreational opportunities.

*When Vanessa exits the restroom she is questioned about her name. The detention staff recognized her from a previous detainment. Vanessa admits that she gave a false name. When her records are retrieved, the detention staff member notices that Vanessa is already on probation. The assessment continues with this new information. As per standard protocol, the staff member administers the MAYSI-2, The Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Second Version, a brief screening tool designed to identify youth who may have special mental health needs. Vanessa's scores are high on four out*

*of six scales on the MAYSI-2, alcohol/drug use, depressed/anxious, and traumatic experiences. Given these scores, she is referred to a mental health counselor for further evaluation. During the assessment, Vanessa requests to see a nurse, as she feels dizzy and complains of nausea. The nurse is called and a medical evaluation is conducted. It is determined that Vanessa is fine, but had a panic attack when she was initially detained. Finally, Vanessa is given a drug test. Her tests are negative for illegal substances.*

Once the intake is completed, the detention supervisor is notified. At this time, the supervisor makes the decision to either release the youth on cautionary warning or detain the youth pending a court hearing. The severity of the offense committed, previous criminal history, and any other indicators of risk influence this decision. Many youth can be safely released to their legal guardians but others must be held in secure detention, particularly if he or she is already on probation. If this is the case, the youth may have been arrested under a Directive to Apprehend, known as a warrant in the adult Justice System, or the youth may have been arrested for a new crime. Under either of these circumstances, the youth remains detained and is not released to the custody of his or her legal guardian.

*Due to her current probation and new offense, intake staff members decide to keep Vanessa in detention until her initial court hearing. Vanessa is taken to the girls unit of the detention facility.*

*While Vanessa is in detention, her mother decides to press charges. She is now being charged with failure to identify herself to a police officer and unauthorized use of a*

*vehicle. After reviewing her case, the judge decides to refer her case to a formal court hearing. A psychological evaluation is ordered at this time.*

### Detention Hearing

A youth who is not released to his or her guardian must receive a detention hearing within 48 hours of being detained. When the detention hearing occurs, the judge may decide to release the youth with a cautionary warning, under deferred prosecution probation, or refer the case to a formal court hearing.

Youth that have been detained are released from detention if given a cautionary warning or deferred prosecution probation. Under deferred prosecution probation, the youth receives a second chance to prove to the court that no further action is necessary to deter him or her from future illegal activity. Deferred prosecution probation ranges from three-month to six-month terms. The goal of deferred prosecution probation is to avoid the adjudication process and continued involvement with the authorities. A youth placed on deferred prosecution probation is required to follow the rules of his or her probation. As part of the probation conditions, the youth may be required to participate in some or all of the following: psychoeducational interventions, counseling services, victim empathy classes, community service, set curfew, regular school attendance, house arrest, or other programs aimed at rehabilitating the youth.

*Vanessa is currently on deferred probation. Her new offense must be evaluated along with her prior offenses. For this reason, intake staff does not release her.*

If the youth is not released, the judge can hold the youth in detention until a decision is reached. Placement in a detention facility ensures that the youth will appear



for all court hearings, it also serves to protect the community from future offense by detaining the youth in a secure environment. Subsequent detention hearings are then held every ten working days, as the judge waits for information regarding the youths' social history or psychological evaluation to aid in determining the next steps.

*Vanessa has now been in detention for five weeks. She has received a hearing every ten working days. The court has received her psychological evaluation and a hearing is scheduled for the following week. This will be her third hearing. Vanessa does not want to be in detention and has been struggling to cope. She has trouble sleeping at night and has received sanctions for falling asleep in class. She cries daily with hopes that she might be released.*

#### Adjudication Hearing

In order to determine the appropriate services for juveniles that are detained, adjudication hearings are held to ascertain if a youth should be classified as engaging in delinquent conduct or a youth in need of court supervision (Siegal & Senna, 2000). A delinquent youth is defined as a youth who has committed a delinquent act. This is generally conduct that, if committed by an adult, could result in imprisonment or confinement in jail, such as a Class A or B misdemeanor or a felony. A youth whose behavior indicates conduct in need of supervision (CINS), displays conduct that is not a violation if committed by an adult, such as truancy or running away.

Adjudication is similar to an adult trial. Most juvenile cases do not reach the adjudicatory state, but serious acts of delinquency that are violations of criminal law, or

when juveniles deny guilt, or are repeat offenders, and in circumstances where juveniles are a threat to themselves or the community, often do reach this stage.

*Results from the psychological evaluation suggest that Vanessa is in need of supervision in a structured environment and mental health treatment. In consideration of her previous and current infractions, recommendations from her probation officer and findings of the psychological evaluation, the judge decides that Vanessa has engaged in delinquent conduct and is adjudicated.*

### Disposition

If the youth is adjudicated, the next step is the disposition—the sentencing step of the juvenile proceedings. At this time, the judge will determine if the youth will either: a) enter community treatment, b) be sent to a treatment program in a secure or non-secure treatment facility, or c) in serious violation of the law, be committed to the Texas Youth Commission. On most occasions, the judge will opt to assign the youth to treatment in the community. This option allows the youth to receive treatment while remaining in the custody of his or her legal guardian. However, if it has been determined that community treatment cannot meet the particular needs of that youth, that individual will be placed in a secure or non-secure confinement in a private or publically operated treatment facility (Siegal & Senna, 2000). Secure and non-secure confinements, such as residential and private treatment facilities, are reserved for juveniles who have been adjudicated delinquent and are committed to the correctional facility. While in a treatment facility, the goal is to rehabilitate the youth and send him or her back into the community as a better-adjusted individual. Although the number of programs and services that are offered

to juveniles depends on the resources available to such institutions, most institutions typically offer youth in custody the following services: individual and group counseling; educational, vocational, and recreational programs; and specialized treatment programs, such as military style programs, for first-time, nonviolent offenders.

In the most serious violations of the law, the judge can commit the youth to The Texas Youth Commission (TYC) with an indeterminate sentence (only felony offenses) or with a determinate sentence (only certain offenses). An indeterminate sentence does not state a specific period of time or release date, just a range of time. Youth sent to TYC with an indeterminate sentence must be discharged by the time he or she turns 19 years of age. In contrast, a determinate sentence allows a youth to be confined up to 30 years, first in the Texas Youth Commission facility, followed by an optional court transfer to prison. “Determinate sentencing for juvenile offenders was approved by the Texas legislature in 1987 as an alternative approach to lowering the age at which a juvenile may be certified to stand trial as an adult” (TYC, 2011). Also, “in Texas, a 14 year-old child may stand trial as an adult for capital felonies, first-degree felonies, or aggravated controlled substance felonies. When charged with any other felony, the minimum age at which a child may be certified to stand trial as an adult is 15 years of age” (Texas Family Code 54.02 (a) (2) (a)).

*At her disposition hearing, Vanessa is court ordered into a government funded, non-secure, residential treatment program with a military structure. At this point, Vanessa has been in detention for eight weeks. She has received visits from her mother, but has not been in contact with any one else in her family. She is disappointed that she*

*will now be going to residential treatment for six to nine months, away from her friends and family.*

In the aforementioned hypothetical situation, the judge has decided that it is in the best interest of the youth and the community that Vanessa is sent to a residential facility that will provide the structure and mental health treatment for her rehabilitation. In many cases, these decisions are made without essential knowledge of the precipitating factors that led to the delinquent behaviors. In Vanessa's case, some key questions include: Why was she not attending school and doing poorly at home with her mother? Why did Vanessa have a panic attack during her arrest? More so, what did Vanessa report during her psychological evaluation that contributed to the judge's determination that she required confinement in a residential facility and mental health treatment as well?

Often the full story or facts about the detained youth's background and experiences are not completely understood until after they are in detention. While in detention, it is often the staff members that supervise the youth daily who become aware of the complete circumstances of their life. In many cases, the youth form relationships with the staff members and share with them their stories as they try to make sense of what will happened to them, what has happened to them, and what is happening to them. For youth who are ordered to treatment, the search for answers continues into treatment.

*While she was in detention, Vanessa disclosed to one of the female staff members that she was having nightmares every night and felt claustrophobic in her small room. She asked if there were any way that she could be moved or if she could sleep outside the room in the common area. Due to security concerns this was not possible, however the*

*staff referred Vanessa to a counselor. When the counselor stopped to visit with Vanessa, she informed the counselor that she did not need counseling. As the weeks went by, Vanessa continued to open up to the staff member. She shared with the staff member that her older brother sexually assaulted her when she was ten years old. After the incident occurred, she told her friends what happened to her and they told her that it was not right; she needed to tell someone about it. She decided not to, but it was not long before her friends told the school counselor. Vanessa confirmed what happened with the school counselor. Her brother was sent to treatment and was not allowed back in the home. He went to live with relatives. Vanessa remembers her mother crying for months after everything had happened.*

*The following year, Vanessa's mother divorced from her father. Vanessa was very close with her father and wanted to maintain their relationship even though he was not in the home. Vanessa told the staff member that her father began dating and stopped calling or picking her up on the weekends. Vanessa was hurt that her father did not want her. She says she began experimenting with drugs and alcohol during this time.*

*Vanessa then shared that she recently found out that the person she believed to be her father was not her biological father. He was her stepfather. She was upset with her mother for not telling her the truth. When her mother asked how she found out, Vanessa told her a woman she did not know contacted her on a social internet site and asked her if she was related to a certain individual. Vanessa asked her sister about this and her sister confirmed the information. When Vanessa confronted her mother about*

*this, she did not respond and instead sent Vanessa to her room. That was the night Vanessa took her mother’s car without permission.*

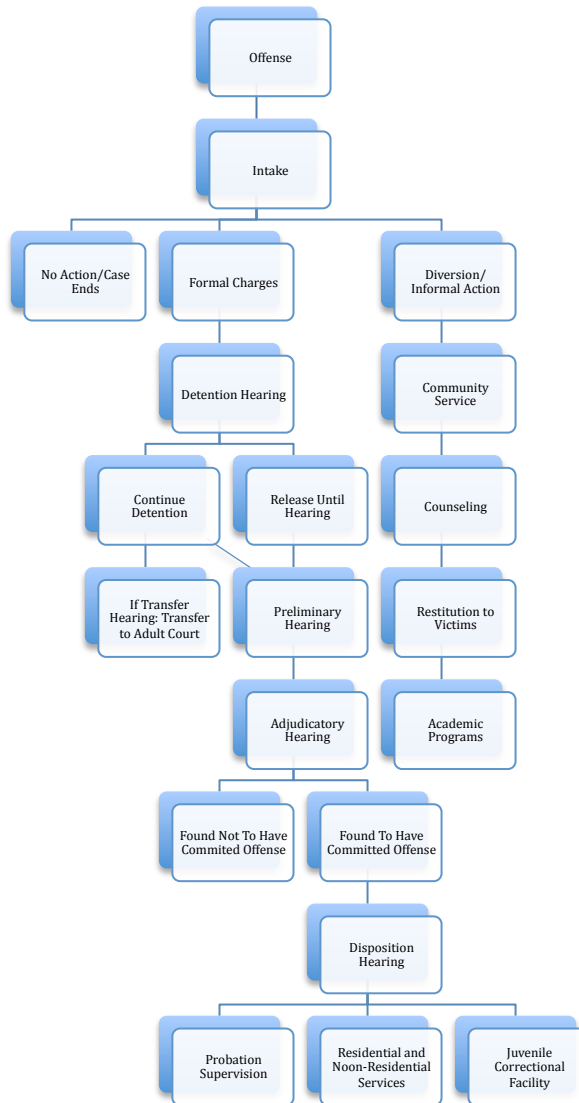


FIGURE 1. Juvenile Justice System Flow Chart (CJCJ, 2011)

*Current Study*

Current research on girls and delinquency has brought to awareness the often stressful and traumatic lives of girls (Acoca, 1999, 2003; Chesney-Lind, 2001; Wood,

Foy, Goguen, Pynoos, & James, 2002; Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2004; Mullis & Huber, 2004; Hennessey, Ford, Mahoney, Ko, & Siegfried, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Finley, 2007). However, it has also been reported that the Juvenile Justice System has not made changes that would adjust the detainment environment to the needs that arise from the often devastating experiences of these girls' lives.

The purpose of the current study is to contribute to the understanding of girls' delinquency and their experiences in military structured residential treatment programs. An important aspect of this research is while both girls' and boys' traumatic childhood events are risk factors for the onset of delinquency, many of these traumas are "gendered" (Belknap, Winter, & Cady, 2003).

The current study took place in a residential treatment program with military structured treatment programming. This site was chosen because staff and administrative personnel at this site noted that girls who were referred to this program, in comparison to boys, were least likely to successfully complete treatment. Administrative staff at this site posed the following research questions:

- 1) Why do staff members report more difficulties when working with the girls?
- 2) Why are girls more emotionally labile than boys?
- 3) What changes can be made to the program to increase girls' success in the program?

The current study utilized an ethnographic approach to explore and identify information that may be useful in better understanding the research questions, as well as inform future program planning and development.

It is the hope of this researcher that utilizing an ethnographic approach and a relational method of analysis will allow for a complete and better-nuanced view of the meanings that the girls in this study, participating in the military structured treatment program, and the staff members, who operate their program, attribute to their experiences with one another. Furthermore, this study hopes to enhance the literature in girls' delinquency by providing an authentic account of the lived experiences of both the staff and the girls. In doing so, the recommendations for the program and its future can be guided by the voices of the girls and staff.



## Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The present day reality of many teenage girls lives makes every day coping quite challenging. Unlike their parents and grandparents, many teenage youth in the United States today face circumstances, experiences, and challenges that can lead to problems generated by “multiple and complex causes” (Elias, Tobias, & Fredlander, 2000; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Severe, 2007). Juvenile delinquency is one such outcome that stems from challenges girls confront that exceed their inner and external coping resources.

### *Establishment of the Juvenile Justice System*

In order to better understand the Juvenile Justice System, it is helpful to understand its involvement in the larger Criminal Justice System. Prior to the 20th Century, there had been little distinction between adult and juvenile offenders (Siegal & Senna, 2000). Although age was taken into account for youth under the age of seven<sup>1</sup>, children seven and older who broke the law were tried in the same courts as adults. It was not until the 20th century when the designation of “delinquent,” applied to children who had been adjudicated by a judicial officer, of a juvenile court, as having committed a delinquent act (Siegal & Senna, 2000).

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<sup>1</sup> In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, children below the age of seven were exempt from prosecution and punishment because they were thought to be incapable of criminal intent, but children as young as seven could stand trial for offenses (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). If convicted, youth were subject to the same sentence as adults: imprisonment, corporal punishment, and execution (OJJDP, 1999).

The practice of separating juvenile delinquents from criminal adults began in 1899, when reformers<sup>2</sup> in Illinois established the juvenile court, creating the first juvenile court in America. The juvenile court operated under the Juvenile Court Act. The act operated under the English Common Law *parens patriae* (the state as the parent) philosophy. This philosophy stated that, “because children were not of full legal capacity, the State had the inherent power and responsibility to provide protection for children whose natural parents were not providing appropriate care or supervision” (OJJDP, 1999, p. 2). In addition to following *parens patriae* philosophy, it was concluded that the state should act in the “best interest of the child,” a viewpoint that encouraged the state to take control of “wayward children” and provide care, custody, and treatment to remedy delinquent behavior (Siegal & Senna, 2000).

Thus, the origination of the term “juvenile delinquency” allowed the juvenile court to shift from stigmatizing children with labels, (i.e. thieves or burglars), to designating the child as being in need of care, custody and treatment of the state (Siegal & Senna, 2000). And so, the key element of this doctrine became a focus on the welfare of the child and the responsibility of the court to intervene. Among its various provisions, the Juvenile Court Act instated a rehabilitative rather than a disciplinary purpose in Juvenile Justice. Through treatment and rehabilitative programs, the court hoped to turn juvenile delinquents into productive citizens (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Consequently,

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<sup>2</sup> The first juvenile court law in the United State was not a sudden invention by a single reformer, but was the result of agitation by two groups of women reformers during the 1890s, the Chicago Woman's Club and the Hull House Community, who worked in cooperation with other agencies (Clapp, 1995).

it was the focus on rehabilitation that became the substantive difference between the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Today, juvenile delinquency can be defined as “participation in illegal behavior by a minor who falls under an established statutory age limit, generally seventeen or eighteen years of age” (Senna & Siegal, 2000). However, since the juvenile court’s inception, the processing of juvenile delinquents has changed dramatically. First, the juvenile justice system has experienced enormous growth. Juvenile courts are now widespread and have been implemented in most major cities. Additionally, the majority of U.S. cities have separate probation department, judges, and other facilities specifically for youth offenders. Most cities also have police departments with officers whose sole responsibility is youth crime and delinquency.

Also, the terminology used in court proceedings and legal documents for juvenile offenders has evolved over the years. For example, adults are “tried” in court; while youth are “adjudicated,” and adults are “punished;” while youth are “treated.” Finally, if treatment is mandated, youth are often sent to non-secure or secure juvenile correctional facilities, as they are not normally committed to adult prisons (Siegal & Senna, 2000). Although the juvenile justice system focuses on the rehabilitation of juveniles, it does have the ability to commit juveniles to adult prisons. Just as adults, youth are subject to arrest, trial, and incarceration. For example, in all fifty states, a youth can be certified to stand trial as an adult. At this point, the child is considered a legal adult and is placed outside the jurisdiction of the juvenile court (Siegal & Senna, 2000).

Another important distinction between the juvenile justice system and the adult justice system is that youth can be sent to juvenile court for committing actions that would not be considered illegal if perpetrated by an adult. This type of conduct is called a status offense (i.e., running away, skipping class, using profanity, violating probation, participating in sex or immoral conduct, having bad companions, smoking or drinking). In the past, these youth were referred to as “wayward minors” or “delinquent children.” Today, there are separate classifications for status offenses (i.e. children, minors, persons, youth or juveniles in need of supervision) to signify that these children are troubled youth with special needs and problems, and not “juvenile delinquents” (Siegal & Senna, 2000).

Finally, in order to monitor law enforcement’s response to juvenile crime, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) created a Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR). The UCR is a compilation of data sent to the FBI from police departments all over the United States. There are two parts that make up the UCR: Part I offenses, also known as Index Crimes, and Part II offenses, all crimes other than Part I offenses. Index Crimes include homicide and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft (Senna & Siegal, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006)

#### *Statistics and Trends in Juvenile Crime*

In recent years, the media has been influential in shaping the publics’ perception of juvenile offending (Siegal & Senna, 2000; Freemon, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). High profile incidents of juvenile crime such as the gang and race wars of Los Angeles and Chicago’s Southside, school violence (such as the incidents that occurred at

Columbine High School in Colorado), as well as television shows, music, and movies with scenes of juvenile violence, drug use, and race conflict as their main themes have helped to convince the general public that “today’s youth are out of control, and that today’s youth are much more violent than before” (Siegal & Senna, 2000, p. 37).

Although these incidents reflect a grave reality in juvenile crime, they are not entirely representative of the crimes committed by youth. For example, in the last decade, reports from National Report of Juvenile Offenders and Victims (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006) have shown a gradual decline in the overall juvenile crime rate. For example, in 1960 there were 400,000 delinquency cases handled in juvenile court. From 1960-1995, this rate climbed steadily to an estimated 1.8 million delinquency cases handled in juvenile court. From 1996 through 2007, the delinquency caseload dropped to an estimated 1.7 million delinquency cases. The number of delinquency cases handled in U.S. juvenile courts has remained virtually unchanged from 2000 through 2007, remaining between 1.6 and 1.7 million cases (Knoll & Sickmund, 2010).

As noted above, recent statistics of juvenile offending show a decrease in juvenile crime since 1995. However, there is an important distinction in what is contributing to the decline in the juvenile crime statistics between 1994 and 2003—the decline was driven primarily by the male arrest rate. For example, from 1980-2003, male arrest rates declined 20%, while female arrest rates increased by 22% and from 1994 to 2003, females showed an increase in the violent crime index (12%-17%), while males showed a decline (7% - 3%) (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Furthermore, in 1980, 20% of all juvenile arrests were female arrests and between 1980 and 2003 the female proportion of

juvenile arrests increased for simple assault, vandalism, weapons, and status offenses such as liquor, curfew, and loitering law violations. Finally, of status offenses that were handled by juvenile courts from 1985 to 2002, female offenders accounted for 61% of runaway violations, 46% of truancy and ungovernability offenses, and 30% of liquor cases (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Thus, a major change in the past few years has been the rise in the proportion of female offenders entering the juvenile justice system. At a glance, the data reflects that female offenders in the juvenile justice system have engaged in more violent crimes. However because the UCR does not ask questions regarding the history of these youth's lives, it cannot be readily determined what factors are contributing to the increase in female arrests rates. It is speculated that an explanation for this pattern could be the changing response of law enforcement to domestic violence incidents. An example would include categorizing family conflicts as violent offenses, which were once considered status offenses. These incidents represent a larger proportion of violence perpetrated by girls than by boys. Thus, it appears that the mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence and the increased willingness to report these crimes could be contributing to the greater increase in arrests of girls than of boys (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Additionally, misdemeanor charges that are associated with running away and violation of court orders can be contributing to the increase of girls involved with the juvenile justices system (Mapson, 2005).

In summary, current statistics in juvenile justice show a decrease in overall juvenile crime. However, a closer look at the data reveal an increase in the number of

offenses committed by girls versus offenses committed by boys (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). It is important to note that, although violent crime rates for girls are increasing, a status offense is still more common for girls than for boys and status offenses often prove to be a girl's first contact with the juvenile justice system (Chesney-Lind, 2001; Rafter, 2000; Siegal & Senna, 2000).

Although the statistics presented in the above sections were taken from official reports of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention, it is important to note that there has long been criticism of the accuracy of official crime data (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Senna & Siegal, 2004). For example, most reports are compiled from victim surveys, which rely on self-report. It has also been shown that less than half of all victims report crimes to the police. There are also concerns that police departments make systematic errors in recording and interpreting crime data. Finally, delinquency rates may be biased because of racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination in the arrest process (Acoca, 1999; Senna & Siegal, 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

#### *A Profile of Girls in the Juvenile Justice System*

In the early decades of the juvenile justice system, male and female offenses differed drastically. Current statistics in juvenile justice reveal an increase in the number of offenses committed by girls versus offenses committed by boys and an increase in violent crime rates for girls. Although there have been changes in the number and type of offenses committed by girls versus those committed by boys, a status offense is still more common for girls and often proves to be a girl's first contact with the juvenile justice system (Rafter, 2000; Chesney-Lind, 2001). For that reason, as the proportion of juvenile

arrest for girls continue to increase, it becomes even more critical to understand and acknowledge the problems and challenges faced by young girls in society.

Current research in juvenile delinquency reports that female offenders often have histories of physical, emotional, and sexual maltreatment or neglect; family problems; academic problems; a history of drug and alcohol abuse, trouble with developing healthy relationships; are people of color; and have untreated physical and mental disorders (Acoca, 1999, 2003; Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2004; Hennessey et al., 2004; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Various studies have also shown that female offenders have different traumatic life experiences than their male counterparts, specifically higher rates of physical and/or sexual abuse (Chesney-Lind, 2001; Wood, et al., 2002; Acoca, 2003; Mullis, Cornille, Mullis, & Huber, 2004; Finley, 2007). Additionally, female offenders are more likely to have been depressed, participated in suicidal or self-inflicted harmful behaviors, and have had early pregnancies (Finley, 2007). Additionally, it has been reported that between thirteen and fourteen years of age, most female offenders were victims of sexual assault, become sexually active, run away from home, are shot or stabbed for the first time, experience their first use of alcohol and others drugs, are expelled from school, and experience their first arrest (Acoca, 1999).

#### *Developmental Pathways to Delinquency*

In the past three decades researchers have identified a pattern of female offending that begins with victimization and ends with offending. More specifically, Belknap and Holsinger (1998) have argued that there are “developmental pathways to delinquency,” stating that pathways to delinquency are often gender-specific, just as physical and



emotional differences that emerge in the developmental process. In particular, Belknap and Holsinger argue that victimization—physical, sexual, and emotional—is often the first step along females' pathway into the juvenile justice system.

In contrast, researchers have found that boys involved in delinquent behavior are more likely to come from families of low socio-economic status and live in a single parent female-headed household (Farrington, 1998, Chesney-Lind & Shelden, 2004). Living in a single parent, female- headed household, boys are most likely to experience harsh physical punishment and harsh maternal supervision. Boys are also most likely to experience low parental reinforcement and parental conflict with their mother.

In sum, the number of girls in juvenile justice facilities has been rising quickly. Most girls who enter the juvenile justice system enter with serious physical, mental, and substance abuse disorders, history of violence, victimization, and family conflict. Although the juvenile justice system has grown tremendously since its formation, it has yet to keep up with the growing demands of the girls that reside in its care.

#### *Juvenile Justice Facilities*

Currently, the juvenile justice system has not developed the capacity to address the unique developmental traumas and needs of female offenders. Researchers in female delinquency argue that the lack of attention to girls needs in these facilities “creates a high risk for trauma, decompensation, and exacerbates the difficulties they face as females in a system designed to meet the needs of males” (Mapson, 2005, p.86).

For example, a review of studies by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (Hennessey, et al, 2004) revealed that upon entry to the juvenile justice system, girls

experienced seclusion, staff insensitivity, and loss of privacy. For many of these girls, the experience of being handcuffed, stripped of their clothes and possessions, and being detained in solitary confinement, potentially exacerbated existing negative feelings they had about themselves and others and elicited feelings of loss of control. Additionally, this research stated that the traditional methods of maintaining order and authority in detention facilities, such as confrontational staff members and physical restraints, could be potentially problematic for girls who suffer from PTSD, likely resulting in re-traumatization and/or re-victimization (Hennessey, et al., 2004).

Leslie Acoca (1998) referred to the experiences of girls in detention facilities as, “multiple violations.” She has argued that female offenders experience multiple violations beginning at the moment of their arrest and continuing through detention or incarceration in juvenile facilities. More so, Acoca emphasized that the abuse the majority of girls have experienced in their homes, in their schools, or on the streets are often mirrored and compounded by physical and emotional injuries they may later receive within the Juvenile Justice System. In light of this information, researchers are calling for gender-specific programs that will meet the growing demands of youth in the juvenile justice system, specifically that of girls.

The information that has been presented thus far has brought attention to the growing number of girls entering the juvenile justice system and the limited gender-specific programs and services that are available for them once they are detained. The following highlights the challenges faced by girls once they are ordered to attend a residential treatment facility, specifically a military structured treatment program.

### *Military Structured Facilities for Juvenile Offenders*

Over the years, Juvenile Corrections Departments have seen an increase in the development and implementation of military structured programs, also known as bootcamps (Peters, Thomas, Zamberlan, & Caliber Associates, 1997). Given that the use of military structured treatment programs is relatively new, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has implemented various multi-site evaluations over the years to determine their effectiveness for juvenile offenders.

For instance, in 1990, the OJJDP implemented a program to examine the feasibility, appropriateness, and effects of the military structured treatment model (Styve, MacKenzie, Gover, & Mitchell, 2000). Ultimately, OJJDP was interested in determining if military structured programs for adult offenders could be adapted for male youth offenders. Three sites were chosen to participate in the evaluation: Cleveland, Ohio; Mobile, Alabama; and Denver, Colorado. All three sites implemented 90-day residential treatment programs with characteristics such as: a) a platoon structure of 10-13 youths, referred to as cadets, that entered together and were expected to graduate together, b) onsite drill instructors, teachers, and case managers, c) staff with military backgrounds, d) a staff training program, e) military uniforms, customs, and courtesies, f) a highly programmed day starting at 5:30 am and ending at 10 pm, g) a progression of sanctions ending in the removal of youth from the program; and h) a public graduation ceremony (Styve, MacKenzie, Gover, & Mitchell, 2000).

Results of the multi-site evaluation revealed that military structured treatment programs could be successfully implemented in the juvenile justice system for male

youth offenders. At all three sites, the majority of the youth graduated from the military structured treatment program and cadets in the first-year military structured treatment program improved in physical fitness, behavior, and made educational gains.

Unfortunately, the gains made during the 3-month program did not persist into aftercare<sup>3</sup>.

Also, all three programs had high attrition rates for noncompliance, absenteeism in school, and rearrest in the aftercare period. Additionally, results revealed high staff turnover rates and difficulty achieving a balance between programming that emphasized military discipline and programming focusing on remedial education and counseling.

Subsequently, in 1993, a second multisite evaluation of military structured treatment programs was launched to examine the efficacy of military structured treatment programs (MacKenzie & Souryal, 1994). Results from the 1993 multisite evaluation showed that over time, participants of these programs developed a more positive attitude about their experiences. Interviews with the cadets revealed a positive experience in the program, a belief that they had changed for the better, and a feeling of pride in themselves for completing a difficult program. However, in light of positive changes in participants, military structured treatment programs did not reduce offender recidivism. The recidivism rates of military structured participants did not differ from the rates of comparison samples of inmates who served a longer term of incarceration in a

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<sup>3</sup> Aftercare is the period of supervision of juveniles once they complete residential treatment and are returned to the community. When a youth is placed on aftercare, the youth and his or her guardian meet with a Juvenile Probation Officer to cooperatively develop the aftercare plan, based on the needs of the individual youth, to ensure sure success while in the community. The aftercare plan includes conditions that outline the expectations for the juvenile while on aftercare in the community.

conventional prison. Additionally, results showed that positive changes demonstrated during the programming did not last when youth returned to the community.

Finally, a third evaluation of military structured treatment programs with male cadets (Styve, MacKenzie, Gover, Mitchell, 2000) reported that juveniles who participated in military structured treatment programs had a positive experience with the environment and felt better prepared for release. In addition, the boys' levels of anxiety and depression decreased during their time in the program. However, the boys were more likely to report feeling like they were in danger from the staff and were more likely to experience a decrease in their social bonds with family, school and work (Styve, et al., 2000).

In light of this research, military structured treatment program advocates contend that the program structure gives staff more control and provides juveniles with a safer environment that is conducive to change. From this perspective, the programs provide a positive atmosphere for therapy and education. In contrast, military structured treatment program critics say that the program's confrontational environment is in direct opposition to the type of positive interpersonal relationships and supportive atmosphere that are needed for youth's positive development (Bourque, Cronin, Pearson, Felker, Han, & Hill, 1996; Styve, MacKenzie, Gover, & Mitchell, 2000; MacKenzie, Wilson, Styve, & Gover 2001).

Today, there are more than 70 military structured treatment programs operating in over 30 states (Peters, Thomas, Zamberlin, Caliber Associates, & United States, 1997). All of the programs in operation have been designed for male offenders and are generally

restricted to non-violent or first-time offenders (Bourque, et al., 1996; Peters, et al., 1997). Although the military structured treatment program was modeled with boys in mind, there has been a recent shift towards sentencing girls to military structured treatment programs. Since 2000, at least thirteen states have incorporated females into military structured treatment programs, with females making up 6.1 percent of the entire military structured treatment program population (Rafter, 2000). However, because juvenile military structured treatment programs were developed with boys in mind, many researchers in the area of female delinquency believe that the effectiveness of programming for girls will not be the same as it was for boys. For example, Morash and Roucker (1990) presume that the confrontational nature of the interaction between the staff and cadets can be problematic for adolescents who have experienced abuse, particularly girls. They also emphasize that the experiences of girls who have a history of abuse or have dependency issues will likely parallel the difficulties they have faced in previous abusive relationships. In essence, they believe these environments will be particularly stressful and counter-therapeutic for girls.

#### *A Move Towards Gender-Specific Programming*

Prior to the 1980's most scholarship and treatment programming for delinquent youth in the United States was almost exclusively male-specific (Belknap, Winder, & Cady, 2003). As a result, the term delinquent was almost always synonymous with the term "male." However, over the years, an increase in feminist scholarship and professional work has increased the attention brought to girls' delinquency. Furthermore, due to recent government reports and statistics of girls' delinquency, which show an

increase in aggressive behavior, changes have been made in policy that addresses the needs of female offenders. For example, the 1992 re-authorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 established “gender-specific treatment” for girls “gender-specific needs.” The legislation declared that each state should:

- Conduct an analysis of the need for, and assessment of, existing treatment and services for delinquent girls
- Develop a plan to provide the appropriate gender-specific services necessary for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency
- Provide assurance that youth in the juvenile justice system are treated fairly regarding their mental, physical, and emotional capabilities, as well as on the basis of their gender, race and family income (Belknap, Dunn, & Holsinger, 1997)

Likewise, gender specific programming refers to program services that are all-inclusive in addressing the special needs of a targeted gender group, such as adolescent girls. Such programs foster positive gender identity development and aim to recognize the risk factors that are most likely to impact the targeted gender group and the protective factors that can build resiliency and prevent delinquency (Greene, et al., 1998; Mullis, et al., 2004). According to a report on Guiding Principles for Girls (Greene, et al., 1998), gender specific programming should:

- Include space that is physically and emotionally safe and removed from adolescent males

- Provide time for girls to talk and have nurturing conversations while developing relationships
- Tap cultural strengthening rather than focusing on the individual
- Provide mentors who share experiences that resonate with the realities of the girls' lives
- Provide education about women's health, including female development, pregnancy, contraception use, disease and prevention, and opportunities for girls to define a healthy sexuality
- Provide opportunities to create positive changes that will benefit girls at an individual level, within relationships, and within the community
- Give girls a voice in program design, implementation, and evaluation
- Provide adequate financing to ensure comprehensive programming will be sustained long enough for girls to integrate the benefits

In summary, one of the most pressing issues in the juvenile justice system today is the development of a deeper understanding of the relationship between mental health status and girls in the Juvenile Justice System. In order to meet the demands of this population, federal and state agencies have made it clear that juvenile justice systems must prioritize mental health assessment and treatment in order to identify youth with mental health needs and provide emergency response and long-term treatment planning (Grisso, Vincent, & Seagrave, 2005).



### *Theory and Prevention*

In order to develop a plan to address the mental health needs of girls, it is also helpful to understand the history of mental health and the manner in which practitioners have perceived individuals with mental health needs.

Psychotherapy has long had a pathology-oriented and medically oriented focus (Seligman, 2002). Before World War II, psychology was aimed at curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent. Soon after, psychology's focus shifted to assessing and curing individual suffering and treating mental illness within the disease-patient framework (Seligman, 2002). The discipline then experienced another paradigm shift in the late 1990's, which led to the integration strength-based approaches into therapy (Maddux, 2002; Johnson, 2003).

The message of the positive psychology movement is to remind our field that it has been deformed by its over focus on pathology. As Seligman (2002, p. 4), states

Psychology is not just the study of disease, weakness, and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is wrong; it also is building what is right. Psychology is not just about illness or health; it also is about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play. And in this quest for what is best, positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, self-deception, or hand waving; instead, it tries to adapt what is best in scientific method to the unique problems that human behavior presents in all its complexity.

In the realm of juvenile delinquency, most of what we know about girls focuses on the problems that they face, but the field itself is facing a paradigm shift, one in which researchers, policy makers, and practitioners are eager to explore the remarkable strength, resiliency, and “hardiness” that youth show during adolescence (APA Task Force, 1998).

### *Strength-Based Approaches*

In 1996, the American Psychological Association formed the Presidential Task Force on Adolescent Girls: Strengths and Stresses. The task force’s mission was to integrate current knowledge regarding adolescent girls, while focusing on the strengths, challenges, and choices of adolescent girls today. Through their work, the task force endorsed the position that adolescent girls should be viewed through a lens of strength and diversity—a health-based model for viewing adolescent girls (APA Task Force, 1998). Thus, it was determined that in order to empower girls, an assessment of their collective and individual strengths must be addressed.

For individuals working with girls in the juvenile justice system, this signified a movement towards gaining an understanding of girls’ specific strengths within the context of their family and community, while embracing the positive assets of their developmental stage. With this knowledge, practitioners and juvenile justice workers have the opportunity to move towards a worldview that not only helps them view girls in a different light, but also helps the girls understand the world within the context they live in (Johnson, 2003). In doing so, it is anticipated that girls will begin to view themselves in a more positive light.

In recent years, it has become apparent that the rising number of juvenile offenders and the lack of gender-specific rehabilitative programs available are critical issues that need to be addressed. Specifically, research by Acoca (1999) indicates that there are only a relatively small number of such programs nationwide that target gender-specific programming. Moreover, these programs are characteristically small and lack the organizational capacity and funding to collect, manage, and analyze client-related data. These programs are also rarely family-based programs, thus they do not provide health, psychiatric, substance abuse, and academic services tailored to girls' needs and they often lack programming that builds and preserves the teen mother-child bond by providing specialized and developmentally sequenced interventions.

#### *Conclusion*

In summary, the rising number of female juvenile offenders and the lack of gender-specific programs available to them are critical issues that need to be addressed across the juvenile justice system. Previous research has shown that the physical, sexual, and emotional victimization that girls experience facilitates a pathway towards delinquency, making their experience in the juvenile justice system different from that of boys (Acoca, 1999; Belknap, Winter, Cady, 2003; FACJJ, 2005).

Research in the area of delinquency has identified ways in which current treatment standards are not meeting the unique needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. Thus, one of the biggest challenges faced by mental health workers and juvenile justice facilities today is the creation and successful implementation of gender-specific programs in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, Sherman (2003) has outlined three

of the most significant gaps in community program and probation services for girls: a) education about sex, sexuality, and issues of parenting, b) vocational training and education and c) mental health services and therapeutic programming.

In order to remedy the existing state and treatment of girls in the juvenile justice system, current policy dictates that every state should, (a) conduct an analysis of the need for, and assessment of, existing treatment and services for girls delinquency, (b) develop a plan to provide the appropriate gender-specific services necessary for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency, (c) and provide assurance that youth in the juvenile justice system are treated fairly regarding their mental, physical, and emotional capabilities, as well as on the basis of their gender, race and family income (Belknap, Dunn, & Holsinger, 1997). More so, states should have (a) increased investment in and development of community based alternatives to detention, (b) administer quality program evaluations, (c) and conduct research concerning the processing of girls in the justice system, to be used to fully understand the impact of the juvenile justice process on girls (Sherman, 2003).

The current study aims to address these recommendations by conducting research concerning girls ordered to inpatient treatment at a military structured residential treatment facility. To accomplish this goal, the current study utilizes an ethnographic approach to obtain information that may be useful in better understanding the girls' experiences in the selected program, as well as inform future program planning and development.

### Chapter 3: Method

Based upon the prior review of the literature, it has been determined that the last three decades have seen an increase in the proportion of girls entering the juvenile justice system as well as an increase in the proportion of girls that are court ordered to attend military structured treatment programs. Additionally, critics of the military structure model believe that military structured treatment programs are less effective for girls, as they were initially developed with boys in mind. Thus, the goal of the current study is to consider the experiences of girls in a military structured residential treatment facility. Additionally, this study seeks to address the following three research questions, which were developed in cooperation with administrative personnel at this site:

- 1) Why do staff members report more difficulties when working with the girls?
- 2) Why are girls more emotionally labile than boys? In the words of the administrative staff members who work with the girls, “ Why is there so much drama?”
- 3) What changes can be made to the program to increase girls’ success in the program?

#### *Design*

In order to begin developing a better understanding of the experiences of female offenders in the military structured treatment program and the staff members that supervise them, this dissertation utilized a qualitative research design. This research method was chosen because it can be used to better understand intricate social processes, capture essential aspects of human experience and behavior from the perspective of the

study participants, and to uncover beliefs, values, and motivations that underlie an individual's behavior (Denzin, 2000; Krauss, 2005).

Additionally, qualitative research allows for the researcher to study individuals in the natural world, learn about the meanings that people make of their experiences, investigate individuals in social interactions and in context, and report the results of research in everyday language (Morrow, 2007). The core assumptions stated above are well suited for the current study, as they can provide the researcher with data that will allow for a better understanding of the meanings that girls attribute to their experiences in the military structured treatment program and the social dynamics that occur between the girls and the staff members.

Furthermore, qualitative research is beneficial in studying special populations and situations that are underrepresented in the literature. One such population is female offenders in juvenile justice treatment programs (Naploes-Springer & Stewart, 2006). Presently, more and more adolescent girls are becoming involved in juvenile crime. Unfortunately, when youth offending starts at an early age, offending persists and worsens over time (Mullis et al, 2004). Moreover, research has shown that programs that are effective in deterring recidivism for male offenders are not effective for most girls. (Sherman, 2003; Batemen, 2008). Finally, research in female delinquency has reported that the causes of female delinquency are highly gendered, as girls have different concerns and experiences than those of boys (Acoca, 1999; FACJJ, 2005; Belknap, Winter, Cady, 2003). According to Alford (2006), "If we are to better understand the developmental pathways that attract girls into at-risk behaviors, juvenile justice

practitioners must listen to them, learn more about them, and work with them more effectively to interrupt the quiet intergenerational cycles of trauma, neglect and economic dependence that often characterize their histories.”

### *Ethnography*

This study utilized ethnography as the research strategy. Ethnography seeks to answer questions concerning the link between culture and behavior and/or how cultural processes develop over time. In order to address the research questions, ethnographers spend a substantial amount of time with the individuals they are studying. While in the setting, ethnographers engage in participant observation, which means they participate as much as possible in the daily life of the individuals, and gain an “emic” perspective, or natural point of view, of the culture. Ethnographers collect data by recording detailed field notes, conducting interviews based on open-ended questions, and gathering site documents that might be available in the settings as data.

In regards to this study, ethnography was chosen over other methods of inquiry because it allows for the researcher to place specific events into a broader, more meaningful context and can help give shape to new constructs and paradigms for further research of girls in military structured treatment facilities (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Denzin, 2003).

### *The Researcher's Role*

It has been determined that in qualitative research, the researcher cannot be separated from the process. Moreover, the success of a researcher is dependent on his or her understanding of the community where the data is being gathered (Suzuki, et al.,

2005). Therefore data gathering is a relational and reflexive process. It is relational in that it requires the researchers to be cognizant of the “researcher-participant” interactions and how the construction of data is a process between the researcher and the client. Data gathering is also a reflexive process because it requires the researcher to engage in critical self-reflection. Thus, it is important for the researcher to examine his or her position, self-identities, and self-constructions that might lend him or her to the important choices in how the data are created and represented (Yeh & Inman, 2007). The following is the author’s self-reflection of her worldview.

*My Role: My Worldview*

As a Latina, issues of culture and diversity have been central in my personal and professional experience. I am a third generation Mexican American woman. I was born and spent my entire youth in the border city of El Paso, TX. My mother was a single parent until I was five years of age. During this time we lived in the “Segundo Barrio” of El Paso (also known as the projects) with my older brother and my great-grandfather. My mother worked long hours, and therefore, my grandparents and other family members often looked after me. My grandparents only spoke Spanish, and so I was raised in a home in which English, Spanish, and at times a combination of English and Spanish (referred to as Spanglish) was spoken. With her hard work as well as family and government financial assistance, my mother did all she could to provide for our family. With the goal of providing us a better living environment, we frequently moved within the city limits of El Paso, never staying in one neighborhood longer than a school year. Eventually my family made it out of poverty and my parents were able to buy their first



home. It was not long before I stayed at one school for four years, gained the familiarity of friends and neighborhood, and graduated from high school. I was the first to graduate from high school in my nuclear family. I was also the first to go directly to college then graduate school.

As I entered graduate school, I realized more how issues of culture and diversity have been a central influence in my personal life. Likewise, issues of class, gender, ethnic identity, and my experience as a person of color in graduate school have continued to shape my worldview. These experiences have fueled my interest and passion to work with disadvantaged youth, to give their experiences a voice, to provide encouragement and instill a sense of hope.

As I reflect, each of these experiences has given me the opportunity to challenge my biases, strengthen my competencies, and grow as a professional. And as my worldview has evolved throughout the years, my history has remained unchanged. I hope to continue developing and strengthening my knowledge as I continue my path towards cultural competency, a path that I believe does not end, but becomes more interesting and enlightening as time progresses.

During my observation at the facility, I grew to understand and appreciate what staff members and girls enjoyed about the program. In retrospect, I began this project with an agenda. When I was encouraged to undertake this study, I thought I was going to find that the military component was re-traumatizing the girls and would not be able to provide the support, care, or nurturance they needed. In acknowledging my bias prior to beginning the study, I found that I became more fully able to immerse myself in the

culture and appreciate what made this program a success, and what posed challenges. More so, I was more available to hear, understand, and accept the meaning that both the girls and staff attributed to their experiences in the program and between one another.

### *Participants*

Participants in this study were ordered to treatment in a military structured residential treatment program. The residential treatment program is designed to include a military-style discipline level of accountability. The residents, referred to as cadets, are required to wear military fatigues, call cadence, and do military style-exercises. During this researcher's observations at the program, the female cadets were commonly referred to as "the girls." For the purpose of this study, female cadets who have been ordered to participate in the residential treatment program will also be referred to as "girls."

At the time of the study, four girls, ages 14 to 16, were able to participate in the study. In addition to the girls' participation, staff members including drill instructors, program officers, teachers, health professionals, and administrative staff participated in the study through direct observation and/or interview.

### *Approval by Human Subjects Committee*

The current study adhered to the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Texas at Austin. In order to participate in the study, the guardians were asked to sign two consent forms. The first was the "*Consent for Medical Treatment and Consent for Release of Information*" required by the WCJJC. This form required only the guardian's signature. The second form was the *Informed Consent to Participate in Research* (UT). Both the girls and their

guardians were asked to sign the *Informed Consent to Participate in Research* (UT) form. This consent form made clear that the cadets were not required to participate in the research study and could select to decline participation with no penalty. Consent forms were also obtained from primary staffs at the treatment program that choose to participate in the study. Finally, the researcher informed all participants of the possibility that information revealed by each participant may make him or her easily identifiable by the community in which the research is being conducted and published.

### *Procedures*

This study took place from April through June of 2009. In order to get a better understanding of the subcultures that existed in the program, this researcher was at the facility five days out of each week, including both weekdays and weekends. All three shifts were observed during this time. Although all the staff and cadets were aware of the researchers presence, it took approximately two weeks for the researcher to develop rapport with all the participants.

Once rapport and familiarity was established, the interview process began. Interviews with the girls occurred in the girls unit, also known as “the pod.” The girls’ wing has two large pods connected by a main control room. In each pod are bedrooms, a recreation area, and shower area. Due to the small number of girls in the program, the second pod is used to store game equipment, such as a foosball table and checkers tables. For the interview, I met with the girls in the second pod. The interviews were often thirty minutes to an hour in length. At times, I would interview, or speak with, the girls during down time. Although there were scheduled interviews, the girls were always eager to talk

during down time and have someone listen.

My interviews with the program officers, the staff members that supervise the girls, were similar to that of the girls. They often occurred in the control room while the girls were showering, participating in recreation time, or sleeping. During the day shift, interviews could take place during the lunch hour or available free times. My interviews with all the program officers had to be casual, as there was no time to take them out of their shift to interview them. In contrast, the interviews with drill instructors and supervisors were scheduled when the staff member was not on duty, and they all took place in offices.

As the interviews continued, I found that the manner in which I interviewed the staff members mirrored the manner in which business was conducted with the staff members. For example, program officers have no office and, unless on duty, are not required to attend regularly scheduled meetings. Discussion with the program officers was often on the “spur of the moment,” casual, and relaxed. However, meeting with the drill instructors, the staff members that teach and oversee the military structure, was much more regimented. In order to meet with each staff member for the interview, the assistant director stated that he would need to email the supervisors and request thirty-minute time slots to speak with the drill instructors. In sum, the interviews with the program officers occurred on a daily basis, as I interacted with them and the girls, whereas the interviews with the drill instructors occurred over a two-day period, and periodically during the lunch shift and midnight/morning shift.

### *Instrumentation*

Ethnography utilizes relatively little pre-structured instrumentation, but instead uses audiotape, videotape, structured observation, field notes, diaries, and other data sources to gather information. The current study utilized audiotaped interviews, structured observation, field notes, and physical data to gather information.

The interview is considered to be one of the most important qualitative data-collection strategies, and is a key source of data for biographies, phenomenological studies, grounded-theory studies, ethnographic studies, and case studies (Creswell, 1994; Suzuki, et al., 2007). The interviews for this study followed a semi-structured process for the purpose of exploration. The semi-structured interview allowed the research to cover a common set of themes, while allowing for changes in the sequencing of questions and the forms of questions. An advantage of the semi-structured interview was the preservation of natural conversation flow (Suzuki, et al., 2007). Additionally, physical data, such as written observations and behavior reports, were obtained from the client's file that detailed behavioral observations from staff members that work with the girls.

### *Analysis*

Ethnography tends towards the descriptive in its analysis, reaching across multiple data sources in order to identify patterns or language that provides information to the culture or environment under study. Therefore, data analysis was conducted as an activity simultaneous with data collection, interpretation, and narrative report writing (Krauss, 2005; Creswell.1994). Additionally, the process of interpretation was based on data "reduction" and "interpretation." This method of analysis required the researcher to

take the information gathered and reduce to it ascertain patterns or categories and then interpret the information to provide meaning about the culture under study.

In order to establish patterns and themes that were descriptive of the participant's experiences and the meaning that they attributed to these experiences, the Listening Guide Method (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) was utilized to conduct a narrative analysis of the interviews with both the girls and staff members. The Listening Guide Method is a voice-centered, relational qualitative approach. This approach is based on the belief that voice is central to one's way of working, it is "a pathway that brings the inner psychic world of feelings and thoughts out into the open air of relationship where it can be heard by oneself and by other people" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992).

This researcher chose to utilize this method because it is less directive, and encourages the participants to take the lead in the interview, and by doing so contribute to the process of analysis. This method is especially important in working with girls who might otherwise stay quite in the presence of an interviewer whom appears to have an agenda, or due to lack of trust. Additionally, this method provides for a relational perspective of the data, as it brings the researcher into a responsive relationship with the person speaking. Finally, this method brings forth the feelings, thoughts and experiences of the participants, allows for the researcher to move in response to what is being discussed, and it is mindful of the way the researcher interprets, interviews, and hears the participant's voices.

The listening guide method of analysis requires the researcher to listen to the transcripts rather than read them. This method utilizes four "listenings" to guide the

researcher into the voice of girls' relationships and experiences. The first time through the interview, the researcher listens to the participant's story. The goal is to get a sense of what was happening in the story, to follow the events of the story, and to listen to the who, what, when, where, and why of the narrative. Like a therapist, the researcher attends to the recurring words and images, the metaphors, contradictions, shifts in sound of voice and the narrative position (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003).

Once the interviews for this study were transcribed, they were analyzed with four listenings. In the first listening, the researcher listened for plot, as the objective was to attend to the stories shared by the participant. The second time through, the researcher listened for "the self," for the voice of the "I" speaking in the relationship. This was a crucial step, as it brought the researcher in relationship with the person, "in part by ensuring that the sound of her voice enters our psyche and in part by discovering how she speaks of herself before we speak of her (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 27). The voice of self, expressed as the first person "I," was utilized to create what Gilligan et al. (2003) refer to as a voice poem. The purpose of constructing a voice poem was to provide a systematic way for the researcher to listen to the participant's first-person voice, to attend to any distinctive patterns within his/her voice, and to give the researcher the opportunity to hear how the participant speaks of him/ herself, in relationship to him/herself and to others.

The "I Poem was constructed by extracting every first person "I" within the transcribed interview, along with the verb and any significant information that

accompanies the first person statement. Second, the researcher maintained the precise sequence in which the phrases originally occurred in the participant's story. As the researcher extracted the sequenced "I" phrases, she placed them in separate lines, like the lines of a poem. According to Gilligan et al (2003) "I poems" capture concepts that may not be directly stated by the participant, yet can be central to the meaning of what he/she has said. Additionally, focusing on the "I" statements provides the researcher with the opportunity to attend just to the rhythms and patterns in the participant's relationships to him/herself and to others as expressed in his/her narratives. In the third and fourth listening, the researcher listened to the ways in which the participants spoke of relationships, how they experienced themselves in relationships, their struggle for relationships, and relationships in which they felt they could freely express themselves (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, et al. 2003).

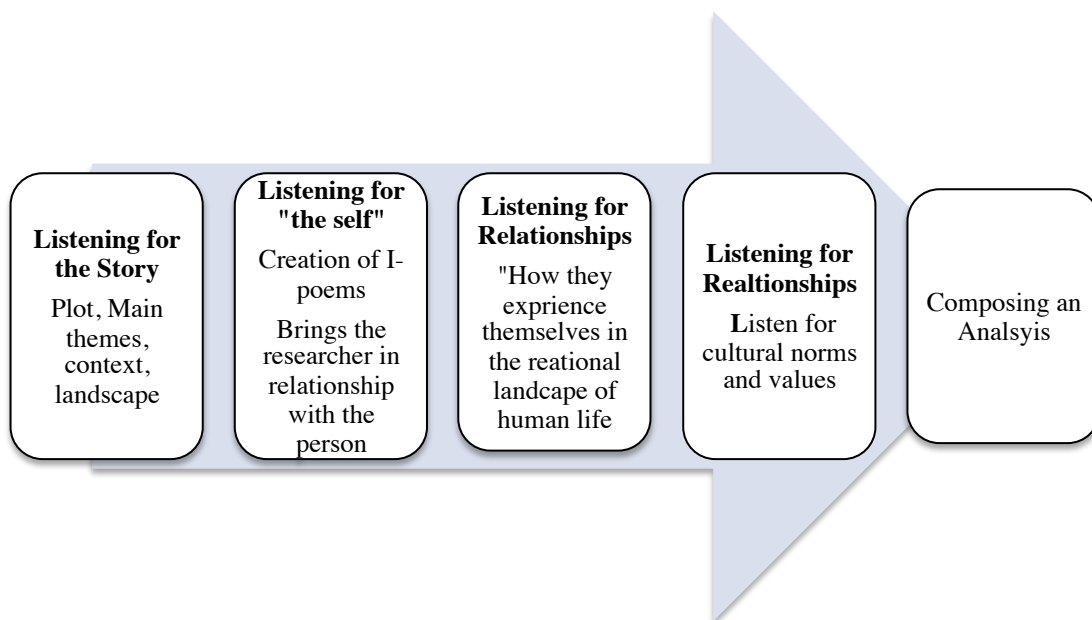


FIGURE 2: Listening Guide Method (Brown & Gilligan, 1992)



### *Conclusion*

Finally, by utilizing an ethnographic design and a relational method of analysis, the researcher had the opportunity to hear the nuances of the participant's stories and listen for important themes and relationships that emerged from the data. Furthermore, this design allowed for a more in-depth view of the multiple meanings that the participants attributed to their experiences with one another and their experiences in the program.

## Chapter 4: Introduction to the Program

The current study utilized an ethnographic research strategy to better understand the culture of the military structured treatment program. In accordance with a qualitative design, the ethnographer studied the participants in their natural environment in order to better understand the experience and behavior of the participants. By doing so, the researcher became very familiar with the design of the facility and the individuals that reside and work there on a daily basis.

The following chapter is designed to give the reader a brief glimpse at the natural environment of the participants by providing descriptions of the facility and the program in which this study took place. By presenting this picture, the reader is better prepared to follow the experiences of the participants that took place in this study and understand the culture of the military structured treatment program. In conclusion, this researcher provides the reader with an examination of her position and how that might have affected the important choices in how the data were represented.

### *Current Facility*

En route to the facility, one leaves the sights and sounds of the bustling city and trades them in for the serene sounds of wide-open spaces. Although the county in which the facility is located is growing in population and urbanization, the facility is located in a rural part of the county. Surrounded by farms with cows, longhorns, horses, and vast fields of crops, the treatment facility certainly stands out. It is a large facility with green rooftops, a ropes course, a garden, and a barn. As one enters the parking lot and exits the vehicle, one is often greeted by the hee-haw of the donkey or the rooster's crow. In the

distance one can also see and hear the cadets dressed in their fatigues, marching in formation.

The facility is housed in a 112,000 square foot building, with three interconnecting departments- the detention facility, juvenile probation, a secure treatment facility, and the military-structured residential treatment facility. The entire building is built to house 48 youths in the secure detention facility and the secure treatment facility and 48 youth in the non-secure residential treatment facility. The space in the residential treatment facility is also utilized as a school for approximately 250 students placed in an alternative education program. The alternative education program is for students between the ages 10 to 16 years old who have been expelled from a public school in the county and ordered to attend alternative placement. These youth attend school with those in the non-secure residential treatment facility, and are also required to wear military fatigues. In contrast to youth in the non-secure military structured treatment program, youth in the alternative education program are only at the facility during regular school hours.

In addition to the detention facility, non-secure treatment facility, and military-structured residential treatment facility, the complex of buildings include a juvenile court room, medical areas, a gymnasium, probation and administration support staff areas, training and conference room, a garden, farm, and an advanced challenge ropes course with a low and high elements obstacle course.

#### *History of the Non-Secure, Military Structured, Residential Treatment Facility*

The first residential treatment program for the county, in which this study took place, began in October 1993 as Intense Residential Center (IRC). The IRC had only six

beds and served only male youth involved with the juvenile justice system. At that time, the goal of the IRC program was to provide a structured and supportive environment for the youth, as they learned and demonstrated higher levels of responsibility, self-control and decision making skills. Based on its early success, the IRC program was moved to a larger facility, expanded to sixteen beds, and received a name change in November 1994 (the name change reflected the introduction of the military structured treatment design). With continued success, the county opened the current 112,000 square foot facility in October of 2003, which houses the program and additional juvenile justice services.

The current residential treatment program is designed to include a military-style discipline level of accountability. The residents, referred to as cadets, are required to wear military fatigues, call cadence, do military style-exercises, and have the opportunity to participate in color guard (presentation of colors, or flags, at opening public ceremonies and community events). The program also incorporates a therapeutic aspect that includes counseling, education, drug programs, anger management groups, life-skills groups, and parent-support programs. The minimum length of stay for a cadet in the program is six months.

### *Description of the Military Structured Treatment Facility*

#### *Rank Structure System*

All new cadets that enter the program are given the opportunity to progress in rank, with each promotion in rank the cadet receives additional privileges and assumes new objectives and responsibilities. Upon entry to the program, the resident is given the rank of Cadet (CDT): The Cadet motto is “Look, Listen, Learn.” The primary objective

of the cadet is to learn and become familiar with the program rules, expectations, and guidelines and to begin demonstrating them daily. When the cadet has met all requirements for promotion in rank, he or she is promoted to Private (PVT). As a private, the primary objective is to maintain positive behavior and demonstrate this positive behavior. The Private's motto is "Be, Know, Do." Next in rank is Private First Class (PFC). The PFC's motto is "Adapt, Overcome, Improvise." The primary objective is to demonstrate leadership, knowledge, and an increased level of trust and responsibility in the program and at home. A PFC is expected to deal with sanction swiftly and positively and move forward in a productive manner. The highest level of promotion is to the rank of Corporal (CPL). The Corporal's motto is "Leadership by Example." The primary objective is to demonstrate leadership, knowledge, trustworthiness, and responsibility within and outside the program.

To be eligible for promotion, all cadets must have been in the program for at least 60 days. A cadet is eligible for promotion again 30 days after each promotion. The cadet must satisfy the following requirements for promotion: achieve the minimum number of points necessary for promotion, receive a "Go" in both individual and group counseling, receive a "Go" from his or her assigned Case Manager, and receiving a "Go" from designated military staff. For Corporal, cadets must also have maintained positive behavior at all times, passed the corporal written evaluation, and passed a military examination covering Drill and Ceremonies and the Manual of Arms. Cadets are also awarded points based on scores from physical fitness tests, uniform inspections, room inspections, observation logs (noting outstanding, acceptable, unacceptable, and

intolerable behavior), noted improvement in behavior, and the number of days a cadet was not able to participate in programming due to sick call.

In regards to privileges, cadets receive extended phone privileges, extended bedtime and rise schedules, extended family visits, use of vending machines and weekend furlough. Cadets may be demoted in rank by engaging in: drug use, possession of contraband, aggressive behavior, leaving supervision while on home pass (furlough), destruction of property, profanity towards staff, physical restraint or escort by staff, any law violation, any probation violation.

### *Staff*

During the time of this study, the administration and staff in the program was comprised of the director, the assistant director, four case managers, two Licensed Professional Counselors, two student interns, and a Licensed Professional Counselor certified in substance abuse. The military component was overseen by the director and assistant director and was comprised of five program supervisors, four men- all with experience in the armed forces- and one woman, drill instructors, and program officers.

As part of the military structured component, the supervisors are expected to enforce the rules and regulations of the program, ensure the safety and well being of the cadets, and oversee that the program is running smoothly and efficiently throughout the day. The role of the drill instructor is to enforce the rules and regulations of the program through supervision of cadets, providing sanctions, and teaching military exercises and programming. Sanctions are given when cadets engage in rule violations. Sanctions, or discipline, can include any of the following loss of daily privileges, extra physical

discipline (PT), extra cleaning details, standing at position of attention (POA), and early bedtime. For major rule violations (such as fighting, failure to comply, disrespectful comments or gestures, and so on), sanctions include any of the following: expulsion from the program and placement in detention, referral to court for further formal court proceedings, and loss of rank. The drill instructors are the only members of the staff allowed to sanction youth utilizing Physical Training (PT).

Designed to work in conjunction with the drill instructors are program officers. Program officers are assigned to a squad during the school day and assume responsibility to supervise the cadets in that squad during school hours. A squad is a group of youth that are assigned to attend classes together throughout the school day. When school ends each day, a change in supervision occurs. During the evening and night shifts there are two program officers per squad. During these shifts, there are only two squads: the residential boys and the residential girls.

In addition to providing supervision, the role of the program officer is to oversee the squad, establish rapport with the cadets, and to help the cadets utilize and develop their coping skills when faced with a difficult situation. Furthermore, the role of the program officer is to provide the cadet opportunities to voice concerns when he or she feels powerless or misunderstood by a drill instructor, another cadet, or a member of the staff. Program officers are allowed to sanction a cadet, however, they are not allowed to use PT as a method of sanctioning.

### *School*

As one enters the corridor for the school, there are classrooms to the left and to

the right, teachers at the head of the class, smiling as they teach the lesson for the day. The wing that houses the school classrooms is in the shape of a circle. As you walk around the school, you can see into all the classrooms, as the doors are always open. Though these classrooms have books, and pencils, pet fish, and geography maps, they are in many ways different than your typical classroom. In these classrooms, there are also restrooms, cadets in military fatigues with canteens for water, program officers watching over the class, and drill instructors ready to give sanctions when there is speaking without permission, disrespectful behavior, or any behavior that would be distracting to the class. In these rooms, teachers do not worry about discipline; they focus on teaching and reaching the minds of their students. Even though there is the occasional whisper, gesture, or eye gaze, the cadets are hard at work.

### *“Opening the Range”*

As the school day comes to an end, the students enrolled in the alternative education program are bussed home or picked up by their guardians. Students who received sanctions during the day and are part of the alternative education program are required to stay until 6:00pm. These students join the cadets who are residents of the treatment program for dinner. As the cadets file in to the cafeteria they sit at assigned tables, generally the boys sit on one side of the cafeteria and occupy every seat within four rows of tables. The girls sit on the opposite side of the cafeteria and occupy one table. Once every cadet is seated, the girls are first to receive their meals, once they are finished it is the boy's turn. The cadets must wait until everyone has received their meal tray before eating. As the last cadet is seated, the supervisor calls on a cadet to “open the



range.”

In “opening the range,” a staff member indicates who is to “open the range.” All cadets who have been in the program for five complete days or more are expected to comply with this instruction without error. When ordered to do so, the cadet is expected to stand at Position of Attention and sound off in aloud and firm clear voice. Once the cadet has sounded off without error, everyone is allowed to begin eating. If there are any errors in opening the range, the cadet will ask for help, or receive assistance from others to “open the range.” Once allowed to eat, no one is allowed to speak. Once the cadets have finished their meal, they are required to push their tray in front of them, giving them space to place their hands on the table, one crossed over the other. There is silence until everyone has finished eating and it is time for next programming event.

### *Pods*

The Pods are the recreation and sleeping quarters for the cadets in the residential treatment program. To get from the school to the pods, one must obtain entry through a steel door that links the school to the pods. Once granted approval to enter through the doorway, the cadets walk down a long, white, empty corridor. There are two Pods, Pod A for the boys and Pod B for the girls, located directly opposite each other. The pod houses the cadet’s rooms, a recreation area, showers, and a secure control room for staff.

In order to gain entrance to each pod, cadets must progress through two security doorways. As each cadet passes through the first security doorway, they must pass through a second doorway that leads to the recreation area of the pod. A secure control office for staff is located adjacent to the second secure entrance. As each cadet enters the

pod, he or she is required to stand by the door to his or her room, unable to enter until given permission by the program officer. Each room in the pod has a bunk bed, two dressers, and a bathroom. Due to the small number of girls, each girl has a room to herself. The boys must share a room, as there are a large number of boys in the program.

Once cadets have entered the pod and the staff officer gives them permission to enter their rooms, they must also request permission to exit their room once they are ready to exit. Depending on the time of day, cadets spend time in the recreation room studying for their rank test, preparing for showers, preparing their uniforms, completing chores, watching TV, or making calls to their guardians. Even though cadets are expected to ask for permission to speak, enter and exit their rooms, the atmosphere in the pod is casual and relaxed. This atmosphere lends itself to the formation of relationships between the girls and the staff members who supervise them daily.

### *Conclusion*

As I began my time with the staff and cadets of the program, I wondered what information I might come across. My first challenge was to strip away all biases and assumptions I held about the effects of military structured programming on youth with traumatic backgrounds. Prior to beginning this project, I had already begun to make assumptions about what I would find and what I wanted to confirm. More so, I was influenced by my previous experiences and conversations with staff members of the program and their thoughts of the program. In order to be unbiased, I needed to let go of my understanding of the program, and open my mind to accepting the genuine experiences of the girls and staff members whom I would be observing. Initially this was

not an easy task, but as the days moved forward and I became immersed within their culture, I found myself looking past the fatigues and my prior assumptions, and into present.

## Chapter 5: Listening for Voice

The current ethnographic study began in April of 2009. At that time, there were a total of six girls in residential treatment at the military structured treatment program where this study took place. The following chapter reports on the analysis derived from listening to the voices of the girls who took part in this study. It is written in the first person in order to reflect the social elements of qualitative research. With regard to qualitative research, it has been “argued that the use of the first person is required in keeping with the epistemologies of the research and in the pursuit of reflexivity (Webb, 1992). To align with the need to de-identify data, the girls will be referred to as: Ashley, Elise, Melanie, and Stephanie.

### *The Girls*

#### *Non-participants*

Although six girls were present at the time this study took place, this researcher was only able to enroll four of them in the research study. The two girls that did not participate in the program opted out for different reasons. The first individual was not able to interview because the researcher was not able to contact her guardian to obtain the signed consent form required to participate in the study. This individual often became frustrated with this, as she too wanted to be interviewed and share her story. The second girl who was not a part of the study engaged in behaviors and incidents that resulted in her being placed on suicide watch, and at one point being hospitalized. More so, she had recently made an outcry about sexual abuse, and was struggling both at home and in the program. She was periodically unavailable, and it was unclear to this researcher if she

were stable enough to participate in the study and not be at risk for increased mental health issues. Due to these incidents and concerns from the researcher, she was not enrolled in the study.

### *Ashley*

Ashley is a 16 year old, white female who lives at home with her mother and stepfather. Ashley's parents divorced when she was two years old. Since that time, she has had very little contact with her father. When asked about her father, Ashley described him as someone that "breaks promises." Ashley's mother remarried when she was in middle school. It was in middle school that Ashley's parents began to experience problems. During this time Ashley was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Finally, there is reason to believe that in middle school, a friend's stepfather molested Ashley.

During high school, Ashley received her first referral to juvenile justice services for Assault Family Violence. In the following year, she received two referrals for Failure to Attend School, one referral for Contempt of Court, and another for Criminal Mischief. During this time period, Ashley was regularly truant from school, thus failing the ninth grade. Along with truancy, Ashley ran away from home twice in the first two years of high school. On both occasions, she ran away with a boyfriend for several weeks before being detained and transferred back to her home county. In her second year of high school, Ashley ingested eight Tylenol capsules in one night. This was her first suicide attempt. Her parents report that Ashley has a history of cutting, and believe that this attempt was a "cry for attention."

Ashley admits to occasional marijuana use. She reports being sexually active beginning at the age of 15 and having three sexual partners since that time. Ashley is only 16 years old.

Ashley's parents report that she is easily frustrated and angry with them, resorting to physical violence towards her mother. Her parents believe she "attaches to boys who mistreat her" and describe her as a follower. Ashley's probation officer describes her as lacking in discipline skills and having difficulty with the expression of emotions. The family does not live in poverty.

When I first met Ashley, I heard her voice, loud and clear, commanding attention in the room. Her tone was often that of enthusiasm, with a bite of sarcasm. Ashley loved to talk. She could generally be found whispering to one of the other girls about something that had happened that day or citing examples and reasons as to why the staff did not like her.

When it came time to write about Ashley, I realized that this was all I knew. I knew she wanted to be heard. As I sifted through my notes and the audio recordings of the girls talking in a group setting, I realized that I did not have very much information on Ashley. I had not recorded many observations of her in the program. This was strange to me, as I had spent as much time with her as I had with the three other girls whom I had interviewed. I quickly realized, I did not know much about Ashley.

My next step was to review the audio recording of my interview with Ashley. Utilizing the Listening Guide to review the material, I began to learn more about Ashley. In the first listening my goal was to get a sense of what was happening, to listen for the

who, what, when, where, and why of Ashley's narrative. As I listened to her interview, I found it difficult to stay on task. I found my mind wandering to other things that needed to be done, often times having to rewind the material and listen to it again. I was not sure what was going on, but I soon realized that it was hard for me to connect with Ashley. As I tried to find metaphors, contradiction, or inconsistencies in her dialogue, I found myself struggling to remain focused. I must admit, at first I thought all Ashley did was complain. This made it even more difficult to get a sense of what Ashley was trying to convey, as it was difficult to remain interested. It was not until my third attempt at the first listening that I was able to hear Ashley and find a metaphor for her voice.

Ashley began her narrative with a complaint about a woman program officer and her response to an event that occurred that morning:

Because she always picks on me. Like this morning? I had a meltdown this morning. Okay, so I was running, right? And remember when I told you that they don't motivate you? Well, I was running—it's hard to run two miles without stopping. So I walked like twice, and she was yelling at me, and she was like, "Maybe I'll call your case manager and maybe I won't let you go home this weekend." Because she throws that in our faces because I'm supposed to be getting out soon, and she's like, "Well, maybe I should call Miss —" which is my case manager—"And I should talk to her that you're not working the program." She wrote an FYI on it. And I'm like, "How come nothing is never good enough for any of you all? All you all do is sit there and complain. You all don't care how good we're doing. You all just sit there and complain about everything that we do. I was just freaking out.

As I listened, I began to hear the voice of a girl who became easily distressed by criticism from the staff members, and did not know how to express her needs without becoming overly aggressive in her interaction with the staff. I could also hear her frustration at the lack of motivation and negativity by the staff member and feeling that she was “not good enough” in the eyes of the staff. Finally, her tone of voice elaborated the hopelessness she felt about being listened to and heard by this staff member.

In the next two examples, the content of Ashley’s dialogue is clothes, but the process that is heard is her desire to be taken care of and to establish a relationship with women staff members. One can also begin to hear feelings of disregard and humiliation, more so, her frustration with short-term solutions and begin ignored:

Okay, these underwear are really cheap, so they tear at the top. So mine kept tearing and tearing and tearing, and I kept asking for new ones. She said she’s not going to give me any more new ones; called my mom and told her to make me a doctor’s appointment because my underwear, because I don’t seem to be able to take care of my underwear [said in sarcasm]. And it was because the tops of them are ripping. Like the very top. So I was mad about that. She never gives me new stuff; like new shoes or anything. So like—I don’t know—and she always has something to say.

So it frustrates me because I’m sitting there listening to her opinion, but she never has time to listen to our opinion. She’s the one who fixed my shoes by putting a whole bunch of gauze in it.



Once again, Ashley experiences hopelessness about her relationship with the staff member. Ashley becomes frustrated that the staff member has criticized her and humiliated her in front of her mother. For example, when she describes her underwear as, “so cheap... they tear at the top,” I can hear the humiliation in her voice. In the second example, Ashley speaks of her desire to connect with this staff member by giving her the time and attention she seeks, only to feel ignored, and in many ways invisible, when the woman staff member fails to reciprocate the interaction. Her sense of disregard by the staff member is highlighted when she describes this woman as the “the one who fixed my shoes by putting a bunch of gauze in it.” In her voice, one can hear the void she experiences when others fail to respond to her needs. It is in the last sentence, that I could hear the disappointment and sadness in Ashley’s voice, as she realized that her attempt to develop a relationship with the staff member was futile.

As I wrote about these examples, I found myself thinking about my experience with Ashley during the first reading. I too failed to connect with Ashley. Many times I found myself saying, “enough already!” I now wondered if I inadvertently told Ashley to “put a sock in it,” just as other staff members quieted her with short-term solutions, such as “putting a bunch of gauze” in her shoe.

Although it was easy to become lost in Ashley’s stories, there were glimpses of her personality and her voice that brought awareness to her feelings of powerlessness and worthlessness. These moments were highlighted in the second listening of her dialogue, when I listened for self, “for the voice of ‘I’ speaking in the relationship” (Brown and

Gilligan, 1992). In the following example, one can begin to hear the metaphor of her relationships, and her sense of self:

I cannot run with anyone

I'm one of the slowest people here.

It makes me want to give up when I run by myself I'm like, "Man, they're trying to single me out"

I get mad and then I'm like, "Whatever"

I give up and I start walking

In the example above, Ashley shares with us that she does not like being alone. When she is alone, she feels hopeless; she is reminded of her challenges, and she feels like giving up. For Ashley, there is no motivation to run in the race if she must run by herself.

In the third and fourth listening, I began to hear more about Ashley's experience with relationships. In the following example, Ashley is discussing her frustration with the morning exercises, referred to as PT. Ashley refers to the woman program officer as "disrespectful" because she "antagonizes us for everything we're doing." Ashley talks about the difficulty of running two miles and her desire to have someone motivate her and cheer her on. Ashley also addresses the disappointment she experiences from the woman staff member who is present.

It makes a difference to me because at least they know what we're going through.

It's like she doesn't care what we're going through. We just need to go. She doesn't understand how hard it is. The staff that's been out there knows how hard it is. Like the staff that's been out there, they don't really say anything. No matter

how slow you're going. At least you're still moving. But she'll sit there and yell at us, and she's not even running with us.

In this example, one can hear Ashley's desire to have someone "understand how hard it is;" she is looking for someone to empathize with her situation and provide support. Specifically, she looks to the women staff members to provide her with support and attention. Ashley is disappointed when the staff members are not able to provide her with the empathy and respect she seeks. More so, Ashley's relationships with others appear to be fraught with confusion and despair. The following "I statement's" illustrate these points:

I've been trying, and everybody's been saying—like the morning staff just breaks me down

I'm trying to run in the mornings

I'm trying to do everything I'm supposed too do

I always get in trouble for it

I've gotten my GED since I've been here

I've enrolled in college

I've done everything on my court order that I was supposed to do

I turned 17, and they don't ever see that

They just see what I'm doing wrong.

I don't get that

In the excerpt above, one can hear Ashley's struggle to be heard. In this statement, Ashley lets us know that she seeks affirmation and validation, yet all she hears is what she is doing wrong.

In discussing her relationships with others in the program, Ashley addresses her relationship with the other girls in the program. The following "I Statement" describes her thoughts:

I hate—I'm not saying I hate females

I don't get along with females all the time

I don't want to see them every minute of the day, every day

I'm in a squad with almost every single female in

I'm not trying to see them everywhere I go

As Ashley continued to discuss her thoughts about the other girls in the program, Ashley stated, "When I need to talk to someone, it's not like you can talk to a female about it because they talk too much. If you told one female, it's going to get around the whole entire place." In this statement, one begins to get a glimpse into the relationship these girls have with one another. Ashley would not go to another girl in the program because she does not trust that the information will be kept confidential. More so, it becomes apparent that Ashley would like to connect with the girls in a much deeper way, but is afraid that she will face humiliation, rejection, and betrayal by the girls. The following statement, made in response to a question about what would be helpful for girls in the program, also reflects this idea:

Probably like an hour—probably just to like—everybody vent and ask questions

like, “This is what’s going on and I don’t really know how to deal with it” and have everybody—but it has to be confidential or you’ll get in trouble. There’s going to be consequences. I think that there should be where like you could ask everybody for advice in that situation—just let things off your chest.

Lastly, Ashley spoke of her relationship with her mother. The following “I statement” reflects her thoughts:

I didn’t really have a relationship with my mom

I didn’t know a lot about my mom that I do now

In her interview, Ashley speaks of the gains she and her mother made in family therapy. Although it appeared that Ashley’s relationship with her mother was improving, when I asked her more about the relationship with her mother, she switched focus to the program. Ashley ended the discussion by providing details about the various services available in the program. It appeared to me that Ashley’s avoidance was perhaps a way to mask pain and hurt that she experienced in regards to her mother.

### *Conclusion*

In sum, it appears that Ashley’s sense of self is that of girl who is “never good enough” for the nurturance, trust, empathy, and acceptance she seeks in her relationships from others. Ashley becomes easily distressed and frustrated in interactions with staff members in which she feels she is not being heard or given the opportunity to explain herself and her actions. Unfortunately, in challenging situations, Ashley’s lack of emotion regulation and distress tolerance leads to anger and aggression towards others.

Finally, as I listened to Ashley’s voice, I could hear the hurt, humiliation, and loss

of trust she has experienced from previous relationships. It was at this point I wondered if perhaps, I too was blinded by the “complaints” and failed to see the attempts Ashley had made to bond with me during my time with the program. My interview with Ashley ended with her hopes for the future; Ashley would like to be a neo-natal nurse. When Ashley said this, I couldn’t help but wonder if her choice of career was in many ways an opportunity to provide others with the nurturance and attunement that she so desperately sought and desired.

### *Elise*

Elise is a 14 year-old, white female whose primary language is English. Elise is described by others as smart and possessing the ability to be a leader. It was recommended that as part of her therapy, Elise work on her anger and self-esteem issues. Prior to her referral to the program, Elise had three referrals to the juvenile justice services, the first for Runaway in August of 2008 and the last two for Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle in October and December of 2008.

Elise resides with her mother and stepfather, she has two sisters, ages seven and fourteen. At the time of this interview, Elise’s parents had recently separated. Elise reports that her stepfather is “generally” nice to her when her mother is around, but is “cruel” in her mother’s absence. Prior to her stepfather, Elise lived with her mother and her sisters’ biological father. It is reported that this individual abused drugs, was verbally abusive towards Elise, and physically abusive towards her mother. During this union, it was reported that Elise’s mother and stepfather neglected the children; a case with Child Protective Services was opened but never substantiated. At the time of this interview,

Elise was in the eighth grade, attended regular classes, and had a history of Truancy.

Elise was said to do well in school when she was in attendance.

In regards to her mental health history, Elise was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder in February of 2008. Elise has been sexually abused on two separate occasions. At the age of eleven, Elise was “molested by her uncle.” The uncle was found guilty and sent to prison. Shortly after, she “was raped by a man who resided in the apartment complex where the family was living.” Elise testified in court against this man, but he was not found guilty of the rape. Instead, he was sent to prison on drug charges, as he was found in possession of drugs at the time of his arrest. Shortly after these two incidents, Elise took numerous pills; reportedly “because she wanted to sleep a few days, not kill herself.” Elise was hospitalized for this incident then released to her parents. Elise also has a history of cutting; on three to four occasions she required medical attention due to cutting. Finally, Elise has a history of alcohol abuse. She began using marijuana and drinking alcohol at the age of eleven. She reports using marijuana only twice, but reports drinking frequently. Elise is only 14 years old.

In my observation, Elise was a leader. She took her rank seriously and was proud of her achievement as a member of the color guard. Elise was also quieter than the other girls. She maintained a good relationship with Ashley, often in the shadows of Ashley’s booming voice and laughter. While in the pods, Elise appeared most comfortable. She let loose and would laugh and speak loudly with the other girls. Elise’s smile was unique; she was often hesitant to allow herself to relax fully and this was apparent in the resistance that was seen in her smile. When she was not in the pod, Elise was reserved

and hyper vigilant of her surroundings. She was generally respectful of the staff and acutely aware of the staff's expectations.

During my observations, I had the opportunity to see Elise make Corporal. The weeks prior to her exam, she spent her free time in the pod studying for the written exam. She would often express her concern about not passing the written exam or the marching exam. Although she was nervous and anxious about the exams, she managed to remain focused and determined.

After weeks of studying, the day had arrived for her marching exam. As I watched her, I could see her hesitate to start. With approval to begin, she began to give her commands, then paused and quietly looked at the floor. She looked nervous and eventually continued to call cadence. As she progressed, she made a few mistakes, but never stopped. She continued until it was complete. Once again, she looked at the floor as she waited for the response of the drill instructors. It was not long before she got the thumbs up-a pass! I could see the relief in her body as her shoulders relaxed. I could feel the relief in my body as well, as every muscle in my body had become tense. Like everyone else in the room, I hoped she would do well and achieve rank.

After she completed her march, the drill instructor came over to me and shared with me what he was looking for in a passing grade. He said the march requires quite a bit of knowledge, memorization, and confidence. The cadets must be loud, remember the steps, and lead the squad of five. He told me she did well, but could tell she was nervous because she kept looking at the floor. If she was in boot camp in the Army, he said, she would not have passed- but she did well.



Given the hard work and determination to get to this point, it was no surprise that my interview with Elise began with a discussion about the military component of the program:

I don't know. At first when I got here, I didn't like the PT at all, but now that I got used to it, I like it a lot. I hated exercise, but now I like, lost a lot of weight and I feel better about myself, building more confidence.

As the interview continued, Elise went on to discuss her appreciation for the discipline and respect she learned during her time in the program. Excitedly, Elise was able to explain to me the requirements necessary to make Corporal and the expectations of a cadet who made Corporal. She spoke of this with great pride and confidence. The following excerpt describes her experience in the Color Guard:

Oh, and the thing I like most about the program that I love is color guards. I love color guards and I love rifle training. I never knew anything about it before I got here.

I don't know. It's just so like, fun and like, when you get it down right, then you feel good about yourself and then you go out and you... like, you represent the academy most of all and you represent yourself and you can show your skills to other people.

And it's not something you see everyday. And plus, we get to go out and we present the flags and I... I'm trained in the American flag, the Texas flag, and the

rifle, so I can do any of the positions, and I just... I like to be the one up there representing, you know, the flags.

You have to train for it though You have to be confident that you, you'll do it.

And I only have one more color guard I have to do 'til I get my color guard ribbon, so I'm excited about that.

Yeah, I really like it.

As I continued my first listening of Elise's interview, I could hear the sense of confidence and accomplishment she felt. Elise enjoyed the military structure; it was a positive experience for her, one in which she learned about her capabilities and strengths. As Elise continue to speak about the military structure, I realized that there were pieces missing from her story. Elise rarely talked about her other experiences in the program. I didn't know much about her thoughts of school, friends, or her family. More so, I noted that when Elise spoke of these things, she became quite. Her voice would become soft and almost inaudible.

In the second listening of Elise's interview, I listened for a sense of self, for the voice of "I." Elise's voice came through clearly in her "I Poem", specifically the following statement:

I mean you can, you can be real without putting your whole self out there.

You know what I mean?

I think in here, like if, if you're doing that in here then you're just looking for an excuse for people to feel sorry for you.

I don't know, what's the point of putting your stuff out here.

In the statement above, I could hear Elise's conflict: how can one be authentic, without being vulnerable. More so, I could hear the struggle in Elise's voice to be strong and confident. She did not want other's to feel sorry for her, a risk she took if she allowed others to see her "real" self. In light of her history, I wondered if Elise struggled with her real experience of herself and the self she thought she should be, in short, her feelings of vulnerability and her desire to be seen as a strong, confident individual, a Corporal. This conflict is further highlighted in the following I-statements:

I don't know, there's too much drama. [regarding the girls] I think the thing that I hated the most was when they tried to talk about who's real and who's fake, because... like in here, you can't really be... your real self. I mean, you can show your feelings, but you can't react, you know. It's something I struggle with. I wasn't really used to that. I don't know.

Like every time I think about it, I'm like, yeah I can't believe I made it 'cause I really doubted it. There were times that I was like, man, I'm not even gonna be able to make it in.

I'm not really... a shy person. I'm pretty outgoing. I'm pretty outspoken. I'm very loud, actually I care what their opinions are I guess.

I had plans I had it all figured out... before I got in here I'm still kind of undecided

In listening to Elise's voice, one begins to hear the incongruity between the real self and ideal self, the "I am" versus the "I should." This is furthermore highlighted in the hurtful conversations other have had with her when trying to point out their thoughts on her self-esteem:

Yeah, and then some of the other female program officers or whatever, like, you might say one little thing or do something and they'll go off on you like, 'you don't respect yourself, you don't love yourself, you think you're worthless, you think you're stupid' and you're like, when did I ever say that? Like, what are you talking about. Like, you don't love yourself, obviously you don't have enough respect for yourself, da, da, da, da, da, da. I'm like, you don't know me. You have no idea who I am. They're like, 'you don't have high self-esteem'. And I'm telling you right now, I have one of the highest self-esteem in here. I'm kind of cocky sometimes

As I continued the third and fourth listening, I wondered if this program, through the staff members that work with the girls and the expectations that placed on the cadets to achieve rank, allowed for situations that challenged Elise's beliefs about her self worth. For example, hearing a drill instructor tell her that she was going to be a Corporal left Elise with much anxiety. Everyday was filled with fear of failure and the possible embarrassment that might come from others witnessing her fail the exam. In other

instances, there were program officers who pointed out to Elise the inconsistencies in her behavior and her beliefs, many times in ways that were perceived as judgmental and hurtful.

### *Conclusion*

In my observations of Elise, I observed a young girl who was very critical of her self. Although there were moments of failed attempts to empathize and validate Elise, there were moments when staff members provided the acceptance and support that she desired, thus allowing her to begin experience growth and autonomy in her development. It was in these activities and these experiences that Elise was moving forward in building awareness and understanding of what it meant to be vulnerable and strong.

### *Melanie*

Melanie is a 16 year old, Hispanic female, whose primary language is English. Melanie is described as “headstrong and not afraid to state her opinion and get her point across.” Melanie has ten prior referrals to juvenile justice services, her referrals consist of: Failure to Attend School, Disorderly Conduct, Runaway, Contempt of Court, and Failure to Identify.

Melanie lives at home with her biological parents. Although her parents live together, they never married. Melanie has two sisters, ages eight and sixteen. Melanie’s family has a troubled history. When Melanie was younger, her parents were heavily involved in cocaine use. At one point, all three children were taken out of the home and placed in foster homes due to neglect. When asked about her relationship with her parents, Melanie reported that she gets along well with her mother, but not with her

father. Her father yells, “gets in my face and gets physical.” The family lives in poverty.

Melanie became pregnant when she was thirteen years old. Due to her instability, and her parent’s drug history, her child was removed from her care one year after she was born and was placed in foster care. In order to regain custody of her child, Melanie was required to attend parenting classes and complete other required courses. Unfortunately, Melanie failed to meet these requirements. During her time in the program, Melanie was faced with the reality that she was going to have to sign over parental rights of her child.

At the time of this interview, Melanie was in seventh grade, special education classes and had a history of truancy. In school, Melanie was behind two years due to excessive truancy and showing up intoxicated to school. In regards to her mental health, Melanie was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, Conduct Disorder, and Borderline Intellectual Functioning in 2008. Melanie has a history of substance abuse, including alcohol, cocaine and marijuana. There is also a history of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect by her parents. Finally, during her time in the program, Melanie alleged that she was raped in October of 2008.

When I met Melanie, a short, petite girl with a boisterous voice greeted me. Melanie might have been small, but she commanded attention in the room. Unfortunately, it was not always the attention that was in her best interest. That said, it was not uncommon for Melanie to receive incident reports for refusal to comply, use of profanity, disrespectful behavior, and disrespectful comments to staff.

If you asked Melanie about these reports, she would be honest with her interpretation of the situation and assure you that she would not have done anything

different. More so, she found no harm in telling someone exactly what she had on her mind, even if it was hurtful. When you'd speak to Melanie about this, she'd tell you that she was not about to back down on something she felt strongly about, especially when she felt she was negatively affected. For Melanie, protecting herself and her wellbeing was more important than any consequence she might receive in return.

In my first listening of the interview with Melanie, I was overwhelmed with the amount of information Melanie gave me. Melanie began her interview very differently than the other girls did, she began with her life story. As I listened, Melanie told me about her three-week stay in detention, and the time she spent considering her placement. A prominent theme in Melanie's dialogue was of her struggles. Melanie would often say, "I had problems that you would not even think of, like it is crazy."

Melanie took time to talk about her struggle at home, her choice not to listen to her family, to talk back to her parents, and leave home when she would become upset. She related this to her inability to adapt to the program and her frequent problems with the staff. Another theme that emerged for Melanie was the value she placed on her ability to "touch" others with her story. For example, it was not uncommon to hear Melanie say, "I guess I touched them with my background and stuff and why I act the way that I act."

As Melanie told me her story, I listened to a girl with bold desire to influence others with her story, to share her struggles with those who would listen, and a strong desire to be validated. More so, I began to hear the voice of a scared child. As Melanie spoke, I could hear her voice shaking, long pauses, and gulps of air. As Melanie spoke the words, "I am never scared, because there is no scary in my veins, in my blood or

anything,” I could hear the fear in her voice. I wondered what this fear might be. Was she nervous? Or was she afraid that in listening to her, I would hear and see what she was trying to shelter from others?

Reflecting on my observations of Melanie, I found that other girls would not challenge her; they often mimicked her, taking on her phrases and slang, at times even the tone of her voice. I came to know a girl that used fear, and denied fear, to protect her fragile self. Melanie, strong and fearless, was in many ways a fragile and angry child who knew enough about her self to say, “I wanted to get back at people, and I would hold it in instead of letting it out.” More so, Melanie felt very alone in the world and took it upon herself to protect and guard herself from danger, “ I don’t talk back as much as I used to, only sometimes when I know it is right because there is nobody that is going to stick up for me but myself.”

Taking into consideration Melanie’ past history with her parents and child protective services, I wondered if she had grown weary of adult relationships and had come to expect that adults would hurt and/or fail her. More so, I wondered if it was easier to accept that she was on her own, than to experience the pain that might come from the loss of another attachment. For example, Melanie said the following about an incident in which she was not participating in PT:

Before he had said that, this other [program] officer was running with this cadet and he was running slowly since I guess his feet were hurting, he said. He was like; look I am walking fast and you are still running slow. I can walk faster than you and I am walking. He was humiliating him and stuff. Then the academy



officer stopped walking and went to go talk to another academy officer, and they are all like he is just faking it and stuff. That same DI that was yelling at me said, I know I am going to get him; accusing him of service sanction and stuff and do more PT. When he said that he cared about me and stuff, I said you do not care about nobody. Do not give me that you care about me stuff. All you are here for is the dinero, which is money. That is all you are here for. Then he was all like whatever, and stuff. Then I just got an incident report for disrespect.

In this example, Melanie interpreted another officer's comments about another cadet as potentially threatening to her. I was there during this incident, and I did see that the cadet was refusing to do the PT. Melanie did not see this, she only saw the potential embarrassment and humiliation that she might suffer. In turn, she refused to hear that this officer could have any positive emotions towards her. At this point, Melanie had already chosen to push away the connection attempted by the officer. As I observed Melanie, I found that she often pushed others away at the expense of forging an attachment.

In putting together Melanie's I –Poem, I began to pick up on some inconsistencies in Melanie's Story. During the first two listenings, and during my time with Melanie, I was caught in emotions of hope and happiness at her impending completion of the program, her renewed excitement and appreciation for school, and the positive changes she noted in herself. During her graduation ceremony, Melanie gave a very long speech to tell her story, thanked everyone for their help and support, and shared with everyone in attendance her dreams and aspirations. More so, she expressed her desire to change and live a different life. Although everyone was happy for Melanie and her successful

completion in the program, there were skeptics in the room, and others who hoped that Melanie would do continue to do well upon her release.

I had only observed Melanie for two weeks prior to her graduation. Thus, I could not entirely understand the reservation I heard from the staff. It was not until I listened for the voice of “I” that I understood their concerns, and realized that Melanie might not be prepared to maintain the gains she had made while in the program. For example, Melanie stated the following about the gains she had made:

I do not want to be in the same situation again

I went through this program, and since I went through a hard life too

I have some struggles in my life and stuff I want to help kids that want to change

If I can change, they can change

I want to show my family

I am tired of telling them

I want to show them

I want them to give me a chance to show them

I am so happy

I want them to be happier than me

I am proud of myself because man this is a new me

I want all my haters to come and look at me and see what I have done

I am not going to be that person any more.

I want to be going to school, be a graduate in my family, and go to college and stuff.

I want to see some tears

I want to see some tears out of my eyes too.

Although Melanie spoke of the changes she had made and the desire to show others that she could change, a closer look at her I-poem revealed inconsistencies in Melanie's idea of change, her readiness for change, and the meaning she ascribes to change.

In the following segment, Melanie describes her perceptions of the staff members. It becomes clear that she believes that others should adapt to her response and reactions versus utilizing coping mechanisms and self-awareness to change her beliefs and perceptions.

I have been here for six months already

They should already know how I am

In response to her smoking, Melanie first stated that she wanted to quit because of the effects it had on her body, but then stated that she would only stop if she did not have the money to purchase them herself.

I know I would not have the money.

My parents will buy them for me, but I do not need them to buy them for me

I would give them the money

If I do not have the money, I do not need them

In speaking of herself and her relationship with others, Melanie used the words, "as much," "that much," "not really even," and "deserve" to describe the changes she has made. She realizes she has made gains in these areas, however, in future statements she reverts to her old thought-process and loses sight of following through on change. The

following I-statements provide examples of these observations:

It took me three months to realize that

I am not disrespectful *as much* as I used to be

I do not cuss *that much*

I do not *really even* cuss at my house either

I do not talk back *as much as I used to*, only sometimes when I know it is right

I think I deserve to talk to them the way they are talking to me

I am still going to be me

I am still going to have my slang talk and everything

I am still going to have the hood in me

I am not going to have the drug in me, and all that

I am not going to let any female just come at me all crazy

I am going to fight the female or I am going to fight the dude

I am not going to let anybody disrespect me

I have more respect for an adult than I would have for a kid

I know that for a fact

In the statements above, one can hear the rigidity in Melanie's thoughts and beliefs about others. Although Melanie has experienced the success of completing the program, doing well in school, and establishing positive relationships with staff members. Melanie has yet to believe that she does not have to use verbal or physical abuse to protect herself against others. More so, Melanie continues to expect that she will have to defend herself against others.

During my time with Melanie I learned from her, and others, that she does not get along with the other girls in the program. She has “no respect” for these girls, specifically because she believes they are not “real females,” as she describes herself. To Melanie, a real female is one who stands up for what she believes in, a female who has her own thoughts and beliefs, who does not talk like others, but has her own style; she is confident. More so, a real female is not weak, but strong.

Of all the individuals that Melanie was that hardest on, it was the other cadets in the program. As I learned more about Melanie and her perception of a “real female,” I wondered if Melanie had a “real woman” in her life that was confident, strong, and stood up for what she believed in. Although I did not know much about Melanie’s mother, I wondered what effect it had on Melanie to see her parents using drugs, neglecting the needs of their children, and experiencing the pain of being taken away from her family.

They took me away from my parents and they put me in a group home for kids  
I could not be there. I cannot even be away from home  
I could only be with people that I know, like be around my family  
I cannot just live somewhere.

Me, I was always running the streets, but I always came back home.

In hearing this, I wondered if Melanie’ attitude and behavior towards other girls or women in the program who she saw as “fake” or not “real females,” was a displacement of her feelings about her mother, for it was much easier to be angry with others than the person she loved so dearly. For Melanie, another conflict was the inability to be angry and disappointed at the person she loved most. Instead, Melanie would be angry and

disappointed in everyone else.

### *Conclusion*

Melanie appeared to spend most of her time in the program, and in life, protecting herself from others. In listening to Melanie's voice, most of what I could hear was her fear. A fear of being abandoned ignored, taken advantage of, and being neglected.

Although she expressed, a desire for nurturance and approval from others, her distrust of others often lead to unstable relationships.

### *Stephanie*

Stephanie is a 14 year old, Hispanic female whose primary language is English. Others describe Stephanie as someone who wants to turn her life around. Stephanie has two prior referrals to the juvenile justice system, one for theft and another for public intoxication. Her current offense is witness retaliation- she threatened a boy who knew of the burglary she was involved in.

Stephanie lives at home with her mother and brother. It is stated by her probation officer that Stephanie has a strong relationship with her mother and her two brothers, ages four and seventeen. Stephanie's parents divorced when she was seven. Her family lives in poverty. Stephanie does not have a history of abuse or neglect. Stephanie has no reported problems at school. She is in the ninth grade, has no history of truancy and reportedly makes A's and B's. Stephanie has not been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. She began using marijuana in sixth grade, and continues to do so but minimizes her use stating, "I have control over it." Stephanie also abuses alcohol.

From my observations, Stephanie appeared to be a soft spoken, gentle, nurturing

young girl. She got along well with all the girls and had a strong connection with Melanie. Although Stephanie stated she had a good relationship with her mother, I learned that her biggest struggle was her relationship with her mother. Most notably, I recall a phone call in which Stephanie began to cry on the phone, asking her mother what she could do better to show her she was a good daughter. During this conversation, I could hear her struggle for love and affection from her mother. A staff member who was present stated this was a common occurrence when Stephanie spoke with her mother. This staff member noted that Stephanie longed for a relationship with her mother, but her mother had “long given up on her.” I wondered why this was, what had occurred that lead to the dissolution of her their relationship?

My first interaction with Stephanie was witnessing a panic attack. She was hyperventilating, crying, and asking for help. The male program officer who was overseeing the classroom at the time had a good relationship with her and took the time to speak with her until she was calm. I learned that this was one of many panic attacks she had on a daily basis. It was my understanding that initially Stephanie tried to hide her anxiety and panic attacks. She would go to the restroom and stay there until they passed. She would often go to bed with anxiety, have trouble sleeping, and experience nightmares. While in the program, Stephanie was diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

In the first listening of Stephanie’s interview, I heard a girl who, prior to coming to the program, was hopeless and did not care about the direction her life was going. Prior to this, she believed, “it does not really matter for me.” In the following excerpt,

Stephanie speaks of the challenges she experienced when she first entered the program, stating:

Being here taught me how to respect adults, because as I grew up, all the adults around me, all they ever did was smoke with me and do drugs and I was realizing when I was like ten this is not what they are supposed to do. They are supposed to watch me and care for me, not give me drugs.

More so, Stephanie was able to communicate the changes that she noted in herself when she experienced the nurturance and empathy that other staff members provided. For example:

I would not want to listen to them at all, I would be like, I think I knew the answer to everything but when I actually sat down when one of the staff members, one of the females, and I was crying, I was having an anxiety attack and she was calming me down, holding me and then she just started talking to me. That is when I realized that maybe I should listen to people more than anything. They always say how many ears do you have – two – how many mouths – one. So your ears win, so listen more than you talk.

So about the third month, I really tried, I really, really tried so hard and I kept messing up, but I realized at least I am trying you know. That is when I realized at least I am trying, if I was to go through this program, clean, like so smooth, then I am not changing, but in order to change you have to go through those struggles and that is what I went through. That is exactly what I went through.



Additionally, Stephanie was able to speak of the abandonment and disappointment she experienced from her mother, stating:

We never really liked each, well she claims she loved me, but if she did, she would not have left me [Stephanie was sent to a girls home for six months prior to returning home and being detained]...I am going to try to make my mom trust me again. I do not really see why she does not trust me I should be the one that is hurt from what she has done

As I proceeded to the second listening, I began to formulate Stephanie's I Poem. From this process I learned that Stephanie had just lost two members of her family, her boyfriend and her unborn child. Both had passed away within a month before she was detained for her current offense. More so, I learned that Stephanie was in a state of hopelessness, she believed no one cared about her and so she was not motivated to help herself.

I did not really have a family

I had just lost my ex in a car accident

I was still shocked by it

I had just lost a baby

I do not really like talking about it she was six months in my stomach

I lost her I was definitely an emotional wreck and everything

I did not think these people would help

I was disrespectful to the staff I did not care

I did not really do anything they said

I did it just to get through

It was not until Stephanie experienced nurturance and attunement from other staff that she began to believe that others did care about her and were being genuine in the attempts to support and care for her:

I actually sat down when one of the staff members, one of the females

I was crying

I was having an anxiety attack and she was calming me down

I realized that maybe I should listen to people more than anything

More so, Stephanie learned to believe in herself:

I started listening to what everybody had to say

I mean yeah it hurts and know that it is going to be better

I really tried

I really, really tried so hard

I kept messing up

I realized at least I am trying you know

I realized at least I am trying

I was to go through this program, clean, like so smooth

I am not changing, that is what I went through.

Although Stephanie was making gains, and had made many gains, in the program, these steps were only the beginning. Stephanie realized she only begun to work through her grief, more so, she struggled with the guilt she experienced from the loss of her baby:

I did not want to talk to them about it

I can say like I had a baby

I am not ashamed to say I had a baby

I am not ashamed to say I lost her

I am ashamed of how I lost her

I do not like talking about it

It is not my fault; it is someone else's

For Stephanie, her time in the program served as the beginning stages of her grieving process and working through the shame she experienced.

It appeared that for Stephanie, the program was also a trigger for her damaging and traumatic past. As I spoke with other staff members who worked closely with Stephanie, I was told that there had been moments when a specific drill instructor would speak to her and she would begin to cry. It was difficult for Stephanie to process this experience and tell others that she was experiencing flashback upon hearing this drill instructor's voice. Stephanie met two days a week with her counselor to try and process the events that occurred while she was in the program. It took three months for her to establish trust and rapport with her counselor. Thus, it was not until the third month that Stephanie began work on her trauma. When asked how they could make the program better, Stephanie stated:

I think there should be like a program where teens who have been abused or sexually assaulted or anything, that hurt them really bad that caused like a traumatic experience. I think they should go in a room together and sit and if they want it would be nice if they all talked about it. So we all let out what is happening to us and we know that

we are really not the only ones that has gone through it. And we learn how to get closer and how to trust people. That is something we could do to get the females to trust each other.

In the third and fourth listening of Stephanie's interview, I listened for how she talked about relationships. In reading and listening to her dialogue, I learned that Stephanie is cautious in her relationships, as stated in the following I-Statement:

I was not acting like oh, yes ma'am all that sweet stuff, no, I was just quiet

I talk a lot, I did not really tell people about me really

I would tell them just enough to barely get to know me I would not tell them enough to be like they know me

I was on the low

More so, I learned that Stephanie values loyalty:

I am real to my friends

I will be their friend at five in the morning

I am not going to go and increase it and be like yeah, yeah let us go fight

I will be the one taking him or her out and be like not do not fight

Stephanie also continues to express a desire to repair her relationship with her mother, but also continues to display caution in her attempts to connect with her mother.

I am going to try to make my mom trust me again

I do not really see why she does not trust me

I should be the one that is hurt from what she has done

Conclusion

Two months into this study, Stephanie graduated successfully from the program. Prior to her graduation, I had a conversation with Stephanie in which she said, “I wish I could stay here...I wish didn’t have to go.” Although her time in the program was challenging, Stephanie had found an environment of caring individuals who nurtured and supported her. Stephanie had been diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder while in the program. She had established trust with her counselor and other staff members and had started work on her trauma and the loss of her family. Unfortunately, Stephanie’s relationship with her mother had not improved. Upon her release, her mother agreed to continue family counseling once a week with Stephanie and the program therapist. They never returned for counseling. Regrettably, Stephanie had made gains in the program, but was not looking forward to going back into an environment that had not changed.

### *Conclusion*

For many girls involved in the juvenile justice system, the psychological distress they experienced in their life history has been turned inward, expressed through depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, and expressed outwardly, through delinquency, substance abuse, and emotional disorders (Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith, 2003).

In the current study, all of the girls experienced some form of victimization, including sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, neglect and relational trauma<sup>4</sup>. In addition to prior victimization, the psychological effects associated with victimization (including more suicide attempts, higher levels of hostility and sensation seeking, and

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<sup>4</sup> Relational trauma is “the convergence of maltreatment by a caregiver, resulting in the loss of secure base, and the resulting dysregulation that children experience without access to safety or comfort” (Kelly & Popper, 2009).

lower levels of self-esteem and sense of control) were also observed in the girls that participated in this study.

For instance, when I first began observation with the girls, I witnessed the challenging behavior and aggression that staff members spoke of frequently. However, in listening to the voices of these four girls, I heard the voices of girls who lived with feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, fear, hopelessness, shame, disappointment, and low self-esteem. Regrettably, the girls had not been taught the social and psychological skills needed to cope with stressful life events, as is common with many female offenders who have been victimized (Widom, 2000). Likewise, the staff members who worked with them perceived them as being more difficult to work with and were unprepared to deal with the problems and challenges of a female offender.

This is further evidenced in the girls interaction with the staff members, and their desire of “feeling felt by” (Siegel, 1999) the program officers. In many of their interactions with the staff, the girls yearned for someone to feel what they were going through, and empathize with their struggles. Unfortunately, many of their attempts were unsuccessful, as staff members only heard the content of their pleas and unruly behavior. In these moments, they missed the process of shared understanding and shared meaning, the opportunity to provide skill building in the areas of social and emotional functioning, and the opportunity to sensitively respond to each girl in the moment. Furthermore, although the girls often experienced success and accomplishment in various components of the military structure, they did not know how to continue problem solving beyond each individual interaction. Instead, the girls learned how to tolerate the program and utilize

their existing coping mechanisms to navigate their environment. In sum, the girls' challenging behavior in day-to-day interactions could have been utilized by the staff to facilitate change in both cognitive and emotional thinking, however the staffs' inability to provide these corrective experiences left the girls with the challenge to navigate their environment to the best of their abilities.

In listening to the girl's narrative and reading their I-Poems, one can also hear that the girls lack a coherent narrative of their lives. A coherent narrative is usually defined as, "the ability to make sense of one's life experiences; the integration of both positive and negative experiences into a more holistic understanding; and resolving negative and distorted conclusions to allow for more constructive and helpful beliefs about oneself, others, and the world" (Kelly & Popper, 2009). For many of these girls, their early attachment experiences had been fraught with fear and avoidance, decreased trust and feelings of safety, and a sense of shame. In listening to their voices, one could hear the desire to understand their life situations, but the inability to do so in a manner that did not break down the defenses they relied on to protect themselves when experiencing intolerable or unacceptable affect. Finally, much of what was missing from the girls' voices was a positive outlook on life and a healthy image of their self.

## Chapter 6: Listening for Culture

The previous chapter discussed the analysis derived from the listening to the girls' voices and their experiences in the program. The following chapter reports on the analysis derived from listening to the voices and observing the experiences of the administrators and staff members who supervise the girls in the military structured treatment facility.

In observing the program staff and listening to their voices, this researcher was sensitive to the program's mission statement "to change behaviors and to develop resilience to adversity while fostering healthy connections with family and community," and values statement, "to encourage growth in each other and the families we serve by identifying, acknowledging, and building positive character qualities." By doing so, this researcher was better able to understand the culture of the program and the manner in which staff were expected to work with one another and the cadets.

### *Direct Care Staff*

During the time of this study, direct care staff was comprised of five program supervisors, drill instructors, and program officers. As part of the military structured treatment component, the role of the program supervisor is to oversee the safety and well being of the cadets and ensure the program is running smoothly and efficiently throughout the day. The role of the drill instructor is to enforce the rules and regulations of the program and to oversee the implementation of military structure. Drill instructors do so through enforcing discipline, teaching and modeling leadership, providing physical training, and teaching a military science course once a week. Discipline is enforced with



the use of sanctions. Sanctions are given when a cadet engages in rule violations. Sanctions, or discipline, can include any of the following: loss of daily privileges, extra physical discipline (PT), extra cleaning details, standing at position of attention (POA), and early bedtime. Finally, the drill instructors are the only members of the staff allowed to sanction youth utilizing Physical Training (PT).

Next, the program officers are expected to work in conjunction with the drill instructors. They are assigned to a squad during the school day. It is the program officer's responsibility to supervise the cadets in the classroom, transport them to and from the daily school activities, and enforce the rules and regulations of the program. During after school programming, two female program officers oversee the resident female squad, while two male program officers oversee the resident male squad. In addition to providing supervision, the role of the program officer is to help the cadets develop and implement appropriate coping skills throughout the day.

*Partnership: Drill Instructor and Program Officer*

According to program administrators, the drill instructors and program officers are expected to have a cooperative relationship. For example, when a drill instructor is in the process of sanctioning a cadet, the program officer should (a) ensure that the punishment is reasonable and (b) monitor the cadet's response to the punishment, intervening when necessary. More so, the program officer is also expected to discipline the cadets when they have engaged in either minor or major rule violations. This is important, as it allows the two roles to present as a united front, with equal authority to decide on and enforce the rules and regulations of the program. Finally, the program

officer is expected help the youth find positive ways to cope with challenging situation that arise during the day and assist them in finding healthy alternatives to cope with these challenges.

Unfortunately, the partnership between the drill instructor and program officer was not very robust. During the three months of observation, it was not common to see the two roles working together as expected. The following excerpt from an interview with a program officer illustrates this point:

So they [program officers] sit back and they get intimidated and they don't do anything and sometimes a drill instructor will do something wrong. I was out there yesterday morning with a [program] officer watching what's going on, had a drill instructor pull a resident out of the formation, told him to get out there in the grass and start doing push ups. I watched the cadet get down start doing push ups, I told the cadet get up. He got up, told him to shake his hands off. What I was looking at was ants. See. I told the [program] officer you need to be watching this. A drill instructor pull him out there but you and I are standing there and these ants are on this guys hands plus you should know, I told him plus you should know we're not supposed to be doing PT in the grass when it's wet. It rained last night. But once again these [program] officers, they're too timid. And confidence. Sometimes they don't do anything because the drill is bold and loud and they might feel intimidated. They don't need to feel that way. They have as much authority and power as that drill. They're partners. He could sound off just as loud as that drill instructor, talking to that drill and say you know when you're

through with that one cadet right there, send him to me I need to talk to him. But I don't know. They are kind of timid.

In the statement above, the staff member describes the program officers as timid and intimidated by the drill instructor, even though they “have as much authority and power as that drill.” Although this is only one example, the program officer’s “timid” approach to discipline was a common occurrence among some program officers. I often observed that the program officers would attempt to verbally redirect the girls, rather than behaviorally sanction the girls for misbehavior that constituted a minor rule violation. This response was most likely to occur during meals, when girls would whisper and gossip at their tables, and in the pods. Additionally, I observed that program officers were less likely to enforce sanctions when the girls were in the pods, stating that it was a much more relaxed atmosphere. Although the staff members wanted the girls to “relax” when they were in the pods, the lack of consistency in discipline would often create confusion and frustration among the girls. For instance, there were numerous occasions in which a female cadet would believe that the program officer was being “mean and unfair” because that program officer had sanctioned her for misbehaving in the pod on one occasion, but not on another.

A second point of observation was the lack of confidence, or “intimidation,” felt by the program officers. During an interview, one staff member cited lack of experience as a likely contributor to the program officer’s lack of confidence. In the following excerpt the staff member details the experience of the drill instructor:

All of my drills here except probably two all got 20 years experience. They're all

retirees from the US Army or you know one of the sister branches of service. So that makes a big difference. They just recruit anybody off the street and make them a drill instructor and I think that's a big mistake for most facilities.

The following statement also discusses the importance that is placed on hiring an experienced drill instructor. More so, it highlights the lack of standards for hiring program officers:

I think maybe the standards, maybe the standards on recruitment. We do have them for drill instructors. We say a drill instructor must be four years of active duty. Maybe we need to get tougher on the academy officer side and not recruit too young academy officers. Maybe we need to say academy officers need to be an older age, maybe 26. This way he would have to finish college, have to have worked somewhere before coming here, maybe married by then, maybe have family because a soldier, a kid gets out of high school at 18, and they go be a soldier for awhile. Like I said, most of my drills, 80% of them are 20 year veterans. So you're looking at men that are in their 40's and I think that's the difference there. You've got drills in their 40's and you've got academy officers that are in their 20's.

To conclude, an important component of the military structured program is the partnership between the drill instructor and the program officer. However, the two components do not often work in cooperation with each other, leaving one to exercise greater authority over the other. Furthermore, the lack of standards for hiring program officers appears to create an environment in which one role is well defined and

developed, while the other is not.

### *Shift to Shift*

In order to learn more about the expectation and experiences of the program officer, observations were made of all three shifts: the midnight/morning shift, day shift, and evening shift.

To begin, the midnight/morning shift began at 11:00pm and ended at 8:00am. The most substantial time on this shift was spent completing room checks while the girls were sleeping, which ensured their safety and allowed for close monitoring of any youth on suicide watch. Although it might appear to be one of the least taxing shifts, it was the last three hours of the shift that proved to be the most problematic and demanding for both the female staff and girls.

The girl's day always began at 5:15am, Monday through Friday. It was the responsibility of the program officers to waken the girls and transport them to PT by 5:30am. As with most teenagers, the girls struggled to get out bed and dress in a timely manner. At 5:30am the girls would begin PT, they would train along side the boys for one hour before being transported back to the pods for showers and a uniform change. By 7:00am, the girls were expected to be in the cafeteria and seated for breakfast. Due to the limited amount of time between activities, the morning routine proved to be the most challenging and often required a higher level of tolerance, understanding, and patience from the staff members and the girls.

Alas, the time constraints in the morning also affected the manner in which the staff attended to the girls during this time period. One staff member stated the following,

“Well, if you handled your issues with kids, we kinda got behind schedule.” This staff member was not alone in feeling this way, three other staff members also expressed concern with the time schedule. Many of these staff members expressed that there was simply not enough time to address the girls and their needs in the morning without disrupting the daily schedule. Thus, in order to comply with the military standards of the program, the program staff took no chances in falling behind schedule.

Next, the program officers on this particular shift had the least experience with youth and therefore were the least prepared to manage the challenging behaviors exhibited by the girls in the morning hours. During an interview, one staff member noted that all the newly hired program officers were placed on the morning shift, leaving few experienced and “seasoned” staff members working on that shift. Additionally, this staff member noted “difficulties in them,” stating that the program officers on the midnight/morning shift often lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to work effectively with the girls.

In addition to a lack of experience, the midnight/morning shift did not operate as a team. Instead, the staff that worked this shift relied heavily on one staff member to instruct them, guide them, and lead them. In order to provide clarity to this observation, this member will be referred to as Jane.

Jane has worked with in the treatment program for over four years, more than any other staff member on the morning shift. Upon meeting Jane, I experienced a woman who was confident in her knowledge of girls in the juvenile justice system and was strong willed in her values and beliefs regarding discipline. Likewise, Jane was also a natural

leader. I often observed Jane sharing her methods of discipline with other staff, and encouraging them to implement her suggestions and recommendations with the girls. Most of the women on this shift lacked prior experience working with juvenile offenders, and so were happy and thankful to receive her instruction.

Unfortunately, Jane did not have prior education or knowledge about female offenders or working in treatment facilities. Much of what Jane knew about the girls was based on personal experience. In observation, Jane often criticized the girls and used little praise or motivation when addressing the girls. She was also rigid and inflexible in her manner of relating to the girls. Given the negative experiences the girls had with Jane, she was often seen as unfair and unwilling to provide support. It was unfortunate that when Jane attempted to provide support and care, it was perceived as cold and not genuine by many of the girls. During these instances, Jane would become upset and frustrated because the girls would reject her attempts to praise them. Incidents such as these would contribute to the cycle of frustration experienced by the girls and Jane in the morning.

Another point of contention between the midnight/morning staff and the girls was in regards to the girl's effort and degree of participation in morning activities. For many of these girls, the start of their day meant the start of their incident reports. Many of the girls often received incident reports for not participating, or "giving 100%" during PT. The girls often struggled to explain to the staff that they were trying their best. When I discussed these observations with the staff, there was an unwillingness to listen to the girl's pleas, often stating that the girls were simply "trying to get out of it" or were being

“so difficult.” Therefore, they were less likely to listen to the girls or respond to their needs.

Moving forward, the day shift and evening shifts were comprised of women who appeared to have an interest in the juvenile justice system and/or were seeking a career in the field. Although more aware of the characteristics of the girls they were working with, these staff members also lacked the tools to communicate effectively with the girls. Many times, I noted a missed opportunity to provide education on coping skills to the girls, or a missed opportunity to intervene on behalf of the girl when an interaction with a drill instructor was inappropriate. In the following example, the staff member explains what the role of a program officer should look like when providing education or coping skills:

[Speaking as if addressing a program officer] Now, what you need to do is tap them on the shoulder, sir when you're through with him can I have him? And when that drill is through given his commands and holler and screaming, then the [program] officer will come in there and play tag team and try to pump that cadet up you know. Make some sense out of this. Do you know why you're upset? You just did this, you did that, now if you – and start education this cadet to alleviate him getting into more trouble.

So the [Program] officers do got a big role here and they are per say a part of that team. You've got your disciplinarian one over here, the drill, and then you've got your counselor, mentor, [program] officer over here. So when the drill is through, he steps aside and let's the [program] officer come in and try to



educate that young person what he did or did not do. That is something that there is no training on to be honest with you.

In sum, officers who struggled most with the youth were the least likely to have training or experience working with youth. For many of these officers, it was not only a lack of time, but also a lack of knowledge. For had these officers acquired the tools to work with the cadets, every interaction with the girls could have been an opportunity to help the girls build a range of coping skills.

### *Drama*

In attempting to understand the staff member's definition of drama, the staff members were asked to give their description of "drama." The following is one example of the statements made in response to this question:

She said this; she said that. Attention seeking. Sometimes they'd make up lies just because they wanted attention. A lot of it was within themselves: them just talking about each other, and not being honest about things. You don't know which kid to believe. This one's saying this, and this one's saying this. You're trying to help them out by saying, "Okay, we shouldn't be here to talk about each other. We're here to work a program." But them living together alone, I just don't believe two females can live together. It's hard.

As discussion regarding the girls' behavior continued, attention seeking became a recurring theme with a few of the female staff members. These staff members often interpreted the girls' behavior as a way to manipulate staff for attention or as a way to establish superiority among the girls. For example,

Well, I say – I say manipulation point is, like, play mom against daddy – stuff like that. If I don't get it from him, I go to this person and maybe get things done in that type of manner and that way I say with the manipulation part of the relationship.

In this example, the word manipulation is used to describe a girls' behavior when she does not get her way. For this staff member, a part of the drama is the girls' response to triangulate<sup>5</sup> in another staff member.

Although some staff considered the girls' "drama" behavior as negative, others saw things differently. Some staff members saw the girls as fearful and in need of encouragement and acceptance. For example:

- I guess I would have to say working with the females is you have to be a little bit more understanding. Maybe that's the right word.
- Acceptance I guess, love; having somebody love on them. I know some of them have had problems with being molested. It's just the fundamental thing that we learn just dealing with these kids is just letting them be safe and I think that's what it is.
- I talk to them almost every night when I work evenings. The females, to me they're looking for acceptance. A lot of women have some bad family ties at the house and they're just looking for acceptance and all it takes it one little note to get to them that says I like you or a look from one of the male cadets. Some way

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<sup>5</sup> An influential construct of Bowenian Family Systems Theory is the "emotional triangle." Triangles occur in all families and social groups; they are most likely to develop when a dyad is experiencing stress and one of them to "triangle in" a third person either directly or indirectly (Bowen Theory, 2011).

they look at each other and she looks back and it's like, okay he likes me and they're just looking for acceptance.

- They don't mean no harm, they're not breaking no major rules but I don't think they, I don't think our female cadets, I don't think the parents have really told these females we love you and to me the female cadets are looking for acceptance. It's strange.
- Again, typical teenage girls, for some reason, I don't know what it is – it's like the Eighth Wonder of the World – girls cannot get along together to save their life, But as far as negative behavior, most of their negative behavior stems from being teenage females. That's all. As far as alone – I haven't really noticed nothing really crazy.

While some staff members construed the girls' behavior as a request for acceptance and nurturance, other staff members interpreted girl's response as a product of the staff member's inability to discipline. For example:

- That's the one problem that I hate. Some staff just don't let it go. They make it personal. They hate the kid versus not trying to figure out what the problem is, so they keep messing with them, day in and day out, until the kid does something. So yeah, that's one thing that we need to improve on. I wish the cameras could probably catch that situation to where we could talk about that.
- They create their own headache sometimes. I think when you have a situation, sometimes the staff member's the one that creates it as opposed to the kid. When you could have just said this is what I need you to do, and this is what I'd like for

you to do, now I need you to do it.

- I think the biggest problem a drill instructor would have is when a cadet is flatly refusing to do what you're doing. Sometimes they may take that personal but they need to understand that a cadet has the right to refuse. Don't take it personally.
- I think the biggest challenge for drill instructors is not to get things personal. Always stay professional. If you go personal, then you're going to lose the battle because your feelings are going to be hurt, you're going to have the sense that you've failed, the systems failing. Always be professional.

And for another staff member, the solution to understanding the girls' behavior was not identifying what was wrong with the girls' behavior, but rather to identify what could be done help the girls succeed. This staff member states that he leads by example:

I would say probably for me, it's lead by example. Whatever I ask them to do, I demonstrate that I know what it is. Like Code of Ethics, if I asked them to recite it, I would recite it first and say, "Okay, if I learned it, then you have no excuse." Or physical training, everything I ask them to do, pushups, run five miles, whatever, I'll do it. You have no excuse. For me, the kids tend to respond more. They say, 'Well, okay, if he can do, I have really no excuse.'" By their standards, I'm old. I'm 45 years old, so I'm supposed to be dead, I guess. So they really don't have no excuse.

Thus, although there were staff members that defined drama as attention seeking, these staff members were a minority. Many of the staff members believed that the girls did not have bad intentions and were not trying to manipulate the staff. Instead it appeared that most staff members perceived the girls behavior as a desire to be nurtured and accepted,

or as product of the staff members response to the girls behavior. Thus, it appeared that the term “drama” was often used to describe the girls’ negative externalizing behavior, such as gossiping, jealousy, and fighting with one another. Finally, while the staff was able to identify negative behavior in the girls, and the likely psychological distress that contributed to this behavior, the staff did not have the tools to identify the problem behavior and provide coping skills to help the girls better navigate the challenges they encountered on a daily basis.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, the military component of the program plays a vital role in the defining the culture of the program. It provides a sense of structure and accountability for the girls, while providing the staff with a common language for which to set expectations and provide discipline. Unfortunately, the program does not provide a common language to better understand and respond to the girls’ needs.

In listening to the voices of the staff members and observing their interactions with the girls, this researcher kept in mind the values statement of the program, to “encourage growth in each other and the families we serve by identifying, acknowledging, and building positive character qualities” when providing recommendations and suggestions regarding the following research questions:

- 1) Why do staff members report more difficulties when working with girls?
- 2) Why are girls more emotionally labile than boys? In the words of the Administrative staff members who work with the girls, “ Why is there so much drama?”

3) What changes can be made to the program to increase girls' success in the program?

*Response to the First and Third Question*

Why do staff members report more difficulties when working with girls?

According to reports on Gender-Responsiveness Programming (The Commission on Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System, 2008; BCCJ, 2010), the juvenile justice system often misdirects its attention towards girls' behavior problems, rather than focusing on the underlying mental and emotional health issues common with the female offender population. For example, interpersonal relationships play a vital role in the lives of female offenders, as many girls are detained for causing harm to themselves or to victims with whom they have some type of relationship. Accordingly, researchers (Morash & Roucker, 1990; Acoca, 1999) have suggested that the experiences of girls in military-structured treatment facilities, who have a history of abuse or have dependency issues, will likely parallel the difficulties they have faced in previous abusive relationships.

In line with this research, the results of the current study suggest that the girls' behavior was often cited without mention to underlying mental and emotional issues. For example, Melanie was a victim of emotional abuse and was exposed to drug use and domestic violence at a young age. Prior to her admittance to the program, Melanie was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and Borderline Intellectual Functioning. While in the program, Melanie received various sanctions for incidents involving verbal aggression towards staff and her peers. When I spoke with staff members regarding Melanie and her

behaviors, I was often met with sighs. Many of the staff members were exhausted by Melanie's behavior and commonly referred to her actions as "drama." Upon analysis of Melanie's interviews, it was found that Melanie likely suffered from fear of abandonment and sensitivity to rejection, leading her to respond with aggression to protect herself in stressful and challenging situations. Furthermore, Melanie often expressed a desire to develop relationships with others, but her distrust of others often lead to unhealthy relationships.

With a focus on her interpersonal history and knowledge of her mental and emotional issues, staff members might have been able to identify potentially problematic situations and provide Melanie with tools to help her regulate her emotions and challenge her negative thinking. Unfortunately, the staff members more readily focused on her behavior, labeled it as drama, and gave her a sanction. Although the staff members addressed the behavior with discipline, they often did not include an intervention to teach Melanie the necessary skills to positively cope with existing psychological distress and the daily interpersonal challenges that arose during her treatment. Consequently, both Melanie and the staff members were left in a negative cycle that began with Melanie feeling rejected, coping with acting out behaviors, and being sanctioned for these behaviors.

In order to begin to remedy the challenges staff members experience with girls, Acoca (1999), suggests that juvenile justice treatment programs "comprehensively address the specific needs of girls, recognize the risk factors most likely to impact girls, and capitalize on the protective factors most likely to build the resiliency in girls"

(Greene, et al., 1998; Acoca, 1999, Mullis, et al., 2004). For example, gender responsive programming should include the provision of training both female and male staff members to form healthy relationships with girls. In regards to the training of male staff members, many girls involved with the juvenile justice system have never had healthy relationship with adult males. Thus, training male staff in boundary setting and sensitivity to effectively interact with girl who have histories of physical and sexual abuse can be beneficial to both the staff member and the girls (BCCJ, 2010). Additionally, staff members should be aware of girls' needs and histories, be trained on how to sensitively respond to issues of past victimization, and be informed that girls' disruptive behaviors may be a sign of mental health issues.

Therefore, it is recommended that program administration consider implementing and/or incorporating gender-responsive training programs, activities, and behavioral interventions into the current military structured programming. Doing so may foster positive gender identity, build positive character qualities in the girls participating in the military structured treatment program, and improve their success in the program.

#### *Response to the Second and Third Question*

In their second query, the administration hoped to understand why girls are more emotionally labile than boys? In their words, “ Why is there so much drama?” The answer to this question can be better understood through the understanding of gender differences in aggressive behavior.

According to Grotperter and Crick (1995; 1996), “relational aggression is a relatively distinct form of overt aggression, and it is significantly related to gender...in



meaningful ways.” Relational aggression includes behaviors that inflict harm on others by manipulating their peer relationships, such as giving peers the silent treatment and spreading lies and rumors about a peer (Crick and Grotpeter, 1995). Research has shown that these behaviors are more characteristic of boys than girls. While overt aggression, behavior that are intended to harm another through physical damage (i.e., hitting, showing, threatening another peer), are more characteristic of boys (Grotpeter and Crick, 1995; 1996; Conway, 2005; Young, Boye, & Nelson, 2006).

Interestingly, relationally aggressive children tend to engage in highly intimate and exclusive relationships, and tend to elicit private information from their friends. Unfortunately, it has been evidenced that this information is used in the future to act in relationally aggressive ways towards others in their peer group. Finally, youth who are relationally aggressive tend to have higher levels of relational goals in peers interaction (i.e. the development of close, warm relationships). In contrast, Grotpeter and Crick (1995; 1996), report that unlike relationally aggressive youth, youth with higher level of overt aggression report using their aggression to harm those outside of their peer group. They also report that overtly aggressive youth are more likely to value companionship and are more likely to focus on instrumental goals (i.e. gaining status in a peer group).

In the current program, I observed the girls exhibit relational aggression towards one another on many occasions. Interestingly, the girls themselves were aware of this behavior, but did not know what it was or why they were engaging in that behavior. For example, all of the girls spoke of the danger involved in having relationships with other “females.” In their interview, they all described the lack of trust and confidence they had

in each other and refused to establish meaningful relationships with one another. When speaking to staff members, this same behavior was defined as “drama.” To staff members, “drama” was the gossip, passiveness, silence, manipulation, acceptance and rejection of “friendship” that was witnessed in the girls peers group.

Accordingly, by gaining greater insight to the understanding of female aggression, the program administration and staff can begin the process of implementing interventions that focus on peer-group dynamics, individual behavior, and skills “which help children develop and maintain social support also may minimize the impact of victimization from relational aggression” (Young, et al, 2006).

#### *Supplementary Recommendations*

Finally, during my time at the program, I observed the following: (a) confusion in the role of the program officer, (b) direct care staff that were often unprepared to deal with the problems and behaviors of young female offenders, and (c) dysfunctional power dynamics in the relationships between male and female staff members and staff members and the girls.

First, although both the drill instructor and program officer were expected to discipline the girls and maintain the rules and regulations of military structure, this was not always the case. In many instances, the program officer would defer to the drill instructor to provide discipline. Furthermore, the program officers were less likely to intervene and assist the youth in coping with distress during or after a sanction from a drill instructor. In many ways, the program officer’s inability to enforce discipline and develop a sense of identity within the program aided in the development of dysfunctional

power dynamics between the program officers and the drill instructors.

Additionally, it is important to note that the lack of female staff members in administrative roles, specifically that of supervisor and drill instructor, can often lead to feelings of exclusion among existing female staff members and impede the development of cooperative and supportive relationships between men and women in the workplace. In being more attuned to gender dynamics in the workplace, program administration can begin to foster positive gender identity development in its staff members and provide a space for women to maximize their respective strengths. Finally, having women in positions of power can provide the girls with daily exposure to positive female role models.

Secondly, many of the program officers (especially those in the midnight/morning shift) did not have prior training in female adolescent development, the female offender, and working with youth who exhibit difficult and challenging behaviors. As a result, it appeared that the staff members were inadequately prepared to successfully implement interventions that would assist the girls with both emotional and behavioral challenges. It was often observed that staff members responded to feelings of powerlessness by giving into their demands, ignoring the behavior, avoiding the girls, or engaging in a power struggle.

In accordance with these findings, Baines and Adler (1996) found that youth workers describe female juvenile offenders as:

More difficult to work with; have more complex problems and/or negative emotional behavior, and more difficulty in developing trusting relationships. They

noted that workers perceived girls as being more personally and verbally abusive...and indicate[d] feeling more unprepared to deal with complex problems and behaviors of young female offenders. (in Mullis et al, 2006).

In light of these findings, Mullis et al (2006) recommend that an ecological framework be utilized to help illustrate a more complete picture of the female offender. In sum, by understanding girls development, individual characteristics, and risk and protective factors, staff members can better develop, identify, and/or modify interventions to best meet the girls needs, all while experiencing a more pleasant interaction with the girls.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

The current study has reported on the experiences of girls participating in military structured treatment facilities and the staff members who work with these girls on a daily basis. The following chapter continues this discussion and reports on program culture and its influence on program success. To conclude, study limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

### *Interview Themes*

In the previous chapters, the experiences of four girls in a military structured treatment facility were discussed. To better contrast the experiences of these four girls with prior studies on female delinquency, themes of their experiences were developed from the analysis of the qualitative data. In doing so, the following themes emerged: History of Victimization, Internal and Outward Expression of Psychological Distress, Emotion Regulation and Distress Tolerance. They are individually discussed in the following sections.

#### *History of Victimization*

Results from the analysis of the current qualitative study suggest that all four girls who participated in this study have a pattern of female offending that begins with victimization and ends with offending. Belknap and Holsinger (1998) argue that there are “developmental pathways to delinquency,” stating that pathways to delinquency are often gender-specific. In particular, Belknap and Holsinger argue that victimization—physical, sexual, and emotional—is often the first step along females' pathway into the juvenile justice system.

Results of this analysis are also in line with previous research, which reports that between thirteen and fourteen years of age, most female offenders become victims of sexual assault, become sexually active, run away from home, experience their first use of alcohol and others drugs, are expelled from school, and experience their first arrest (Acoca, 1999).

#### *Internal and Outward Expression of Psychological Distress*

In addition to identifying a history of victimization, voice-centered, thematic analysis suggests that all four girls internalized the psychological distress they experienced in their lives, likely resulting in the development of negative self-beliefs and self-destructive behaviors. These results are in accordance with previous studies, which report that girls in the juvenile justice system have mental health problems at higher rates than boys and suffer most commonly from major depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and disruptive disorders (Covington & Bloom, 2003; BCCJ, 2010). Additionally, studies have found that girls who suffer from depression may be at greater risk of engaging in antisocial behavior (BCCJ, 2010). Finally, it has been found that girls are more likely to report hurting or harming themselves, thinking about committing suicide, and having tried to commit suicide (Belknap and Holsinger, 2006).

In regards to the current study, one of the girls in the program did not participate in the research due to suicidal ideation and hospitalization while in the program. In speaking with the staff members, I learned of their concern for her progress in the program and her ability to successfully complete the program. Such incidents illustrate the importance identifying existing mental and behavioral disorders when developing

treatment plans for female offenders.

In order to aid in the successful treatment of female offenders, prior studies have stated the importance of utilizing needs-based assessment tools to aid in the determination of treatment and case planning. Studies have reported that gender-responsive needs assessments are essential to gauging girls' specific issues (Covington & Bloom, 2003; The Commission on Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System, 2008; Girls Study Group, 2008; BCCJ, 2010). These studies have stated that the ability of needs assessments to identify existing mental and behavioral disorders, and educational capacity, is especially important for girls who have extensive histories of victimization and co-occurring mental illnesses. By obtaining this information, the juvenile justice system can better assist professionals in developing a treatment plan to address the youth's needs, provide a baseline for monitoring the youth's progress, determine the most suitable resources and treatment programs for specific youth, and aid in locating gaps in service that need to be addressed. (The Commission on Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System, 2008; BCCJ, 2010)

In response to the need for improved assessment standards for girls, the OJJDP convened Girls Study Group (2008) to identify assessment instruments that perform favorably for girls. The Study Group found a total of 73 instruments, out of 143, that were favorable in the assessment of girls. These instruments included risk assessments, needs assessments, substance abuse assessments, and mental health assessments. For additional information on the instruments reviewed by the Study Group, please see: [www.nttac.org/GirlsStudyGroup/dsp\\_instrument\\_list1.cfm](http://www.nttac.org/GirlsStudyGroup/dsp_instrument_list1.cfm). To conclude, it is

recommended that juvenile justice systems implement the use of these assessments to provide adequate intervention planning for girls and to aid in locating the most suitable resources for each youth.

### *Emotion Regulation and Distress Tolerance*

The four girls who took part in this study had varied histories of victimization and psychological distress. While listening to their voices, I could hear feelings and thoughts of anger, sadness, frustration, fear, hopelessness, shame, guilt, disappointment, and low self-esteem. Regrettably, the girls had not learned the social and psychological skills needed to cope with their psychological distress and the stressful life events. Likewise, the girls utilized maladaptive coping behaviors, including both overt and relational aggression, in the face of challenges and crises. Consequently, the staff members who worked with the girls perceived them as being more difficult to work with. Unfortunately, the staff members were unprepared to deal with the problems and challenges of a female offender, leading to successive behavioral problems and challenges.

In order to help the girls better understand and navigate their environment it is suggested that the program consider training or hiring therapist with experience in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). The goal of DBT, as developed by Marsha Linehan, is to change the behavioral, emotional, and thinking patterns associated with problems, while promoting development of the inner-self. Skills taught in DBT include mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance and self-management. Marsha Linehan (2001) states the following about DBT,



"DBT emphasizes learning to bear pain skillfully. The ability to tolerate and accept distress is an essential mental health goal for at least two reasons. First, pain and distress are a part of life; they cannot be entirely avoided or removed. The inability to accept this immutable fact itself leads to increased pain and suffering. Second, distress tolerance, at least over the short run, is part and parcel of any attempt to change oneself; otherwise, impulsive actions will interfere with efforts to establish desired changes."

Preliminary research on DBT suggests that the application of DBT for adolescents is promising. For instance, a study by Katz, Gunasekara, & Miller (2002) reported that adolescents in an inpatient unit who were treated with a modified DBT protocol had significantly fewer behavioral incidents (i.e. self-harm, suicidal behavior, aggression toward staff and property, etc), and significant reductions in depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation. Trupin, Stewart, Beach, & Boesky (2002) studied the effectiveness of DBT programs for incarcerated female juvenile offenders. Results of this study showed that youth behavior problems and use of "punitive responses by staff" decreased with the implementation of a DBT program. Thus, DBT has been shown to be effective in helping people learn to build the capacity to cope with distress and regulate emotional expression. Furthermore, DBT has been shown to be generalisable across a variety of settings and populations, and can be utilized by clinicians with varying backgrounds.

It is also recommended that administrative staff provide training on effective methods for working with problematic children. One suggested method is "Collaborative Problems Solving," by child psychologist Ross Greene (2010). Collaborative Problem

Solving is a cognitive-behavioral approach that focuses on the interaction of the adult with the child. The basic principle of Collaborative Problem Solving is that “kids do well if they can: if they are not doing well, it is because they are unable to do so, not because they do not want to” (Greene, 2010). Collaborative Problem Solving takes a proactive approach to problem solving. This approach assumes that children know that their behavior is wrong, thus the challenge is not to stop the behavior, but to identify the situations or circumstances in which the child is likely to behave that way. Once these situations are identified, staff can begin to teach children the skills necessary to solve the problem and cope with their emotional response to the stressor. Staff members then help the youth by being empathic and asking how they might be helpful. Methods such as the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach are recommended to better equip direct care staff with the tools to help them feel confident in their work.

### *Program Culture*

When I began this study, I thought I was going to come across a program that was unfit to meet the needs of girls in the juvenile justice system. In doing so, I expected to find drill instructors that were unresponsive to the needs of the girls and a program that relied on harsh discipline to change behavior. It is to no surprise to me that upon arriving at the facility, I directed my attention towards the drill instructors. In my initial meeting, I observed that the drill instructors carried themselves with great confidence, focus, and determination. I found myself hesitant to speak to them, and often wondered if there was protocol I had to follow when addressing them. In retrospect, I found myself relying on my schema of what a drill instructor might be and how he might act. That schema was

extremely limited and worked towards my detriment, as the negative stereotype I had formed of the drill instructors hindered my ability to see beyond the uniform and truly hear their voices.

It was not until my interviews with the drill instructors took place that I was able to challenge my own perceptions. During these interviews I found myself connecting with them in ways that I had not thought possible. The drill instructors *were* focused on discipline, but they were also cognizant of the struggles the girls faced while in treatment, and at home, and were attuned to their needs. It was at this point that I gained awareness of another side of the program that I had not allowed myself to experience, that of caring and understanding individuals who had chosen to work with youth of troubled backgrounds.

After the interviews with the drill instructors were completed, I found myself more comfortable around the drill instructors and more open to approaching them throughout the duration of the study. In reflection of this experience, I was left wondering if other outsiders also experienced the drill instructors in the same manner? If so, did the girls, as outsiders upon initial entry to the program, also respond in this manner?

In my discussion with girls, it appeared that the girls were able to develop positive relationships with many of the drill instructors. However, there were select drill instructors whose personality and manner of communicating was not well received. In those moments, the girls welcomed and enjoyed having staff members that they could speak to about their frustration with these specific drill instructors. On the other hand,

there were also instances in which the very staff members the girls turned to for help were unable to meet their needs, leaving the girls feeling hopeless and powerless.

Due to their limited knowledge and training, some of the inexperienced staff members often used ineffective and damaging intervention to reduce negative behavior. For example, some staff members utilized anger, humiliation, avoiding, and dismissing behaviors when working with the girls. These behaviors were not helpful and often lead to increased externalized behaviors and psychological distress. Hennessey, et al, (2004) have found that negative characteristics, such as staff insensitivity, can exacerbate negative feelings and the sense of a loss of control among girls. For girls with PTSD, this experience may re-traumatize or re-victimize girls. Unfortunately, instances such as those stated above often paralleled many of the challenges the girls faced at home.

As I continued my observation of the program, I also noted that lack of counselors available to assist the youth in moments of crisis, both boys and girls, and the lack of staff members trained to help the girls cope with daily challenges. For instance, at the time of the study there was only one licensed counselor working for the program. Given the limited resources, counselors from other areas of the facility and interns were often sought to aid with the delivery of therapeutic services. With so many youth in the program, I often found myself wondering why there were not more counselors on staff to serve the residents of the military structured treatment facility.

Although the facility was able to provide discipline and structure through military programming, there was a lack of attention to therapeutic programming. In my observations I found that military programming and structure was integrated into every

aspect of the girls daily activities, yet therapeutic aspects, such as teaching empathy, coping skills and distress tolerance, were not. In many areas, the program lacked the successful integration of therapeutic services with the military structure. In accord with these observations, Covington and Bloom (2003) have stated,

The culture of corrections (i.e., the environment created by the criminal justice system) is often in conflict with the culture of treatment. As mentioned, the corrections culture is based on control and security. Treatment, however, is based on the concern for safety and on change (Covington, 1998b). Creating effective gender-responsive services must include creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, and program development that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the specific issues of participants. Thus, in order to better meet the needs of the girls, it is recommended that this program strive to integrate both military and therapeutic programming, and educate and train all its staff members in the delivery of gender-responsive programming (BCCJ, 2010). Such programs are relationship-based, strengths-based, and are responsive to a history of trauma, they encourage communication and provide safe space removed from males (BCCJ, 2010).

Lastly, in my observations of the program I was often stuck by the lack of females in positions of power within the facility and the lack of opportunities for all of the girls in the program to participate in strength building and empowering activities. In my observation, all but one of the supervisors and drill instructors were male. In order to provide the girls with positive female role models, the program should provide the girls

with an environment in which both males and females have leadership roles in the work place. Doing so not only provides female role models for the girls, but also provides a new schema of women's strengths and abilities.

In order to empower girls, their collective and individual strengths should also be addressed and fostered by the military structured treatment program. Qualitative analysis of the current study suggests that the girls appeared to enjoy the military structure and welcomed both the emotional challenges and physical challenges they experienced from the military structure. For instance, many of the girls experienced a sense of accomplishment and confidence from learning drills, moving up in rank, leading a squad, learning how to iron their uniforms and shining their shoes. The girls often spoke of the joy and confidence they felt from improving in physical fitness. By fostering the girl's individual and collective strengths and f their individual and collective interests while participating in the program, the girls have the opportunity to begin viewing themselves in a more positive light and gain a greater sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence (Johnson, 2003).

#### *Strengths, Limitations, and Implications for Further Research*

To date there is little research that focuses solely on the experience of girls in a military structured boot camp. Thus, this study contributes to the debate on the effectiveness of military structured treatment programs for female offenders. More so, uses of the Listening Guide method provided sufficient opportunities for the researcher to systematically and constructively attend to the many dimensions of the participant's voices, as well as make sense of the relationships that were formed in the program.

Finally, due to the modest number of participants, the current study may not be generalisable to the experiences of girls in other military structured treatment programs or to the challenges faced by other military structured treatment programs. Continued research that explores the differences between the emotional and behavioral experiences of girls in non-military and military structured treatment facilities is needed to better understand the factors that negatively and positively impact a girls' experience in juvenile justice treatment facilities.

#### *Final Thoughts*

I'd like to end this study with an expression of my gratitude to all the men and women who work with youth in community mental health, government mental health agencies, and juvenile justice systems. Although research can provide us with guidance about how to best meet the needs of children and families that are served in these institutions, it is impossible to implement that guidance without dedicated, passionate and committed staff and personnel who devote countless hours to the youth of today.

## Appendices



## **Appendix A: Consent Forms**

**Child/Adolescent Assent Form**

**INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

I agree to participate in a study that is interested in learning more about girls that get in trouble and are sent to treatment programs. This study will look at the military structured treatment program in order to see if I like the program and how it can be made into a better program. I understand that this study has been explained to my parent or guardian and that he or she has given permission for me to participate. I understand that I can decide, at any time, to stop participating and that it will be stopped if I say so. Information about what I say and do will not be given to anyone else unless I say so.

About the study: I understand that I will be asked to complete about two interviews a month, for five months. This equals a total of 15 hours. At this time, I will be asked about my current feelings, behaviors, and thoughts about my time at the Academy. I understand that my participation in this study will not affect, in a good or bad way, my relationship with Juvenile Services. This study will not affect any involvement I may have with the juvenile justice system.

I understand that by signing this form:

1. I am giving the researchers permission to read information that is in my records, such as mental health test scores, school reports, and other information.
2. I am giving permission for the interview to be audiotaped for research purposes and that these tapes will be erased as soon as the study is completed.
3. I will be observed at least twice every week while I'm at the treatment facility.
4. It is all right if I decide to stop my participation in this study at any time.

I understand that it is all right if I decide to stop my participation in this study at any time. When I sign my name to this page I am showing that this page was read to me and that I am agreeing to participate in this study. My signature also shows that I understand what will be required of me and that I may stop my participation at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child/Adolescent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff/Researcher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**PARENT CONSENT**

**INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

Dear Parent:

**We are requesting your permission to allow your daughter to take part in a research study.** Before you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, we want you to know the reason for the study. We would also like you and your daughter to know exactly what to expect from participating in this study. Being a part of this study is entirely up to you and your daughter. Feel free to ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. Your child's participation **is entirely voluntary** and both of you can refuse to participate in our study without penalty. Your child's probation will not be affected and she will not experience any negative treatment from the staff if she decides not to participate. If you and your child decide she will participate, she can also stop participating at any time during the study. All she has to do is tell the examiner she does not want to finish the study. **This study is NOT a requirement of Juvenile Probation or The Academy and is completely voluntary.**

**Title of Research Study:**

Panoramic Distortions: Understanding the culture of girls in a military structured treatment facility

**Principal Investigators:**

Jessica Hernandez, B.A., Principal Investigator, University of Texas at Austin  
John D. King, Ed.D., Co-Investigator, University of Texas at Austin

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to learn more about girls that are sent to The Academy as part of their treatment. The Academy is different from other treatment programs because it incorporates military structure and skills with counseling and education services. While at The Academy, your daughter is under the supervision of counselors, caseworkers, teachers and drill instructors. Most children are used to seeing counselors, caseworkers, and teachers at school, but they are often not use to seeing drill instructors that are a part of military structured treatment programming.

From research, we have learned that military-structured treatment programs, like the Academy, work very well for boys, but we want to know what it is like for girls that go through this treatment program. We also want to know if there are ways we can improve the program to make it a better program for your daughter. In order to do this, we will be conducting interviews with you, your daughter, and the staff at The Academy so that we can better understand *everyone's* thoughts on this program. Some of our questions are: What do you like and dislike about The Academy (girls), What changes have you see in your daughter since she has been attending The Academy (parents), What are the strengths and challenges of this program (staff). In addition to interviews, we will be observing the girls while they are at school, in counseling programs, and on the weekend. This is so we can get a better understanding of the environment they are in and how they react and adapt to that environment. Finally, we will be going through your daughters record so that we can understand why she came to The Academy and how her past might be influencing her current behavior at The Academy.

**What will be done if you allow your child to take part in this research study?** If you decide to allow your son/daughter to participate, she will be asked to:

- Allow us to look at her records to get information about offenses she has been detained for; information about her grades in school; medical records that may give us information about her previous experiences; records of her behavior in detention or The Academy.
- Allow us to observe her interactions with other cadets and staff at The Academy.
- Allow us to interview her and ask her questions about her thoughts and feelings about being at The Academy (this can be about other cadets, staff, the military-structured programs, etc), and allow her to give us feedback on what she thinks would make The Academy a better program.
- In addition to interviewing your daughter, we would also like to interview you and ask you about your thoughts and feelings about the progress your daughter has made while at The Academy.
- Finally, we will ask if you will allow the researcher to do at least one home visit so we can get a better understanding of what its like for you and your daughter to be at The Academy during the week, then have the chance to go home during the weekend.

**Project Duration:** The entire project will last about 5 months. There will be 2-3 interviews per month

with your daughter, for a total of 15 hours in interviews. There will be one interview with you per month, for a total of 7.5 hours in interviews. Observations will take place at least 2 times a week and will not require anything on your part. In order to make it easier on the parents, we are available to interview when your daughter is dropped of on the weekend after furlough.

**Will anything bad happen to my child?**

We do not think anything bad will happen to your child. We will not be asking your child any specific questions about her past, or any traumatic experiences she has had. If she does speak of any experiences which have been stressful or traumatic, because they are related to something she experienced while at the Academy, it is possible your daughter may experience discomfort while she is being interviewed and possibly after she has completed the interview. We are aware that your daughter may want to talk to someone after the interview if she does feel uncomfortable about what she discussed. If this happens, she will be told at the beginning of the interview that she has the option to talk to one of the licensed counselors available on site. There are no anticipated physical discomforts or deception involved with this study. **Remember, your child has the right to stop answering questions or leave the interview early without any penalty.**

### **What will I gain?**

You will not benefit directly from this study. But your feedback will help us to improve treatment that may benefit your daughter and other children at The Academy.

### **Is this study confidential?**

Te records of this study are confidential. Each volunteer will be given a number. We may write about what we discover but your daughters name will not be used. Your daughters information will stay confidential unless we have to reveal it based on the law (If your child states that she suicidal intent or are otherwise unsafe to herself or another person, we will tell the authorities and take steps to make sure the safety of all persons (including calling 9-1-1, visiting the nearest emergency room, or discussing the situation with the probation officer). **Any abuse that is disclosed as a part of this study will be shared with Child and Family Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) within 48 hours as required by Texas law). It is the policy and procedure of Williamson County Juvenile services that juveniles participating in a juvenile justice program shall not be subjected to abuse or neglect. The Director of Juvenile Services shall ensure that any allegation of neglect or abuse in a juvenile justice program or juvenile probation department or it's facilities will be reported to the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission within 24 hours of having cause to believe a child had been abused or neglected by completing a T.JPC Incident Reporting Form.**

The taped discussions will be typed onto paper. Your child's name will not be used. All notes, audiotapes, and records will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will be destroyed when the study is over. Consent forms will be stored in a secure place for three years after the end of the study and then will be destroyed. The examiner will make very effort to protect the confidentiality of the content of your child's discussion. Every participant will also be expected to follow the confidentiality rule of "what is said here stays in this room."

## **Can I quit at anytime?**

Being a part of this study is entirely your choice. If you take part, you may choose to stop at any time. There are no penalties for quitting. Quitting will not affect your status or experience in the Williamson County Juvenile Detention or Academy Services. This study will not affect any involvement that you may have with the justice system.

If you or your daughter would like to stop participation at anytime during the study, you should tell the researcher in person that you want to stop. You will be not asked why you do not want to continue. The examiner will stop the interview and will give you information about people you can call incase you start feeling sad after the interview.

**PARENTS**, if you wish to take your daughter out of the study for any reason, you should contact one of the principal investigators by phone or tell them in writing:

### **John D. King, Ed.D**

1 University Station, D5300  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, TX 78712  
512-471-7551

### **Jessica Hernandez**

1 University Station, D5800  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, TX 78712  
512-914-6519

Please include the name of your daughter if you contact us to end participation. You should also call for any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research. **You can withdraw your consent and stop being in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.** Your daughter's records will be destroyed if you withdraw. During the study, the researchers will notify you if new information comes up that might affect your daughter's decision to stay in the study.

**In addition, if you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, or if you have complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or via e-mail [jlj@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:jlj@mail.utexas.edu). You may also contact the Office of Research Compliance and Support at (512) 471-8871.**

**Signatures:**

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study (from pages 1-3 of this document):

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**Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent** **Date**

You have been told about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the time to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to allow your daughter to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Your daughter will also give her permission to participate below.

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**Printed Name of Participant (Parent)** **Date**

---

**Signature of Participant (Parent)** **Date**

---

**Signature of Principal Investigator** **Date**

**STAFF CONSENT**  
**INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

Dear Participant:

**You are being asked to take part in a research study.** This form gives you information about the study and is for you to keep. Please look over the information and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your **participation is entirely voluntary** and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits you otherwise receive.

**Title of Research Study:**

Panoramic Distortions: Understanding the culture of girls in a military structured treatment facility

**Principal Investigators:**

Jessica Hernandez, B.A., Principal Investigator, University of Texas at Austin  
John D. King, Ed.D., Co-Investigator, University of Texas at Austin

**Funding source:** This study will be funded in conjunction with Williamson County Juvenile Justice Center

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to learn more about girls that are sent to The Academy as part of their treatment or as part of their alternative schooling. The Academy is different from other treatment programs because it incorporates military structure and skills with counseling and education services. While at The Academy, the girls are under the supervision of counselors, caseworkers, teachers and drill instructors. Most children are used to seeing counselors, caseworkers, and teachers at school, but they are often not use to seeing drill instructors and military structured programming. From research, we have learned that military-structured treatment programs like the Academy work very well for boys, but we want to know what it is like for girls that go through this treatment program. We also want to know if there are ways we can improve the program to make it a better program for female cadets. In order to do this, we will be conducting interviews with you, the female cadets, and the parents/guardians, so that we can better understand *everyone's* thoughts on this



program. Some of our questions are: What do you like and dislike about The Academy (girls), What changes have you see in your daughter since she has been attending The Academy (parents), What are the strengths and challenges of this program (staff). In addition to interviews, we will be observing the girls while they are at school, in counseling programs, and on the weekend. This is so we can get a better understanding of the environment they are in and how they react and adapt to that environment. Finally, we will be going through the girls records so that we can understand why she came to The Academy and how her past might be influencing her current behavior at The Academy.

**What will be done if you decide take part in this research study?**

- You will be asked to participate in an interview to talk about your experiences with the girls in the Academy. The interviews will take place at least twice a month for five months and will take approximately 30-minutes to 1 hour, for a total of approximately 15 hours of your time. This interview will be audiotaped.

**Project Duration:** The entire project will last about 6months. You will be asked to participate at least once throughout the duration of the project.

**What are the possible discomforts and risks?**

The potential risks include loss of confidentiality (your privacy and identifying information about you). There are no anticipated physical or psychological discomforts or deception involved with this study.

ALL PARTICIPANTS

**Parents will be told if any safety or abuse issue arises.** All events listed above will

also require a report to the IRB. If any items or questions make the participant feel

any discomfort, he or she may simply refuse to answer that item.

**What are the possible benefits to you or to others?** The information gathered has potential to inform policy makers and residential treatment directors of the experiences of court-involved girls and their prognosis for different types of treatment facilities. It is the hopes of the researchers that this information will lead to gender-specific programming in youth treatment facilities.

**If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything?** The only cost to you is the time involved for the interview.

**Will you get any money for your participation in this study?** No

**What if you are injured because of the study?**

The activities required for this study are discussion. There are no physical risks in this study.

**If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin or your relationship with the juvenile justice center.

*How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you have questions?*

If you wish to stop being part of this research study for any reason, you should contact one of the principal investigators by phone, tell the researcher that you wish to stop participation during the interview in person, or tell them in writing:

**John D. King, Ed.D**

1 University Station, D5300  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, TX 78712  
512-471-7551

**Jessica Hernandez**

1 University Station, D5800  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, TX 78712  
512-914-6519

Please include your name if you contact us to end participation. You should also call for any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research. **You can withdraw your consent and stop being in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.** Your records will be destroyed if you withdraw.

**In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have complaints, concerns, or questions about the research, please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or via e-mail [jlj@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:jlj@mail.utexas.edu). You may also contact the Office of Research Compliance and Support at (512) 471-8871.**

**How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?**

Confidentiality will be protected in several ways. All names and identifying information will be replaced with a researcher-assigned ID number or otherwise disguised in the data records that are stored. All materials will be stored in locked file cabinets in a locked office and all computer files will be password-protected documents on a password-protected computer. Interviews will be audio taped, but the cassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. The transcripts of tapes will contain researcher ID numbers and initials of any persons mentioned in the interview so that no identifying information will be on the transcript. All cassettes will be heard only for research purposes by the investigator and his or her associates. All tapes will be erased after they are transcribed or coded.

Any abuse that is disclosed as a part of this study will be shared with the Child and Family Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) within 48 hours as required by Texas law. Parents will be informed if any safety or abuse situation arises. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed. It is the policy and procedure of Williamson County Juvenile services that juveniles participating in a juvenile justice program shall not be subjected to abuse or neglect. The Director of Juvenile Services shall ensure that any allegation of neglect or

abuse in a juvenile justice program or juvenile probation department or it's facilities will be reported to the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission within 24 hours of having cause to believe a child had been abused or neglected by completing a TJPC Incident Reporting Form

**If in the unlikely event the Institutional Review Board needs to review your research records, then the University of Texas at Austin will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.**

**Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study?** The researchers will not benefit in any way from your participation, other than to contribute to science at professional meetings and in publications.

**Signatures:**

**As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study (from pages 1-3 of this document):**

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**Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent** **Date**

**You have been told about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the time to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.**

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**Printed Name of Participant** **Date**

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**Signature of Participant** **Date**

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**Signature of Principal Investigator** **Date**

## **Appendix B: I-Poems**

## Ashleys' I-Poem

I had a meltdown this morning  
I was running, right  
I was running—it's hard to run two miles without stopping  
I walked like twice, and she was yelling at me

I'm supposed to be getting out soon

I was just freaking out  
I kept asking for new one  
I was mad about that

I just don't think she likes me  
I think she talks very disrespectful to us  
I hate the fact she sits there and yells at us to run faster, but she's sitting on the sidelines eating  
I've never seen her run. Ever  
I've never seen her do PT ever

I've been trying, and everybody's been saying—like the morning staff just breaks me down  
I'm trying to run in the mornings  
I'm trying to do everything I'm supposed to do  
I always get in trouble for it  
I've gotten my GED since I've been here  
I've enrolled in college  
I've done everything on my court order that I was supposed to do  
I turned 17, and they don't ever see that

I've gone weeks at a time only getting one sanction  
I don't get that  
I hate—I'm not saying I hate females  
I don't get along with females all the time  
I don't want to see them every minute of the day  
I'm not trying to see them everywhere I go  
I know with some females it's like that  
I talk to males because I'm friends with males

I didn't really have a relationship with my mom  
I didn't know a lot about my mom that I do now  
I'm on my P's and Q's when I'm on furlough

I was in her office today  
I was like, "At least I finished"

I was like, “Yeah, because I like finished”  
I was like, “Yes”  
I was like, “But—“  
I’m like, “Doesn’t even make sense”  
I’m like, “Thank you. Why don’t you tell her that?”  
I’m like, “Is that even necessary?”  
I’m like, “Is that even necessary?”

I was walking—it was like—what day was it?  
I was walking through the line  
I was like, “Ma’am?”  
I was like, “That was unnecessary  
I just think—she’s just a very rude person  
I think she’s not professional at all  
I don’t know  
I don’t like her  
I forgot what it was for, but it was my first incident report  
I’m like, “Is this necessary? You’re not going to touch me” [the staff was not going to touch her, but this was an automatic, initial response from her]  
I’m like, “I read my handbook; I know how the program works  
I’m trying to do something here  
I’m like, “I’m immature?  
I was 16 at the time  
I’m like, “And you’re arguing with a 16-year-old?

I’m very smart about people I don’t know [sarcasm]  
I could’ve just said, “Yes, ma’am”  
I could’ve just went along with my life  
I don’t know  
It’s just the way I am  
I’m not as bad anymore

I’ve changed so much from when I first got here  
I refused and I didn’t run at all  
I did two push-ups and a sit-up  
I didn’t care  
When I first got here, I didn’t care about anything  
I didn’t care about being—I didn’t have respect  
I’ve changed so much since I first got here  
I’ve learned respect; to respect more people  
I’m not all the way there

I’m like, “Good”  
I’m like, “I’m gonna dig a tunnel”  
I was very mouthy

I would always have something to say  
I'm like, "You get on the wall"  
I'd sit down and they're like, "Are you refusing?"  
I'm like, "Hmm, I guess you didn't get it. I'm sitting down, not sitting on the wall, so what do you think I'm doing? Driving Miss Daisy? What am I doing?"  
I'm like, "I know"  
I'm glad I came here because I've changed a lot

I know I've changed, but they don't want to give me credit that I've changed  
I'm like, "What the crap?"

I mean, I didn't finish my first PT test until almost my third month here  
I would refuse  
I didn't care about anything  
I knew I was going to go to a worse place than here  
I have anxiety,  
So every time I'd do PT, I'd start breathing harder and freak me out  
I felt like I couldn't breathe, and they weren't helping me  
I'm like, "Whatever, I refuse then"

I cannot run with anyone  
I'm one of the slowest people here  
It makes me want to give up when I run by myself  
I'm like, "Man, they're trying to single me out"  
I get mad and then I'm like, "Whatever"  
I give up and I start walking

I start in the fall  
I want to be a neo-natal nurse  
I think it's going to be better

I really don't understand that  
I'm going to take some stuff with me here  
I'm going to think of consequences more before I actually do them  
I used to not think about consequences



## Elise's I-Poem

I don't know  
I didn't like the PT at all  
I got used to it  
I like it a lot  
I hated exercise  
I like, lost a lot of weight  
I feel better about myself, building more confidence

I don't know, just learning discipline here  
I used to hate authority figures  
I'm kind of used to it  
I used to be like, every time... anybody like my step-dad or a cop, or anybody would  
like, get up in my face  
I'd be like, dude, backup  
I get irritated  
I just know what I have to do

I'm happy  
I like that we have furloughs  
I think that's good, cause it gives a chance for us to like, slowly move back in with our  
family

I feel like they were pretty easy on me  
I didn't do that good of a job  
I don't think  
I don't know  
I did look at the ground a lot  
I was really nervous, and went outside the line a couple times  
I don't know, I guess everybody just like, looking at me  
I don't know

I'm not really... a shy person  
I'm pretty outgoing  
I'm pretty outspoken  
I'm very loud, actually  
I care what their opinions are I guess

[The drill instructor] told me that I was gonna be the next leader  
I hung onto those words ever since then  
Like every time I think about it, I'm like, yeah  
I can't believe I made it 'cause I really doubted it  
There were times that I was like, man, I'm not even gonna be able to make it  
I don't know

It makes me feel happy and it makes me want to try harder to, you know, to be good and do what I know what to do and don't...

I wanted to change 'cause the reason I'm in here  
I totally wrecked everything... but like, it was just a big wakeup call for me  
I wanted to change  
I changed a lot

I'm closer with my mom now; we have a better relationship  
I think whenever I got locked up for doing what I did  
I was ready to change 'cause it really like, opened my eyes  
I really didn't care about anything  
I really didn't care about anybody else except for me  
I really didn't care  
I got locked up  
I realized how much I had hurt my family  
I really felt bad  
I really wanted to, you know, I couldn't do anything 'cause I was locked up

My goal ever since I got in here is to just... make changes and be a better me

I don't want to hurt my family again like I did  
I guess it's okay working with the animals  
I worked with animals before I was here, so that wasn't anything like, changing big

I mean, school, like, that's been my getaway ever since I was a little kid  
I never any problem with school  
I just had problems at my house  
I don't know  
I never got in trouble at school  
I was a "A" honor roll student

I have a couple teachers—we have these things called 'theme books'  
I like those a lot  
I have other teachers, like my science teacher  
I talk to her all the time  
I really, really like when the guest speakers come they tell us their story and some of it I can relate to  
I want to go and talk to them afterwards

I didn't like... marching  
I didn't... but I like it now  
Oh, and the thing I like most about the program that I love is color guards  
I love color guards  
I love rifle training

I never knew anything about it before I got here  
I don't know  
I'm trained in the American flag, the Texas flag, and the rifle, so I can do any of the positions, and I just...  
I like to be the one up there representing, you know, the flags  
I don't know, I love my country  
I was... on the big camera and everything  
It was nerve-racking and exciting...  
I loved it  
I only have one more color guard I have to do 'til I get my color guard ribbon  
I'm excited about that  
I really like it

I've never been really good at counseling

No, I do not because...  
I go to school  
I see them  
I go to Anger Management  
I see them  
I go back to the pod  
I see the  
I don't know, there's too much drama  
I think the thing that I hated the most was when they tried to talk about who's real and who's fake, because... like in here, you can't really be... your real self  
I mean, you can show your feelings, but you can't react, you know  
It's something I struggle with  
I wasn't really used to that  
I don't know

I think it helped me because  
I would just get upset about it  
I would just let all my feelings out and I wouldn't care  
I would just hold my feelings in depending on what it was  
I mean here, you just have to take deep breaths and you have to think about it and... they show you how to handle it in a mature and adult way  
I think that's better for all of us

I could just talk to them about stuff and they were just kind of laidback  
I don't know, they keep con- confidentiality better  
I know some girls don't like me because I get along better with guys than girls  
I talk to a lot of the guys  
I guess that I'm closer to the guys and some of the guys just kind of don't like them  
I mean you can, you can be real without putting your whole self out there  
You know what I mean?

I think in here, like if, if you're doing that in here then you're just looking for an excuse for people to feel sorry for  
I don't know what's the point of putting your stuff out here

I have a lot more respect for my mom and I'm closer to her than I was  
I don't know, me and her have a better relationship  
I'm more open and I handle my feelings better  
I understand where she's coming from  
I've learned how to calm myself down, so then I calm her down  
I like explain the whole picture to her, you know?  
I hope I can help her more with that  
I'm definitely learning more communication  
I mean we still have a ways to go, but we're doing a lot better than we have with everything  
I mean just like, me on my own building better communication skills here  
Like I said whenever you have feelings, they teach you here to like, to control it and handle it in a mature way, you know?  
And I mean once you're aware of that kind of stuff, then you kind of notice it more  
Because I mean stuff you're not aware of, like you're not gonna notice it

Sometimes I feel like they should be a reality show. It's so funny, like...  
I don't know  
I really know that they appreciate it  
I think when I get out of here, I'm gonna make figurine dolls of all of them and they're all gonna have little quotes on the box of stuff they say

I noticed the most littlest stuff here that I never used to notice before  
I like the way they hold us accountable...

I'm more of the motivational type, I guess  
I like motivation, not like somebody like, yelling in my face, telling me what I'm doing wrong or whatever  
Just because that's what my dad used to do to me  
Oh, man, when I first got here, I hated that  
I thought that was so disrespectful  
I was like, oh my gosh, you could just tell me that my hair, you know, doesn't look exactly right, maybe I should comb it a little bit or something  
I hated the way they said that to me, but after awhile I got used to it

I feel like they're family 'cause, you know, they're there for us  
I really like talking... there's two in particular that I really like talking to  
I like that. They like listen to what we say and they usually have pretty good advice  
I like that

I love art

I think it's a good way to express feelings  
I mean just any kind of art, like... any kind of art  
I know there's girls in here that like to write...  
I love to draw and I love to paint  
I love to paint. That is my... forte` .  
I know what that means 'cause... we learned vocabulary in our English class  
You know what I mean?

I think PT in the morning, I wish we were allowed to talk, like communicate  
I don't know, because sometimes when I'm running like I feel like I want to give up and I  
have to self-motivate  
I know when I first got here, that was really hard for me  
I had to learn by myself and it was pretty hard  
I just think that would help a lot of people, you know  
I just kept going and then finally I finished  
I didn't even realize that I had gone that far  
I mean, sometimes they let you run with people, but they don't let you talk.

I had plans  
I had it all figured out before I got in here  
I was gonna go into the Army  
I was gonna be a Chemical Engineer, you know, and I was gonna do all that

I went on that and I, you know, filled out like, took the test and everything  
I know for the longest time  
I just felt really lonely like I was the only one  
I know a lot of kids feel like that  
My first career that they had on the list for me was Motivational Speaker  
I know that at first, you can't just start out like that and start making big money  
I started looking at related careers  
I was thinking about kind of like a high school teacher. ...  
I'm thinking about kind of high school teacher  
I don't really want to be a school counselor  
I was thinking about it for awhile, but a lot of kids, they don't really like to go to the  
school counselor, but if you're a teacher then you're like in there, you know, everyday  
I just think like, teachers are more in tune than school counselors  
I just really want to do something like that  
I want to help some kids out  
I think it'd be cool to, you know, teach at the same time  
I'm still kind of undecided  
I still have time  
I take a lot of the advanced classes  
I'm really ahead in here

## Melanie's I-Poem

I am here for a warrant for my arrest  
I was not going to school  
I was not obeying my probation  
I am here  
I needed a place to come and help me with my problems and stuff  
I was going through a lot of issues  
Every time I am in those beds I pray to God to have somebody come and help me,  
I came to this program  
I almost got kicked out  
I hated people telling me what to do

I did not listen to my family  
I did not listen to my mom and dad  
I would just go off on them  
I would go off on them  
I would just walk out of my house come back any time that I wanted to  
In here I got loud  
I told them that they cannot make me stand on the wall because I would not even put my  
own baby on the wall  
I said no  
I kept saying no  
I did not let him

I told them a little bit about my situation and stuff and gave them my background  
I guess I touched them with my background and stuff and why I act the way that I act  
I cannot have people always yelling and stuff because my family I always disrespected  
them  
I have to start with them first before I start with anybody else  
That is how I feel in my mind  
I started respecting my family after I started getting furloughs and stuff  
I go home  
Now I respect these people in here  
I have got to come back over here and you are wishing you are at home  
I do not want to be in the same situation again  
I need to do good because I want to go home again this weekend  
I barely even had any furloughs or home passes because I was always getting incident  
reports

They would get in my face  
I just start going off  
I have got to say something to them for them to shut up and leave me alone  
I get the incident report  
I do not see why I should get the incident report

I felt like I was getting them for nothing because they were disrespecting me before  
I disrespected them  
I was doing PT and stuff in the morning at five o'clock  
I was doing everything that I had to do  
I am doing the exercise  
I am just not going when he is saying, but I am doing it  
I felt like, at least I am doing it  
I am doing the exercise right, ma'am  
I felt ganged up on  
I feel ganged up on  
I said, miss why are you mean muggin' me?  
I was like all right sir  
I would have been doing my PT like I was doing it right  
I am doing my exercises and stuff  
I do not get along with her  
I was like, oh my God  
I do not know  
I forgot what I said  
I am already done talking  
I shut up and stuff  
In my own little world I am saying, horse playing for horses  
I was not like directly telling her  
I was not even facing her  
I am not talking to you  
I am all cold  
I am over here trying to warm my own self up  
I was like, miss it is cold  
I said sir; you do not have to yell  
I said you do not care about nobody  
I just got an incident report for disrespect for saying that

I am a real \* female.  
Anything I say, I am going to say it like it is  
Do you know what I am saying?

I have been here for six months already  
I am in a calm way and saying it  
It depends on how my reaction is  
That is what I do not get  
I tell him everything that happened  
I was like all right, well I understand  
understand me when I say that they start with me before I start with them  
I was like, you are supposed to help me  
I do not try to get smart with him since he is the director or whatever  
I do not want to be saying anything

I just take the incident report like a "G" and just stay here for the weekend  
What am I supposed to do?  
I only got one me  
am I going to win  
I was like, I feel ganged up on so what are you going to do?  
I really got crunk with him and stuff, loud with him  
I never did  
He does not get my side  
I am but I can only do so much  
I can only do so much with the people that do want to help me  
I know when they are upset with me  
I wanted to go home  
I just know which ones that do want me to be successful in here

I have got a lot of goals in my life that I want to do  
I want to be a probation officer.  
I went through this program, and since I went through a hard life too  
I have some struggles in my life and stuff  
I want to help kids that want to change  
If I can change, they can change  
I have got muscles  
I am fit  
I lost a lot of weight  
It made me stronger  
It made me feel good about myself since I look good  
It made me be proud of myself

I did not like going to school for nothing  
I was telling the teachers oh I need help with this  
I need help with that  
I even went to the principal and told her that I need help  
I need help with reading and all this other stuff  
I would probably be getting fifties like I have been since fifth grade  
I am getting A plus, A and B honor roll  
I am not even tripping about the C  
I am happy because I have never got A and B honor roll  
I was smiling at my stuff  
I was like, what?  
I am proud of myself because man this is a new me  
I want all my haters to come and look at me and see what I have done  
I was always going to be bad  
I am always going to be running the streets and doing drugs and stuff  
I am not going to be that person any more  
I want to be going to school, be a graduate in my family, and go to college and stuff



I am writing a book  
I am going to come back over here and have my teacher publish it  
I am going to get a real publisher to publish it  
I used to be in CPS and stuff like that  
I was in probation  
I was just running the streets and stuff  
I could not be there  
I cannot even be away from home.  
I could only be with people that I know, like be around my family  
I cannot just live somewhere  
I was always running the streets, but I always came back home  
I never slept anywhere because I was not that stupid  
I ran from there and came back to the house, and then they got me again  
I ran away  
I am talking about how I am walking the streets and running while I was three months pregnant  
I dropped to my knees and was praying to God hoping somebody would give me a ride home  
I started to tell my mom to call my aunt to tell her to come and pick me up.  
I just did not go to school I did not want the law to come and get me or anything.

I made money while I was pregnant  
I was just selling drugs and stuff when I was pregnant  
I thought about it, that I did not want to because I was pregnant  
I needed to make money for my baby so that she can have stuff  
I made money so then when my baby does come out  
when I give birth to my baby, she will have some stuff  
I did not know if she was a girl or a boy  
I just bought the main stuff that I needed, like Pampers and all that other stuff  
I just hid it somewhere where I would think that I would come back and find it  
I was just straightening my hair and how I fainted and went to the hospital  
I did not want anything to happen to my baby  
I went to the hospital  
I wanted to fake my name, but I gave them my real name  
I did not sleep in my aunt's room, I slept in my own room and that did not have A/C  
I just got removed from this place and how I went to this lady's house and stuff  
I still have not got to the middle  
That is a part of my story

I am happy by myself  
I am writing that book too and stuff  
That is just my title  
I always see white names or something like that  
Yeah, not that I am racist or anything  
I am just saying

I never see Chicana or anything like that on a book title, or Hispanic, or Spanish or anything on a book title that I read  
I do not even read books  
I was just looking on the internet to see if anybody had that similar book title  
I chose that  
I am a Chicana  
I wanted to put that, and since I am a young mother  
I put that all together

I am proud of myself  
I told my boyfriend how happy I am  
I am ready to do good and show everybody  
I am doing good, and be happy about my life  
I am always down and everything  
I was never happy  
I have faith in God that everything is going to go good  
I just have got to look forward and not let it put me down, and he will bring her around

I know that this is a juvenile delinquent place, but come on now  
I know that you cannot stay school  
I do not see why we should get in trouble for moving and itching  
I do not see why that is an issue  
I learned a lot from Phoenix too  
I learned a lot from them about the smoking and stuff and how it makes your face look, and all that other stuff  
I do not want to do drugs any more because I look pretty right now  
I do not want to look all ugly later on, or look older and stuff  
I do not want to look ugly  
I never listened until I saw pictures  
I should have listened to my dad, because that is my parent  
I want to help my parents and stuff for them not to drink so much  
My mom smoking cigarettes, and for my boyfriend to stop smoking cigarettes  
I can see smoking cigarettes if you are going through some things, because it helps your stress calm down and stuff  
I know I would not have the money  
My parents will buy them for me, but I do not need them to buy them for me  
I would give them the money  
If I do not have the money, I do not need them  
I do not know if it works

I just sit there [anger management]  
I stay in that class anyway  
I listen, but I am just there  
If I had my own anger management class  
I would make kids sit around in a circle and just start talking about how their life is

I am like talking for myself because maybe I should do that  
Do you know what I am saying?  
That is what I would do  
It would help me by knowing  
I would probably name all the bad things that I have done in my life  
I would put all the bad things that I have done and then look at it  
maybe I should not be so angry  
I should just let it go, because it is not getting me anywhere  
I wanted to get back at people, and I would hold it in instead of letting it out

I need to get out of here  
It is time for me to get out  
I did my dues  
I am here to change and everything  
I did my six months straight, and now it is time for me to leave

I had a bad attitude  
I was always arguing with staff, always liked to get the last word  
I would cuss  
I would move my hands when I talked and stuff  
I never wanted to get on the wall to do time out  
I would get out of the shower late and stuff  
I would not go in the PT where it was hard  
I did not like doing the PT that much  
I would keep warming it up until it gets warm and then hop in the shower  
I am barely drying myself  
I want a warm shower  
I want to clean myself right  
I kind of calmed down on getting the last word  
I am not going to lie  
I do try to get the last word, but it has not gotten me anywhere  
I have noticed that  
I got a lot of incident reports and stuff  
I am not disrespectful as much as I used to be  
I do not cuss that much  
I do not really even cuss at my house either  
I do not talk back as much as I used to, only sometimes when I know it is right  
I think I deserve to talk to them the way they are talking to me

I want to show my family  
I am tired of telling them  
I want to show them  
I want them to give me a chance to show them  
I am so happy  
I want them to be happier than me, because hey look. I have done it

I am doing it for myself, but the other way around I am doing it for my family too.  
I am doing it for myself, I am doing it for my family too  
I want to see some tears, because I want to see some tears out of my eyes too  
I just look at myself and I am happy because I have done it  
I did not think I could do it  
I kept saying I cannot, I cannot. Now look at me  
I am saying I am doing it, I am doing it

I do not get along  
I get along, but I stay to myself  
If I need help like spelling or something, they will help me  
I am not going to be a\*and say do not come and talk to me  
I am going to talk to them or whatever  
I stay to myself  
I do not talk to any female, because I do not get along with females  
I chill with boys  
I do not even talk about people  
If I do not even know that person  
I just say it to myself  
Like I said, I am a real \* female  
I peep game  
I see how they act and stuff like that  
I have been talking like this for I do not know, forever  
I hear them talking like me  
I am like girl, do not say my word  
I just act myself  
I stay with my one person

I am a \*and I am a cool\*\*female to hang around with  
I would describe myself as being the \*  
I never hated on any female because there is nothing for me to hate on  
I got everything I want  
I like to fight with females  
I am still going to be the same me  
I am never scared, because there is no scary in my veins, in my blood or anything  
I am still going to be me  
I am still going to have my slang talk and everything  
I am still going to have the hood in me  
I am not going to have the drug in me, and all that  
I am not going to have all the not going to school, not obeying the law and everything  
I am not going to let any female just come at me all crazy  
I am going to fight the female or I am going to fight the dude  
I am not going to let anybody disrespect me  
I have more respect for an adult than I would have for a kid  
I know that for a fact

I am a cool \* female  
I am not going to be their mom and keep telling them and keep telling them  
I had to learn that for myself  
I am glad, because it only made me the person that I am  
What I went through in my life only made me who I am  
I did not want to be like the last cadets that did not help me  
I wanted to be better than them  
I helped them out and stuff  
I said I am only going to tell you once  
It is your choice to do it or not  
I at least helped them and stuff  
I just try to have a real talk with them  
I wanted to tell them is because I was the main one that was getting in trouble and stuff  
I wanted to be the one to go and help them out  
I was the better one in the program  
I was the worst one in there  
I did my part  
I am trying to help them out and do good

I am going to come back over here and talk to the newer cadets and tell the ones that are  
struggling and tell them  
I know if I could make it in this program you all can  
I was probably worse than any of you all  
I cannot say that because I do not know you  
I was bad  
That is all I can say

## Stephanie's I-Poem

I was exceptionally emotional [after her graduation ceremony]  
I did not really have a family  
I had just lost my ex in a car accident  
I was still shocked by it  
I had just lost a baby  
I do not really like talking about it  
she was six months in my stomach  
I lost her  
I was definitely an emotional wreck and everything

I did not think these people would help  
I was disrespectful to the staff  
I did not care  
I did not really do anything they said  
I did it just to get through  
I had a court  
I got some felonies  
I was pretty rude, whatever for a while

I grew up, all the adults around me, all they ever did was smoke with me and do drugs  
I was realizing when I was like ten this is not what they are supposed to do  
I got to tell them how I really felt about the program  
I got to thank them  
I know there are a lot of times where I can thank them  
I will be out of this place  
It is scary

I wanted to scream  
I could not handle it  
I really thought I was not going to make it  
I am athletic  
I never really used it  
I just always had an athletic body  
I had no respect for anybody  
I would be nice to them  
but one little thing I did not like about them I would tell them  
that is what got me in trouble because of my mouth.  
I was like I do not care man, it does not really matter for me  
I would just go out and I would not listen to them  
I just kept going off  
I did not want to take any of their advice  
I gave them a chance  
I listened to them

I started realizing what they are saying makes sense  
I would not want to listen to them at all  
I would be like, I think I knew the answer to everything  
I actually sat down when one of the staff members, one of the females  
I was crying  
I was having an anxiety attack and she was calming me down  
I realized that maybe I should listen to people more than anything

I always peeped game  
I put an act on because I had to act good  
I was not going to go to TYC  
I realized I did not have to, something changed  
I started becoming like meaner, that is how I am though  
It really hurt so I was really emotionally unstable and everything  
I thought about it and I tried  
I tried so hard to pick myself up and move  
I had found out that my cousin had died  
I tried to pick myself up and it did not work at first  
I was struggling  
I thought about it  
I do not know I was just praying a lot to God  
I started listening to what everybody had to say  
I mean yeah it hurts and know that it is going to be better  
I really tried, I really, really tried so hard  
I kept messing up  
I realized at least I am trying you know  
I realized at least I am trying  
I was to go through this program, clean, like so smooth  
I am not changing  
that is what I went through  
That is exactly what I went through

I mean when I was out of the house when I was ten, turning 11  
I was living with a friend for a while and then her family became my family  
She was like my sister  
I called her dad – dad, and her mom – mom and they bought me everything  
I felt like I was a family  
I was 13, I do not know, there was just me and my mom  
I would go see her and whatever, but I would not stay at the house  
I was like no I moved out because they actually took care of me  
I hate family counseling personally  
I told her some stuff that has happened to me in the past  
she realized where I was coming from  
I told her, you know this is happening, move forward  
she understood where I was coming from

[drug awareness]

I learned what they do to you

I learned a lot

I learned how much it actually hurts you than what you think

I was like dang I have been smoking those for a whole minute

I like my anger management

I do not really chill with females in the free

I only chill with one

I chilled with two females and one of them is long gone

she did me dirty so I dropped her

I have one good friend

she has been my friend since I was two, since I moved here

when I was in anger management, the people in my group, they helped me open up

I chill with guys more

I never got along, because females you know how

I was not acting like oh, yes ma'am all that sweet stuff, no, I was just quiet

I talk a lot

I did not really tell people about me really

I would tell them just enough to barely get to know me

I would not tell them enough to be like they know me

I was on the low

I had an anxiety attack in front of her and my anxiety attacks go crazy, they are crazy

I needed it. [a hug, being held by a staff member]

I needed it

I can do better than that

I am real to my friends

I will be their friend at five in the morning

I am not going to go and increase it and be like yeah, yeah let us go fight

I will be the on taking him or her out and be like not do not fight

I help myself through that is the thing

I do help myself, they just do not see

I help myself by praying to God

I pray to them and they just give me strength, they just help me

I am definitely going to try to stay sober

I am going to try and go back to singing and dance and work with animals

I love animals

I love the animals

I am going to try to make my mom trust me again

I do not really see why she does not trust me

I should be the one that is hurt from what she has done.



I think there should be like a program where teens who have been abused or sexually assaulted or anything, that hurt them really bad that caused like a traumatic experience I think they should go in a room together and sit and if they want it would be nice if they all talked about it  
I think it is kind of weird, but I know it would help me most definitely [having a dog in therapy]  
If I was sitting in front of a group of people and tell them what is happening to me I would not be able to do it that way  
I wanted to talk to my mom alone  
I would too or we would just argue and argue and argue in family counseling

I asked if I could stay here until I graduate  
Oh I love it  
[when talking about school]  
I did not do this when I was young  
I realized, you got to do some things to get through it  
I am in sex ed right now  
I learned a lot about abortions  
I never want to get an abortion because each one is so sad  
I personally, I cannot like hold it as a grudge against God because everything happens for a reason  
I think though she showed up in my life because I needed help  
I needed to set myself straight

I found out I was pregnant, I dropped out of everything and I stopped using drugs  
I was just like, I have a baby I am about to have  
I have a baby girl coming  
I lost her  
I thought about it  
I was thinking maybe it was just God letting me know I need to straighten up  
So I mean it hurts to know that I lost her  
I think about how it would be if I still had her  
I would not be here  
I cried  
It was very amazing when I was pregnant  
I loved it

I do not like telling people a lot about it  
I do not think I will ever talk about it  
My mom does not even know  
I met the guy, we dated for a while  
I got pregnant and then six months later I lost her  
I was 13 when I got pregnant  
I was 14 when I lost her

My birthday was between that  
I lost her  
I got arrested and sent to detention  
I got sent here.  
I did not want to talk to them about it  
I can say like I had a baby  
I am not ashamed to say I had a baby  
I am not ashamed to say I lost her  
I am ashamed of how I lost her  
I do not like talking about it  
It is not my fault, it is someone else's

I did not tell her what happened, [her mother]  
I told her I had a miscarriage  
I did tell her when I was pregnant and how happy I was and everything

I finally burned off the fat  
I did not think I would lose it  
Thank God I did not get any stretch marks  
I did not get any stretch marks  
I am happy  
I have seen my mom's stretch marks  
I do not want to get those

I can talk about my baby and everything  
I just cannot talk about how I lost her  
I never want to talk about  
I have not said that story in a long time  
I do not want to  
I picked myself up  
I mean I regret getting some of these tat's and stuff  
I mean it does not mean any gang, no nothing, it is Mi Vida Loca  
I think it is something I would tell my kids, how my life was  
I am going to tell them how my life was  
I am not going to hide it  
I do not want them to get inspired by the adrenaline rush that I had  
I really do not want my little brother looking up to me like that because it is just not right  
As long as I am happy  
It does not even matter what I want to be  
I have always wanted to work with animals or babies  
I can be a janitor  
I do not care if I am a janitor or pooper-scooper as long as I am happy  
I am good

## Staff Member I-Poem

[A Cadet]

I think her biggest problem is that she's got like a chip on her shoulder  
I also feel that although she can very easily criticize others, she doesn't accept criticism well at all  
I kind of see that in her mom too a little  
I can kind of see where that would come from  
I definitely see a pretty big improvement from when she first got here  
I think she responds well enough to the PT in the aspect that she is actually thinking of possibilities with the military  
I've never heard any staff member saying that she complains or makes excuses  
I've never heard her say she loves it, but she does a lot of good stuff in counseling  
I don't think that has ever been one of her issues, for sure

[Counseling]

I think there could be more  
I think she is definitely doing as much as she can  
I just found that out about ten minutes ago  
I was like "wow, she handles all of those kids!" Even if you're the best, that's a lot of work

[Military Programming]

I never really knew everything that the other case managers did  
I definitely think it would help, for sure  
I felt like I had to be the more boisterous one, I guess, where I had to be louder  
I had to sound more stern, where the males, they could just talk and they would listen.  
I had to kind of yell or talk loudly or sternly in order to get the same effect, unfortunately  
I feel like emotionally they attach to the females more because they want somebody to talk to

I would say there were inconsistencies  
I don't think it has anything to do with titles  
I feel like the morning shift has to be very strict  
I think there is definitely time for another program  
I really do believe that there is time  
I think that is something that would be nice to have  
I think three, four or five times a week it would be possible

## Staff Member I-Poem

My role is first and foremost the welfare of the cadets  
I think my mission is to mold or shape some young person's life to where they can be  
productive citizens  
I would say probably for me, it's lead by example, demonstrate that I know what it is

If I asked them to recite it, I would recite it first  
"Okay, if I learned it, then you have no excuse."  
I'm old. I'm 45 years old, so I'm supposed to be dead, I guess  
I wish [Others] would come on board  
I wish everybody would do that – lead by example

I would say our male staff probably has more of a problem with that than our female  
staff  
I think our males fail in that though  
I think the average age for our staff is like 36  
I think it is, which is good versus other facilities I've seen where they're three, four years  
older than the kids

I wish they wouldn't do that, because every time they call for a drill, they're giving up  
their power  
I don't know if you notice on this shift though, while I'm here, academy officers keep  
their power because I won't let them give it up  
I say, "Don't call a drill. You handle your sanction

I wish we had a facility where the JJs go to school on one side, residents in another  
I think you would see the JJAP program improve a lot better  
I really don't think they would act as bad as they do without the resident audience  
I've been praying for that for 15 years. Please, separate the facility  
(If staff would be a little bit more proactive) I think we would have less problems too  
I think they could probably catch – or we could probably catch a lot of the stuff that's  
going on

I don't know what it is – it's like the Eighth Wonder of the World – girls cannot get along  
together to save their life, so once they get back in the pod, they'll start  
I don't want to say arguing, but a little bickering back and forth  
I haven't really noticed nothing really crazy  
I've never heard a male cadet talk about female cadets when they're separate  
I haven't seen that  
I wish we could keep them separate.  
I was fortunate

I've got two daughters, so I've seen it  
I think they would understand why girls do what they do

I don't think at home, nobody's ever told her, "You're smart," or, "You look this," or whatever

I made the mistake of telling her that, and so now, she's, "Sir, how's my room today?" "It's good to go." "How do I look?" "Ma'am, you are dressed appropriately?" "How's my boots?" "Ma'am, your boots are adequate."

### Staff Member I-Poem

I understand what they're doing because of their military background and my military background  
I very much enjoy having them in the classroom  
I don't miss a beat in my teaching  
I always say the kids are smarter after a week because whatever is in their system is gone,  
I like to find what they're interested in because part of my goal is to hook them enough  
on liking learning  
I think for us as teachers we ought to encourage them to ask questions because there's no  
dumb question  
I've taken them all—I've taken some really crudely put ones, but I've taken them as  
questions because I don't think there's any question not worth asking

I have great response from my students  
I think part of that is you get the distracters out of the way  
I've received great feedback from them as far as really liking the smaller classes, the  
more attention they get from the teachers and are able to really feel like they're learning  
more than they would in a larger classroom in their school system

## Staff Member I-Poem

I can just start with my history  
I'm first-generation Hispanic-American – U.S. citizen  
I lived that whole thing – single mother – single-parent household  
I went to nursing school  
I wish I would have pursued it further, but I didn't  
I've been a nurse for 17 years as an LPN  
I just love kids. I just love kids  
I love this age group of kids  
I have worked in all kinds of fields  
I've worked geriatrics  
I've worked – I've worked with disabled adults psychiatric – adult psychiatric – all that  
I mean, I've done it – after 17 years, I've done orthopedics – everything  
I did school nursing  
I did that for about ten years

And I just – a lot of these kids just need encouragement  
I don't give them excuses  
I give them the positive part  
I have the bad habit of – and I'll admit to it – and I – that's one fault that I have  
I do cling more to the Hispanic people – to the Hispanic girls and males  
I just wanna see them better themselves because that's kinda what I grew up with  
I hate to see them in the situation  
I still am compassionate towards the other girls and males, It's my heritage  
It's just what – how I grew up  
I do take the time out for everybody  
I always tell them, don't make excuses  
I care about all of them  
I just try to hear their side of the story but put all that to the side and say, it's just what  
you gotta do

I just love this age group, like I said  
I think that they need a lot of positive reinforcement  
I just – I just – like the females  
These females are very promiscuous. I'm saddened by that  
I was really shocked  
I try to talk to them, but they are very deceptive  
I know the real deal  
I contact the parents.  
I still – we have a connection because of the fact that we're both females  
I talk to them one-to-one  
I have gone down to the pod and see them when they're here their first days

I get amused by it

I talk to them on their level so that they can feel like they can express their feelings to me  
I don't try to be fake with them  
I don't try to be fake with anybody  
I'm too old to be fake  
I don't know what else to say  
I just – I just love these kids  
I like it. [the program]  
I think that it pushes them to the limit that they have never pushed themselves  
I love – I love to see these females when they come in, and they can't do one push-up  
The obstacle course – I've been out there with them  
I had – I got up there and did it, too  
I think it helps their self-esteem a lot

I think the kids do well here that are missing a lot of attention at home  
I think genuinely this staff believes that our success is measured by the kids' success  
And when we see those kids fail, we've failed. That's how I feel  
I feel like – I really pray that when they exit this program that they do good, and that they become productive citizens

I like this program a lot  
I think it's a really good program  
I don't think they realize the diversity that each one of them has  
I don't think that they're taught those life skills  
I think they need to learn those life skills

I have caused some drama  
I still do it because I'm not hurting anybody  
I'm helping the kids feel more comfortable  
I think there is some things that could be flexible  
I think the staff is doing everything they can  
I think the kids want flexibility.  
I think – If they get too much flexibility, then it loses its meaning  
I think it needs to stay the way it is  
I would like to see them, if they get sick and they say they can't work during the week doing the exercise, then they can't go home  
I'm not – I can't make that suggestion to anybody because it just won't happen



## Staff Member I-Poem

I found out quickly that they do need to be nurtured  
I have seen them pick up, they get the routine down, and they start to feel confident  
I mean I think that's what it is, that craving for that acceptance  
I don't think they really do have a good understanding of mental health, overall  
I don't know, we have some good female staff; we don't have a lot of female staff  
though

I see kids who really try their best and they fail  
I was really cautious about staying in my boundaries and not having, doing any  
interference with their job and what they were doing

I try to be really respectful of their jobs, because I have no idea what its like to do it  
I could just imagine what the challenges are  
I really feel like if they had more understanding and more training, and more  
education, and maybe some extra little techniques

I always said yes to everything, can you do this, can you do this, can you see this kid yes  
I'm learning not to do that anymore  
I have to tell myself to back off like when I get a new kid so that we can develop our  
rapport and I can just nurture them for a while so they can feel comfortable

I'm amazed everyday at what they are accomplishing with these kids  
I used to think just leave the staff alone let them do their job  
I think, well no I need to get involved more  
I need to give them some guidance and instruction and maybe I can contribute there and  
helpfully improve some things  
I am very, very dedicated and I really do want these kids to have the best  
I'll stay late and I'll skip lunch to do whatever I have to do to make it happen  
I think I've earned some respect from people here

## Staff Member I-Poem

I think one of the things that would be beneficial is kind of a conflict-resolution group

I think if they had a chance to confront one another on their behavior and be able to talk it out, and talk about why they get so frustrated with one another, that it might be a little bit easier

I think, if we can teach them how to talk out their frustration, instead of fighting, then that would be beneficial for them

(How abuse versus, when a guy is being abusive, whether it be emotionally, physical is pretty obvious, but you know some of the emotional abuse) I think they are not as aware of, or it is accepted more

I think it kind of, negatively affects the kids, because it in a way retraumatizes them, because they come from abused families, or whatever that trauma was, and for that moment they are reliving it, and they feel very powerless, like there is nothing they can do to fix it.

I think if the staff can maybe reword what they say, or maybe even change their tone

I understand the component of the military, and some parts need to be firm  
I think some of the ways things are said to kids could be with a softer tone  
I understand there are times when they are not allowed to speak, but I think maybe if they could hear them out more often, and be open to when the kids point out their inaccuracies, because they feel like they are being judged all the time

I think it depends on the person's personality and the way they come at them  
I think the female officers are pretty good from what little interactions I've watched  
I think it's the male officers that they have issues with  
I think, once they have identified the problem making sure that they have helped address it and maybe working with that particular staff on work with that kids, doing more training about transference, figuring out what's going on, maybe educating them a little more about that

I think, understanding what they can do and what they can't do  
I think a little more consistency from staff to staff, shift to shift would help, because I think they get a lot of inconsistency

## Staff Member I-Poem

I have a lot of experience with kids at risk in the front line  
I already had a frame of reference to work from  
I mean can you really mentor somebody for this job?  
I mean from dealing with the kids?  
I think that's why focus is on just make sure this paperwork's right and here you go  
I think that's realistically the only way that is able to happen

I don't really see it as a difference between [program officers] and drills  
I think they're all different  
I think they all have their different strategies and at times it's like they're different  
survival techniques because it's tough here if you're not equipped  
I see the difference with the drills is obviously they're more military

I didn't take this job for the money – these kids, it's tough for them to come in this  
program  
I would think it would be difficult for anybody but they make it through and they make  
it through beautifully

I think they have a seed planted  
I know they have a seed planted

I think the beautiful thing is that if and when they do get ready to make a change if it's  
not soon or now that they can really dig deep

I think it's a wonderful program as far as that because it's that buffer to jail  
I think it's insatiable in what it's about  
I think it's a great component

Acceptance I guess, love; having somebody love on them  
I know some of them have had problems with being molested  
It's just the fundamental thing that we learn just dealing with these kids is just letting  
them be safe and I think that's what it is

I see the dynamics between the women and the girls; the staff women  
I go back to everybody has their different style and strategy and experience so you might  
have one staff member that the girls will just jaw jab to death  
I believe the girls have manipulated staff to have this kind of dynamic where they feel  
hey can be in control because let's face it, they like to be in control these little girls and at  
least some of them  
I've seen that dynamic

I'm never ever, mostly ever, ever popping a smile, joking, being sarcastic

I'm totally by the book  
I set the expectation  
I think it's different with different staff members

They're experts at knowing who to manipulate and so I see that dynamic a lot too

I like them to stand there and think about it.  
I set the expectation by going "You know, don't sabotage yourself tonight. Your free time's important. You have control of your free time  
I think a lot of drills are over the top with a lot of things and they might think the same about me  
I'll tell you that because I've been here just a short time what I expressed to Mr. -- is that that's just the expectation and it's a beautiful thing and the kids, they understand it

I will kinda say that kinda one of the negatives with drills or with AO's and even me sometimes is that we say things and we say things that really don't help the cadets. Antagonizing. I don't know if it's purposely or not  
I'm being totally critical about it because my deal is -- my justification is I wanna make sure that whatever we put in front of the cadet is the best for the cadet

I don't know if it's more a process among the boys talking but I'm of the fact that whatever your mind perceives your body will achieve and really what's coming out of your mouth is from your heart  
I think any time you purposely have a cadet psychologically whipped and in a state where he's pissed and he doesn't have any coping mechanisms and you continue just to just throw salt in the wound  
I think that it's unfair  
I've seen it so yeah

I think that the camera system is a great way to be accountable and to have great training  
I think we need to look at video  
I think the liability's the biggest thing  
I think the long term effect on cadets and our program is huge  
I think it's the reputation of the academy  
I promise you there are a lot of people here that are totally awesome  
I think you're gonna start bringing in people that understand having expectations  
I think over time it'll really start blending and you'll have a more cohesive group

## Staff Member I-Poem

I get great joy in it  
My duty here is basically to motivate our drill instructors and academy officers, give them direction and give them purpose, purpose and mission here, purpose in what they do  
If I can fulfill those three things, I'm doing great

I've been here 12 years  
I've seen cadets that it's time for them to leave and they don't want to leave  
I don't know what all there is but whatever it is, they prefer to live here  
I think the program we have right now should be the pilot for the whole state if not nation  
I think six months is, it's a good time period for a young person  
So six months I think is good because I'll be honest with you, the young people that we have today are not the average high school kid  
I really believe personally that the furloughs we have, the system we have is a good program  
I believe in it because I see their vision  
I believe in it

I wish we could separate them more but I don't think that it's feasible with the teaching staff, with the buildings and so forth [regarding the JJ]  
I think that you would see the residents maintaining a high level performance  
I believe its working

I think the biggest thing also is probably not just the seasoned staff, but the staff being professional role models  
I think the biggest challenge for drill instructors is not to get things personal  
I need the [program] officers out there communicating, coaching, teaching these young people once the drill instructor is through doing what he has to do or she has to do  
I think the most successful and the best [program] officers are those officers that have families and they have a sense of how to deal with a spouse and how to deal with a child, their son or daughter so I think that does make a difference

I'm not looking for excuses for them but they should know what to do but there are some difficulties in them  
But I don't know. They are kind of timid

I'll tell you I think we have excellent counselors  
I think the counseling group we have is very effective  
I talk to them almost every night when I work evenings

The females, to me they're looking for acceptance

I don't think our female cadets, I don't think the parents have really told these females we love you and to me the female cadets are looking for acceptance. It's strange

I think that confuses cadets. I think it confuses the females  
I don't think you have to be a rocket scientist to figure out why  
I think the female staff has a need to be more masculine, more hard around male staff but they really don't have to  
I think it creates a little confusion to the female cadet because they're watching the female staff being rough and loud like the males but then you take them to the pod and they're more gentle  
I'm surprised none of the female cadets never asked the female staff

I think you have to answer their questions  
I always feel that it's important to let the cadet talk because what might be silly or really nothing at that moment, might be coming up to be very important tomorrow

I'm just a strong believer in the system  
I've been here 12 years, I believe in my commander  
I've served him for all 12 years and -- I think this is the best  
I don't want to be biased or anything but I true strongly believe this is the best juvenile institution in the state of Texas

I don't know a church group or some kind of group, a girl scout leader, or somebody come in here to talk to them  
I just think that in real society, I think that females have a different role to provide to their families than males

I'll tell you the females always surprise me  
I remember those 12 girls. [the first 12 in the program]  
I didn't think, to be honest with you, I didn't think much of them  
was told yesterday that one of them is into the University of Texas  
I'm glad to hear -- is in the University of Texas getting her education  
I'm hoping she's still in the reserves  
I know there's a whole lot more that we don't see

### Staff Member I-Poem

I do have a problem with the staff because a lot of them retraumatize the kids by screaming and acting threatening and you know all kinds of gestures and postures and everything that just sets off all kinds of stuff

I'm going to have to share that with them because its ok for them to scream, there is nothing keeping staff from screaming, it's allowed but these girls who just fall apart and they don't know what to do with them and a lot of it is that they're triggering a lot of it you know so its kind of difficult

I don't know, usually our female's finish, it's just been here recently that that has happened

## Staff Member I-Poem

I am strict  
I worked in the jail system a long time  
I am probably a little more stern than most of the ladies, you know  
I do say they respect me because they know when I am about business I am about business  
I cannot speak for nobody else  
I tell them I am not playing  
Put your A-game on that is what I mean

I enjoy working here  
I have not had any problems  
I can truly say that  
I use my expertise like I say as I do in the jail and along with them rules and regulations

I do not have any problems  
I guess because all of us have our different walks of life and it is just-. Feels like more family on this shift  
I cannot speak for the other shifts  
I mean I work day watch but it is just too busy  
I would rather have just my one-on-one with the kids  
I get a chance to talk with them, try to help them make positive decisions, and try to make them think positive even when things are bad

I am strictly about that and that is what I stress to them  
I'd like to see it a little more stricter  
I am truly a strict discipline and I do not like the pat on the hand  
You know what I am saying  
And I feel if they do something wrong they need to be punished for it. If they do something right they need to be awarded  
I do not think- and I have to understand too, this is not a jail  
I just think they should take out the furloughs until they get to the corporal aspect.

I think it is a pretty good program  
I think it is a pretty good structure  
I think the program needs to be separate for the girls and separate for the boys because when they start that interacting then they start liking each other and it becomes an issue.  
I think they should have the same program but the girls should be girls and the boys should be boys  
I tell them all the time, your main goal and objective is to complete this program



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