

GIRLS...MOVING ON Program Description

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

Program Philosophy and Guiding Principles

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

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

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

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

Principle #1: Relational. *Girls...Moving On* recognizes the centrality of relationships in facilitating the personal growth and development of participants. The program is facilitated in a gender-responsive, respectful, and empathic style, and the girls are encouraged to reciprocate this approach.

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



Principle 2: Strengths-Based. *Girls...Moving On* is based on the premise that all of the girls and young women entering the program have strengths and resources that can be mobilized to solve problems and address life challenges. An emphasis is placed on helping participants to become aware of and build personal strengths and resources.

Principle 3: Trauma-Informed. The success of *Girls...Moving On* is contingent in large part on creating an environment that is respectful of and safe for all participants. Facilitators should recognize the circumstances and pathways that bring girls into the justice system and support participants' efforts to overcome the impacts of trauma.

Principle 4: Respectful of Differences. Facilitators of *Girls...Moving On* are encouraged to respect differences in culture, learning style, and emotional, social and cognitive development.

Principle 5: Work Collaboratively To Establish Program Outcomes, to Enhance Motivation and Build Self-Efficacy. *Girls...Moving On* was designed to build intrinsic motivation and increase self-efficacy. To achieve this outcome, facilitators work collaboratively with the participants to identify personal goals and to set the agenda for the program.

Principle 6: Build Healthy Relationships (Formal and Informal). *Girls...Moving On* assists the girls to build social capital. They are introduced to the skills necessary to build healthy relationships, encouraged to develop new interests, and given the means to access resources and services.

Principle 7: Provide a Framework for Continuous Services. As the girls move through the program, they are encouraged to connect with mainstream services across personal, family, career/vocational, and community domains.

Principle 8: Evaluation. Several assessment tools are recommended to monitor the impact of *Girls...Moving On*. Pre-post assessments and client-centered feedback help to ensure that the girls have input into the delivery of the program, that they are benefiting from the program, and that contributions can be made to the evidence-based literature.

Program Delivery

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

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

The group modules are organized around a specific theme that is delivered on a stand-alone basis. This means that after completing Module 1, participants can enter the group at the beginning of whatever module is being taught. The facilitator can also introduce modules in whatever order is desired to ensure that participants with less time in the program can complete those elements of the program that they need most.

Program Overview

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

Figure 1: Program Snapshot

Topics	Delivery
Module 1: Orientation	One-to-One
Module 2: Listening and Being Heard	Group
Module 3: Building Healthy Relationships	Group
Module 4: Expressing Emotions	Group
Module 5: Making Connections	Group
Module 6: Transitions	One-to-One

Module 1: Orientation [One-to-One Delivery]

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

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

The Primary Goal of the Segment Includes:

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

Figure 2: Tasks and Schedule for Module 1

Topic	Estimated Time	Key Points
Program Description	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to the program. • Review program goals and the format of the program • Establish terms of participation. • Review and sign the participant contract.
Assessment	75 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the assessment process. • Administer and score assessment measures. • Interpret and integrate the assessment results.
Feedback	30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback. • Begin to identify priority targets for change.
Personal Change Plan	90 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the portfolio. • Develop a collage (My Vision of Success) across four major domains of life contexts: personal, career/vocational, family, and community/peers. • Establish personal goals for one or more of the four domains.

MODULES 2 - 6: [GROUP FORMAT]

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

Part I: Reviewing

Part II: Discovering

Part III: Reflecting

PART I: REVIEWING

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

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

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

Session 1 - Welcome [Optional]: *Girls...Moving On* offers a continuous intake so it is possible that new participants will join the group at the beginning of each module. Safety and support are a critical component of the program, therefore new members should be welcomed, introduced and provided with the opportunity to review and add to group guidelines.

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

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

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

PART II: DISCOVERING

Discovering is the largest segment of each session and is designed to introduce information and provide opportunities for skill acquisition. It is typically offered over 75 minutes.

Module 2: Listening and Being Heard

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

"My usual style is just to agree with everyone – I just don't know how to say NO." Tamara

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

Figure 4: Snapshot of Module 2

Sessions	Estimated Time	Session Titles
Session 1	2 hours	• I Am Listening
Session 2	2 hours	• Expressing My Wants and Needs
Session 3	2 hours	• Saying "No"
Session 4	2 hours	• Taking the Sting out of Criticism
Session 5	2 hours	• Win-Win: the Art of Negotiating

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

Module 3: Building Healthy Relationships

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

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

In this module the girls are asked to define a healthy relationship and to explore connections with others within various contexts... intimacy, friendship, gang involvement, etc. They are also asked to explore the impact of unhealthy relationships and social aggression. A snapshot of Module 3 is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Snapshot of Module 3

Sessions	Estimated Time	Session Titles
Session 1	2 hours	• What Is a Healthy Relationship?
Session 2	2 hours	• What Can I Do Without in a Relationship?
Session 3	2 hours	• Love and Friendship: What I Want and What I Need
Session 4	2 hours	• Loyalty, Conflict, and Friendship
Session 5	2 hours	• A Different Perspective

Module 4: Expressing Emotions

"I try not to feel anything – it's just easier that way..." Andrea

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

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

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

Figure 6: Snapshot of Module 4

Sessions	Estimated Time	Session Titles
Session 1	2 hours	• Exploring Feelings
Session 2	2 hours	• Reacting to the Outside World
Session 3	2 hours	• Listening to My Inner Messages
Session 4	2 hours	• Challenging Harmful Self-Talk
Session 5	2 hours	• Celebrating Emotions

Module 5: Making Connections

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

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

The final context that is explored in this segment is the community. Research suggests that for many girls a sense of involvement and connection in community-based activities can help to build competencies and foster the development of important social and physical skills. Girls will be challenged to explore their own communities in order to establish a sense of what, where and how they can begin to connect. A snapshot of Module 5 is presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Snapshot of Module 5

Sessions	Estimated Time	Session Titles
Session 1	2 hours	• My Family
Session 2	2 hours	• My Career: What I Want to Do
Session 3	2 hours	• My Career: What I Can Do
Session 4	2 hours	• My Community: What I Like to Do
Session 5	2 hours	• My Community: What I Can Do

Module 6: Making Healthy Choices

The Module opens with a look at how cultural messages and the media influence self-concept and the way we feel about self, others, and the world. Girls are then given the opportunity to expand their personal resources by focusing on three areas that may lead to ongoing health and emotional problems: (1) Drug and alcohol use; (2) High-risk sexual behavior; and (3) Distortions in body image. A snapshot of Module 6 is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Snapshot of Module 6

Sessions	Estimated Time	Session Titles
Session 1	2 hours	• Challenging Common Myths and Stereotypes
Session 2	2 hours	• Learning to Love My Body
Session 3	2 hours	• Looking at Drug Use
Session 4	2 hours	• Exploring My Sexuality
Session 5	2 hours	• It's All About Me

PART III: REFLECTING

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

Module 7: Transitions [One-to-One Delivery]

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

Figure 9: Snapshot of Module 7

Topic	Estimated Time	Key Points
Program Description	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback forms administered at the end of each module. • Elicit participant feedback regarding program content and delivery.
Post-Assessment	75 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer post-assessment tools. • Score, review, and integrate the results.
Achievements and Endings	60 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the girls with a summary of progress made throughout the program and current strengths and challenges. • Identify future challenges. • Identify personal strategies and resources on the Roadmap. • Honor achievements made by participants throughout the program.

Additional Information:

Girls...Moving On is a proprietary program developed and trained by Orbis Partners Inc. For additional information about this program and training opportunities please contact Orbis Partners www.orbispartners.com.