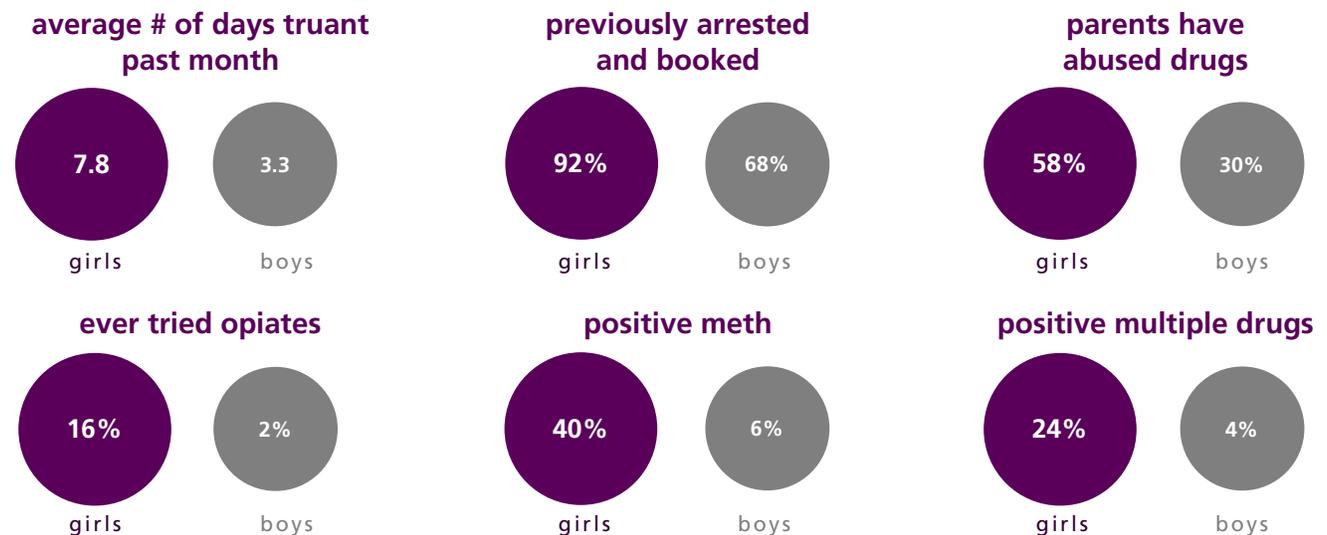


25 Girls: A Story of Young Females in Local Detention

As part of the Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program, SANDAG interviews juvenile and adult arrestees in local detention facilities regarding their drug use and other risk-taking behaviors. In 2016, 106 juveniles were interviewed and of these, 25 were females. Analyses of the data by gender revealed a number of differences between these 25 girls and the boys who were interviewed. Who were these 25 females and what does this information suggest regarding underlying needs, possible gaps in services, and where additional resources may be needed?

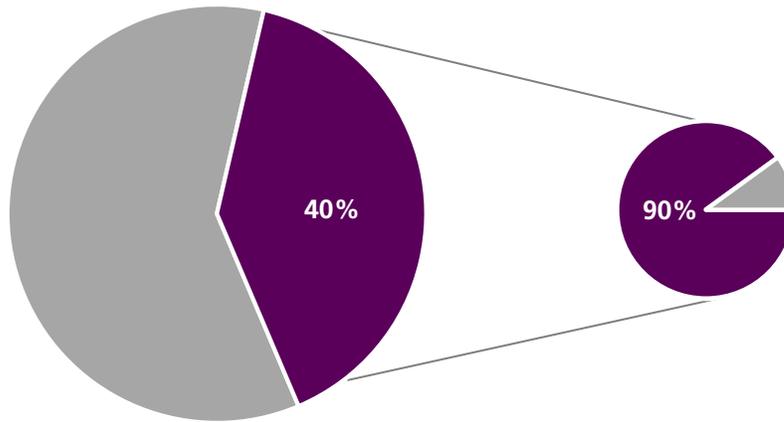
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ■ ■ 2 in 3 had previously run away from home ■ ■ ■ 2 in 3 had been stopped for a curfew violation □ □ ■ ■ ■ 3 in 5 had gone to school drunk or high □ ■ 1 in 2 family had previous Child Welfare Services contact □ □ □ ■ ■ 2 in 5 didn't live with a parent □ □ ■ 1 in 3 had been in foster care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ □ ■ 1 in 3 had previously thought about killing themselves □ □ ■ 1 in 3 had dropped out of school or weren't enrolled □ □ □ ■ 1 in 4 had been approached for human trafficking □ □ □ □ ■ 1 in 5 had previously had a drug overdose □ □ □ □ ■ 1 in 5 lived in an unstable or group situation |
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how girls differed from boys



12 to 15 average age first tried each type of drug (including marijuana, meth, heroin, and cocaine/crack)

40 percent of the girls have abused prescription drugs



90 percent of the girls who abused prescription drugs abused tranquilizers or sedatives (such as Xanax and Valium), compared to 53 percent of boys

what else do we know about these girls?

They ranged in age from 14 to 18. Ten were Hispanic, seven White, six Black, and two another ethnicity. Four already had children of their own.

possible implications

Many of these girls come from homes with numerous risk factors – interventions for those with the greatest need should include looking at family issues as well.

Girls interviewed as part of SAM had more serious drug use histories than boys on a number of measures. Gender-responsive treatment that addresses underlying trauma is essential.

Drug use for many girls started before high school. Truancy prevention and early education are important regionally.

A number of these girls in juvenile hall had contact with other systems. To the greatest degree possible, information should be shared and efforts coordinated to increase protective factors for these girls.