ADDRESSING THE GENDER-SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GIRLS:
AN EVALUATION OF SAN DIEGO’S WINGS PROGRAM

BOARD OF CORRECTIONS
FINAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2003

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As of September 19, 2003
ABSTRACT

In 1999, the California legislature provided funding support to several counties to develop programs designed to intervene with juveniles at-risk for delinquent behavior. The San Diego County Probation Department successfully competed and received funds to develop a Challenge II grant to support a gender-responsive program for young girls entering the juvenile justice system. Acknowledging research that delineates the psychosocial and developmental pathways that differ for girls compared to boys, local practitioners determined that the justice system needed a program that was responsive to the issues experienced by girls. The result was the WINGS program, or Working to Insure and Nurture Girls’ Success. The primary goal of WINGS was to reduce the number of girls entering or continuing in the juvenile justice system by supporting and empowering them and their families to access and receive appropriate services.

The San Diego County Probation Department contracted with the San Diego Association of Governments’ (SANDAG) Criminal Justice Research Division to conduct the required evaluation. Using a classic experimental design, the assessment tracked the girls’ progress in the program, documented the interventions, and determined outcomes, including recidivism. In addition, the research documented program implementation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are extended to San Diego County Probation Department staff who worked on this project. These individuals include Kim Broderick, Director of Community Partnerships and Planning, and Secorra Getty, Program Manager. In addition, the efforts of others no longer with the program are also to be commended. These include Sara Vickers, Connie Kent, Ruth Clevenger, Zosie Domingo, and Carol Ryan. All of the service providers at Home Start, South Bay Community Services, Escondido Counseling and Crisis Services, and North County Lifeline were extremely helpful and their cooperation in conducting this evaluation is also greatly appreciated. Finally, a number of SANDAG staff assisted in the compilation and review of data for this report, including Donna Allnutt, Arlene Aquino, Mara Bernd, Christine Brena, Debbie Correia, Shannon Courtney, Laura Curtis, Tina Evangelou, Michelle Gonnam, Rebecca Hammett, Lisbeth Howard, Lori Jones, Roni Melton, Liliana Mercado, Erin Oliver, Lindi Schirmer, and Jessica Sippy.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM BACKGROUND

San Diego County has addressed the problem of juvenile crime with a number of innovative philosophies and programs since the early 1990s. Challenge I funding from the California State Legislature, administered through the California Board of Corrections (BOC), was instrumental in the implementation of one successful strategy: Breaking Cycles. Breaking Cycles is a multi-agency project designed to deter youth from becoming delinquent by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth and their families and improving the juvenile justice and community response to juvenile offenders through a system of graduated sanctions.

In 1998, the County applied for Challenge II funding with the hope of securing funding to implement a girls-only program to provide gender-responsive services. Research shows that girls' social and developmental needs differ from boys and that they enter the juvenile justice system for different reasons. In addition, they may not respond in the same way to existing interventions, the majority of which were developed with boys in mind. San Diego County’s Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC), which played an integral role in securing Challenge I funding, reviewed system gaps that continued to exist locally and noted in the Local Action Plan that the categories of girls and home visiting programs remained critical areas of need. In May 1999, San Diego received notification they had received funding and the WINGS program was born: Working to Insure and Nurture Girls’ Success.

The San Diego County Probation Department served as the lead agency for the WINGS project, in cooperation with four community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout the region. The Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) conducted both the process and impact evaluations of the WINGS program. This final report discusses the program, its implementation, and services provided, as well as the results of the impact evaluation that tracked 798 girls randomly assigned to the program or the comparison group. Because of funding cuts in 2002, the WINGS program, as it was implemented and evaluated in this project, ceased to exist as an independent entity. Instead, specific program components, including the provision of gender-responsive services and home visits, were incorporated into the Community Assessment Teams (CATs).
Program Description

WINGS was managed by the San Diego County Probation Department, in partnership with four CBOs. Modeled after the Cal-SAHF (California Safe and Healthy Families) “Best Practices” approach that includes the provision of comprehensive services in the community through linkages, coordination, and home-based visiting services, WINGS recognized the innate differences between boys and girls. Program services were gender-responsive and were based upon the crucial element of relationship-building that has been shown to be essential in working with this population. The primary goal of WINGS was to reduce the number of girls entering or continuing in the juvenile justice system by supporting and empowering them and their families to access and receive appropriate services.

To be eligible for the program, a girl had to meet several eligibility requirements. These included being between 12 and 17½ years of age, not having more than four referrals to Probation, not having more than two sustained petitions requiring formal adjudication, not having more than 90 days of out-of-home placement, having a referral that resulted in the case being counseled and closed, informal probation, deferred entry of judgment, or formal probation, and not having served more than 90 days in Breaking Cycles or the Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP). WINGS clients were assigned a Home Visitor within three days of the service provider receiving a referral from Probation. The Home Visitor could be described as a case manager, coach, mentor, or teacher, and most importantly, a facilitator of change. Utilizing a family-focused, strength-based approach, Home Visitors developed comprehensive case plans addressing not only the needs of the girls, but the families as well. The Home Visitor had 30 days after a referral was received to establish contact with the client and secure participation. For counseled and closed cases, participation in WINGS was voluntary. For informal probation and court petition cases, participation was mandatory and failure to participate could have led to further sanctions.

WINGS clients were provided with a comprehensive array of no-cost services through a multi-disciplinary team model (MDT) that combined home visiting and center-based services. Some core program elements included mother-daughter mediation, transportation, and a variety of gender-specific programs that addressed such issues as academics, alcohol and other drug use, anger management, and vocational/career support. Successful program completion was defined as participation for a minimum of six months that included the client completing her case plan and not receiving a new petition resulting in custody of 90 days or more.
Program Implementation

Collaboration among the Probation Department staff and the CBOs was an integral part of the WINGS project. The need for coordination required a substantial amount of time and energy on the part of Probation and the partnering agencies, but resulted in a valuable partnership. Since their first meeting in 1999, both staffs attended regular meetings, participated in site visits, and engaged in numerous training and development activities. They also joined together to celebrate the successes of the clients at graduation ceremonies and to educate other agencies, Probation staff, and the general public about the WINGS program. Effort also was directed at ensuring program policy and consistency through the development and refinement of a WINGS program protocol and a staff development manual.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Process Evaluation

A number of research hypotheses were addressed through the process evaluation to determine if WINGS was implemented as planned. These included:

- Clients referred to WINGS were engaged in the program by service providers and received gender-responsive services.
- Service provision to at-risk girls was enhanced through gender-responsive services provided by multi-disciplinary teams of service providers and Probation Officers.
- Service providers in the San Diego region were knowledgeable about the nature of gender-responsive services and were satisfied with their relationship with the WINGS program.
- Clients and their parents were satisfied with their relationship with WINGS staff and felt the services received have had a positive impact on problem behavior.
- WINGS clients were satisfied with the services they received and reported positive changes as a result.
- Each of the four WINGS sites was staffed with a multi-disciplinary team able to provide services to clients.

Data were collected through a variety of sources to address each of the research questions under these six hypotheses. These included program automated records (Management Information System, or MIS), Probation files, client surveys and interviews, staff interviews, and service provider surveys.
Impact Evaluation

A true experimental design was used to collect data for the impact evaluation. Between April and December 2000, 499 eligible girls were randomized to either participate in WINGS or to receive “treatment as usual” (regular probation/diversion) and serve as the comparison group. Starting in January 2001, another 299 girls were randomized into a second sample. This second sample was included to determine if outcome measures would be more positive when more time had passed since implementation. To answer the research hypothesis that WINGS clients were less likely to engage in at-risk behavior and have less involvement with the juvenile justice system, data were collected from service provider records, as well as Probation Department files. A key assumption underlying this hypothesis was that delinquent behavior would be reduced when risk factors such as poor family functioning, truancy, alcohol and other drug abuse, antisocial peers, and victimization were addressed.

Data for both WINGS girls and the comparison group were collected primarily through two sources. First, information was collected from the San Diego Regional Resiliency Checkup (SDRRC) administered by Probation to all girls (with the exception of informal probation cases that were ordered by court) during an initial contact. Second, data regarding risk factors were collected from Probation Department files and their automated computer system using a standardized instrument. Additional information for the WINGS group was captured using other instruments, including a general intake/exit form, the Cook County Strengths/Needs Assessment, and a Pathways Questionnaire. In addition, the service providers readministered the SDRRC at program intake and exit.

Analyses of the 798 girls randomized as part of the research design revealed that randomization was successful in that individuals in both groups did not differ in a significant way from one another. About one-quarter to one-third of girls in both groups were White, while another one-third were Hispanic. The majority of both groups had only one referral to Probation and the most common referral outcome for both groups was having their case counseled and closed. The other one-half of the participants had a referral that resulted in informal probation, formal probation, or deferred entry of judgment. Many of these girls lived with only one caregiver, were not at the appropriate grade level, and had experienced some type of trauma in their life. The five most common risk factors identified on the SDRRC for both groups included having poor parental relations, having poor academic achievement, being sensation seekers, having anger management issues, and associating with delinquent friends. The five most common protective factors from the SDRRC included belonging to a caring school environment, having someone to confide in, having parents that model moderation in their alcohol/drug use, having a supportive family, and being treated with unconditional regard.
IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS

The impact evaluation results revealed that clients who successfully completed the WINGS program had more protective factors and fewer risk factors at exit, compared to at intake. Some of these positive changes are displayed in Table 1. In addition, successful clients had more knowledge about available resources, were more successful in school, had received health care, and felt safer at home, at school, and in their neighborhood. There was little difference in criminal activity, but WINGS girls were more likely to successfully complete probation and less likely to have an institutional commitment during program participation.

Table 1
IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS
WINGS Final Evaluation Report, September 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful WINGS Clients Had More Protective Factors at Exit</th>
<th>Before WINGS</th>
<th>After WINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53% Has Relationship with a Prosocial Adult</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55% Enrolled in a Supportive School Environment</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Involved in Organizations</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31% Has Self-Control</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28% Effectively Manages Peer Pressure</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41% No Distressing Habits</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful WINGS Clients Had Fewer Risk Factors at Exit</th>
<th>Before WINGS</th>
<th>After WINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64% Has Delinquent Friends</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45% Pattern of Truancy</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36% Pattern of Suspensions/Expulsions</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21% Socially Isolated</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38% Uses Alcohol or Other Drugs</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful WINGS Clients Had a Higher Overall Protective Score and Lower Risk Score at Exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before WINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clients who were on formal or informal probation were more likely to become engaged in the WINGS program than those who had a referral that resulted in the case being counseled and closed. While over three-quarters of those with required participation became engaged (formal or informal probation), less than two-thirds of those with voluntary participation did (counseled and closed cases). In addition, girls who were part of the second sample were more likely to be engaged, supporting the idea that time should be incorporated into research designs that allow for program development. Over one-half (58%) of engaged clients successfully completed the program and, on average, these girls spent about ten months in the program. Client factors that were predictive of successful program completion included living in a stable home environment, the presence of a supportive adult, having educational aspirations, not using alcohol and other drugs, and valuing honesty and integrity.

Analyses of the client assessments revealed that clients were most likely to need girls’ group, a center-based group activity that emphasizes raising self-esteem using cognitive skill-building curricula. Other common service needs included health education, family conferencing, vocational training, family counseling, and mental health treatment. More than eight out of ten successful clients completed many of the recommended services, including life skills, crisis intervention, girls’ group, family conferencing, mental health treatment, alcohol counseling, and health education.

Since program inception, each of the WINGS sites maintained a talented team of staff and volunteers to meet the varied needs of their clients. Program staff that came to work at WINGS often did so because of their desire to work with girls. These individuals received a great deal of gender-specific training, which was useful in their new positions. Overall, staff were very positive about the benefits of working collaboratively to provide gender-responsive services and were committed to working as an MDT. However, they also were aware of some of the challenges associated with the team approach. These included coming from different perspectives and consistently appreciating the others’ contributions. Program and Probation staff shared a common belief that WINGS was well implemented and were satisfied with program management. In addition, two-thirds felt that WINGS was “very” effective in assisting at-risk girls and more than three-quarters noted that the program model was WINGS’ greatest strength. The complexity of need of the families was reflected in the staff’s call for more accessible, intensified, and specialized services for family members.

Local service providers that were surveyed as part of the evaluation were knowledgeable about WINGS and many reported receiving referrals. Most of these agencies were satisfied with their relationship with the program and felt that gender-responsive services were necessary to meet the needs of at-risk girls.

Clients who were interviewed and surveyed reported a high level of satisfaction with the program, even though some were initially unsure about becoming involved. Clients and adults alike were very positive about their relationship with the Home Visitor, as well as the services they received. Equally important, they also noted that program participation had resulted in positive change in the client’s behavior, including a better relationship with the parent/guardian and improved school grades and attendance, areas that were also identified as top risk factors.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Results from the process evaluation support the view that providing services that were family-focused, gender-responsive, center-based, and included home visits was beneficial to program participants. Clients who were required to participate were more likely to be engaged, but there was no difference in successful completion rates once they were engaged. Clients represented a variety of ethnic groups and came to the program for different reasons, but many shared a history of having experienced traumatic events in their lives. A number of factors were related to program completion, including having prosocial relationships, valuing fairness and honesty, and having constructive outlets. Clients in the second sample were more likely to become engaged and completed the program in a shorter amount of time, supporting the view that WINGS matured over time. Clients received a variety of services, including crisis intervention, girls’ group, life skills, conflict resolution, and health education. Both program staff and clients shared their appreciation for key program components. Program staff and Probation agreed that working as part of a team was useful, but that it was essential that ongoing communication and coordination be maintained.

Impact evaluation findings from the SDRRC showed that successful clients had significantly more protective factors and fewer risk factors at exit. While this change in resiliency was associated with positive changes in school engagement, it was not directly tied to lower recidivism rates. Specifically, a small percentage of both groups (WINGS and the comparison) had a sustained petition in the follow-up period, supporting the view that traditional criminal justice measures are not the most sensitive to use when measuring change with girls.

Some of the limitations of this research include inconsistent documentation in program files, which affected the number of cases available for analysis; self-selection of clients for program participation after randomization; and variation in program standards across the four sites. Some recommendations for other researchers in this field include working with program staff early on to ensure proper documentation, allowing program start-up time before an evaluation begins, encouraging the program staff to designate one contact person to coordinate data collection, and including a variety of different measures. Program recommendations include taking additional steps to ensure cross-site consistency, providing after-care services, utilizing client assessments to a greater degree in case planning, making participation mandatory for all clients, and identifying and targeting appropriate clients.

DISCUSSION

What We Found That Worked

- Multi-disciplinary teams that included Home Visitors, Specialists, Team Leaders, community members, and the Probation Officer provided comprehensive services.
- Home Visitors who were able to provide home-based and family-centered services.
- Center-based services that were based upon a gender-responsive curriculum.
- Regional-based services that met the needs of clients in their own communities.

- Offering both mental health and alcohol and other drug-related services helped to address the needs of many clients.

- Providing staff training on gender-responsive services was important initially, as well as through the course of the project.

- Building partnerships and collaborating on service provision were necessary to maximize the limited resources in the community.

- Matching the appropriate clients with the ability of the program through the use of client assessments.

- Paying attention to information management was essential for documentation purposes and was possible through the dedication of the staff.

**What Didn’t Work**

- Voluntary participation in the program for some clients made initial engagement difficult.

- Lack of resources for intensive mental health and substance abuse needs of clients hindered some girls’ progress in the program because WINGS was not designed to address the needs of these individuals.

- Lack of standardization across the regions allowed each CBO to meet the individual needs of the community, but also resulted in different ways that the gender-responsive services were implemented.

**Problems That We Encountered**

- Engaging the family in the process was a constant challenge.

- Ensuring reliable transportation was difficult due to the large geographic area of the region.

- Providing after-care services would have eased the girls’ transition from the close relationship with the Home Visitor to program completion.

- Unexpected staff turnover affected relationships with clients, as well as the amount of knowledge maintained by staff over time.

- Reduced Challenge II Grant funding affected the number and type of youth served during the last year of the grant.
Future Plans for the Program

Because of funding gaps, the WINGS project is being incorporated into the Community Assessment Teams (CATs). CATs offers services region-wide, like WINGS, and provides wrap-around services to families with school age children who are at-risk for involvement or further involvement with the juvenile justice system. As part of this transition, the eligibility criteria is changing so that girls on formal probation are targeted. In addition, those with higher level needs, including those related to having extensive custody time, a history of violence, extensive gang involvement or drug use, or a history of mental health issues, will be excluded.

Recommendations for Other Counties

- Identify local service gaps prior to program implementation so that the program is most effective in meeting regional needs.
- Establish a consistent meeting schedule early on for all program partners to ensure issues are discussed and resolved as they occur.
- Have contracts in place prior to program implementation so that information sharing is addressed early on.
- Clearly define staffing needs to ensure that the infrastructure necessary to support a large grant project is in place.
- Secure flexible funding for all program components to ensure that the basic needs of clients can be met.
- Establish data collection methods up-front and take into account that data needed for case management are often different from data needed to assess outcomes.
- Determine specific program graduation requirements and ensure they are standard across sites.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM BACKGROUND
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In response to growing concerns regarding the rate of juvenile crime, the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 1760 in 1996. This bill provided Challenge grant funds, which were administered through the California Board of Corrections (BOC), to assist counties in forming collaborations to implement comprehensive strategies for preventing and reducing delinquency.

Through a competitive selection process, San Diego County received a four-year Challenge I grant in 1997 to implement the Breaking Cycles program. Breaking Cycles is a multi-agency, geographically diverse project designed to deter youth from becoming delinquent by focusing prevention programs on at-risk youth and their families and improving the juvenile justice and community response to juvenile offenders through a system of graduated sanctions.

In 1997, San Diego County’s Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC), which played an integral role in securing Challenge I funding, reviewed system gaps that continued to exist locally and noted in the Local Action Plan that the issues of girls and home visiting programs remained critical areas of need. Hoping to secure funding to implement a girls-only program to provide gender-responsive services, San Diego submitted another proposal in 1998 to the BOC for funds made available through Assembly Bill 2261. In May 1999, San Diego received notification they had received Challenge II funding for three years and the WINGS program was born – Working to Insure and Nurture Girls’ Success. WINGS was designed to serve adolescent females who were beginning to demonstrate delinquent behaviors that brought them to the attention of the juvenile justice system. To address issues that may be underlying these behaviors, a dual approach of both in-home and community-based interventions was used. In 2001, the program received a one-year funded extension.

While the San Diego County Probation Department was the lead agency for the WINGS project, collaboration also was an essential part of Challenge II, with services provided in four regions of the County (Central, East, North, and South Bay) by four community-based organizations (CBOs), each of which subcontracted with other CBOs in the community. The Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) partnered with these agencies to conduct both process and impact evaluations of the program.
PROGRAM BACKGROUND: WHY FOCUS SPECIFICALLY ON GIRLS?

What Are the Numbers?

When comparing the number of girls to boys in the juvenile justice system, one is not initially alarmed, until one looks at the trends over the past 20 years. While male involvement in the justice system has declined, girls’ involvement has steadily increased. According to a Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) report, arrests for females under the age of 18 increased 25 percent from 1991 to 2000, while at the same time, the number of male juvenile arrests decreased 3.2 percent. Even more disconcerting is the high percentage increase during the same time period for female drug abuse violations (up 220%), offenses against the family and children (up 108%), and curfew and loitering violations (up 111%). Likewise, while male juvenile arrests for aggravated assault decreased 16 percent in 2000, female juvenile arrests for that crime increased 44 percent. Furthermore, more girls are arrested at a younger age than boys. In 2000, while 22 percent of boys arrested were under the age of 15, 35 percent of girls arrested were in the same age range (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2000).

This gender shift also has been seen in the juvenile courts nationwide. Between 1991 and 2000, there was a 65 percent increase in the number of girls placed in residential facilities, compared to a 15 percent increase for boys. Similarly, the detention of girls in a restrictive facility prior to disposition increased 63 percent, while boys only increased 2 percent during the same ten-year period. In addition, those girls adjudged as delinquent and placed on formal probation increased 128 percent, compared to a 41 percent increase for boys (Stahl, Finnegan, & Kang, 2002).

The arrest figures for San Diego County parallel those of the nation with regard to dramatic changes in the numbers of females arrested. Some juvenile arrest statistics for the past 20 years from 1983 to 2002 include:

- Arreasts of females under the age of 18 rose 35 percent, whereas arrests for males rose 19 percent countywide.
- The female proportion of juveniles arrested for violent offenses was 26 percent in 2002, up from 17 percent in 1983.
- The number of female juveniles arrested for violent offenses increased 220 percent, from 249 to 798 arrests. For males, the comparable difference was a 90 percent increase.
- The number of female youth arrested for aggravated assault increased 308 percent, from 40 to 163 over the time span. For males, the increase in arrests for assault was 154 percent (293 to 744).
- In 2002, girls were twice as likely to be arrested for being a runaway than boys (10% compared to 5%). Conversely, boys accounted for more of the curfew violators than girls (26% compared to 12%).
- The number of girls arrested for prostitution rose 135 percent from 20 in 1983 to 47 in 2002.
There are a number of national experts who suggest that these unprecedented trends related to girls should not be ignored and that the increases in arrests, convictions, and imprisonments are more a reflection of a shift in criminal justice policy than an actual measure of increased criminal behavior by females (Immarigeon & Chesney-Lind, 1990). Although the mechanisms may vary, research has revealed several factors that contribute to the risk of a girl finding her way into the justice system.

**How are Girls Different from Boys?**

**Different Pathways to Crime**

The idea that females have different life experiences that are unique to their gender and that contribute to the reasons they commit crimes is well-grounded in the research conducted by Bloom, Owen, Chesney-Lind, and others. There is substantial literature that demonstrates that female offenders have different pathways that lead them to the juvenile and adult justice system (Acoca, 1999; Covington, 2002). For example, girls who offend are more likely than boys to have significantly higher rates of sexual victimization, come from dysfunctional homes, have higher rates of psychopathology, and abuse history, as well as familial risk factors (Bloom, Owen, Covington, & Raeder, 2002; Booker Loper, 2000; McCabe, Lansing, Garland, & Hough, 2002).

The psychological and behavioral effects of sexual abuse and parental neglect include low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, fear, hostility, repeat victimization, running away, criminal behavior, illegal substance use, academic problems, and prostitution. Female offenders, to a greater extent than males, have more episodes of depression and attempted suicide, and a lower level of resilience. The abuse and suppression experienced by young girls can thrust them into a life of delinquency and subsequent adult criminality (Booker Loper, 2000). One study on the criminal behavior of girls showed that abused and neglected girls are nearly twice as likely as their female peers to be arrested as juveniles. Often these girls are runaways, who leave home generally due to some sort of abuse. Yet, when they enter the justice system, they are punished as runaways (Spatz Widom, 2000). Locally, in 1999, female juveniles were three times more likely than boys to be arrested for runaway behavior. Girls make up a disproportionate number of the status offenders and these status offenders are likely to escalate their criminal offending (Prescott, 1997). In the study mentioned above, about one-half (49%) of the abused and neglected girls who committed status offenses were later arrested as adults, compared to 36 percent of a control group (Spatz Widom, 2000).

Another example related to victimization is the high incidence of substance use among female offenders (Covington, 2002). Women offenders not only use more drugs than male offenders, but also have different reasons for using drugs. For some women, using drugs becomes another self-destructive behavior to dull the feelings associated with being sexually abused. The rise in the female incarcerated population is attributed to the corresponding increase in the number of females arrested for drug violations (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). Again, the system traditionally has ignored the history of victimization behind the commission of crimes.
Developmental Differences

The psychosocial perspective and developmental needs of young women and girls are very different from those of young men and boys. Research on adolescent female development suggests that girls develop self-esteem differently, learn differently, process information differently, and respond differently to people and situations than boys do. Further, females develop their identity in relationships with others, whereas boys develop theirs in relation to the world. Connectedness to relationships is a critical issue in the foundation of female identity (Covington, 2002).

While for boys, separation from others is the route to maturity, girls’ primary means to mature development is in building a sense of connection with others (Covington, 2002). One study reports that incarcerated women have been repeatedly exposed to nonempathetic relationships. This results in a lack of empathy for others and self (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990). An Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) report states that girls are charged with probation and parole violations more often than boys (Maniglia, 1998). Since young women place a high priority on their relationships with others, they are willing to violate abstract rules that come between those relationships. For instance, a girl might be more willing to violate curfew because she is needed by a friend (Covington, 2002).

The Role of Culture

The role culture plays in the formation of a female’s identity has been well studied. The actual role of women in our culture is often in conflict with the perceived messages that are given to children in their formative years. While women in America have made significant strides to become equal partners with their male counterparts with respect to educational and professional attainment, the cultural values and messages often send mixed signals to girls. Research has shown that adolescent girls often go through a time of self-doubt and lack confidence and self-esteem as they become more aware of their roles in society and the negative and often restrictive expectations associated with those roles (Gilligan, 1982).

Pipher echoed these findings in her own research of adolescent girls. As she states, “Something happens to girls in early adolescence. Girls become less assertive and energetic and become more deferential, self critical, and depressed.” Pipher attributes these behaviors to what she calls “junk culture” and cites television shows such as MTV as an example. Junk culture is that which denigrates young girls and values them only for their appearance. Television, in general, displays women as objects and convinces them that, to be important, one must be thin and beautiful. Coupled with the loss of self-esteem experienced in adolescence, the overall issues that girls face become more significant (Pipher, 1996).

Two recent research efforts confirm the issues young girls confront on a daily basis, merely by being members of a community. The first study, sponsored by the Girl Scouts of America, concluded that the three key areas of child development (cognitive, physical, and emotional) do not work in sync and create pressures on young girls. Cognitive and physical development have accelerated, while emotional development has not. This imbalance has led to conditions of stress and tension in 8- to 12-year-olds that were not present in prior years. Research supports the beliefs of parents that child development is being “hurried” or “compressed.”
Girls, specifically, seem to be pressured to deal with typically “teenage” issues long before they reach their teens. Another finding of the study was that these young girls were glad for the opportunity to talk about these issues and many expressed that their parents and others were unwilling to answer questions which they thought the girls were too young to be asking. If they are ignored, the research suggests, the girls may internalize their feelings as wrong, thus increasing their feelings of stress (Roban, 2000).

A second report on how girls think brought to light the opposing messages girls get about their sexuality from the media and society. Specifically, the conflict between the sexually active images they see in the media and the societal message they receive to “just say no” to sex. They also noted a similar contradiction when trying to balance their ambition to achieve academically with the ridicule they receive from peers for doing so (Haag, 1999).

**GENDER-SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING**

Experts in the field recently have begun developing program guidelines that address the specific needs of girls (Belknap, Dunn, & Holsinger, 1997; Covington & Bloom, 1999; Bloom, Owen, Covington, & Raeder, 2002). These guidelines are based in part upon theories of female development and research documenting the associated risk factors with this population. The intent of creating a gender-specific approach in the juvenile justice system is to apply what is known about girls’ pathways into the system and treat those issues in hopes of not only preventing further involvement in the system, but helping the girls heal. Some of the basic elements of gender-specific programming are noted below (Covington and Bloom 1999; Booker Loper, 2000).

- Incorporate program components that are based upon theories that are consistent with girls’ social, developmental, and psychological needs.
- Create a safe and supportive environment that is girl-centered and supports building healthy, trusting relationships.
- Provide services that are accessible to the girl, preferably in her community.
- Include program components that address reproductive health, teen parenting, and academic and vocational needs, as well as mental health and substance abuse needs.
- Start from a strength- or asset-based approach to treatment and skill building.
- Use gender-specific assessments and individualized treatment plans.
- Provide wrap-around services.
- Hire staff that reflect the population’s culture and ethnicity.
- Provide gender-specific training to staff.
WINGS was a program that was developed using these recommendations and theories. The experts were closely involved in the development of the program, as well as in the training of staff. Over the past four years, WINGS provided an opportunity to assess the challenges and benefits of taking a program from theory to practice.

REPORT OUTLINE

This final evaluation report fulfills project requirements to the California Board of Corrections for the WINGS project. In the chapters that follow, a program description is provided (Chapter 2), as well as information about the evaluation, including the hypotheses tested, the methodology used, and the clients studied (Chapter 3). Results from the impact evaluation are presented in Chapter 4 and information regarding the process evaluation, including data gathered through staff interviews, service provider surveys, and client interviews and surveys, are included in Chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 7 conclude the report with a summary and conclusion, as well as discussion.
CHAPTER 2
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION
CHAPTER 2
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The current chapter begins by describing the program, including clients served, screening procedures, general program goals, client randomization, the level and types of services that were provided to both groups of clients, the service providers, and the standards for determining program completion or failure. In addition, project implementation issues also are discussed, including coordinating among the project team members, what training opportunities were available, and program modifications.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Working to Insure and Nurture Girls’ Success (WINGS) was a program developed through the San Diego County Comprehensive Strategy for Youth, Family, and Community. The San Diego County Probation Department served as the lead agency for the implementation of the grant. Addressing gaps identified in the Local Action Plan, WINGS reached adolescent girls countywide through an extensive community-based service network. Modeled after the Cal-SAHF (California Safe and Healthy Families) “Best Practices” approach that included the provision of comprehensive services in the community through linkages, coordination, and home-based visiting services, WINGS recognized the innate differences between boys and girls. Program services were gender-responsive and based upon the crucial element of relationship building that has been shown to be essential in working with girls. The primary goal of WINGS was to reduce the number of girls entering or continuing in the juvenile justice system by supporting and empowering them and their families to access and receive appropriate services.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Screening Procedures and Clients Served

The target population for WINGS was girls who had minimal involvement in the juvenile justice system. Potential clients were identified at different points in the juvenile system, depending upon the outcome of the current probation referral. For example, girls with referrals that were counseled and closed or resulted in informal probation were screened for program participation by one of five Community Intervention Officers (CIO). Wards (those with sustained petitions), on the other hand, were referred to program staff by either Juvenile Supervision Officers or Juvenile Intake Officers after court action had been concluded.
To be eligible for the program, a girl must have met each of the following five eligibility requirements. Each of these requirements was chosen to ensure that the program targeted the intended group: girls at early stages of delinquency.

- Between 12 and 17½ years of age;
- No more than four referrals from law enforcement agencies to Probation and no more than two sustained petitions requiring formal adjudication;
- No out-of-home placement or custody greater than 90 days (not counting foster home placement);
- One of the following dispositions for the instant offense: counseled and closed, informal probation, deferred entry of judgment, or formal probation for either a criminal or status offense; and
- No involvement for longer than 90 days in the Breaking Cycles program, or the Repeat Offender Prevention Program (ROPP).

The program began accepting clients on November 30, 1999, as originally planned. On this first day alone, ten girls were referred. The experimental design was implemented on April 1, 2000, and between then and June 2001, clients were randomly assigned to either receive WINGS services or regular probation services. Specifically, prepared sealed envelopes with consecutive identifying numbers were opened in turn. Inside each envelope was a form that was faxed back to the researchers designating each girl as either a member of the experimental or comparison group. A total of 798 girls, 399 in the treatment and 399 in the comparison group, were randomized by June 2001. After June, the program began accepting all eligible clients. Between November 1999 and June 2003, 1,317 girls received services.

### Initial Contact and Assessment

One of the program guidelines for gender-responsive services put forth by experts in the field is to provide services in the girls’ communities. Probation originally contracted with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide service in the area where the girls lived. WINGS services were provided countywide by three CBOs: Home Start in Central and East County, South Bay Community Services in South County, and North County Lifeline in North County. Once a girl was randomized to WINGS, Probation Department staff forwarded a referral to the appropriate regional service provider, depending in what area of the county the family resided (Table 2.1).

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1 The eligibility criteria for participation were revisited and revised during the course of the project. In 2000, girls referred for a status offense were deemed eligible, though this changed in 2002 with reduced project funding. In addition, participation was changed from voluntary to mandatory for informal probation cases, and the number of referrals a girl could have increased from two to four in mid-2000.
WINGS clients were assigned a Home Visitor within three days of the service provider receiving a referral from Probation. According to Probation, the Home Visitor could be described as a case manager, coach, mentor, or teacher, and most importantly, a facilitator of change. Utilizing a family-focused, strength-based approach, Home Visitors developed comprehensive case plans addressing not only the needs of the girls, but the family as well. Home visits provided up-to-date information on available community services and facilitated access to resources, which addressed employment, housing, educational, medical, and mental health needs. There was an expectation that families would work as partners in this process and not merely as passive recipients. The goal was to build self-sufficiency, empowerment, and self-reliance. Each Home Visitor had no more than 20 cases, ensuring in-depth comprehensive case management.

The Home Visitor had 30 days after the referral was received to establish contact with the client and secure participation. While every attempt was made to engage the family, in many instances, this was not possible. For counseled and closed cases, participation in WINGS was voluntary and could not be mandated. For informal probation and court petition cases, participation was mandatory and failure to participate could have led to further sanctions.

Table 2.1
CLIENT REFERRAL AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS
WINGS Program Protocol, August 2000 – June 2001

| Probation Department Received Referral and Randomized Client |
| Client Information Forwarded to Appropriate Regional Service Provider |
| Service Provider Assigned Home Visitor to Client Within 3 Days |
| Home Visitor Attempted to Establish Contact With Client Within 30 Days |
| First Home Visit Occurred Within 7 Days of Establishing Contact |
| Assessments Conducted During the Second and Third Home Visit |
| Individualized Case Plan Developed |

According to program protocol, the first home visit should have occurred within seven days of initial contact. Because of logistical difficulties this was not always possible. During the first visit, the service provider was required to allocate sufficient time for in-depth conversations regarding the program, to schedule the first service, and to sign necessary program documents (e.g., consent forms).
The needs of each girl and her family were assessed at program entry, typically during the second and third home visits, using a variety of tools to determine what services were most appropriate. All WINGS clients received individual assessments in the following areas: drug and alcohol dependence, physical health, academic achievement, and vocational and career interests. In addition, individual case assessments were utilized to measure mental health needs, English language proficiency, anger management and cognitive functioning, adult and/or teen parenting skills, family well-being, family violence, self-esteem or self-efficacy, and depression. A Family Service Plan, as well as an Individual Girl Plan, was created using the information gained through these assessments which outlined and delineated issues and goals specific to the girl’s needs, strengths, and interests. Both plans were shared with the client by the third home visit.

Service Provision

WINGS clients were provided with a comprehensive array of no-cost services through a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) model that combined home visiting and center-based services. While each service provider had some discretion in the types of gender-responsive services that were offered, a number of core elements needed to be included. Completion of these core elements was the minimum requirement for successful graduation from WINGS. Building on this foundation, each region customized the curriculum and the level of intensity of the core elements, creating their own minimum requirements for program completion. The core elements were derived from the recommendations of experts in the field as to what were essential components in a gender-responsive program. These core elements included:

- **Mother-Daughter Mediation:** Because many adolescent girls have ongoing issues with their mothers, a structured process for clients to address these issues was mother-daughter mediation. The goal of these sessions was to clarify issues, consider options, and reach workable agreements that fit the needs of the family.

- **Transportation:** One barrier to program participation for some individuals was not having adequate or reliable transportation. To reduce this potential barrier, each of the service providers agreed to offer transportation and/or bus passes to assist families in accessing services.

- **Center-Based Services:** A variety of innovative gender-responsive services were offered at each of the service provider sites to address such issues as academics, alcohol and other drug use, anger management, and vocational/career support. These groups were based upon the educational model, with emphasis upon varied activities that support academic, vocational, recreational, or cultural interests of adolescent girls. Four mandatory center-based group activities existed, which included girls-only group (which emphasized raising self-esteem using cognitive skill-building curricula), family group counseling (which could take the form of conflict resolution, anger management, mother-daughter mediation, or relationship counseling), healthy lifestyles for girls (which included such topics as nutrition, fitness, eating disorders, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases), and academic enhancement (e.g., vocational and career planning, tutoring, literacy, and instruction and assessment for learning and perceptual disorders).
In addition to these elements, wrap-around funds were available for special needs and program access was available for participants for up to six months following program completion (i.e., aftercare). While the estimated program length was nine months, there was variability, depending upon the particular needs of the family and the extent to which clients remained engaged. To facilitate and maintain client engagement in WINGS, the Probation Department and service providers outlined in their policy and procedures manual a number of tools and strategies to facilitate continued participation. These included describing program requirements in a non-threatening informational context that encouraged “buy in” on a gradual basis and allowing for periods of crisis or lack of motivation.

During 2001, some of the established components, such as the vocational career segment, were streamlined and revamped to better meet the needs of participants. Other types of services that were added or revised during the first half of 2001 included the girls-only literacy program, scholarships to Girl Scout Camp, the development of a consumer education component, trips to the Museum of Tolerance, a sports-related grant for at-risk girls, personal safety classes, support for pregnant or parenting teens, and art therapy groups.

**Program Completion and Termination**

Successful program completion was defined as participation for a minimum of six months that included the client completing her case plan and not receiving a new petition resulting in custody of 90 days or more.

The following behavior while in the WINGS program resulted in unsuccessful program termination:

- failure or continued reluctance to allow Home Visitor contacts;
- failure to attend required center-based activities;
- disruptive or uncontrollable behavior in group activities;
- assultive or suicidal behaviors;
- chronic “runaway” episodes;
- toxic and continuing levels of substance use, indicating a need for residential treatment of 90 days or more;
- mental health issues not controlled by medication; or
- true finding on a petition with a court recommendation for 90 or more days in custody.

Once a case had been closed, regardless of the reason (successful completion or termination), the client was not eligible to reenter the randomization process. However, they could continue with Probation and receive standard services.
SERVICE PROVIDERS

Probation contracted with three well-established CBOs to provide services in five regions of the county. The Central and East regions were serviced by one agency, as were the North Inland and Coastal regions. Originally, the Escondido Youth Encounter (EYE) held the contract for the North region. However, during the project, the EYE declared bankruptcy and, in July 2002, North County Lifeline assumed responsibility for the entire North region. North County Lifeline had been providing WINGS services as a sub-contractor of the EYE and was, therefore, familiar with the program.

Probation provided a general road map for service provision and permitted the providers to adjust the services to meet the unique needs of their community. Each of the programs required girls to participate in WINGS for a minimum of six months, comply with their probation requirements, and complete their treatment plans to graduate successfully. However, the regions differed in the number of groups each girl had to participate in and the curriculum for each. For example, the North region focused on pregnancy prevention in the healthy lifestyle groups because it was an issue in their region. On the other hand, Central had more of a need to address issues related to prostitution with their girls. In addition, each of the providers was affiliated with a larger agency that offered an array of services to support the core WINGS services. Below is a brief description of the provider agencies and how they differed in their WINGS graduation requirements.

- **Home Start Inc.**: Home Start targets at-risk children and their families and focuses on the prevention and treatment of child abuse, neglect, and other adverse outcomes. They use a strength-based, home visiting approach to support families in times of need. Graduation requirements for WINGS clients consisted of six (Central) to eight hours (East) of participation in the girls-only group, attendance at one healthy lifestyles group, and participation in other services as identified in each girl’s treatment plan.

- **South Bay Community Service (SBCS)**: SBCS is a leading service provider of programs for youth and families in the South region of San Diego County. Services include community development, family wellness and self-sufficiency, independent living skills, and youth and family development. SBCS had slightly more requirements for graduation from WINGS than Home Start. Their girls-only group curricula included a healthy lifestyles group and a vocational education group, for a total of 18 hours of groups. Girls were also required to attend individual or family group counseling.

- **North County Lifeline, Inc.**: Lifeline provides a wide range of intervention and prevention services to families and youth. These services include family preservation and support, youth delinquency prevention, counseling, family development, and mediation and legal services. To successfully graduate from WINGS, girls in the North region were required to attend 12 hours of groups, which included the healthy lifestyle and the vocational component of the program. In addition, they had to attend eight sessions of individual or family group counseling.
Project Coordination

Collaboration in service delivery among the Probation Department staff and the CBOs was an integral part of the WINGS project. The need for coordination required a substantial amount of time and energy on the part of Probation and the partnering agencies. Although Probation was the administrator of the grant and responsible for the development, implementation, and oversight of WINGS, input and feedback from the WINGS service providers were incorporated. The decision making process was one of partnership. As such, the sometimes challenging, but necessary discussions that occurred at meetings attended by the partners were essential throughout the duration of the program and in finalizing program policy.

The first official meeting between Probation, researchers, and the service providers occurred during October 1999. Originally, team members and the researchers met twice monthly to review programmatic updates and progress reports and to discuss problem areas. These meetings functioned as an avenue to disseminate information, problem-solve, develop policy, and coordinate all of the involved entities. Responding to both the feedback from service providers and the maturation of the program, in March 2002, these bi-monthly meetings were decreased to once per month. At the same time, a Team Leader meeting was created to facilitate the sharing of ideas, policy discussions, and collaboration among the different regions. In addition, in April 2002, the Program Assistants started to meet monthly to exchange information and address questions regarding the data. Minutes for these meetings were provided to all staff by the Probation Department and were useful in facilitating communication.

In addition to these meetings, monthly site visits by Probation and SANDAG staff to all sites to ensure proper form usage and data documentation were a well-established process by May 2000. However, with the improvement in the service providers’ documentation and case files, the frequency of SANDAG site visits decreased in early 2001. The diligence on the part of the service providers resulted in the institutionalization of a standardized case file and case review process for each region. Probation also discontinued its monthly site visits in March 2002 and only conducted site visits as needed, usually for the purpose of documentation and data support.

All team members participated in an extremely productive two-day strategic planning meeting in March 2000. A key component of this session was goal setting for the upcoming year and visualization of desired outcomes for the grant’s conclusion. Some of the goals for the first year included developing a WINGS web page, fund-raising, conducting outreach to key community members, soliciting media coverage of the program, recruiting peer mentors, and establishing protocol.
During the second part of 2001, discussions continued on the policy regarding information sharing between Probation and the Home Visitor. Although each individual had a different role, each was part of a team, which required a high level of communication and information exchange. In traditional service models, juvenile justice information is not usually available to service providers. However, this information becomes valuable when partnering with Probation in order to address all the needs of a client. Providers and Probation Officers raised the issues of confidentiality, conflicting purposes, and the necessity to trust each other professionally. The provider meetings, attendance by Probation Officers at the community MDT meetings, and joint home visits were all arenas where progress was made on these issues. More information regarding the communication between the Home Visitor and Probation Officer captured during staff interviews is discussed in Chapter 5.

Program Policy and Consistency

By the end of 2000, all team members had finalized a number of issues essential for program consistency across the sites. These included completing the WINGS program protocol manual, constructing in-depth interventions and service guidelines, working with an outside contractor in setting up a Management Information System (MIS) used to collect data on participants, and developing, implementing, and standardizing data collection forms. In addition, a staff development manual was completed that documented trainings conducted by Probation and listed various CBOs, girl-centered websites, and associated services.

During the first part of 2001, the protocol manual, which was intended to grow and change in concert with the needs of the program, was updated. These revisions included the addition of policies on Probation case management, media involvement, case reviews by Team Leaders, a timeline and process for linkage with a WINGS Specialist and specialized outside services, grade reporting standardization, and case coverage due to staff turnover or increase in the number of participants. An important addition to the policy manual that occurred during late 2001 was the development of a crisis screening instrument, administered to all WINGS clients at the first visit. Developed by the service providers, with input from Probation, the assessment was created to alert the Home Visitor to any issues that required immediate intervention. This tool was derived as a response to the severity of issues facing some of the WINGS clients.

In the latter part of 2002 and through 2003, the actual coordination between the regions decreased as there were no all-region gatherings or meetings. Also during this time, the EYE, the original contractor in the North region, filed bankruptcy, which disrupted the continuity of staff and administrators. Its partnering agency, North County Lifeline, assumed the responsibility for the services in that region.
Staffing

Both Probation and the service providers had to address the issue of staff turnover and transitions. There were staff changes at every level, with the highest frequency occurring among Home Visitors. In addition to the highly competitive market and a professional field with a history of turnover, an increase in the number of girls in the program and the entry level status of the Home Visitor position were also contributing factors. The increase in the number of girls entering the program was a direct result of the completion of the randomization process for the study component of the program. In regard to the latter issue, service providers noted that the Home Visiting position is considered entry level and has the expectation of frequent turnover. In response to this issue, a policy was implemented to ease the transition of staff for the clients and to ensure the accurate exchange of information.

In March 2001, WINGS was granted status as a specialty unit within the Probation Department and an initial staff of four Probation Officers was established under the direction of the Program Manager. Prior to this period, WINGS cases had been intermixed with general supervision caseloads. Each of the four regions was assigned one Probation Officer that supervised WINGS cases exclusively. This addition to the WINGS team required the development of a program policy to clarify the Probation Officers' roles and responsibilities. Although this formal protocol provided a guide for practice, the actual relationship and type of partnership between the WINGS teams varied across the sites. As elaborated in Chapter 5, teaming the right Probation Officer with the programs was very valuable in the overall success of the relationship.

In June 2001, the last WINGS study client was randomized. The immediate impact on Probation and the providers was an increase in referrals to WINGS (because one-half of all referrals were not being randomized to the comparison group). In response to this increase in program capacity, four additional Probation Officers were assigned to the WINGS unit. In November 2001, the Probation Officers were assigned to the four regions and started intensive WINGS training. In addition to the Officers, weekly trainings were made available to the service providers for their new WINGS staff. This joint training model had a secondary outcome, one that supported relationship development between the new Home Visitors and the Probation Officers. These trainings exemplify the maturation of the partnership that occurred over the program's duration.

Probation also was subject to staff turnover. In March 2002, there was a significant change in Probation Department personnel due to the retirement and subsequent promotion of a large portion of the staff. All aspects of Probation were affected by this staff turnover. The WINGS unit was directly impacted with the change in the Program Director, the Program Manager/Supervising Probation Officer, the Probation Aide, and one of the newly hired Deputy Probation Officers (DPO). In addition, one of the original DPOs was promoted to Senior Probation Officer, but was able to remain with the WINGS unit. Any difficulties associated with this transition were eased thorough documentation of WINGS in the BOC reports, the ongoing access to the promoted Program Manager/Supervising Probation Officer, and the remaining Probation Analyst who has been with the program since its inception.
In June 2002, funding reductions in the Challenge II Grant’s fourth year extension negatively affected staffing at each of the four sites, as well as Probation. At the program level, Home Visitor, Specialist, and Team Leader positions were eliminated or hours were reduced. These changes resulted in fewer MDT meetings and a smaller number and type of Specialists available to both the teams and the clients. Additional information regarding staff changes is reported in Chapter 5. WINGS Probation staff also responded to the funding cuts with the elimination of WINGS support positions. Specifically, both the Probation Analyst and the Probation Aide positions were eliminated. This resulted in the Probation Records Clerk having to assume the majority of duties and responsibilities from the loss of these positions toward the end of the grant period. Fortunately, both employees remained with the Probation Department and were available for assistance when needed.

### Staff Training and Development

Ongoing training and staff development were priorities for this project, as reflected by the number of sessions that were conducted. In addition to each region implementing their own training, a broad array of ongoing Probation-sponsored trainings included:

- two-day training on gender-responsive programming for adolescent girls conducted by Dr. Stephanie Covington and Dr. Barbara Bloom, national experts in the field;
- two-day presentation on program development for adolescent girls by Dr. Leslie Acoca, Director of the Women’s and Girls’ Institute for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency;
- five-day training on the CAL-SAHF model;
- two-hour training on client retention;
- two half-day trainings on administering various assessment instruments;
- half-day session on data entry;
- one-day training on “What Works” in the criminal justice field conducted by Dr. Ed Latessa, a renowned expert on this topic;
- half-day session on data compilation and management;
- half-day training for Home Visitors on how to engage hard-to-engage clients;
- review of the Cook County Assessment given by three of the more experienced Home Visitors;
- half-day training entitled “Motivational Training” conducted by a Supervising Probation Officer and a psychologist to assist Home Visitors in their work with clients;
- “Reports Training” provided by the Social Policy Institute to review documentation and the MIS system;
▪ “Motivational Interviewing Training” conducted by Probation Department and community-based organization staff;

▪ one-day training for new Home Visitors and staff on gender-responsive programming for adolescent girls conducted by Dr. Stephanie Covington;

▪ “Body Image” training focused on eating disorders, body esteem, and gender specific issues for girls that was conducted by the Berkeley-based Body Positive Tide Center;

▪ all-day Home Visitor forum dealing with suicide prevention and assessment, girl gangs, prostitution, and eating disorders that was organized by the Central region WINGS team and conducted by various experts in the field; and

▪ weekly training on WINGS policy and protocol for new staff.

In addition, Probation Department staff also attended training on the California Wrap-Around Philosophy and a five-day national conference on adult and juvenile female offenders. Both Probation and program staff also were able to attend a one-day Girls Summit in November 2002 that focused on gender-responsive services and girls’ needs.

**Special Events**

With an increasing number of clients graduating from WINGS, the sites began to hold ceremonies in the early part of 2001 that offered an opportunity for celebration for the girls as well as their families and friends. The ceremonies also were attended by the Home Visitors, Team Leaders, and agency Administrators, other WINGS clients, Probation staff, research staff, and community members. At one ceremony, each Home Visitor introduced the graduate and spoke about her accomplishments. The graduations also had successful females in the community, such as local college athletes and a former city mayor, provide words of congratulations and inspiration to the girls. These events were well attended and held in the late afternoon at a restaurant or a community center. In addition, refreshments were offered and event participants were encouraged to interact. The number of staff in attendance and the detailed presentation of the event offered a glimpse at the level of commitment by the service providers to their clients. These types of celebrations continued throughout the duration of the program.

In addition to graduations, WINGS providers and Probation staff also gathered together in 2000 and 2001 for staff appreciation retreats that provided an opportunity to celebrate their successes. In the second part of 2001, several service provider staff were recognized by Probation for their outstanding work with WINGS. Awardees were honored at an annual Community Partnership Retreat, celebrating the efforts of the various juvenile justice collaborative programs.
Outreach and Education

The effort to educate other agencies, Probation staff, and the general public about the WINGS program was an ongoing priority for Probation since the program’s inception. In the first part of 2001, strides continued in this area and reached beyond the borders of San Diego County. Probation hosted a site visit from the Chief of Ohio’s Hamilton County Juvenile Court and met with the Director of Gender-Responsive Services of the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Probation and the service providers continued their efforts to maintain media relations and broaden the scope of services available to girls in WINGS. Outreach efforts also included six presentations by Probation to various entities. Presentations in San Diego County were given to the Joint Law Enforcement Task Force, to the El Cajon Community Collaborative, at a judicial orientation for new judges, and to the Juvenile Delinquency Policy Group. Probation also provided information about WINGS at the Girls’ Symposium sponsored by the Santa Barbara County Probation Department and to the visiting Children’s Initiative from Roanoke, Virginia.

The documentary “What’s Up With Girls,” which explores gender and girls’ issues, was completed in Spring 2001 and premiered in San Diego, with introductions from the Chief of Probation, Alan Crogan, and County Supervisor, Ron Roberts. In September 2001, the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Programs filmed a WINGS group and home visit for one of their national teleconferences. In addition, the WINGS Web site (www.wingssandiego.com) was updated regularly since its creation, providing a valuable link and resource on gender issues and resources for girls. However, due to lack of funding, the Web site was disbanded in May 2002.

STANDARD PROBATION SERVICES

San Diego County has several innovative programs to address the needs of juveniles on probation. Because of this, it was possible that girls in the comparison group or “treatment as usual” could have received services from an array of programs from the continuum of Probation services. These services could have included counseling (individual and family), community services, substance abuse treatment, and educational classes that were appropriate to the offense (e.g., anti-theft class, conflict resolution). For counseled and closed cases, as well as informal probation cases, contact with a probation officer was minimal and, in many cases, not required at all. The standard caseload for a juvenile Probation Officer is 50, while for WINGS it was 35.
Because of the experimental design and the need for accurate comparisons, program length for girls in the comparison groups was based upon the average length of involvement in Probation associated with a disposition. Based upon this formula, program length for formal probation cases was nine months, and for counseled and closed and informal cases, program length was six months. Because girls in the comparison group could have been involved in a variety of treatment programs, completion status was determined differently than WINGS. Completion status for girls involved in WINGS was based upon their participation in the WINGS program. For girls in the comparison group, completion status was determined by their ability to change their criminal activity in the “during” time period. If a girl did not receive a probation violation or commit a new offense in the “during” time period, she was considered as having successfully completed.

**SUMMARY**

Working to Insure and Nurture Girls’ Success (WINGS) was a program developed to reach adolescent girls through the provision of home visitation and center-based services. Administered through the San Diego County Probation Department, girls who were deemed eligible for participation were assigned to receive services from one of four regional community-based organizations (CBOs). After assessing the needs of the clients and their families, a case plan was developed that could include mother-daughter mediation and transportation, as well as a variety of innovative gender-responsive services. Coordination, communication, training, and team building activities were essential components for the strong partnership that was developed between Probation and the agencies providing services. Program implementation challenges included consistency across sites and staff turnover, as well as decreased funding availability.
CHAPTER 3
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER 3
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

A key component of the Challenge II grant was documenting how this girls-only program was implemented and determining how successful it was. The current chapter includes information about the process and impact evaluations conducted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG). The hypotheses that were tested are described, as well as a baseline description of the girls who were assigned to the first treatment or comparison group between April and December 2000 and the second between January and June 2001.

PROCESS EVALUATION

Background and Process

To determine if WINGS was implemented as designed and what types of gender-responsive services were provided to at-risk girls, the following research questions were addressed. Results from the process evaluation are presented in Chapter 5.

Statement of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:
Clients referred to WINGS were engaged in the program by service providers and received gender-responsive services.

Specific Research Questions

- Which clients were most likely to be engaged in the WINGS program?
- What was the average length of client participation in WINGS?
- How did clients exit the program and what factors were related to successful completion?
- What were the service needs of WINGS clients?
- Did WINGS clients successfully complete their service plan?
Data Sources

Information regarding program engagement, length of service, services needed and received, and exit status were collected by WINGS program staff and forwarded to SANDAG as part of the Management Information System (MIS). In addition, data were collected from Probation files by research staff.

Analyses

 Frequencies, cross-tabulations, measures of central tendency, and chi-square analyses were used to analyze these data.

Hypothesis 2:
Service provision to at-risk girls was enhanced through gender-responsive services provided by multi-disciplinary teams of service providers and Probation Officers.

Specific Research Questions

- What were the qualifications and training levels of program and Probation staff assigned to the WINGS program?
- How did service provider and Probation staff feel about the collaborative nature of the program and the use of multi-disciplinary teams?
- How did program and Probation staff feel about how well the WINGS program was implemented?
- How did program and Probation staff feel about how well the WINGS program was managed?
- How individualized were the services at each site and how did staff feel about these cross-site differences?
- How did program and Probation staff engage WINGS clients and their families?
- How did program and Probation staff feel about the effectiveness and application of client risk assessment instruments?
- Who did program and Probation staff see as successful WINGS clients?
- How did program and Probation staff feel about the effectiveness of WINGS?
- What program components were most and least effective and what suggestions did program and Probation staff have for improving WINGS?
- What were the opinions of program and Probation staff toward the research process?
Data Source

As part of the process evaluation, staff interviews were conducted twice over the course of this project. The purpose of these interviews was to gather qualitative data on staff perception of the program’s implementation, development, progress, and areas for improvement. During the interview, staff were asked to share their opinions of both their own agency’s and Probation’s management of the program, the assessment process, the characteristics of the clients, program effectiveness, and suggestions for improvement. In addition, program administrators were asked questions on the collaborative process, and Probation’s implementation and management of the program, as well as the research component.

Analyses

The analyses of these data were purely descriptive, using frequencies, and comparisons were made over time.

Sample Description

The first set of staff interviews was conducted between September and December 2001. A total of 20 program staff were interviewed, as well as 4 Probation Officers. These individuals, many of whom had been with the program for the longest amount of time, were selected across the four WINGS sites (four from the South and East, five from the North, and seven from Central). Specifically, nine Home Visitors, five Team Leaders, four Probation Officers, one Program Assistant, three Specialists, and two agency administrators were interviewed. The average length of employment with WINGS for all of those interviewed was just over one year. Each interview took approximately 90 minutes to complete.

The second round of interviews was conducted between May and September 2002 and involved 12 program staff (five from Central/East, four from South, and three from North). These included six Home Visitors, three Specialists, one Team Leader, one Agency Administrator, and one Program Assistant. Four of the program staff had been interviewed before. No Probation Officers were interviewed due to the lack of turnover. On average, these staff had been with the program for approximately two years.

Hypothesis 3:

Service providers in the San Diego region were knowledgeable about the nature of gender-responsive services and were satisfied with their relationship with the WINGS program.

Specific Research Questions

- What was the nature of the relationship between service providers surveyed and the WINGS program?
- What opinions did local service providers have regarding gender-specific programming and the WINGS program?
- Were local service providers involved in community collaboratives and how did they feel about these partnerships?
Data Source

Two surveys regarding the WINGS program were sent to local service providers. In March 2001, the first survey was mailed to 30 local service providers. A follow-up mail-out was conducted the next month and the total response rate was 63 percent, with 19 surveys returned. A revised survey was mailed out in June 2002 to 62 local service providers. A follow-up mail-out was again sent a month later and the total response rate was 23 percent, with 14 surveys returned. Instructions on the survey stated that the staff member most familiar with the WINGS program should complete the survey and assured respondents that their responses would be confidential and anonymous. Service providers who returned the surveys represented community-based and Health and Human Service agencies around the County. For the first survey, seven offered services in the Central region, six around the County, six in East County, four in the Northern region, and two in the Southern region. Seven of the respondents from the first survey also completed the second survey. Of all the respondents completing the second survey, seven offered services in the Central region, six Countywide, five in the East County, three from the North region, and two in the South region.

Analyses

These data were described using frequencies.

Hypothesis 4:
Clients and their parents were satisfied with their relationship with WINGS staff and felt the services received have had a positive impact on problem behavior.

Specific Research Questions

- What were the clients' first impressions of WINGS?
- How did clients and families feel about their Home Visitor and their relationship with her?
- How did clients and families feel about their relationship with their Probation Officer?
- How were family members involved in the WINGS program?
- What problem behaviors were identified and addressed by clients while participating in the program?
- How did clients and their families feel about the WINGS program and its particular components?
- What suggestions did clients and family members have for program improvement?
Data Source

Interviews with clients were conducted to gather descriptive information about their experience with WINGS. Interviews with randomly selected clients (who had participated in WINGS for at least four months) were conducted, with the number of interviews per region proportional to the number of clients served. The two interviews (client and adult) were conducted separately and both the girl and the family member were assured that their answers were confidential and would not interfere with the services they receive. At the conclusion of the interview, the family was given a gift certificate to a local restaurant for their participation. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Analyses

The analyses of these data were purely descriptive, using measures of central tendency and frequency distributions.

Sample Description

The interviews began in March 2001 and were completed in March 2002. A total of 43 client interviews (17 from Central, 10 from East, 9 from North, and 7 from South) and 41 adult interviews were conducted. Adults included 38 parents, 1 grandparent, 1 sibling (who was over the age of 18), and 1 legal guardian.

Hypothesis 5:
WINGS clients were satisfied with the services they received and reported positive changes as a result.

Specific Research Questions

- Were clients more knowledgeable about community resources after program participation?
- Was family communication improved after WINGS participation?
- Were WINGS clients satisfied with the services they received?

Data Source

Youth and adult surveys, available in both English and Spanish, were administered to both the girl and her parent or guardian at entry and exit and included items designed to measure knowledge and use of community resources, family communication, and family functioning. At exit, questions about satisfaction with the services provided also were included.

Analyses

Pre- and post-surveys were matched by assigned client identification number and are presented in the aggregate. Comparisons of frequency and measures of central tendency were made over time.
Sample Description

During the course of the evaluation period, 272 youth pre-surveys and 267 adult pre-surveys were returned, as well as 176 youth post-surveys and 170 adult post-surveys. Data on 162 matched youth surveys and 155 matched adult surveys are presented in Chapter 5.

Hypothesis 6:
Each of the four WINGS sites was staffed with a multi-disciplinary team able to provide services to clients.

Specific Research Question

▪ How were the multi-disciplinary teams at each of the sites staffed?

Data Source

Staffing data records were updated on a monthly basis as part of the MIS database.

Analyses

Frequencies, as well as means, were used to described the staffing data by site.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Background and Process

A true experimental design was used to collect data for the impact evaluation. Between April and December 2000, 499\(^1\) eligible girls were randomized to either participate in WINGS or to receive “treatment as usual” (regular probation/diversion) and serve as the comparison group. Starting in January 2001, another sample of 299\(^2\) girls was randomized into a second sample. This effort was possible through additional funding from the Board of Corrections (BOC) and allowed for comparisons to test if the second sample did better after the program was better established. Random assignment to conditions was important because it ensured that the two groups were equivalent starting out on any dimension and all eligible candidates had an equal chance of being assigned to either group. If any differences between the two groups was later documented, and the only difference between the two groups was the type of services received, then it could be concluded that it was the treatment and not any initial differences that was the cause. A key assumption underlying these hypotheses is that delinquent behavior will be reduced when risk factors, such as poor family functioning, truancy, alcohol and other drug abuse, antisocial peers, and victimization are addressed.

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1 Five hundred girls (250 to each condition) were originally randomized, but one girl in the WINGS group was made a non-sample because her file was immediately sealed.

2 Three hundred girls (150 to each condition) were originally randomized, but one juvenile in the comparison group was erroneously referred to the program.
Statement of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 7:
WINGS clients were less likely to engage in at-risk behavior and have less involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Specific Research Questions

- Was WINGS participation related to a decrease in risk factors and an increase in protective factors?
- Was WINGS participation related to a decreased probability of having a true finding for a new criminal offense, a felony level crime, or a violent offense in the follow-up period?
- Was WINGS participation related to a lower probability of continued wardship in the follow-up period?
- Was WINGS participation related to a lower institutional commitment rate in the follow-up period?
- Was WINGS participation related to an increased probability of being enrolled and engaged in school?

Data Sources

SANDAG researchers worked closely with the WINGS team members throughout the first quarter of 2000 in identifying and creating instruments that would most accurately capture the data of interest and determining how this information could best be managed. Because there was considerably greater contact with the WINGS girls, compared to those in the comparison group, more detailed information was available for them. Whenever possible, identical data collection strategies were used with the two groups to ensure that valid and reliable comparisons were made and all coding strategies were thoroughly documented.

Data for both the WINGS girls and the comparison group were collected primarily through four sources. First, information was collected from the San Diego Regional Resiliency Checkup (SDRRC) administered by Probation to all girls (with the exception of informal cases that were ordered by the court) during an initial contact. This standardized instrument includes 30 protective factors that potentially buffer an adolescent against delinquency and 30 risk factors. Combining the scores on these items yields a resiliency score and allows comparison of the two groups at baseline. Second, data regarding risk factors (e.g., alcohol and other drug use, abuse, school attendance, treatment services, and criminal activity) were collected from Probation Department files and their automated computer system using a standardized instrument. Third, school information also was gathered from a Web site maintained by the San Diego Juvenile Court. Finally, adult criminal activity information was collected from electronic files maintained by the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department.
A number of instruments were completed by the WINGS service providers during the intake process and at exit from the program. These included:

- **General Intake/Exit Form:** This instrument was administered by the service provider during the first home visit and includes questions related to the client’s current living situation and school performance.

- **San Diego Regional Resiliency Checkup:** This Probation Department tool was readministered by a service provider within 30 days of opening a case and again at program exit.

- **Cook County Strengths/Needs Assessment:** The Cook County Assessment is a gender-specific instrument that was administered within 30 days after a case was opened and again at program exit. It was completed by program staff using the best information available through observation, self-report information from the girl, family members, third parties, reports from official agencies, and the results of formal evaluations. During the assessment, clients were rated on 12 strength/need items and a total score, ranging from -5 (which would designate a high level of functioning) to 46 (which would designate a high level of need), was calculated. These twelve items of strength/need included: family relationships, emotional stability/mental health, basic needs, substance abuse, life skills, history of abuse/neglect, physical safety, peer relations, school/employment status, social supports, motherhood, and health.

- **Pathways Questionnaire:** Administered within 30 days of opening a case and at exit, this questionnaire was developed specifically for this project and includes questions related to health care, criminal history of family members, educational aspirations, and feelings of safety at home, at school, and in the client’s neighborhood.

**Analyses**

Analyses included baseline comparisons between participants in WINGS and the comparison group. Also, the WINGS girls were assessed at entry and exit and predictors of program success were determined. Statistical tests such as t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and chi-squares were used to determine if the program was able to achieve the previously-stated objectives through the provision of gender-responsive services.

**Sample Description**

As of June 30, 2001, 798 girls were screened for program participation, with 399 randomized to WINGS and 399 randomized to the comparison group. These numbers differ from the total number who received services through the grant since the program began accepting clients in November 1999 and continued after randomization ended. Analyses were done on information collected by Probation Department staff comparing these girls on a number of characteristics, including ethnicity and the reason for the current referral. The results of these tests revealed that randomization was successful in that individuals in both groups did not differ in a significant way from one another. In other words, any changes that were discovered at a later time between the two groups (e.g., school attendance, drug use, etc.) could be attributed to differences in the types of services received and not to any differences that existed between them initially.
Demographic Information

As Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show, both groups in each sampling period were ethnically diverse, with Hispanics composing approximately one-third of each group in the first sample (35% of the WINGS and 33% of the comparison), as well as the second (40% and 37%, respectively). Whites were the second most frequently represented ethnic group, followed by girls who categorized themselves as Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, and “other” ethnicities. These differences, as well as those presented in the following sections, were not statistically significant. The average age of the girls in Sample 1 was 15.3 (for both groups) and it was 15.2 for both groups in Sample 2 (not shown).

Figure 3.1
SAMPLE 1 WINGS AND COMPARISON GROUP ETHNIC COMPOSITION
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April – December 2000

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3 The ethnic groups in this report are referred to as Hispanic, White, Black, and Asian and Others in the text. While many people may prefer to identify themselves as African American rather than Black, Latino rather than Hispanic, or as a member of a particular ethnic group rather than White or Asian, SANDAG uses the terminology consistent with the 2000 Census questionnaire.
Figure 3.2
SAMPLE 2 WINGS AND COMPARISON GROUP ETHNIC COMPOSITION
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, January - June 2001

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
Criminal History

The majority of both groups in both samples had only one referral (including the instant offense) to the Probation Department (79% of each group in the first sample and 77% of each group in the second sample); the rest of the girls had two to six referrals. For 81 percent of the first WINGS group and 84 percent of the comparison group, the highest charge on the current referral was at the misdemeanor level. For the second sample, the highest current referral was also most likely to be at the misdemeanor level, as opposed to the felony level (70% for the WINGS group and 77% of the comparison group) (not shown).

As Figure 3.3 shows, approximately one-half of the most recent referrals for both groups in the first sample were for a property crime and approximately one-third were classified as a violent crime. Given the level of the offenses (e.g., misdemeanors), those offenses in the violent category were likely to be battery (e.g., fighting), as opposed to a more serious offense. The victim in the instant offense was most often a business (43%). Other victims included a peer (30%), parent (13%), another adult (11%), a friend (2%), or a sibling (1%) (not shown).

Figure 3.3
SAMPLE 1 HIGHEST CHARGE ON MOST RECENT REFERRAL BY GROUP
Probation Department Records, April – December 2000

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4 A review of Probation records revealed that three girls actually had five referrals and that one had six. These statistics included probation violations and referrals from other jurisdictions.

5 According to information from Probation files, the median amount of property stolen or vandalized, across samples and groups, was $101.50.
There was some difference between the two samples in the type of referral charge, as Figure 3.4 shows. Specifically, a greater proportion of individuals in the second sample was referred for “other” charges, which included status offenses, and fewer were referred for a property offense, compared to the first sample. This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2 (3, N = 798) = 24.99, p < .005$).

Figure 3.4
SAMPLE 2 HIGHEST CHARGE ON MOST RECENT REFERRAL BY GROUP
Probation Department Records, January – June 2001

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
Despite the difference in referral reason, there was no difference in the current Probation Department response to the instant offense, as Figures 3.5 and 3.6 show. In both samples, approximately one-half of the girls had a case that was counseled and closed, about one-quarter had a case that resulted in being placed on informal probation, and about one-fifth were put on formal probation. In counseled and closed cases, the Probation Officer will typically meet only once with a juvenile. Informal probation cases involve a six-month period during which any additional delinquent behavior can result in a petition being filed, which will include both the original as well as the new charges. A youth is placed on formal probation by the juvenile court and is then under formal supervision by the Probation Department. Deferred entry of judgment was added as a referral outcome as a result of the passage of Proposition 21, which allows for juveniles with no prior offenses, who are charged with a felony offense and admit to all charges, to be placed on probation. If the juvenile successfully completes probation, then all charges are dismissed. Because only four girls out of the 798 were sentenced to deferred entry of judgment, this category is included with the informal probation cases.

Figure 3.5
SAMPLE 1 MOST RECENT REFERRAL OUTCOME BY GROUP
Probation Department Records, April – December 2000
Living Situation

Information regarding the current living situation at intake was also collected for WINGS clients and the comparison group. Because there was no difference by sample, the data for the two randomized groups are presented together.

About two in five girls in both groups (41% of the WINGS group and 38% of the comparison) lived with only one caregiver (Table 3.1). This person was most often their mother. “Other” caregivers included friends and foster parents.

As Table 3.1 also shows, the girls in the WINGS group were significantly more likely to have a sibling, compared to those in the comparison group (78% versus 66%) ($\chi^2(1, N = 779) = 11.97$, $p < .001$). However, this difference could be due to variability in documentation, rather than some real difference. That is, more information was collected from the WINGS clients by program staff. Of those who were not only children, the average number of siblings was 2.3 for the WINGS group and 2.2 for the comparison (not shown).
Table 3.1
CLIENT LIVING SITUATION AT INTAKE BY GROUP
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April 2000 – June 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WINGS</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lives with one caregiver</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary/Secondary Caregiver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relative</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-parent</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a Sibling</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives with Someone on Probation/Parole</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved in Last Year</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

Information regarding whether or not the girl lived with someone who was on probation or parole and whether or not she had recently moved was more readily available for the WINGS girls because these questions were asked by service provider staff at intake. As Table 3.1 shows, about one-quarter of both groups did currently live with someone who was under justice supervision. In addition, about one-third (34%) and one-quarter (28%) had moved at least once in the past year.
School Involvement

As Table 3.2 shows, while most girls in both groups were enrolled in school at intake, less than two-thirds (60% of the WINGS clients and 55% of the comparison group) were at the appropriate grade level. In addition, around one-half of both groups had been suspended or expelled in the past year (54% and 51%, respectively). Of those who were enrolled, around two-thirds (68% and 70%, respectively) attended public school and the majority were either in junior high (grades 7 or 8) or high school (grades 9, 10, 11, and 12). Other types of school included independent, private, community day school, or home study. There was again no difference between the first and second sample for any of these variables.

Table 3.2
CLIENT SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT AT INTAKE BY GROUP
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April 2000 – June 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>WINGS</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enrolled</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>WINGS</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/middle</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior high</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At appropriate grade level</th>
<th>WINGS</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suspended/expelled last year</th>
<th>WINGS</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
Traumatic Life Events and Mental Health Problems

As part of a supplementary data collection effort from Probation Department files, information regarding whether or not a traumatic event had ever been experienced and whether or not there had ever been a mental health diagnosis was documented for girls in both the WINGS sample and comparison group. Again, because there was no difference across samples and because this information was not reliably available, these data are presented together.

Information regarding a history of trauma was documented for 149 girls in the WINGS group, as well as 155 girls in the comparison group. It is possible that a greater number of individuals in both groups had experienced a traumatic event but it was not documented. The traumas experienced by these girls are consistent with the research correlating victimization with girls’ involvement in the criminal justice system. Often, these girls had to deal with more than one disturbing event in their lives. For example, one girl was sexually abused by her father, physically abused by her mother, and had a miscarriage at age 15. Another client’s father died from an overdose and her mother was an active heroin addict. Although the categorizing of traumatic events, as shown in Table 3.3, does not capture the brutality of these experiences, it does offer some insight into the type and scope of trauma these girls have had to deal with.

Table 3.3
HISTORY OF TRAUMATIC LIFE EVENTS BY GROUP
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April 2000 – June 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>WINGS</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent absent</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually abused</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other type of abuse experienced</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental substance use</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other trauma</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of loved one</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s divorce</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent has criminal problems</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Percentages based upon multiple responses. Cases with missing information not included.
The traumatic event most often noted in both groups was the absence of a parent (41% WINGS and 43% comparison), which included girls whose parent was murdered, committed suicide, overdosed or died for other reasons, as well as those that had abandoned the family. In addition, about one-quarter of each group had been sexually abused or abused in some other way (e.g., physical, verbal, emotional). In some of these cases, the abuse resulted in another traumatic event with the youth being separated from family members or placed in the foster care system. Around one in ten girls in both groups had to deal with the negative consequences of a parent’s substance abuse or with a pregnancy, miscarriage, and/or abortion at a young age. “Other” types of trauma included the death of a loved one, parents divorcing, having a parent with a criminal justice problem, and being homeless.

In addition, about one-quarter of both groups were documented as having a diagnosed mental health problem (22% of the WINGS group and 24% of the comparison). This most often took the form of depression (65% WINGS and 61% comparison) and attention deficit disorder (56% and 52%, respectively) (not shown).

Regional Resiliency Checkup

Information from the Regional Resiliency Checkup (SDRRC) completed by a Probation Officer prior to randomization was available for 355 WINGS girls and 322 of the girls in the comparison group. As previously described, this instrument includes 30 risk factors and 30 protective factors that, when subtracted from one another, provide a resiliency profile. Both the risk and protective factors are divided into six domains: family, peer, individual, education, delinquency, and substance use. In turn, each domain has five factors. For the purpose of this evaluation, girls were considered as being at-risk if they were categorized as having a particular factor or if they were considered “somewhat” on that dimension because there was still room for improvement (i.e., moving from “somewhat” to “no”). Similarly, they were only considered as having a protective factor if they were rated as having that element, but not if they were rated as “somewhat” on this dimension - again, because there was room for improvement (i.e., moving from “somewhat” to “yes”). When a factor was coded as unknown, the assumption was made that it was “no” so that a total risk and protective score could be calculated. Thus, the risk or protective score for each domain could range from zero to five, with a total risk score of 30 and a total protective score of 30 possible.
Figure 3.7 presents the six domains of risk and the percentage of girls in each who had at least one factor rated as at-risk or somewhat at-risk. For both groups, the greatest percentage of girls (87% and 85%) was at-risk on the individual domain. Individual risk factors include personal characteristics, such as a lack of prosocial interests, being supportive of delinquency, and having anger management issues. In addition, three-quarters (75% and 75%, respectively) of clients were at-risk in terms of their peers and approximately two-thirds were at-risk in the delinquency (68% and 66%), family (68% and 69%), and education (67% and 70%) domains. With respect to substance abuse, 41 percent and 44 percent, respectively, were rated as at-risk.

**Figure 3.7**

PERCENT OF CLIENTS AT-RISK AT INTAKE BY GROUP
Probation Officer Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – June 2001
Figure 3.8 presents the five (of the 30 total) most common risk factors identified through the assessment and the percentage of clients rated as having some level of risk in each area. The most common risk factor, which was shared by over two-thirds (67% of WINGS clients and 70% of the comparison group), was having delinquent friends (peer domain). In addition, more than one-half were described as having anger management issues (individual domain), being individuals who seek sensation (individual domain), and having demonstrated poor academic achievement (education domain). Slightly less than one-half (46% and 45%, respectively) were described as having a poor relationship with their parents (family domain).

Figure 3.8
PERCENT OF CLIENTS WITH MOST COMMON RISK FACTORS BY GROUP
Probation Officer Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – June 2001
The majority of WINGS clients were also assessed as having a large percentage of protective factors that potentially buffer against delinquency. As Figure 3.9 shows, approximately nine in ten (91% of the WINGS group and 88% of the comparison group) had at least one family characteristic, such as communicating well with parents, that is considered a protective factor. In addition, over three-quarters had at least one positive factor that buffered them in terms of substance use, peers, and education. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the WINGS clients and 72 percent of the comparison group had at least one delinquency protective factor and 57 percent and 55 percent, respectively, had at least one individual protective factor.

**Figure 3.9**
PERCENT OF CLIENTS WITH PROTECTIVE FACTORS AT INTAKE BY GROUP
Probation Officer Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – June 2001
Approximately two-thirds or more of clients also shared the five most common protective factors. As Figure 3.10 shows, these include unconditional regard from a parent and family support (both in the family domain), having parents who model healthy moderation (substance use domain), having a person to confide in (peer domain), and being educated in a caring or supportive school environment (education domain).

Figure 3.10
PERCENT OF CLIENTS WITH MOST COMMON PROTECTIVE FACTORS BY GROUP
Probation Officer Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – June 2001
Figure 3.11 reflects the average number of factors, out of 30, for which the girls were at-risk, the total number (again out of 30) for which they had protective factors, and the average adjusted resiliency score (i.e., number of risk factors subtracted from the number of protective factors). The girls in the WINGS sample had an average of 10.6 protective factors (range 0 to 26), 9.1 risk factors (range 0 to 26), and an adjusted resiliency score of 1.4, meaning that they had about one more protective than risk factor on average. The comparison group had a similar profile, with an average of 10.7 protective factors (range 0 to 29), 8.9 risk factors (range 0 to 29), and an adjusted resiliency score of 1.8.
Additional Characteristics of WINGS Clients

Data captured through the Cook County Assessment revealed that 82 percent of the WINGS clients were rated as being in the "low" range of need, 16 percent in the "moderate" need range, and one percent in the "high" need range (not shown). As Figure 3.12 shows, the greatest percentage of clients had some level of risk in terms of their school/employment status (65%), with over one-half also at-risk to some degree in terms of their substance abuse (59%), life skills (52%), or peer relations (53%). These findings support other research in the field of female offenders. The issues of abuse, mental health, family dysfunction, substance abuse, and poor academic achievement are frequently cited as areas of risk for girls in the juvenile justice system (Acoca, 1999; Booker Loper, 2000; Chesney-Lind, 2000).

Figure 3.12
PERCENT OF WINGS CLIENTS WITH SOME LEVEL OF RISK
Intake Cook County Assessment, April 2000 – June 2001

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
Other information collected regarding WINGS clients during the intake process included the following.

- Twenty-five percent (25%) of the clients had not seen a health care professional in the previous year (not shown).

- Approximately one-half (55%) of the clients reported that a family member had been in jail at one time. Of these 149 clients, 26 percent reported that their mother had been incarcerated, 31 percent their father, 21 percent a sibling, 6 percent a step-parent, and 16 percent some other relative. When asked the length of the most recent incarceration, 32 percent reported less than one month, 39 percent reported 1 to 12 months, and 29 percent reported more than 12 months (not shown).

- One-third (33%) reported ever having completed any type of vocational assessment (not shown).

- Almost all of the clients (98%) reported they planned to graduate from high school (not shown).

- About two-thirds (68%) of clients reported always feeling safe at home. About one-half (49%) always felt safe at school and slightly more than one-half (58%) always felt safe in their neighborhood (not shown).

**SUMMARY**

The evaluation design for WINGS includes testing a number of hypotheses related to the process and impact of the project. As described in this chapter, a variety of methods were used to answer these research questions, including reviewing program records, administering client and service provider surveys, and conducting interviews with staff and clients. Random assignment to conditions was successful, with individuals in both groups matched on a number of characteristics, including age, gender, criminal history, and risk level. The results of the impact and process evaluation to date are presented in Chapters 4 and 5.
CHAPTER 4
IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS
CHAPTER 4
IMPACT EVALUATION RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

The impact evaluation of WINGS addressed hypotheses related to what impact the program had on specific outcome measures. These include risk and protective factors, delinquent behavior, and a number of measures related to school performance.

CLIENT EXIT RISK ASSESSMENT RECORDS

Was WINGS participation related to a decrease in risk factors and an increase in protective factors?

To answer this research question, data collected by the WINGS service providers from engaged clients at exit through the San Diego Regional Resiliency Checkup (SDRRC), the Cook County Assessment, and the Pathways questionnaire were analyzed. Matched SDRRC data (intake and exit) were available for 276 clients, 165 of whom had successfully completed the program. Matched Cook County Assessment and Pathways data were available for 280 clients, 171 of whom had successfully exited WINGS. These analyses focus on those who successfully completed the program because they were the ones who received the “full dosage” of treatment. More information regarding client engagement and successful program completion is provided in Chapter 5.

Compared to program entry, clients who successfully exited the WINGS program were more likely to have protective factors in each of the six domains on the SDRRC at exit. Protective factors are seen as characteristics that may buffer the client from future delinquency-related behavior. As Figure 4.1 shows, more than three-quarters of successful clients had at least one protective factor in each of the six domains at exit. The greatest change was seen in the substance abuse domain (76% at intake compared to 88% at exit), delinquency domain (73% at intake compared to 83% at exit), and education domain (82% at intake compared to 92% at exit).
Figure 4.1
PERCENT OF SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS WITH PROTECTIVE FACTORS AT INTAKE AND EXIT
Service Provider Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – February 2003

TOTAL = 165
A greater percentage of successful clients had each of the 30 protective factors at exit, compared to intake. Figure 4.2 presents comparisons in the factors with the greatest change between intake and exit, representing four of the six dimensions (one school, one individual, two substance abuse, and two delinquency factors). These included 75 percent who were involved in a supportive school environment at exit compared to 55 percent at program intake. In addition, 50 percent demonstrated self-control (compared to 31% at intake), 61 percent had no distressing habits (compared to 41% at intake), 70 percent had an adult prosocial relationship (compared to 53% at intake), 45 percent could manage peer pressure (compared to 28% at intake) and 44 percent were involved in a community organization (compared to 25% at intake). Those protective factors that were most difficult to change over time included two that a high percentage of girls already had at intake (values fairness, from 67% to 70% and makes friends, from 76% to 79%) and two that around one-third or less of girls had at either time (participates in structured activities, from 34% to 35%, and participates in a faith community, from 27% to 30%) (not shown).
There was less dramatic change in client risk factors measured through the SDRRC at intake and exit, compared to client protective factors. One reason for this might be the increased awareness on the part of the Home Visitor of the risks in a girl’s life at exit compared to intake. Program staff have reported that clients reveal more after they have established a relationship and level of trust with them. Despite this, Figure 4.3 shows that successful clients were still less at risk at exit on five of the six dimensions, compared to at intake. The greatest change in risk factors occurred in the substance abuse domain, with 44 percent of clients having at least one risk factor at intake, compared to 33 percent at exit. Other positive changes occurred in the education domain (69% at intake compared to 59% at exit), peer domain (76% at intake compared to 67% at exit), individual domain (70% versus 65% at exit), and delinquency domain (76% versus 72% at exit).

Figure 4.3
PERCENT OF SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS WITH RISK FACTORS AT INTAKE AND EXIT
Service Provider Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – February 2003

![Figure 4.3: Percent of successful clients with risk factors at intake and exit.](image)

- **Substance Abuse**: 44% at intake, 33% at exit
- **Peer**: 67% at intake, 65% at exit
- **Education**: 69% at intake, 59% at exit
- **Individual**: 70% at intake, 65% at exit
- **Delinquency**: 76% at intake, 72% at exit
- **Family**: 75% at intake, 78% at exit

TOTAL = 165
In addition, fewer successful clients were at risk on 21 of the 30 individual risk factors. Figure 4.4 shows the five risk factors that showed the greatest positive change over time. The greatest change in risk level was in the education domain. At program intake, 36 percent of the clients had suspension/expulsion issues and 45 percent had truancy problems. At exit, these percentages had decreased to 18 percent and 30 percent, respectively. Other items with less risk included having delinquent friends (peer domain), using mood altering substances (substance use domain) and being socially isolated (peer domain). Interestingly, these changes in risks are consistent with those risks most often associated with girls. Specifically, problems with school attendance, substance abuse issues, and the role relationships have in shaping their behavior (Bloom, Owen, Covington, & Raeder, 2002; Maniglia, 1998). Factors that showed no change over time included having a chaotic family life (52%), living in a neighborhood with crime (42%), affiliating with a gang (22%), and not being enrolled in school (7%) (not shown).
Overall, successful clients significantly increased their number of protective factors and significantly decreased their number of risk factors over time. Consistent with the previous discussion, the change in protective factors was larger than the change in risk factors, demonstrating how WINGS is most effective. As Figure 4.5 shows, successful clients had an average of 13.3 protective factors (out of a possible 30) at intake, which increased to 16.6 at exit. At intake, successful clients had an average of 9.5 risk factors (also out of 30), which decreased to 7.9 at exit. Both of these changes in protective and risk factors were significant ($t(165) = 6.72, p < .001$ and $t(165) = 4.05, p < .001$).

Figure 4.5
SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS’ AVERAGE PROTECTIVE AND RISK SCORES AT INTAKE AND EXIT
Service Provider Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – February 2003

There was no significant positive change in the number of protective or risk factors for the individuals who failed WINGS (9.1 protective factors at both intake and exit and 13.3 and 14.3 risk factors, respectively) or who left through no-fault of their own (8.9 protective factors at intake and 11.3 at exit and 13.0 risk factors at intake and 12.2 at exit) (not shown).
Further analysis of the average exit protective and risk factors for successful clients by initial referral reason also revealed significant differences. Specifically, those on informal probation had the highest protective and lowest risk scores at exit and those on formal probation had the lowest protective and highest risk scores ($F(2, 162) = 3.21, p < .05$ and $F(2, 162) = 4.15, p < .05$) (Figure 4.6). This finding is not as surprising when one considers that there was greater self-selection for participation on the part of girls whose cases were counseled and closed and that girls on formal probation started out at greater risk at intake, compared to those on informal probation.

**Figure 4.6**

AVERAGE PROTECTIVE AND RISK SCORES AT EXIT
FOR SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS BY REFERRAL REASON
Service Provider Regional Resiliency Checkup, April 2000 – February 2003

![Bar chart showing average protective and risk scores at exit for successful clients by referral reason.](image-url)
Data from the Cook County Assessment were consistent with the SDRRC data in showing that clients who successfully exited the WINGS program were doing better at exit, compared to at intake. As Figure 4.7 shows, those who successfully completed WINGS were less likely to be rated as at-risk on 8 of the 12 Cook County Assessment items. These positive changes included less risk in the areas of social support (36% at intake, compared to 22% at exit), peers (46% versus 35%), substance abuse (54% versus 43%), mental health (35% versus 25%), school (58% versus 48%), physical safety (25% versus 19%), life skills (46% versus 43%), and basic needs (27% versus 26%).

Figure 4.7
SUCCESSFUL CLIENT CHANGE IN RISK BETWEEN INTAKE AND EXIT
Cook County Assessment, April 2000 – February 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>Exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Safety</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Needs</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL = 170 - 171

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
In addition, data collected through the Pathways Questionnaire at exit revealed that successful clients were more likely to have visited a health care professional, completed a vocational assessment test, and reported feeling safe at home and at school, compared to at program intake. There was no change in clients’ feeling of safety in their neighborhood from intake to exit (Figure 4.8).

**Figure 4.8**
SUCCESSFUL CLIENT CHANGE IN OTHER PATHWAY AREAS
Pathways Questionnaire, April 2000 – February 2003

- **Safe in Neighborhood**: 56% & 56%
- **Safe at Home**: 69% & 78%
- **Safe at School**: 47% & 56%
- **Receive Health Care**: 76% & 92%
- **Vocational Assessment**: 34% & 96%

**TOTAL = 170 - 171**

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
Criminal activity for this evaluation was collected from Probation computer records and files for five time periods: 1) the pre-period, which includes all activity prior to and including the instant offense; 2) the during period of program participation; 3) the first 6-months following exit; 4) months 7 through 12 following exit; and 5) months 13 through 18 following exit. Data are presented here for 171 girls who successfully completed WINGS, as well as the 399 girls in the comparison group. Additional analyses also utilize data collected for those who failed or left no-fault. Because the “during” period ended after December 31, 2001, for a number of these clients, data could not be collected for all girls for all three follow-up periods. In these instances, deviations from the numbers stated above are noted. When a girl turned 18 before the end of the third follow-up period, information regarding criminal activity was collected from San Diego County's adult computer system.

When interpreting the percentages related to criminal activity, it is important to note that, because participation was voluntary for counseled and closed cases, the WINGS group contained a slightly smaller percentage of these types of clients, compared to those in the comparison group (46% versus 52%). Because these girls were least at risk, this difference could affect the pattern of results presented here. In addition, because parents often decided they didn’t want these juveniles to participate in the program, the group as a whole may be somehow different than those in the comparison group, where no self-selection occurred. Another factor to consider is that there was a low level of recidivism documented for the girls in both groups. This shows that these girls were generally low risk and also suggests that criminal activity measures may not be the most sensitive for measuring program effectiveness. Thus, even though protective and risk factors changed, expecting significant changes in juvenile justice or criminal justice outcomes for this population was not realistic.
Was WINGS participation related to a decreased probability of having a true finding for a new criminal offense, a felony level crime, or a violent offense in the follow-up period?

### Criminal Activity During Program Participation

There was little difference in the “during” time period between the two groups in terms of the number or type of referrals or sustained petitions. As Figure 4.9 shows, about one in ten (11%) of the successful WINGS clients had a referral to Probation for a new offense. A slightly larger percentage (14%) of the comparison group had a referral. Eleven percent of both groups had a sustained petition for a new offense. Of the 19 girls in the WINGS group with a sustained petition, 3 had a true finding for a felony-level offense, as did 8 for a violent offense. Of the 54 in the comparison group, 9 had a true finding for a felony-level offense, as did 17 for a violent offense. Six percent of both groups also had a sustained petition for a probation violation during this time period (not shown).

![Figure 4.9](image-url)

**Figure 4.9**

PERCENT OF CLIENTS WITH A PROBATION REFERRAL OR SUSTAINED PETITION IN THE DURING PERIOD BY GROUP AND EXIT STATUS

Probation Department Records, April 2000 – February 2003

- **Successful WINGS (n=171)**: 11% Referral, 14% Sustained Petition
- **Comparison Group (n=399)**: 11% Referral, 11% Sustained Petition
Although the actual number of clients with a sustained petition in the “during” time period was small, there were some slight differences based upon initial referral type, as well as between successful WINGS clients and the comparison group. As Figure 4.10 illustrates, girls who were referred with a counseled and closed case had the lowest recidivism rate, while those on informal probation had the highest. This later difference reflects the fact that the charges associated with an informal probation case can be reissued if another offense occurs during this time of informal supervision. In terms of the comparison by group, successful WINGS clients on informal probation or counseled and closed were slightly more likely than the comparison group to have a referral to Probation (4% and 22% compared to 3% and 19%). However, those in the comparison group on formal probation were more likely to have a sustained petition (17% compared to 12%).

Figure 4.10
PERCENT OF CLIENTS WITH A PROBATION REFERRAL IN THE DURING PERIOD
BY GROUP AND REFERRAL TYPE
Probation Department Records, April 2000 – February 2003
The percentage of girls who had a referral for a new charge in any of the three follow-up periods was relatively small, varying between a low of five percent (for the WINGS clients during the first follow-up period) to a high of eight percent (for the WINGS clients in the second follow-up period). There was no difference between the two groups in terms of the percent of referrals for a felony or a violent offense (not shown).

Figure 4.11 presents a survival-type analysis for the girls who completed WINGS, compared to those in the comparison group. Specifically, this figure shows the percentage of girls with no new referral at each of the follow-up periods. At the end of the exit period, all of the girls (100%) did not have a follow-up referral. At six months, four percent in the WINGS group had received at least one referral, as did six percent in the comparison group. After 12 months, an additional 11 percent in the WINGS group, and an additional 5 percent of the comparison group had received a referral, bringing the percentage with no referrals down to 85 percent, and 89 percent, respectively. By the end of the follow-up period, 18 percent of the successful WINGS clients had at least one referral in the prior 18 months, as did 15 percent of those in the comparison group.
When one utilizes the same type of analysis for sustained petitions, a similar pattern emerges. Specifically, a small percentage of girls in either group had a sustained petition for a new offense during the follow-up periods (from 2% of the WINGS group in the third follow-up period to 6% of the comparison group in the first follow-up period) and there was no difference by group in terms of the percent with a sustained petition for a felony level offense or a violent offense (not shown).

As Figure 4.12 shows, around nine out of ten girls in both groups did not have a sustained petition during the entire follow-up period of 18 months. For the WINGS group, three percent of those tracked for this period of time had their first sustained petition during this six-month period, seven percent during the second, and two percent more in the third. For the comparison group, these figures were four percent, four percent, and one percent, respectively.

Figure 4.12
PERCENT OF CLIENTS WITH NO NEW SUSTAINED PETITIONS DURING FOLLOW-UP BY GROUP AND EXIT STATUS
Probation Department Records, April 2000 – June 2003
Was WINGS participation related to a lower probability of continued wardship in the follow-up period?

A desirable outcome goal for girls under Probation supervision is to fulfill their obligations and be removed from supervision caseloads. Of the 171 successful WINGS girls, 62 were placed on probation as a result of their instant offense. For the comparison group, 100 of the 399 were wards. As Figure 4.13 shows, the proportion of WINGS clients still on probation at exit and the first two follow-up periods was lower than the comparison group. For example, at the end of the “during” time period, less than two-thirds (61%) of the WINGS clients were still wards, compared to over three-quarters (77%) of the comparison group. By the end of the 18-month follow-up, this difference had almost leveled out (10% of the WINGS group and 14% of the comparison).

Figure 4.13
PERCENT OF CLIENTS STILL UNDER PROBATION SUPERVISION
BY GROUP AND EXIT STATUS
Probation Department Records, April 2000 – June 2003
Was WINGS participation related to a lower institutional commitment rate in the follow-up period?

During the period of program participation, a significantly smaller percentage of successful WINGS clients (1%, or 1 of the 171 girls) received an institutional commitment for a new offense, compared to the comparison group (4%, or 16 of the 399 girls) \(\chi^2(1, N = 570) = 3.74, p < .05\). Due to the small number of girls with true findings in the follow-up periods, there were no other significant differences and the percentages with a commitment ranged from zero percent (WINGS girls in the second follow-up period) to three percent (WINGS girls and comparison group in the first follow-up period) (not shown).

SCHOOL-RELATED INFORMATION

Information regarding school engagement and achievement was collected for individuals in both groups from Probation files and the San Diego Juvenile Court’s Web site, as well as program documentation. However, despite utilizing a number of sources, information regarding grades, attendance, and disciplinary action was not reliably available and affected the number of cases that were available for comparison. The following analyses again compare successful WINGS clients to individuals in the comparison group.

Was WINGS participation related to an increased probability of being enrolled and engaged in school?

Information regarding whether or not the girl was enrolled in school, as well as the type of school, was collected for the “during” time period, as well as each of the three follow-up periods. However, this information was available for a smaller number of clients as time went on. For example, while it was available for 96 percent of WINGS clients and 60 percent of the comparison group at the end of the “during” time period, it was available only for 41 percent and 46 percent at the first follow-up period. In addition, it is important to note that 46 percent (78) of the WINGS girls and 53 percent (210) of the comparison group either graduated from high school or turned 18 before the end of the final follow-up period, so data were not applicable for these individuals (not shown).
School Enrollment

At the end of the during period, there was a significant difference between the two groups in enrollment status ($\chi^2(5, N = 404) = 13.28, p < .05$). As Figure 4.14 shows, over one-half of both groups (57% of WINGS and 58% of the comparison group) were enrolled in a public school at the end of the “during” time period. However, a greater percentage of the WINGS girls were involved in a continuation school (a diploma program for youth 16 to 18 who are not exempt from compulsory school and are deemed at-risk of not completing schooling), a smaller percentage were enrolled in a court school, and a smaller number were categorized as not enrolled. “Other” types of schools include community day (an alternative program for expelled and other high-risk youth), private, independent, and home study. Not included in the figure are those individuals in both groups who were not enrolled because they had already graduated or were over the age of 18 (4 in the WINGS group and 7 in the comparison).

Figure 4.14
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT TYPE AT THE END OF THE DURING PERIOD
BY GROUP AND EXIT STATUS
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April 2000 – February 2003

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.

There was no significant difference in enrollment information between the two groups at any of the three follow-up periods, with about one-half enrolled in a public school and between one and six percent not enrolled, even though they should have been (not shown).
Information regarding how regularly the girls attended school, as well as whether or not they were suspended or expelled, was collected for the “during” time period, as well as for the first follow-up period. While there were no differences between the two groups in terms of being suspended (27% during and 23% follow-up WINGS and 26% during and 28% follow-up comparison) or expelled (16% during and 11% follow-up WINGS and 11% during and 13% follow-up comparison), there was a significant difference in their attendance in the “during” time period (not shown). As Figure 4.15 shows, girls in the WINGS group were more likely to attend school on a regular basis (70%), compared to those in the comparison group (45%) ($\chi^2(2, N = 322) = 29.08, p < .001$). At the end of the follow-up, there was a non-significant difference, with 31 percent of WINGS clients and 36 percent of the comparison group attending school on a more sporadic basis (not shown).

**Figure 4.15**

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AT THE END OF THE DURING PERIOD**

**BY GROUP AND EXIT STATUS**

Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April 2000 – February 2003

![Attendance Chart](image)

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
Consistent with the previous results, successful WINGS clients appeared to do better in school during their period of participation. As Figure 4.16 illustrates, while an almost equal percentage of girls in both groups got As and Bs on average, fewer in the WINGS group (18%) were recorded as failing (Ds and Fs) in the “during” period, compared to those in the comparison group (30%). This difference was statistically significant ($\chi^2(2, N = 323) = 7.66$, $p < .05$). However, this positive difference was not consistent with the data collected during the first follow-up period for the 53 WINGS clients and 127 comparison group individuals with information that could be coded (not shown).

### Figure 4.16
AVERAGE SCHOOL GRADES AT THE END OF THE DURING PERIOD
BY GROUP AND EXIT STATUS
Probation Department and Service Provider Records, April 2000 – June 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Successful WINGS (n=155)</th>
<th>Comparison (n=168)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As and Bs</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cs</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ds and Fs</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.
SUMMARY

Results of the outcome evaluation show that at exit, successful WINGS clients were more likely to have protective factors and less likely to be at risk. Positive changes included being better able to manage peer pressure, having self-control, having better attendance at school, and performing better in school. Consistent with the strength-based program philosophy of WINGS, and in alignment with research on delinquent girls, successful WINGS clients graduated with enhanced personal skills that may buffer them from the ongoing risks they face in their daily lives. A relatively small percentage of girls in either group had a referral or sustained petition for a new offense or a sustained petition during follow-up, supporting the idea that traditional criminal justice measures may not be the most appropriate for this group. However, successful WINGS clients were significantly more likely to complete probation and were also less likely to have an institutional commitment during their period of program participation. In terms of school-related measures, there were some differences in the type of schools in which the girls in the two groups were enrolled. Additionally, during the period of program participation, WINGS girls were significantly more likely to attend school on a regular basis and to not have failing grades.
CHAPTER 5
PROCESS EVALUATION RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

The current chapter includes information for the project collected as part of the process evaluation. Data collected through staff and client interviews, and client and service provider surveys, as well as program records, are used to address research questions presented in Chapter 3. These include how many clients were engaged and received WINGS services, staff perception of how well the program was implemented and managed, how clients felt about different program components and their level of satisfaction with program services, and how service providers in the community viewed WINGS and the gender-responsive services it provided to girls in the San Diego region.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Which clients were most likely to be engaged in the WINGS program?

The percentage of girls who were referred to WINGS and engaged by the service providers varied as a function of the referral disposition, as well as whether or not they were in the first or second sample. As Figure 5.1 shows, approximately nine out of ten (92%) girls on formal probation were engaged. In comparison, slightly more than three-quarters (81%) of those on informal probation and almost two-thirds (63%) of those with cases that were counseled and closed were engaged. This difference was significant ($\chi^2(2, N = 399) = 29.64$, $p < .001$). As previously noted, program participation was recommended, but not mandated, for counseled and closed cases and, in a number of cases (29% of the 214 cases), the girl's parent chose to have her not participate in the program (not shown).

In addition, girls in the second sample were significantly more likely to be engaged (77%), compared to those in the first sample (70%) ($\chi^2(1, N = 399) = 3.96$, $p < .05$) (not shown). This difference was not related to the fact that the second sample included a greater proportion of formal probation or informal probation cases (48% in the first sample and 44% in the second). Rather, it supports the view that it is important to build project start-up time into evaluation timelines so that protocols can be developed and staff trained regarding how to most effectively work with clients.
What was the average length of client participation in WINGS?

The average length of enrollment for clients who successfully exited WINGS was about ten months (314.3 days). Not surprisingly, those who failed the program and those who left no-fault, excluding those clients who were not engaged at all, were involved in the program for shorter amounts of time (213.9 days and 153.4 days, respectively) (not shown).

Interestingly, there was a significant difference in the length of participation for these 171 individuals by their initial referral reason. Specifically, while girls on formal probation and informal probation were involved for slightly less than ten months, on average (296.6 days and 293.1 days, respectively), girls referred for a counseled and closed case were involved for eleven months, on average (337.6 days) \( F(2, 168) = 3.60, p < .05 \) (not shown). This longer length of participation could be related to the fact that participation was voluntary, or alternatively, that they came into the program with different types of needs.

Additionally, successful participants in the second sample were involved in the program for a shorter amount of time, compared to those in the first. These averages, which were 336.1 days for the first sample and 288.9 for the second, were significantly different \( t(169) = 2.97, p < .01 \) (not shown). Program staff interpreted this difference to be another indicator of program maturity and the ability to work effectively with clients.
How did clients exit the program and what factors were related to successful completion?

All clients who exited the program were categorized with one of these outcomes: successfully completing the program requirements, failing through no fault of their own (e.g., moving, parental reasons, court order, or participation in another program), or failing through their own fault1 (e.g., probation violation, new offense, commitment, failure to participate). As Figure 5.2 shows, of those who were engaged, more than half (58%) were successful, around one-third failed (32%), and ten percent failed through no-fault of their own. When these data were analyzed by original referral reason (and only those who are engaged are included), there was no significant difference. That is, 58 percent of counseled and closed girls, 63 percent of informal probation girls, and 54 percent of formal probation girls were successful and there was no difference by their original level of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Thus, while making participation mandatory affected the engagement rate, it did not affect the success rate once the girl was involved in the program.

Figure 5.2
CLIENT EXIT STATUS
Service Provider Records, April 2000 – February 2003

1 It should be noted that, even though program participation was not mandatory for counseled and closed cases, if they failed to complete program requirements once they were engaged, they were terminated unsuccessfully.
As Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show, a number of other client characteristics, including protective as well as risk factors, were significantly related to program exit status. These characteristics were captured during the service provider intake process. For example, compared to those who later failed the program, successful clients possessed several protective factors related to having people to turn to, valuing fairness and honesty, and having a positive family environment. Successful clients were also more likely to be described as being successful in school at intake, as well as having educational aspirations, having a positive self-concept, and belonging to a caring/supportive school environment. In addition, as described in Table 5.2, WINGS clients who failed were more likely to have no meaningful adult in their lives, be prone to run away, have few prosocial interests or acquaintances, have a prior arrest, be manipulative or deceitful, and have problems related to school, including truancy and a pattern of suspensions or expulsions. These findings were helpful to program staff in focusing interventions on at-risk areas. They also provided an opportunity to explore additional interventions to address the more intensive needs associated with those girls who were unable to complete the program, specifically the substance abuse, mental health, and poor school performance issues. Early identification and recognition of such higher end needs helped to effectively and efficiently channel those girls into more appropriate services.

Table 5.1
CLIENT PROTECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS AT INTAKE
SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO PROGRAM EXIT STATUS
Service Provider Records, April 2000 – February 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Failed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has at least one person to confide in</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes friends easily</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values fairness</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values honesty</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational aspirations</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/supportive school environmnet</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial adult relations</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive self concept</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in school</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy in prosocial roles</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans, organizes, and completes tasks</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates with family</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family activities</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive use of time at home</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive structured activities</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment with achiever</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive peer relations</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in faith community</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2
CLIENT RISK CHARACTERISTICS AT INTAKE
SIGNIFICANTLY RELATED TO PROGRAM EXIT STATUS
Service Provider Records, April 2000 – February 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Successful</th>
<th>Failed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance use interferes with functioning</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No meaningful adult relations</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few prosocial interests</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior arrests</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative/deceitful</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent orientation</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of suspension/expulsion</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug use</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few prosocial acquaintances</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of truancy past year</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental supervision deficiencies</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relations with parent(s)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaotic family</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent friends</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What were the service needs of WINGS clients?

As a part of the client intake process, assessment tools were used to determine the appropriate services for each individual. Treatment service plans and documentation of services provided were included in the client database once a client had exited the program.

As Table 5.3 shows, girls’ group was the most frequently cited service need for the clients, included for 94 percent of girls in their service plan. Girls’ group, which was a required component of the program, was a center-based group activity that emphasized raising self-esteem by using cognitive skill-building curricula. Consistent with the risk assessments, the services addressing family issues (e.g., family conferencing/counseling), substance abuse, and mental health issues were frequent on the list of needs. The high frequency of health and vocational needs directly relates to the program’s gender-responsive design to be proactive in addressing the needs of girls. As a prevention or early intervention measure, crisis intervention and referrals to Child Protective Services were required for nearly 20 percent of the clients. Furthermore, almost one-quarter (22%) of the clients required some form of financial assistance.
Again, these findings are consistent with the literature on female offenders. In particular, family distress, substance abuse, and poor school performance, as well as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, have been identified as pathways to criminal behavior (Belknap, Dunn, & Holsinger, 1997; Booker Loop, 2000; Chesney-Lind, 2000; Prescott, 1997; Spatz Widom, 2000). These issues are not discrete categories that are addressed independently of each other. For instance, the role of abuse and its relationship with substance use, runaway behavior, eating disorders, and delinquent behavior is complex and viewed as a crucial point of intervention when working with girls (Acoca, 1999; Booker Loop, 2000; Chesney-Lind, 2000). Although not universal, the WINGS girls, especially those who were unable to successfully complete the program, have distinct needs that warrant gender-specific programming.

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Need</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls' Group</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Education</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conferencing</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Counseling</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Treatment</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School Services</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Counseling</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-Daughter Mediation</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger Management</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Counseling</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Services</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Treatment</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Intervention</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protective Services Referral</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Treatment</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Services</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Assistance</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Counseling</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Percentages based upon multiple responses. Cases with missing information not included.
Did WINGS clients successfully complete their service plan?

Table 5.4 presents the percentage of clients who received each of their assigned services by exit status (services planned for less than 15 clients in either group are excluded). For example, of the 26 successful clients assigned to receive crisis intervention, all or 100 percent, did so compared to 95 percent of the 22 who were assigned to, but who failed the program. Between 72 percent and 100 percent of clients who successfully completed the program also completed specific services, compared to a low percentage of 52 percent of those that failed. Successful clients were most likely to receive crisis intervention, complete girls’ group, life skills group, conflict resolution, and family education. The greatest difference that existed between the two groups in what was planned for and what was completed was health education, drug treatment, and girls’ group.

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider Records, April 2000 – February 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients Who</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Conferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-Daughter Mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Treatment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For comparison purposes, information regarding the services received by the 399 girls in the comparison group was also tracked. The six services which were received by 30 individuals or more of this group included mental health treatment (25%), anger management (17%), drug treatment (13%), drug counseling (11%), family counseling (10%), and alcohol counseling (8%) (not shown).
**PROGRAM AND PROBATION STAFF PERCEPTIONS**

*What were the qualifications and training levels of program and Probation staff assigned to the WINGS program?*

Staff interviews were conducted at two points during the project, in 2001 and in 2002. Although the second interview was very similar to the first, it provided a different perspective for two reasons. First, the interviews happened to occur during a time when the programs were grappling with budget cuts and the related changes to the program. Second, the staff in the second interview had been involved in the program for a longer period of time and could reflect on the maturation of the project.

The majority of program staff interviewed during both time periods came to WINGS with some experience in the field of social services and all of the Probation Officers had previously worked in field supervision with juveniles. One of the more appealing aspects of working with the WINGS program for these individuals initially was having the opportunity to work specifically with girls, including girls in the criminal justice system. Extensive training was provided to staff to further strengthen their skills, especially during the implementation phase of the project. Two-thirds (65%) of program staff from both interviews thought this was sufficient training to effectively work with the girls, but one-third of the staff and all of the Probation Officers felt there was still the need for additional training. Most notable was the perceived need for additional training on gender-related mental health and substance abuse interventions. Staff in the second interview also noted the need for more training on the criminal justice system, the WINGS program in general, how to engage difficult clients, and how to work with those that have more risk factors, such as mental health and substance abuse. The suggestion to have consistent and timely training for new staff also was seen as important.

In the second interview, staff were asked what trainings they found to be most helpful. Nearly all of those interviewed noted the Probation-sponsored training that dealt with suicide, prostitution, eating disorders, girls in gangs, and gender-specific services. One-quarter of staff also mentioned the trainings that dealt with alcohol and drug issues. Two each noted the trainings on the juvenile Probation system, mother-daughter mediation, Cal-SAHF engaging clients in services, and/or mental health issues.

*How did service provider and Probation staff feel about the collaborative nature of the program and the use of multi-disciplinary teams?*

Program staff and Probation Officers recognized both the benefits and challenges of working collaboratively to implement WINGS, with three-quarters feeling that this collaboration was “very” or “somewhat” useful. A common sentiment was that collaborating among agencies results in a greater pool of resources available to the client and the sharing of each agency’s ideas was noted as an important by-product of the collaboration. Program staff also felt that the collaboration had improved the delivery of services to at-risk girls and educated the community on the need for gender-responsive services. Likewise, Probation Officers thought it was a “very” efficient means of meeting the goals of Probation and appreciated the enriched outreach and knowledge of the community that agencies provided.
The majority (83%) of program and Probation staff interviewed in 2001 and all of the staff interviewed in 2002 found the multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) to be very helpful in their work with clients. The most often cited benefit in both rounds of interviews was having access to a broad base of knowledge and expertise, as well as different perspectives. In addition, around one-half of those interviewed felt the MDTs were an important source of support for the Home Visitors by providing a team atmosphere and clinical feedback on their clients. The MDTs also were praised for serving as a means to coordinate the care and services delivered to clients. One specialist stated that the MDTs were helpful because of “the communication between the team members, the opportunity to brainstorm and consult on the girls and their families, and sharing perspectives about the girls’ needs and what interventions or resources might be useful.”

All of the staff interviewed in both years rated the pairing of a Probation Officer and Home Visitor as “very important.” When asked the reason for this rating, many of those interviewed noted that each member contributed different resources to the partnership. Program staff often appreciated the client background information that the Probation Officer had access to, her knowledge of the juvenile justice process, and her leverage to enforce consequences. This ability allowed the Home Visitor to stay focused on the social service aspect of treatment and, if needed, have the Probation Officer use the client’s probation conditions as a motivating factor. The Probation Officers acknowledged the value of the program staff’s in-depth knowledge of the community and the benefit this had in the provision of treatment. Both staffs also felt that the increased communication was valuable in the coordination of services. One agency administrator summed-up the benefits of this partnership by stating, “The Probation Officers provide the most in-depth comprehensive knowledge of the probation life of this girl and with more teeth to follow through. When done well, the treatment is coordinated and comprehensive, and the family sees it.”

According to the staff members interviewed in 2001, an essential factor to the overall success of the partnership was the ongoing communication between the two entities. In addition to bi-monthly provider meetings, Probation staff have routinely conducted site visits and provided documentation of training. Over three-quarters of program staff felt the bi-monthly meetings were either “very” or “somewhat” useful and more than one-half felt Probation had clearly explained their agency’s roles and responsibilities. Suggestions for further improving this communication included having more consistency with Probation’s expectations and utilizing written communication to a greater degree.

At the same time that they felt the partnership was beneficial, some program staff were aware of the challenges associated with this team approach. In addition, program staff noted that there has been a certain level of competitiveness among the regions and that the level of collaboration decreased over time. About one in five of the program staff noted an imbalance of power between the two perspectives, citing a lack of consensus in the decision-making process and reporting that they sometimes felt that Probation did not always value and respect their agency’s level of experience. Similarly, some program staff felt that the Probation Officer was not a consistent team player, that this particular model had not necessarily improved service delivery in the region, and the different perspectives and philosophies of law enforcement compared to social service were a challenge to overcome.
The Probation Officers also recognized this difference in perspectives and understanding of each other’s roles as one of the central issues that they have had to address. In turn, two of the officers felt distrusted or misunderstood by the service provider. The issue of confidentiality and its interference with the need to share information also was raised as a challenge to overcome. Most (three of four respondents to that question) of the Probation Officers believed the agencies respected and valued their experience.

To assess any change in the partnership between Probation and providers, staff were asked in the second interview if they felt that their relationship had changed over time. All but two of the program staff interviewed felt that the relationship had changed and the change was for the better. Specifically, the staff felt that the level of communication, trust, respect, and the Probation Officer’s understanding of the role of the programs had improved. Two staff noted that this improvement was due to Probation staffing changes. Staff also felt that spending more time with each other and becoming more familiar with each others’ roles was instrumental in the improved relations. These insights by program staff speak to the value of teaming individuals that are open to working with staff from outside agencies and being flexible in their approach to clients. This was true for both program and Probation staff.

How did program and Probation staff feel about how well the WINGS program was implemented?

Questions regarding implementation were included only on the first interview. Program staff acknowledged that creating a new program was a challenge that was accompanied with some inherent difficulties. These included educating the community about gender-responsive services, getting staff in place, working in a collaborative model, serving a large geographical area, and addressing transportation issues.

Overall, both program staff and Probation expressed a positive level of satisfaction with the implementation of WINGS by both Probation and their agency. The majority stated that they did a “very” or “somewhat” effective job implementing the program. However, common areas of frustration expressed by program staff with their own agency during the start-up period included the number of changes in the paperwork, the policies, and the procedures. Suggestions for improvement included taking more time and having the procedures and staff in place prior to providing services, as well as providing clearer guidelines. In regard to Probation, program staff expressed a desire that all of Probation demonstrate a greater awareness and understanding of the WINGS program. They also noted the need for improved communication between the two entities, an increase in trust of the community-based organization’s (CBOs) ability to work with this population, and a more team-oriented approach by Probation. Similarly, Probation Officers expressed a need for more open communication, as well as a need to respond more quickly to fill vacant staff positions and address ineffective program components.
How did program and Probation staff feel about how well the WINGS program was managed?

In general, program staff were satisfied with the management of WINGS by their agencies and Probation. They expressed a strong feeling of support and encouragement from their immediate supervisors and an appreciation for the team atmosphere. Other areas of support included the autonomy granted by the agency to manage the program, the feeling of being heard, and management’s responsiveness to their needs.

The most common recommendations for improving the management of WINGS were to be more supportive of the Home Visitor and to designate more of the program manager’s time to WINGS. Specific ways cited for increasing the support for the Home Visitor included improving the work environment, providing more resources, increasing the level of pay, providing clearer job descriptions, having more direct communication, and increasing administrative support. These recommendations were similar to program staffs’ suggestions for decreasing the high staff turnover rate. These suggestions included increasing compensation, providing more resources to complete their job, and administration showing a greater understanding and support of WINGS staff.

Program staff’s recommendations for improving Probation’s management of WINGS fell into the previously described categories of better communication and improved team participation. Specifically, staff requested more consistency with the program expectations and an increased level of commitment to the partnership. Staff also felt that Probation could provide additional resources to meet the goals of WINGS. The most prominent need was safe and accessible transportation for clients, preferably a van. Other desired resources included additional training, as noted before, and increased funds for staff resources.

Probation Officers were most likely to think that both the agencies and Probation were doing a “somewhat” effective job of managing WINGS. Being better organized with the resources being distributed and having a greater level of accountability were noted as areas where the agencies could improve. In turn, some of the Probation Officers recommended that Probation hold the agencies more accountable to the program goals and contracts. The Officers did feel “very” supported by Probation while working in the WINGS unit. Reasons cited for these feelings were Probation’s overall support of the unit and having a supervisor who listens to them, trusts their capabilities, and encourages them.

How individualized were the services at each site and how did staff feel about these cross-site differences?

All of the program staff in the first interview agreed that WINGS had been implemented differently across the sites, with more than two-thirds finding this difference as having value. When asked what made these differences valuable, the most common response was that it enabled each community to address the unique needs of their clients and to learn from each other’s different practices.
How did program and Probation staff engage WINGS clients and their families?

Client and family engagement in WINGS services was one of the primary and more difficult tasks for the staff, especially for voluntary status clients. Consistent with previous research, the development of a trusting and supportive relationship was most often cited in both interviews by program and Probation staff as the key to engaging a girl in services. Other useful steps involved “selling” the program, convincing clients it could work, and providing a client-centered approach. One program staff member captured these sentiments with her list of what is effective: “Everything about the program should be respectful of the girl. It should be age and gender-relevant. It has to be fun for them too.”

Nine out of ten program and Probation staff in both interviews felt it is “very” important to involve the family in the girl’s treatment plan. However, a girl’s family also was seen as the greatest challenge to engaging a client in WINGS. Negative factors here included a lack of parental support, a parent’s own mental health and substance abuse issues, family secrets, and overall dysfunction. Overcoming a girl’s distrust of relationships and her own lack of motivation or negative attitude, as well as a girl’s substance abuse or mental health issues, were other issues staff felt needed to be addressed.

When asked to describe how a girl’s family could best be engaged, the majority of staff felt it was important to establish a relationship from the beginning that respects the guardian’s role, to include them in the service plan, and to support them. Several staff also thought that having a Specialist or Parent Advocate was conducive to getting them involved in their daughter’s treatment. In addition, linking them with resources in the community, offering incentives, and providing specialized services for the parents were also helpful. As with the girls, the most common challenges included parental lack of motivation and their own personal issues. These findings were consistent across both interviews.

How did program and Probation staff feel about the effectiveness and application of the client risk assessment instruments?

The assessment-based service plan was one of the unique qualities of WINGS and at times was a point of frustration for the Home Visitors. Program and Probation staff were asked to rate the assessments on their usefulness in creating a service plan, understanding their client’s needs, assisting in their clinical work, identifying appropriate interventions, and their overall work with the client. The San Diego Risk and Resiliency Checklist (SDRRC) received the highest rating for overall usefulness when working with a client, with 90 percent of program staff finding it to be either “very” or “somewhat” useful. This differed from the Probation staff, who almost unanimously found it to be only “somewhat” useful in their work with the client. The vocational and Pathway questions were more often viewed as being “somewhat” rather than “very” useful in the same categories. In the second interview, staff were only asked how useful each assessment was to their overall work. Both the SDRRC and the Pathways assessment were viewed as the most useful. Similar to program and Probation staff in the first interview, the vocational assessment was not seen as being very useful and the Cook County Assessment was most often viewed as “somewhat” useful (50%).
The most frequently cited criticisms of the assessments, especially the SDRRC and Cook County Assessment, were that they are completed too early in the process to obtain accurate information about the client and at times hindered the development of the relationship because of the nature of the questions. This inadequate amount of time was also seen as a drawback by staff that participated in the second interview. This raises the unanswered question of how many visits or how much time is needed before one can obtain reliable information. This issue also could weaken the perceived validity of the tools and, consequently, their clinical use by the practitioner. The second most common complaint about the assessments was the duplication of information received from the SDRRC and Cook County Assessment, with the staff favoring the SDRRC. Perceived drawbacks of the SDRRC, however, included that it was subject to the interviewer’s interpretation and that it wasn’t being properly used by the Home Visitors, which could have some relation to the Home Visitors’ perception of its accuracy. Similarly, two staff in the second interview felt that the assessments were not being applied by the Home Visitors and were therefore ineffective.

Who did program and Probation staff see as successful WINGS clients?

The program staff and Probation Officers in the first interview defined success for WINGS clients in broader terms than the basic contractual standards. Two-thirds of the program and Probation staff felt that improvement in a girl’s troubling behavior, including family relations and her ability to deal with problems, was a mark of a successful WINGS client. They also felt strongly that the level of investment and participation in the program and self-awareness by the client of issues in her life were signs of success. Probation Officers were more likely to list “completion of probation” as a sign of success, whereas 40 percent of program staff cited “completion of the program goals” as an important measuring stick. Although staff interviewed in the second interview most often cited change in behavior as a definition of success, nearly one-half (5 of 12) felt that improvement in school also was important to a girl’s success.

Nearly three-quarters of program and Probation staff in both interviews specified having a supportive parent or family environment as a key characteristic associated with those clients that were more likely to succeed. They also identified a client’s level of motivation and ownership of her own behavior as an indicator of potential success. In addition, possessing some sense of purpose or internal focus of control were deemed as valuable assets in a client’s ability to succeed.

How did program and Probation staff feel about the effectiveness of WINGS?

All of the Probation Officers interviewed, as well as two-thirds of program staff in both groups, felt that WINGS was “very” effective in assisting at-risk girls. Over 80 percent in the first interview noted that the program model was WINGS’ greatest strength. Specifically, they noted the client-centered philosophy, the use of Home Visitors, the flexibility, and the strength-based model. In the second interview, staff placed a greater emphasis on the MDT concept as a primary reason for program success. Staff in both interviews also recognized the collaboration, the wrap-around funds, and the compassion and commitment of the staff as valuable assets. Despite this support, slightly more than one-half of the program staff felt that their agency
would not be able to afford to continue with WINGS upon completion of the grant. This question was not asked in the second interview.

One of the concerns expressed by staff in the first interview was high turnover of staff and its effect on the program. This was coupled with the view that the program placed too much strain on the Home Visitor, including having to balance transporting clients and completing paperwork with their clinical work. In turn, decreasing the caseloads and having more focused job duties were suggestions to improve WINGS. Other areas of possible improvement included relationship issues between Probation and the agencies, as well as among the agencies themselves, and the need for additional program components, such as more parent services or a drop-in center. In the second interview, staff shared these views, but placed more emphasis on providing specialized program components such as counseling or alcohol and drug services.

What program components were most and least effective and what suggestions did program and Probation staff have for improving WINGS?

Both program staff and Probation Officers in the first round of interviews were unanimous in their belief that the home visits were the most effective program component in assisting the WINGS girls. The access to the MDTs, the center-based services, and the involvement of the family in the services were also recognized as vital aspects of the program. However, the staff felt strongly that WINGS could benefit from additional services for both the girls and their families, including increased gender-responsive substance abuse services and accessible mental health treatment by licensed professionals. In addition, these crucial services needed to be provided with more consistency by the program. During the second interview, going to where the clients were, whether it be in their home or at school, was perceived as very valuable (7 of 12). The staff also singled out the girls' group as particularly helpful to their clients. In addition, the Home Visitor's ability to act as a mentor and peer was an important element. Unlike staff in the first interview, involving family was seen as the least effective component, mainly because staff was unable to get them engaged in the girls' treatment.

The complexity of the families' needs was reflected in the staff's call for more accessible, intensified, and specialized services for family members. Specific suggestions included home-based mental health services, a separate Specialist for just the parent(s), support groups, and additional resources in the community. To help facilitate family participation, staff suggested the addition of childcare services, more bi-lingual services, and assistance with transportation.

In addition to direct services, the staff reiterated the necessity of changing the current transportation arrangements by creating a more efficient system that stretched beyond bus tokens and the Home Visitors transporting clients. The alternative was to have a van or designated transportation position. Common responses to all questions regarding areas of improvement included the need to continue to work on the partnership between Probation and the agencies. Specific suggestions were to increase the understanding of each other's perspective, to have more consistent interaction at the field level, and to create methods for clearer communication. This later appeal was not such an issue in the second interview, which was consistent with the fact that the relationship and communication with Probation had improved. Also particular to the second interview was staffs' concern with having WINGS being dependent upon one limited funding source.
What were the opinions of program and Probation staff toward the research process?

One of the unique and challenging aspects of WINGS was that it included an extensive research component. Although the research placed extra demands on all levels of staff, they did acknowledge it as a valuable piece of the program model. Staff in the first interview expressed a desire to use the research results to refine the program, inform policy, and hopefully leverage additional funds.

SERVICE PROVIDER PERCEPTIONS

What was the nature of the relationship between service providers surveyed and the WINGS program?

The relationship between the service providers and WINGS program was an essential component of the WINGS program model. As with all collaborative relationships, the process has required attention to development. The success is reflected in the service provider opinions, which changed over time, on the effectiveness of the WINGS program model and referral process.

The first survey asked respondents to indicate if they knew the goals of WINGS. The majority (16) of the service providers stated they knew the goals and many of the programs had received referrals from WINGS (13 service providers for the first survey and 11 for the second survey).

Most of the service providers who responded to the first and second surveys indicated that they knew about WINGS because it was operated by their agency. Others heard about WINGS through communication with WINGS staff. When asked with which particular program components they were familiar, the most common responses were similar in both surveys. These program components included girls’ groups, home visits, assessments, counseling, and health education for girls. In addition, service providers that completed the second survey indicated that they were familiar with the mother-daughter mediation program component.

In the first survey, 58 percent of the respondents were satisfied with the referral process, as were 64 percent in the second survey. The first survey also asked those service providers who had received referrals if they received feedback regarding the referrals. All but two of these service providers reported that there was a formal mechanism in place to provide feedback regarding these WINGS clients. This feedback occurred in a variety of ways, including phone calls, written documentation, and face-to-face interactions, and was provided most often immediately after the referral was received. Only the first survey asked how frequently the service providers had contact with WINGS staff. About two-thirds indicated it was weekly or more frequently.

For the first and second survey, nearly three-quarters of the service providers indicated that their agencies provide services tailored specifically for girls, including competency building, support services, health services, education, and victimization-related services. The most
What opinions did local service providers have regarding gender-specific programming and the WINGS program?

The vast majority (15 of 18 respondents) of service providers in the first survey felt that gender-responsive services were “very necessary” to meet the needs of at-risk girls. This was slightly lower for respondents of the second survey (77%). In addition, almost all of the respondents of both surveys felt WINGS services were “very responsive” in meeting the gender-specific needs of girls. One respondent who provided insight as to how services could better respond to girls’ gender-specific needs stated that improved collaboration was necessary.

All but one of the service providers to the first survey, and approximately three-quarters (77%) of the providers of the second survey, indicated that they would rate their experience with WINGS as “very positive” or “positive.” The most common reasons why service providers felt their experience was positive remained the same in the first and second survey and included the collaborative model of the program, WINGS staff, and the program’s impact on girls.

Were local service providers involved in community collaboratives and how did they feel about these partnerships?

Almost 90 percent of the respondents to the first survey belonged to a local community collaborative, whereas all of the service providers in the second survey were members of a collaborative. Misunderstandings regarding roles and responsibilities continued to be indicated as one of the most common barriers to collaboration reported in both rounds of surveys. In addition, unwillingness to share information due to confidentiality and limited capacity to track families’ progress due to lack of automation were also frequently indicated.

CLIENT AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS

What were the clients’ first impressions of WINGS?

Clients’ first impressions of WINGS were mixed and illustrate both the importance and the challenge of engaging girls in the services. Over 45 percent of the girls interviewed reported having negative expectations initially, and thought that they would not like the program. Similarly, more than one-half of the girls were only partially or not at all interested in participating. The most common reason for this reluctance was a concern that the program would be too time consuming and interfere with their other activities. Some of girls were simply apprehensive, while others thought it would be boring or didn’t think they needed it. On the other hand, 40 percent did express a desire to participate in the program. They thought WINGS would be fun and interesting, as well as help them with Probation and their troubling behavior. The opportunity to have someone to talk to was also appealing for some of the girls.
How did clients and families feel about their Home Visitor and their relationship with her?

One of the unique components of WINGS was its intent to include the family in the services. As such, both the adult and youth were asked about their relationship with the Home Visitor. Nearly 40 percent of the girls had switched Home Visitors once during their time in the program. On average, the Home Visitor had some type of initial contact with the girl once per week, which then tapered to twice per month or less. The majority of girls thought their Home Visitor was either “very” (72%) or “somewhat” (19%) helpful to them during the program. The girls also provided feedback about the Home Visitor by agreeing or disagreeing with a series of statements about the relationship. In general, the girls reported having a positive relationship with their Home Visitor and felt strongly that she was respectful, cared about them, was accessible, provided useful information, and helped them see their strengths. However, the girls were not as sure about the usefulness of involving their families in the services or meeting with the Home Visitor at school. Some of the specific findings included:

- 97 percent felt the Home Visitor respected their opinion;
- 95 percent felt the Home Visitor had clearly explained all of the support services available through WINGS;
- 95 percent felt they had a good relationship with the Home Visitor;
- 95 percent felt the Home Visitor respected their cultural/ethnic background;
- 93 percent felt the Home Visitor listened and understood them;
- 93 percent felt the Home Visitor had a positive attitude;
- 90 percent felt the Home Visitor had given them useful advice and suggestions; and
- 90 percent felt the Home Visitor helped them to see their strengths.

This feedback from the girls supports the dialogue in the field on what is appropriate gender-responsive programming. Specifically, experts argue that relationships and connections are essential in the healing process of girls and women (Covington & Bloom, 1999). Research has shown that girls and women learn and change in the context of relationships (Covington & Bloom, 1999; Prichard, 2000). The WINGS clients’ responses highlight the value of their Home Visitor and her role in their process of change.

The adults interviewed shared similar opinions about the Home Visitors. They described having a positive relationship with the Home Visitors and found them to be respectful, informative, and helpful. As with the girls, just over one-half of the adults felt the involvement of their family was useful. However, more of the adults than the girls had a hard time contacting the Home Visitor.
Three-quarters of the clients interviewed reported having been assigned a Probation Officer. However, slightly more than 40 percent met with their Probation Officer less than once per month and another quarter had never met with them at all. The primary reason for this difference in the number of contacts between the Probation Officers and the Home Visitors was that Probation’s standard procedure was to only assign an Officer to girls on formal probation. In addition, girls whose cases were counseled and closed were never assigned a Probation Officer and those on informal probation only had a preliminary meeting with a Probation Officer, which could be mistaken by a client as a standard assignment of a Probation Officer. There was a difference in opinion between the adults and the girls on the overall helpfulness of the Probation Officer, with the girls being more likely to report the Probation Officer was “very helpful,” compared to the adults.

Nearly nine out of ten of the adults interviewed had participated in at least the home visiting component of WINGS. In addition, 60 percent had participated in family conferencing and almost 40 percent had engaged in mother-daughter mediation. Only eight of the adults interviewed reported participating in family group counseling and four adults reported taking a parenting class. Besides the home visits and the family conferencing, which most often occurred during the home visits, very few adults had participated in other support services. This level and type of adult participation calls for further exploration, especially when compared to the staffs’ experience of the importance of family support and family issues to the girls’ success. It also supports staffs’ suggestion to have a separate Home Visitor or specialist for the parent to address their issues.

Using a four-point scale from “no” improvement to “much” improvement, WINGS girls provided valuable feedback on changes that they made while in the program. The issue identified the most and having the greatest change for the girls was their relationship with their parent/caregiver, with 90 percent of those with this type of issue reporting some type of improvement. School activities were also commonly cited as behaviors that needed change, specifically grades, attendance, and interest. Of the 25 clients who identified school grades as an issue, all but one said that they had experienced some degree of improvement. To a lesser degree, the girls felt that their attendance (19 of 24) and their interest in school (20 of 30) had also improved. In addition, girls reported positive changes in their choice of friends (21 of 25), their runaway behavior (11 of 14), and their drug (11 of 15) and alcohol (9 of 10) use. Some of the girls also noticed changes in their attitude and motivation level. For example, one girl stated that she was “more motivated to do things – go to school, do work, get along with people, and don’t start fights.”
In addition to the changes made thus far, almost two-thirds of the girls expressed that there were improvements they still wanted to make. Again, improving the relationship with their caregiver was one of their top priorities for change. This was coupled with a desire to make improvements in their school activities, including their grades and attendance. Some of the girls also expressed a desire to improve their attitude and emotional state.

Nearly all (95%) of the adults interviewed felt that their family had benefited from their participation in WINGS. The most common reason for this feeling was the positive change in their child’s behavior, attitude, or feelings of self-worth. Another benefit from participation in the program was the improvement in their relationship with their child. Specifically, the parents commented on how the relationship between the Home Visitor and their child helped bridge an existing communication gap. The following comment by a parent describing how her family has benefited from WINGS exemplified this: “My daughter (has benefited). The Home Visitor is like a big sister and (she) has had someone to talk to, which helped me understand (her). And (the Home Visitor) gave me parenting ideas to help communicate with (my daughter).”

When asked the same questions as the girls concerning the type and level of change in behavior, more of the adults than girls identified areas of needed change. Similar to the girls, the greatest level of improvement identified was in their relationship with the youth. The adults recognized improvement in the girls’ grades (29 of 33), interest in school (27 of 32), attendance (22 of 27), choice of friends (21 of 28), and runaway behavior (7 of 9). Interestingly, although the recognition of a problem with substance use was similar, the adults more often than the girls reported “much” improvement in a girl’s alcohol (60% versus 30%) and drug (71% versus 47%) use. This discrepancy raises the possibility of parental/guardian lack of awareness or denial of their child’s substance use.

Adults more often felt there was still improvement that could be made in the youth’s behavior. Of greatest concern was the need for improvement in the girl’s emotional well-being or attitude. Improvement in school activities was also seen as a priority, as well as the girl’s choice in friends and their relationship with the caregiver. There was also a slight difference in the adults’ and youths’ perceptions of change in the level of involvement by the adult in their school activities. One-third of the adults, compared to 23 percent of the youth, thought that they had become more involved in their child’s school activities while participating in WINGS.

How did clients and their families feel about the WINGS program and its particular components?

There was a shift from the girls’ initial impressions of WINGS after participating in the program. Over three-quarters of the girls felt either “great” or “good” about their involvement in the program and 89 percent thought WINGS had been helpful. The most notable reason for this was the information they received from the different groups and classes, which provided many with different choices. In particular, the girls’ group, the anger management classes, and the drug education group were all perceived by the girls to be helpful. Girls expressed an increased awareness of various issues, such as body image, drugs, birth control, and an appreciation for the group process. Several of the girls even noted their enjoyment interacting with and learning from other girls. The following comment from a client, describing the benefits of the
groups, captures this sentiment: “They talk about problems and it helps and makes it easier because there are other girls in it with the same problems as me. They talk about school and career things that helped me think about what I want to do when I grow up.”

The relationship with the Home Visitor also was a vital source of help, guidance, and support for the girls. Nine out of ten thought it was either “very” or “somewhat” helpful to them. This relationship was also the most influential component in providing a positive experience for the girls. The girls valued having an individual whom they could talk to, who could guide them, and who was there to support, rather than judge, them. One WINGS client commented, “What made the program positive and what I will miss is the Home Visitor, because she made me change a lot by talking to me, by doing things for me, and by never yelling at me.”

Between one-third and one-half of the girls participated in either individual or family counseling, mother-daughter mediation, or family conferencing. On average, three-quarters of those interviewed found these services to be “very” or “somewhat” helpful, with individual counseling standing out as being the most helpful of the mental health interventions (85%).

In addition to these core components, the majority of girls who received any school advocacy assistance found it to be helpful and all of the girls liked the recreational activities. In support of the staff’s concerns about transportation, both the girls and adults found the assistance with transportation to be valuable. Overall, the girls’ experience with WINGS was positive and they felt that they had received either all (79%) or some (16%) of the services that they needed.

The adults found most of the components helpful to their families. The majority felt that they were either receiving all (70%) or some (25%) of the services they needed. A similar percentage thought the focus on gender-specific services was helpful. In concert with the girls, the adults saw the home visits and groups as very valuable. Again, the role and influence the Home Visitor had in their child’s life was perceived to be very effective in changing their child’s behavior, attitude, and relationship with the caregiver. As one parent shared, “The individual attention given by the Home Visitor went above and beyond the call of duty. The Home Visitor turned me back on to connecting at the family group. It was very positive.” The various groups also were seen as valuable by most of the parents.

The adults, more often than the girls, were likely to find value in the family mental health and mediation components of the program. They especially liked the mother-daughter mediation and the individual counseling that their child had received. As with the girls, the adults recognized the value of the school advocacy and transportation assistance and, overall, they too had a positive experience with WINGS. In addition to the staffs’ assistance, the noticeable change in their child’s behavior and attitude, as well as the improvement in their relationship with their child, were the most often cited reasons for this feeling. One parent shared that “my daughter is more involved in school and she now thinks about her future.”

For those clients whose experience with WINGS was not helpful or less than positive (12% to 19%), the reasons varied. For some of the girls, it was a conflict with their Home Visitor that tainted the experience and, for others, it was the inability of the program to meet their needs. The adults who were dissatisfied with WINGS shared the view that the program was unable to address the particular needs of their child, especially the mental health needs. Several suggested that additional counseling services were needed for their child.
What suggestions did clients and family members have for program improvement?

Although the overall consensus was that WINGS was a helpful program, both the girls and adults had suggestions for areas of improvement. One of the more common suggestions by the girls was to better meet the unique needs of the client, including services to address their mental health and substance abuse needs. Other suggestions included better organization of the groups, assistance with transportation, more cultural sensitivity, and increased recreational activities. The most common recommendation from the adults was to involve them more in the services. They also requested that services be closer and at more convenient times, specifically not during peak traffic hours. Some of the adults suggested more involvement by the Probation Officer and also echoed some of the girls’ suggestions for more flexibility or variety in the services to better meet the unique needs of clients.
CLIENT SURVEYS

Were clients more knowledgeable about community resources after program participation?

Both youth and adults who received WINGS services were aware of a greater number of community resources after program participation, compared to before. As Figure 5.3 shows, youth, on average, were aware of 14.4 resources at program intake, compared to 18.6 at exit. Adults’ knowledge also increased, from 14.8 resources at intake to 17.3 at exit. In addition, the adult clients also were more likely to report that they had utilized these resources at exit (92%), compared to intake (76%) (not shown).

Figure 5.3
CLIENT KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES AT INTAKE AND EXIT
WINGS Juvenile and Adult Client Surveys, April 2000 – February 2003
Was family communication improved after WINGS participation?

According to client feedback, WINGS participation may be related to positive change in family communication. As Figure 5.4 shows, a greater percentage of both the juveniles and adults reported having “very good” or “good” communication with each other at program exit (61% and 67%), compared to program intake (52% and 57%). Feedback during client interviews that were conducted support this finding. For example, one client said, “My attitude has been changing. I am able to sit down and talk. I always have a positive attitude.”

**Figure 5.4**
**JUVENILE AND ADULT CLIENTS REPORTING “VERY GOOD” OR “GOOD” COMMUNICATION**
WINGS Juvenile and Adult Client Surveys, April 2000 – February 2003

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included.
Were WINGS clients satisfied with the services they received?

WINGS clients were very positive about their experience in the WINGS program. Overall, 94 percent of juveniles reported they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied,” the highest ratings on a five-point scale, with WINGS services. Adults shared these feelings with the juveniles, with 88 percent being “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the services they received. In addition, 93 percent of juveniles and 97 percent of adults said that if a friend was having similar problems, they would refer her to the program (not shown). Some quotes from client interviews demonstrate the strong feelings many clients had about this program. For example, a juvenile client described WINGS as a “very good program” and said that “I don’t know where or how I would be without it.” Similarly, one adult client described WINGS as a “very worthwhile program that should be recommended by the courts because it makes a big difference.”

Juveniles and adults also reported that many of the project components were “very” or “somewhat” helpful, the highest ratings on a five-point scale. As Table 5.5 shows, four out of five clients and parents were satisfied with the assistance they received through the home visits, counseling, the girls’ groups, and daily life group. In addition, two-thirds or more also found school services, mother/daughter mediation, anger management, alcohol and drug services, and after-school services as helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Juveniles</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Group</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Life Group</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Services</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Drug Services</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/Daughter Mediation</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger Management</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-School Services</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Services</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Education</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>44-160</td>
<td>34-145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Cases with missing information not included

The results from the client interviews showed much praise for the program staff and their dedication and hard work as a team. For example, one parent said that WINGS is “a team working with you - not just one person, so you have a lot more resources.” Another felt appreciative of the “patience and understanding of the staff” and the fact that “they don’t judge you.”
How were the Multi-Disciplinary Teams at Each of the Sites Staffed?

Since program inception, each of the WINGS sites maintained a talented team of staff and volunteers to meet the varied needs of their clients. Key staff roles included Home Visitors, Team Leaders, Program Assistants, Probation Officers, and Specialists. A general description of each of their roles and responsibilities is explained below.

- **Home Visitor**: The Home Visitor position was central to the WINGS program model. The role of the Home Visitor was to oversee and implement the girl’s treatment plan. One of her primary responsibilities was the building of a healthy, trusting, and supportive relationship with the youth, which functioned as the foundation for change. The Home Visitor traveled to where the girl and her family were and assisted in connecting them to services in their community. The maximum caseload for a Home Visitor was 15.

- **Team Leader**: The Team Leader provided supervision and direct oversight for the program. This included facilitating the MDT meetings, reviewing case files and plans, and maintaining the partnership with Probation. In some instances, the Team Leader assumed the role of a Mental Health Specialist and provided direct services to the girls.

- **Program Assistant**: The Program Assistant was responsible for the management of the MIS data system. It was her responsibility to coordinate data collection, enter it into the database, and transfer the data to Probation and the evaluator. The Program Assistant also assisted in other administrative tasks as needed at the site.

- **Probation Officer**: The Probation Officer selected for this special assignment supervised WINGS girls who were wards of the court. The Probation Officers were considered part of the MDTs and provided valuable information about the criminal justice system and the individual case. In some regions, the Probation Officer and Home Visitor visited the girls together and, in other regions, their interactions with the girls were separate. The maximum caseload for a Probation Officer was 25, one-half of the normal Probation caseload.

- **Specialist**: The Specialist provided expertise in gender-related areas to help guide a girl’s treatment plan and educate staff on gender-responsive services. The types of specialists varied according to the need of each site and a detailed list is provided in Table 5.6. The Specialist also provided services to the girls and their families, in the form of counseling, parenting classes, and alcohol and other drug services.

The level of staffing at each of the sites was fairly constant over the course of the project, except during the fourth year, when programs had to decrease their staffing levels due to decreased funding. Before these funding cuts, each program was assigned two Probation Officers and had one Team Leader, except for Central, which had two because of their larger size. The average number of Home Visitors varied before the fourth year among the sites, with Central having eight, North six, South five, and East four. During the last year, none of the programs had a Gender Specialist, Health Educator, Peer or Parent Advocate, and only one
retained the services of a part-time Therapist and a Vocational Specialist. To help supplement regular staff positions, each of the sites relied upon interns. Most often these were undergraduate and graduate students from the local colleges.

Table 5.6 shows the types of positions each of the sites had, as well as how many individuals were in these positions between 2000 and 2003. At one time or other, each of the sites employed an Administrator, Administrative Support, Home Visitors, Peer Advocates, a Team Leader, and a Victimization Specialist. The East region also had a Juvenile and Gender Specialist and a nurse on their MDTs. Two sites (East and South) incorporated a Vocational Specialist and had Parent Advocates on their team.

### Table 5.6
**WINGS SERVICE PROVIDER STAFFING**
Service Provider Records, April 2000 – June 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Drug Specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Outreach/Advocate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Coordinator/Facilitator</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Educator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visitor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intern</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Advocate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Educator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Advocate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization Specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff turnover was one of the identified challenges of WINGS. Overall, WINGS staff were retained, on average, from one year to one year and one-half. The average Home Visitor was employed with the program for slightly longer than one year (14.4 months), while the Team Leader, Probation Officer, and Specialist were all with WINGS for about one year and one-half (17.0, 18.3 and 18.4 months, respectively). These lengths of employment support the staffs’ suggestion to provide trainings cyclically, preferably on a yearly basis.

Figure 5.5
SERVICE PROVIDER STAFF AVERAGE LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT IN MONTHS
Service Provider Records, April 2000 – June 2003
SUMMARY

Data were collected for the process evaluation through a variety of methods, including staff and client interviews, service provider and client surveys, and program files. Results presented in this chapter reveal that clients referred to the program who are on formal and informal probation were most likely to be engaged, but there was no difference in completion rates of those who were engaged. Factors related to successful completion included risk and protective factors in the family, peer, individual, and educational domain of the SDRRC assessment. Successful clients completed a high percentage of recommended services. These often included life skills, crisis intervention, and girls' group. Identifying the characteristics of those unable to complete the program assisted staff in identifying those clients upfront and channeling them into more appropriate services that matched their level of need.

Provider and Probation staff were committed to their collaboration and the necessity of providing gender-responsive services and were willing to offer suggestions regarding ways to further strengthen the program. Other service providers in the community also placed great value in WINGS’ mission to provide gender-specific services. Feedback from clients and adults revealed a high level of satisfaction with the program, staff, and the positive impact the program had on their lives. The staffing of WINGS was substantially affected by funding cuts that occurred in June 2002, with each program having to eliminate and reduce the hours of the Home Visitors, Team Leaders, and Specialists.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Challenge II Working to Insure and Nurture Girls’ Success (WINGS) project, process and impact evaluations were conducted. The results from this research are summarized here. In addition, research limitations, recommendations for future research, and recommendations for the project are discussed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Integration of Research Findings

WINGS, which was implemented and managed as an independent Probation Department program between 1999 and 2003, was the first gender-responsive program of its kind in San Diego County. Based upon extensive research on the needs of girls, WINGS targeted girls at risk of continued involvement in the juvenile justice system. As part of WINGS, gender-specific services, including home visits and center-based activities, were provided to clients and their families by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) that included service providers and Probation Officers. Funding cut-backs in 2002 led to program reorganization that included key program components being incorporated into the Community Assessment Team (CAT) program.

WINGS brought research into practice. When implemented in San Diego County, the program was designed and succeeded in providing services to girls in their communities that were strength-based, gender-responsive, and based upon relationships through the provision of home visits. Utilizing an MDT was a key component and results from the process evaluation suggest that program staff supported the importance of different disciplines working together to meet the needs of clients. However, staff also were cognizant of the need for constant coordination and communication to make this partnership effective. In addition, they also voiced the need for ongoing training, especially in positions with high staff turnover.

Clients who participated in the WINGS program represented varied ethnic backgrounds and were most likely to have had their case counseled and closed. Many of the clients were not at their appropriate grade level at intake and supplemental analyses revealed that many had experienced serious trauma in their lives. Common risk factors included having delinquent friends, poor parental relations, and doing poorly in school. Not surprisingly, clients mandated to participate were more likely to be engaged. Program staff also felt that being on probation gave program staff leverage to enforce consequences. However, once engaged, counseled and closed case clients were equally likely to successfully complete WINGS. Factors related to success
included valuing fairness and honesty, having prosocial influences, and participating in constructive activities. Despite strict eligibility criteria, a number of girls entered the program with mental health and substance use needs that exceeded the ability of the program to meet them. In addition, engaging parent participation and providing reliable transportation were ongoing challenges.

Findings from the impact evaluation showed that the program increased successful clients’ resiliency, primarily through increasing their protective factors, rather than decreasing risk factors. Increased resiliency was not directly related to decreased delinquency or criminal activity, despite these initial expectations. This pattern of results was not surprising, however, when one considers that traditional criminal justice measures may not be most appropriate for girls and that there were generally low rates of recidivism for girls who participated in WINGS, as well as those in the comparison group. Program participation appeared to more strongly affect school performance, with successful WINGS girls having better attendance and grades during their period of involvement. However, because this effect did not continue during the follow-up periods, the need for after-care services was identified.

Limitations of Research

A number of limitations should be considered with regard this research.

- Inconsistent Documentation: As noted earlier in the report, more reliable information was available for clients in the WINGS program and less was available for the comparison group. In many instances, this lack of consistency was related to the fact that counseled and closed and informal probation cases had very limited contact with their Probation Officer. Because of this, the number of cases available for analyses was small for some of the variables tracked, which limits reliability and generalizability. In addition, it is possible that the sample for whom information was available, was biased. For instance, a client’s poor school attendance may be documented, while average or acceptable attendance is not.

- Self-Selection After Randomization: When the evaluation protocol was initially created, staff believed that, despite the voluntary nature of the program for counseled and closed cases, participation would be high. As noted earlier, this was not the case, and many girls in this category were not engaged in the program. Because this self-selection occurred after randomization, it is possible that the two groups (WINGS and comparison) differed in some consistent way.

- Variation Across Program Sites: Program staff originally envisioned that program flexibility was desirable in that the needs of particular communities could best be addressed. However, these inconsistencies could affect evaluation results because program staff used various definitions of success and could have interpreted different variables in different ways.
Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations are offered to other researchers involved in similar evaluation research projects.

- **Work with Program Staff to Ensure Proper Documentation:** The researchers for this project learned from previous evaluations the importance of working with staff early on. Because the program-research partnership was established at the beginning of the project, the researchers had a say in the design of the data documentation system and were able to speak to the need for operational definitions of key concepts. This partnership also was essential in documenting program implementation.

- **Allow Project Start-Up Time:** Approximately 6 months passed between program implementation and randomization of the first set of clients and around 12 months between implementation and the second randomization. Having this start-up time allowed program staff time to establish protocol and also get used to collecting client data. In addition, as our results showed, second sample clients were more likely to be engaged, which demonstrated that the program matured over time. This finding may have been missed if randomization had started immediately.

- **Designate Program Staff Person to Fulfill Data Responsibilities:** Adequate documentation would not have occurred if a program staff person had not been dedicated to fulfill this responsibility. Although this is not always possible, it is important to attempt to allocate resources in this direction because documentation of staff efforts and subsequent positive results is necessary to show what is being accomplished.

- **Use Multiple Measures:** Criminal activity measures were not the most sensitive to measure change among this population, but were the primary ones used due to the project's participation in a cross-site evaluation. More appropriate measures when working with girls include family relationships, acknowledgment of problems, and willingness to make positive change. Therefore, it is important to be cognizant of additional ways that positive change can be measured, including protective and risk factors.

Recommendations for Future of the Program

The following recommendations are based upon the results of the process and impact evaluation. However, because of funding limitations, the researchers are aware that some of these may be difficult to implement.

- **Ensure Cross-Site Consistency:** As WINGS matured, it appeared that a greater level of consistency across the sites would be appropriate. As services continue to be offered in different regions of the County, Probation should continue to work with the providers in ensuring consistent service provision that also meets the individual needs of each client.
- Provide After-Care Services: Because relationships are very important to girls, it appeared that service completion was not always an easy transition for the clients. Based upon this knowledge, it would be beneficial if some type of standardized after-care services could be provided or that mentor assignment could be incorporated as part of treatment services and continued after formal participation is completed.

- Utilize Client Assessments: The use of standardized assessments is most helpful when they are utilized in the case planning process. Probation is encouraged to work with service providers in ensuring that the methods associated with administering these assessments are valid (i.e., done after enough time has passed for the service provider to make a proper assessment), not redundant, and viewed as a practical tool in guiding treatment.

- Make Participation Mandatory for all Clients: Based upon research results showing that program engagement is highly affected by the mandatory nature of the program, but that once engaged, there is little difference in completion rates, we recommend that the program be mandatory for all eligible girls. Eligible clients, regardless of engagement, demonstrated needs that could be addressed through program participation, and feedback from program staff suggests that participation is enhanced when lack of compliance results in some negative consequence.

- Identify and Target Appropriate Clients: Program clients who were unsuccessful in the WINGS program had a greater number of risk factors than those who were successful. In addition, feedback from staff indicated that many girls had mental health and substance use needs that exceeded program capabilities. As resources become more limited, it is even more important to target appropriate clients who can benefit the most from these gender-responsive services.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION
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INTRODUCTION

This final chapter concludes the report with a discussion of what did and didn’t work, problems that were encountered, future plans for the project, and recommendations for other counties.

WHAT WE FOUND THAT WORKED

Multi-Disciplinary Teams

“I believe the Multi-Disciplinary Team aspect worked best for these girls receiving WINGS services. The Home Visitors were able to receive considerable support and information that they could then use to better provide services to the clients without having to spend hours and hours researching information and resources.”

- Staff member on what worked best

Using a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach that brings together professionals from a variety of fields to guide a client’s treatment was essential to the provision of comprehensive services. Staff overwhelmingly praised the value of having input from the different individuals on the team to assess and provide input on a girl’s treatment. The MDTs typically included Home Visitors, Specialists, Team Leaders, community members, and the Probation Officer. This team approach aided in the coordination of services, ensured that everyone interacting with the client had the same information, and provided needed support to the Home Visitors. The MDTs also maximized resources, as one Specialist could provide consultation for all of the program’s clients with those particular needs. Essential to a successful MDT is a commitment by all members to attend to and stay focused on addressing the client’s needs as a team.

Home Visits and Home Visitors

“They brought the service directly into the home on a timely basis and were able to develop relationships with the clients. This relationship was the crux of the program.”

- Staff member on what worked best

Providing services that were home-based and family-centered was the crux of the WINGS program. WINGS incorporated the “Best Practice” model of offering services that were accessible and located in a client’s community. By going to the client’s home, seeing where they live, going to their school, and meeting their family, teachers, and friends, the Home Visitor
gained insights to the client’s world that would otherwise be missed in an office setting. This approach also supported the development of a relationship between the Home Visitor, the girls, and their families.

The Home Visitor relationship was the cornerstone of the gender-responsive services offered through WINGS. Having an adult who was close in age to the girl helped nurture trust and safety. This relationship was not only supportive of the girl, but was also a vehicle for change.

**Center-Based Services**

“A second very important aspect was the blending of home-based, individual work with center-based, group/peer activities. Either one alone would not render the benefits that the two intervention modalities were able to achieve. “

- Staff member on what worked best

Complementing the home visits were an array of center-based services, based upon a gender-responsive curriculum. The girls’ group, in particular, garnered the most recognition by staff. These girl-only groups were based upon an educational model and covered such topics as body image, relationships, gang issues, and life skills. In addition to the educational information, these groups provided a forum for girls to interact with one another in a positive and supportive setting, which was a new experience for many of them.

**Regionally-Based Services**

Having agencies regionally-based throughout San Diego permitted minors and their families to have available services within their communities. In addition, once the client completed the program, this proximity facilitated access to the local community-based organizations (CBOs) when other issues arose.

**Offering Both Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug-Related Services**

The prevalence of trauma in many of these girls’ lives, coupled with the level of alcohol and drug use, warranted specialized treatment services to address these needs. Once a Home Visitor established a level of trust, she was allowed access into the lives of the girls and their families, which often revealed a deeper layer of issues and needs. However, it was common that the level of intervention exceeded the scope of experience of the Home Visitor. It was in these situations that the Specialist played a crucial role in helping the Home Visitor assess the situation and devise an appropriate action plan. This level of expertise, along with the availability of affordable and accessible counseling and treatment services, was necessary to meet the range of needs of the clients and their families. Being able to go beyond the presenting issues and conduct secondary level assessments, as well as offer the appropriate services, is necessary in order to fully address the diverse needs of this population.
To identify those clients who might need immediate attention, staff created a brief crisis intervention assessment to be administered at first contact. This procedure offered a safeguard for those clients whose needs could not wait until the next home visit.

**Training on Gender-Responsive Services**

Probation assumed the lead in providing extensive training during the first two years of the project. The trainings established the foundation for a gender-responsive program philosophy. Those trainings that spoke directly to the needs of the girls were highly valued by staff. This included inviting experts in the field to teach about the needs of girls, their development, and the guidelines for gender-responsive programming. Additional training topics included substance abuse issues, engaging difficult clients, the probation system, and mental health issues. With the natural attrition of staff, cyclical trainings would have been valuable. In addition, some staff suggested having more trainings on how to work with the higher-risk girls and their families. The trainings also were a means to raise awareness in the community about the need for and definition of gender-responsive programming.

**Building Partnerships and Collaborating on Service Provision**

“The Probation Officers and Home Visitors asked for suggestions from each other, and listened to each other as they shared information about their own interventions and their own disciplines. The Home Visitors and Specialists did not try to assume the role of the Probation Officers (and vice versa), but each appreciated that the other performed their specific role, consistently communicating with each other.”

- Staff member’s final thoughts on WINGS

Establishing partnerships and collaborating on service delivery were necessary to maximize the limited resources in the community. It was through these alliances that WINGS was able to provide a rich array of services to clients and draw on the diversity of experiences and expertise of numerous professionals in the field. These relationships occurred on many levels, as WINGS providers collaborated across the regions, among agencies in their community, and with Probation. The collaboration among the regions is discussed in the next section. The success of prior collaborative work was beneficial to WINGS. The providers were able to take advantage of those partnerships already established in their community with other agencies. Drawing on the existing services in the community, as well as those services in their larger agency, was an excellent way to increase the scope of resources available to clients.

The partnership between Probation and CBOs also was a valuable asset to WINGS. This relationship required a melding of two perspectives that at times could be at odds with each other. Building this partnership took a concerted effort on the part of the social service provider and the Probation Officer. It required individuals who were flexible and willing to embrace a different approach to working with this population. The relationship also gained by having the same individuals work on the same team over a period of time, which fostered trust and understanding of each other’s role. When successful, everyone on the team recognized the value and benefit working together brought to the client. The success of each of these
partnerships varied. However, underlying all of them was the need for clear communication, the focus on similar goals, and respect for each other’s roles.

Matching the Appropriate Clients with the Ability of the Program

Key to a successful intervention is the accurate assessment of a client’s need and the delivery of targeted services. In times of limited resources, the most effective use of program dollars is to target the correct clientele. Using an effective assessment is a useful way to do this.

Staff also favored working with those clients that were more involved with Probation to help with the level of motivation to participate in the program. The leverage provided by the Probation Officer, when used in concert with the team, was viewed as a very useful treatment tool.

Attention to Information Management

WINGS required an extensive amount of documentation, including case files, assessments, intake and exit information, customer satisfaction surveys, and monthly statistics. Having a standardized data system and uniform case files improved the effectiveness of managing all the data. This type of organized system made the data immediately available for staff to use in their work and accessible for analysis. Essential to maintaining this system was early and frequent quality control of the case files and databases and having one dedicated staff member at each program site who was in charge of the system.

WHAT DIDN’T WORK

Voluntary Participation in the Program

At program onset, the assumption was that clients and their families would be open to the specialized services offered by WINGS. What quickly became apparent was that those clients who had no consequences attached to their involvement were less likely to engage in services. This was especially true for status and counseled and closed cases. The reason for not wanting to engage may have differed for each group. Girls with a status offense had issues that could have been addressed by WINGS services; however, those issues also prevented them from engaging in services. Both program staff and Probation Officers were in agreement that this group of girls was a particular challenge and, without a Probation consequence, was not appropriate for WINGS. The counseled and closed cases were often first-time offenders and were arrested for lower-level offenses. In many of these cases, the higher-end services offered by WINGS exceeded the needs of the girls.
**Lack of Resources for the Intensive Mental Health and/or Substance Abuse Needs of Clients**

“Another problem was the substance abuse component. Although there was a provision requiring a Specialist, the more important consideration of requiring each program to have a female substance abuse program would have been more important. “

- Staff member on what didn’t work

WINGS cast a broad net in its referral process. Although efforts were made to screen out the high-end girls by limiting the number of adjudications, a percentage of girls were accepted into the program who had needs that exceeded the level of intervention provided by WINGS. WINGS was not designed to provide psychiatric and intensive mental health services, nor were these services available through the collaborative agencies. The demand for mental health services in the region exceeds the available resources and WINGS was able to identify clients in need, but unable to obtain services for them. This was a point of frustration and concern for the providers and Probation.

In addition, WINGS was limited in its capacity to offer alcohol and other drugs (AOD) services. Not all of the regions had a staff member devoted to AOD issues. In addition, when an agency had to refer a WINGS girl to an outside AOD program, they could not guarantee the treatment services would be gender-responsive. Often the groups were co-ed. The need for AOD service outstretched the resources of the WINGS providers and the lack of gender-responsive services in the broader youth community compromised the treatment available to the girls.

These problems were only compounded when members of a girl’s family also had psychiatric and substance abuse issues. Families dealing with these issues greatly intensified the work for the Home Visitors and teams. Not only did the family not have to address their personal issues, their issues directly impacted the involvement of the girls in the program.

**Lack of Standardization and Uniformity Across Regions**

“There was too much leeway given for the model. Each region interpreted the program in slightly different ways.”

- Staff member on problems with WINGS

WINGS services were provided by established community providers in that region. The goal of the regional collaboration of WINGS was to meet the unique needs of each community, while holding true to the general guidelines of gender-responsive services. In hindsight, a little less flexibility and a little more uniform application of the guidelines would have helped ensure the fidelity of a gender-responsive program. The range of interpretation of the core elements diluted the strength of the program in some regions, as the level and quality of service varied. For instance, in one region, successful completion of the girls’ group portion of the program was participation in four groups, whereas, in another region, it was participation in ten groups. There was no means to assess what “successful” completion meant to each region or to provide any type of quality control. Consistent communication, written curricula, and routine monitoring would benefit this type of collaboration.
PROBLEMS THAT WE ENCOUNTERED

Engaging the Family in the Process

Working with the client within the context of her family was seen as a valuable approach to treatment. The family could be a helpful resource or a troubling obstacle to a client’s treatment. For various reasons, engaging the family in the treatment was a constant challenge. Tactics to mitigate these challenges included involving the families from the onset, establishing trust, “selling” the program in a way that highlights how the clients will benefit, and providing services that would address their specific needs. Devoting more staff and program resources to engage the family might strengthen these efforts to improve the level of participation.

Need for More Reliable Transportation

Although funds were available to each agency to provide transportation, the actual demand and associated staff time were an obstacle. Often, the burden to transport clients fell upon the Home Visitor. This was a challenge because of the large geographical area that they covered and the number of youth that they were responsible for picking up and bringing home. It was not uncommon for staff to have to schedule several hours in a shift for transportation. Youth were provided bus passes, but this was not a useful option for those that lived in dangerous neighborhoods, were too young to ride the bus alone, or who were not very motivated to participate. The soft nature of the funds prohibited an agency from making the investment in a van, as they would not be able to sustain it after the grant period. Provision of a staff member and vehicle devoted solely to the transporting of clients would free up the Home Visitor’s time and assist in clients attending the program. It should be noted that the unexpected benefit of transporting clients was the conversations that occurred in the car. The distraction of driving seemed to offer a comfortable setting for the girls to be open with their thoughts.

Provision of After-Care Services

The research stresses the importance of healthy relationships in a girl’s development and healing. Because close bonds were formed between the Home Visitor and the youth, care was needed to end the relationship in a manner that did not re-injure the youth. Linking girls to community resources was one way to ease this transition and providing after-care services was another means. Theoretically, a girl who requested to continue services after her graduation would be allowed to do so through the same provider. These services would not include home visitation, but could include participation in the girls’ group, counseling, or other center-based activities. However, it was never clear how and to what extent these services were being delivered, as each program implemented this component differently. It would have been beneficial to establish a standard protocol and tracking system for after-care services at the beginning of program implementation.
Unexpected Staff Turnover

The Home Visitor position was typically an entry-level position for college graduates going into the field of social work. As such, these positions had a high turnover rate as the Home Visitors moved on in their careers. This frequency of staff changes was not anticipated at the beginning of the program. Adjustments had to be made to address the loss of information on the clients, the loss of knowledge from trainings, and the difficulty in filling these positions when a staff member left. Cyclical training, clear transition plans, and, when possible, cross-over visits with the new Home Visitor would help with this issue.

Reduced Challenge II Grant Funding

The Governor’s revision to the FY 2002/2003 State Budget eliminated the fourth year of funding for WINGS. Although not at the same level, the Chief Probation Officers and the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council worked diligently to secure other funds for the fourth year. These reduced funds, coupled with the ending of the fourth year with no new funds in sight, had an impact on the number and type of youth served, as well as the staffing of the program. Going into its fourth year of service, WINGS was still a new program, but was starting to show the maturity that comes with a few years of operation. The gender-responsive philosophy was no longer a new concept in the community, Probation and providers were communicating more effectively and had better working relationships, the providers were more aware of the girls’ needs, and the program components were refined. With the reduced funds and uncertainty of additional money in the future, programs started to reduce their personnel, decrease the amount of services available, stretch the resources they had, and started to prepare for the end of WINGS. Although Probation embraced the importance of gender-responsive services and creatively came up with a plan to modify the program, running the program on soft money was a challenge in the final year.

FUTURE PLANS FOR THE PROGRAM

The greatest impact on the future of WINGS was the lack of funding to sustain the program at the capacity at which it was designed and implemented. Faced with challenging decisions, Probation was able to preserve WINGS in a modified form by combining it with another juvenile justice program, the Community Assessment Team (CAT) program. Based in the community and operated by many of the same provider agencies that helped develop WINGS, CATs is a front-end program that provides prevention and early intervention services to youth and their families. The program design is similar to WINGS, providing wrap-around services to families with school age children who are at risk for involvement or further involvement in the juvenile justice system. Home-based services are available and client treatment is guided by strength assessments. An MDT, consisting of a Probation Officer and CBO staff, also is used in structuring the interventions for youth. Because of these program changes, the eligibility requirements also have been modified. Specifically, only formal probation cases will be screened and youth who have extensive histories of violence, gang involvement, or drug involvement, or a psychiatric diagnosis, will be excluded.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER COUNTIES CONSIDERING A SIMILAR PROJECT

Identify Local Service Gaps

During the Local Action Plan development process, key leaders in the community were brought together as the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) to identify strengths and weaknesses in the community and to identify local service gaps. These gaps were prioritized, allowing the program to target specific areas of greatest need. Other programs are encouraged to spend adequate time prior to program implementation, identifying and prioritizing gaps in service so that limited resources can be most appropriately allocated.

Establish Consistent Meeting Schedules

By establishing collaborative partnership meetings and including them as part of the contracts, all parties are able to meet on a regular basis to discuss program service delivery, areas of concern, and problematic events. The result is a processing forum that works together to coordinate change and/or establish policy and procedures.

Have Contracts in Place Prior to Program Implementation

All Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and contracts should be negotiated, signed, and in place at the time of program implementation. Contracts should be realistic, allow for competitive salaries for professionals, and include merit increases. If contract staff are underpaid, turnover will be high, which will result in a disruption of services.

Clearly Define Staffing Needs

Anticipate staffing needs to ensure the infrastructure necessary to support a large grant project. In addition, be realistic about the level of resources (e.g., spacing, computers, vehicles) necessary to adequately run the program. Establish and prioritize support needs in advance of program implementation. Plan for contract monitoring. Create a team composed of an Analyst dedicated to the program and staff for fiscal support, operations support, and case management. Plan for employee turnover, keeping in mind that employees with strong skills will promote out quickly. Establish appropriate staff-to-client ratios and anticipate what services these staff will be providing to the youth.

Secure Flexible Funding

Set aside a flexible funding account, or wrap-around funds, which consist of a dedicated funding source for meeting the needs of all program participants. These funds can be used to provide concrete services for families in need. The services may include emergency food, transportation, and housing to help stabilize families and facilitate their participation.
Establish Data Collection Methods

Identify the manner in which data are to be collected and the software in which it will be entered. Anticipate the size of the program and the numerous items collected. Information needs should take into account that data needed for case management is often different from data needed to assess outcomes.

Determine Specific Program Graduation Requirements

Initially, WINGS contracts specified the types of groups each of the regional providers were required to complete. However, graduation requirements were not specified and each of the four regions was substantially different. A recommendation would be to indicate what specific requirements determine what a successful graduation is and include this in contracts. This would assist in establishing uniformity across the sites and provide a clear picture as to what the clients need to complete and the services providers know what to budget for.
REFERENCES


