

*From
Corrections to
Connections:
Working
-With-
Girls*



An AMICUS Program

*A Newsletter
Serving
Individuals
Working with
Female Juvenile
Offenders*

Fall 2006

Issue 4

Dear Colleagues,

In this issue, you will find many updates on our RADIUS programs, including evaluation results and information on new grant endeavors. The highlight this month is Body Image. Enjoy!

- RADIUS Staff

Program Name Change for AMICUS Girls' Restorative Justice Program

In an effort to have the AMICUS Girls Programming in Duluth, MN and St. Paul, MN be viewed as a single unit within AMICUS, AMICUS began working with a marketing company to find a name specific to our girls programs that reflects the type of work that we do.

The name that was chosen is: **RADIUS**. The Rationale: The radius of a circle is the distance from the center to the outer edge. Through the AMICUS circle, and all the other aspects of the program, a young person begins to radiate from her own center to the many places in her life that need healing and restoration. By helping girls get in touch with themselves, AMICUS points them back into their lives so they can take a more positive direction.

RADIUS has recently expanded from its current residential-based program in Duluth and its community-based effort in St. Paul to include two new programs: a JDC To Community program in St. Paul and a education and training effort on girls' needs and best practices. Read on for more details on these exciting new efforts!

RADIUS-Ramsey has launched a new detention-based program!

The new RADIUS-JDC program was created as a collaborative effort between AMICUS, Ramsey County Juvenile Detention, and Ramsey County Juvenile Probation to offer Ramsey County Community Corrections a female residential program for girls on probation. The program was created out of a need for treatment programming for girls, specifically in the metro area. Girls who are court-ordered to treatment programs outside of the metro area often struggle to maintain contact with their families while in placement. It is also difficult to establish positive, supportive community connections when placement is hours away. The program provides an opportunity for the girls to collaborate with adults, family, and support people to define her needs and goals and work to make changes in her life.

The RADIUS-JDC program for girls includes a 30-45 day stay in the Juvenile Detention Center, and 60 days involvement after the girl returns to living in the community. The entire program lasts for 90-105 days, depending on the amount of time spent in detention. Following the RADIUS philosophy, the program is holistic in nature, working with the girls in all areas of their lives. The girls participate in weekly psycho-educational groups, restorative justice circles, and one on one counseling, and receive professional mentorship from RADIUS staff. Program capacity in the JDC is 8 girls.

Highlight: Body Image

There is no question that the media and our United States culture does not always support and encourage healthy behaviors and positive images in our youth. Specifically, girls and women are often targets of stereotypes and unrealistic expectations on how we should look, act, and feel. These messages received by family members, peers, community, and society affect how girls feel about their bodies. For example, Schreiber et. Al (1996) found that in their study of 2379 African-American and Caucasian 9 and 10 year olds, 40% of the girls in both categories reported wanting to lose weight. This is only the beginning! As girls reach their teen years, the pressure to look and be a certain way increases. It is often difficult as parents, caretakers, and professionals working with teen girls to know exactly how to help with this issue and encourage girls to feel good in their skin. Here are a few resources to help get adults started in communicating with teens in a positive way about their body, helping teens to make good eating and exercise choices, and teaching teens about the impact of the media and the unrealistic expectations it often portrays.

About-Face

About-Face promotes positive self-esteem in girls and women of all ages, sizes, races and backgrounds through a spirited approach to media education, outreach and activism. The web site offers galleries of advertisements that are classified as “winners”, i.e. promote positive body image in women and girls and those classified as “losers”, i.e. promote negative body image and stereotypes in women and girls. The site also offers opportunities to share your voice, and tips and resources to empower yourself and empower others.
<http://www.about-face.org>

I'm, Like, So Fat! By: Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, PhD

This book is for parents and other adults and gives practical information on how to help teens make healthy choices about eating and exercise. The book discusses the influences on our teens around body image, who can be a support, and gives suggestions about talking to teens about body image issues. It also gives suggestions on what teens should be eating. The book is well written, provides some easy at home worksheets to fill out, and encourages us to look at ourselves and what we communicate to teens about body image by what we say and do.

Body Wars: Making Peace with Women's Bodies By: Margo Maine, PhD

This book focuses on issues such as dieting consciousness, concepts of beauty, advertising, plastic surgery, etc. that impact the level of comfort women feel with their bodies.

Food & Mood By: Elizabeth Somer, M.A., R.D.

This book describes how what you eat affects how you feel, think, act, and sleep. It is useful in evaluating food choices and viewing their impact on the body and mind.

Outcomes RADIUS-Community

Evaluation is very important for determining the success of a program. We are excited to share the evaluation outcomes from 2004 and 2005 based on our RADIUS-Community program in Ramsey County, which provides individual counseling and psychoeducational groups around issues such as grief, trauma, relationships, self-esteem, and self-empowerment. Restorative Justice Circles are also offered. The goal of this program is to help girls on probation remain at home and law-abiding, as well as have the opportunity to heal and grow as an individual. We give girls the opportunity to give us feedback on how RADIUS-Ramsey has impacted their lives. Here are a few of the comments girls have written to us:

- "I learned I can be in a bad position but I can get through it and learn about it, learn a lesson".
- "I learned it is better to deal with things than to just hold it all in".
- "Group was helpful because I was able to express my feelings/emotions with my peers".
- "I learned that I am important and girls are not that bad".

RADIUS-Ramsey had 49 participants in our community program in 2005.

- 86% of girls successfully discharged from the program in 2005 were not returned to long-term out-of-home placement during the program.
- 100% of participants discharged from the program in 2004 were not returned to long-term out-of-home placement 6 months and one year following discharge. In contrast, 80% of girls who did *not* successfully complete the program were returned to out-of-home placement within one year following program discharge.
- 95% of the girls who successfully completed their programming in 2005 had no new petitions to the court admitted or sustained during participation.
- 94% of successful program participants had no new petitions admitted or sustained 6 months following their program discharge. In contrast, 60% of the girls who did *not* successfully complete their program had no new petitions.

RESOURCE CORNER

The Poetry Lab

Youth are encouraged to "discover, understand and share their lives and voices" through the use of creative writing, poetry and spoken word. The Poetry Lab "encourages the use of writing and poetry as a healthy coping strategy."

<http://www.poetrylab.spps.org>

"Gender Responsive programming for women offenders: Guiding principles and practices" Barbara E. Bloom, PhD. This article focuses on best-practice principles for gender-responsive programming, as well as assessment tools. The article also touches briefly on the characteristics of women in the system and the theories surrounding gender-responsive programming.

http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/e113/e113f_e.shtml

"The Impact of Restraint on Sexually Abused Children and Youth" by the Child Welfare League of America

This article helps in-patient service providers to identify and understand behavior of sexually abused children when restraint is used, as well as offers suggestions and demonstrates effective alternatives to restraint.

http://www.cwla.org/programs/group_care/rgcqwinter2004

Girls' Circle Association

This website provides tools and resources, including materials, workbooks, training information, etc, for facilitators who work with girls' groups

<http://www.girlscircle.com>

RADIUS RADIATES TO RICE COUNTY

The AMICUS RADIUS training grant, funded by the MN Department of Public Safety, is designed to provide consultation, training and ongoing support to communities wishing to introduce best practices for girls into the complement of services available to girls in the juvenile justice system, or those who are at risk. Major program components include gender specific training, as well as training in grief and trauma counseling and circle work.

After several months of meetings and discussions in Rice County, we're very happy to announce two new initiatives under the RADIUS training grant.

First, we will be partnering with the Girl Scout Council of Cannon Valley, which will be incorporating the RADIUS program elements into three of their currently operating programs: "La Cultura" and "Comadres", which assist Latino girls, and "Beyond Bars: Mothers with Fabulous Daughters", which serves the daughters of women who are incarcerated at Shakopee Correctional Facility.

As an organization, the Girl Scouts are uniquely positioned to deliver gender responsive programming because of their basic mission to strengthen girls in their effort to grow into responsible, competent, capable young women. In addition to meeting that basic grant criteria, this group of staff has led us to look at several new perspectives on the grief and trauma issue: First, the kinds of grief and trauma experienced by immigrants as a result of discrimination and prejudice and second, the horrendous grief and trauma children experience when they lose a parent – especially a mother - to incarceration. We at AMICUS will grow and benefit also as a result of our partnership with the Girl Scouts.

The second new program initiative will be with the Faribault Area Learning Center, known more familiarly as the alternative school. This program will not begin operation until later in the fall after school has started and teachers and students settle into a new school year. Program coordinator, De Musselman, a 30-year veteran of the Learning Center, is interested in offering a boy's group as well as girl's group, and is interested in incorporating a mentorship component into their program design. The Learning Center is extremely interested in the circle aspect of the RADIUS program design, as many of their students have issues that could be effectively dealt with in a circle format. They are also interested in designing certain groups to incorporate both girls and boys to help create understanding in a safe, controlled environment. The Faribault Area Learning Center has also invited us to present a panel at the upcoming Southwestern Area Learning Center Conference in October. We hope through this venue to reach other communities where we might establish more programs and partnerships under the training grant.

For more information please contact Project Coordinator Kathleen DuChene at (651)433-4637 or email ksduchene@hotmail.com.

We are very pleased to have formed these new associations and look forward to working with both organizations.

Please pass this newsletter on to anyone who is interested. Requests to subscribe/unsubscribe:
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