



# Female Youth on Probation: Gender Specific Needs and Probation Trends - *updated*

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Santa Barbara County Probation  
**Girls Program**



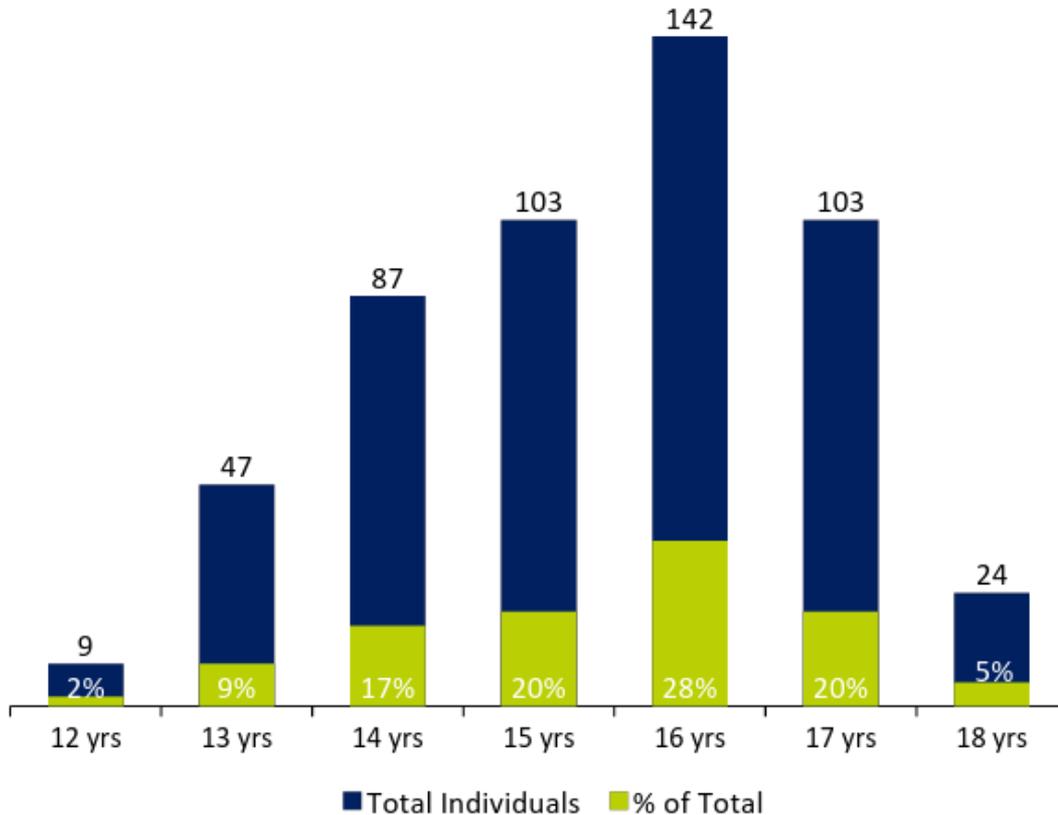
Juvenile & Institutions Division

**UCSB**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
SANTA BARBARA

# Who are our girls?



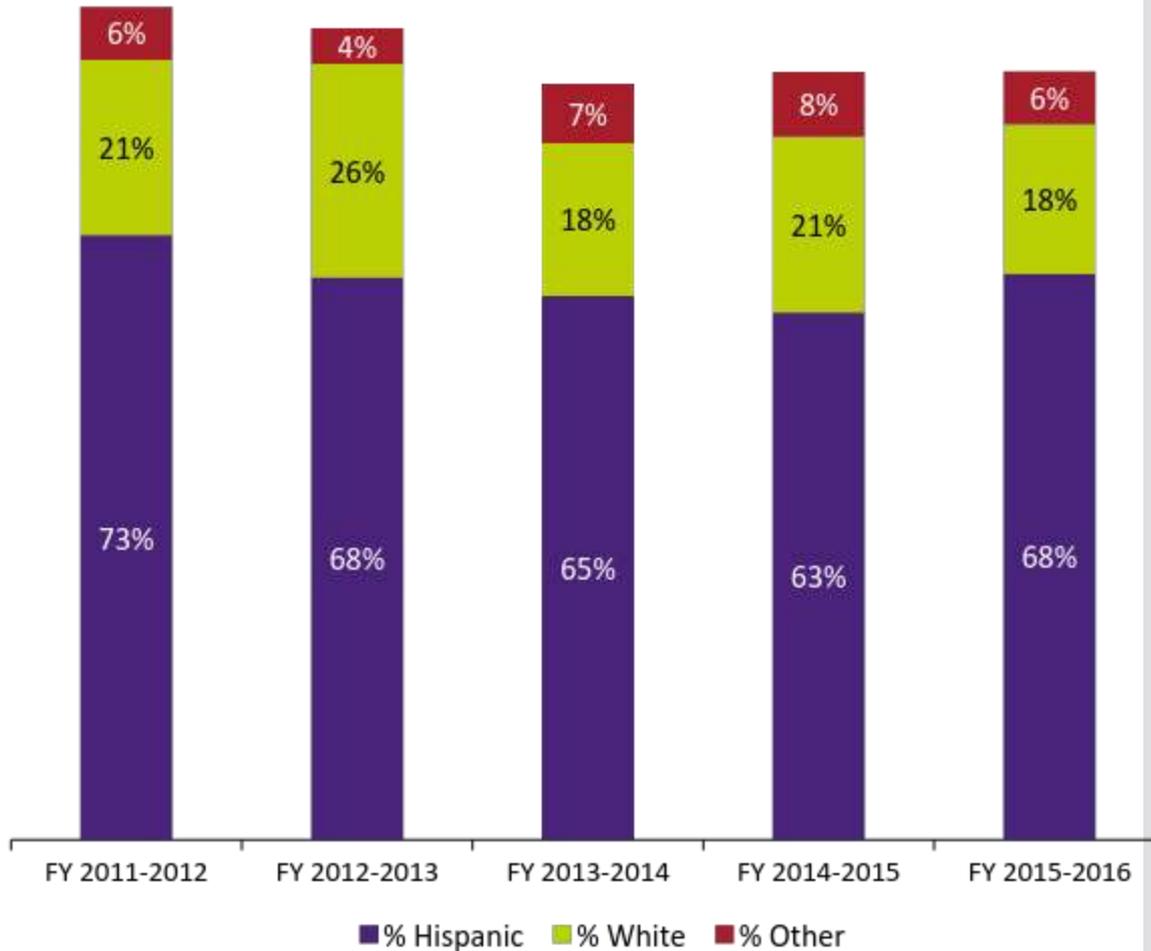
## Age at time of Sentencing



n=515

Majority of female youth are between **14 and 17 years old** at the time of sentencing

## ~7 of 10 Identify as Hispanic



n=515

Probation data with the assistance of the W. Haywood Burns Institute (BI)

”

A 2015 report by the Burns Institute finds that youth of color are overrepresented in the criminal justice system:

*“In 2014, the total youth population in Santa Barbara County ages 10-17 was 42,092. The data indicate that **Black and Latino youth are overrepresented at arrest and admission to secure detention.**”*

# Geographic Representation



## Top Represented Areas

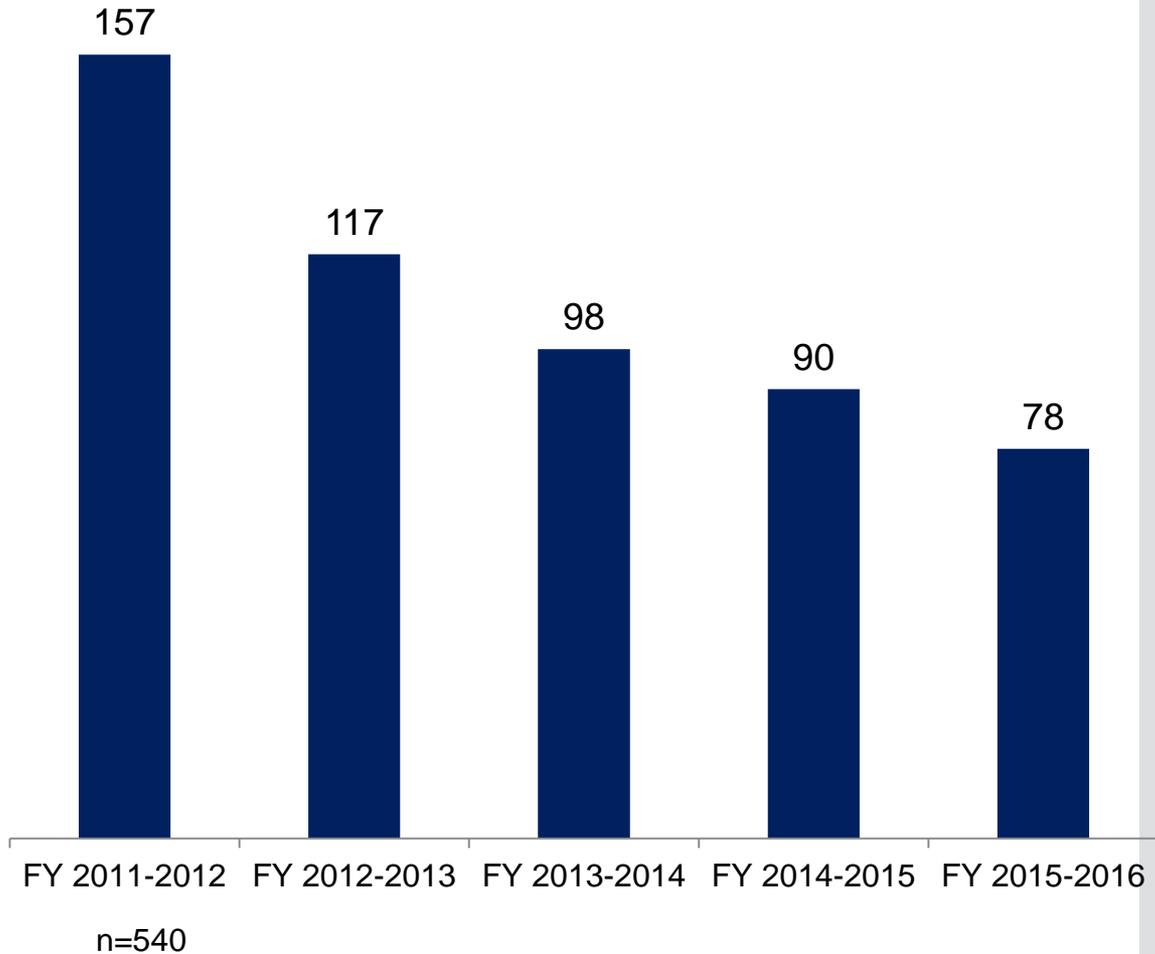
- + Santa Barbara, Goleta & Carpinteria (44%)
- + Santa Maria (34%)
- + Lompoc (21%)

*n=390 (individuals with null values and out of county/state zips excluded)*

## What are their needs?



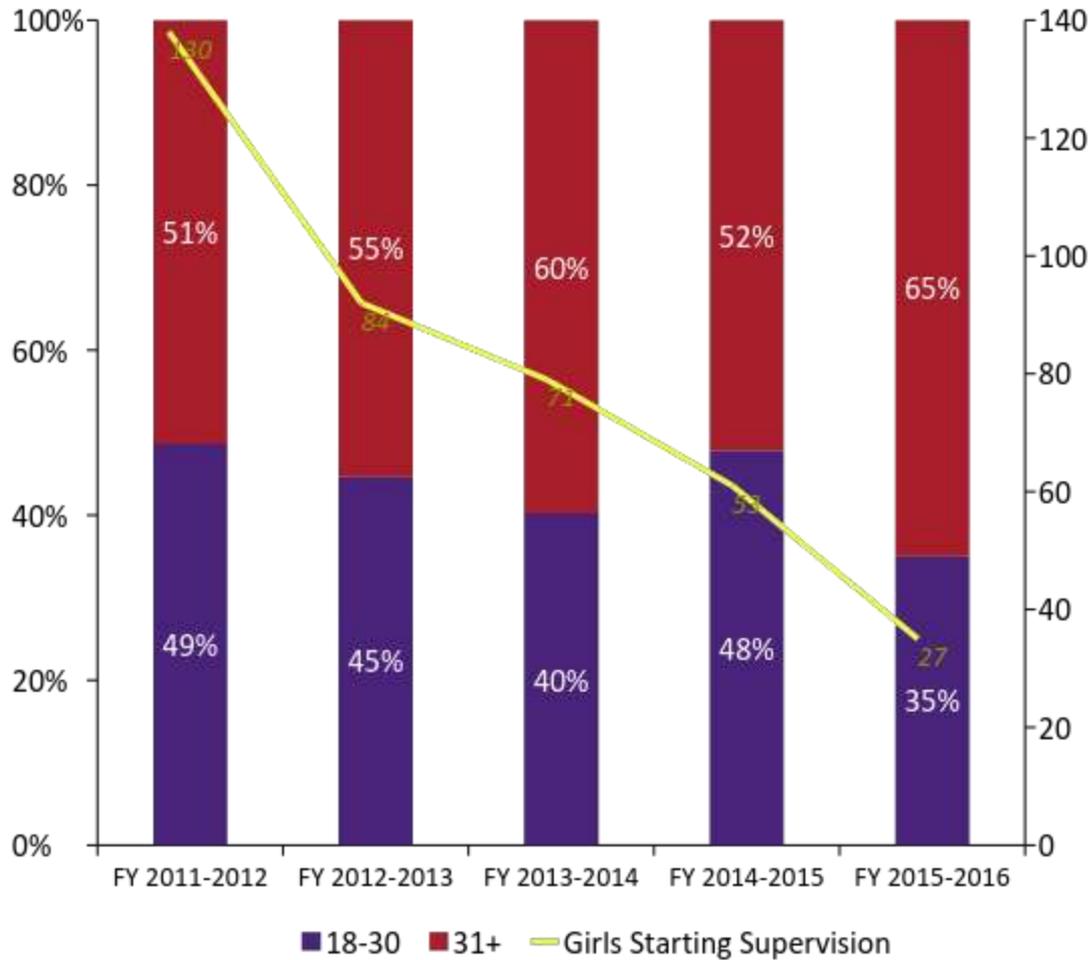
## Declining Population Trend



Total number of females exiting probation has **declined** over the last 5 fiscal years



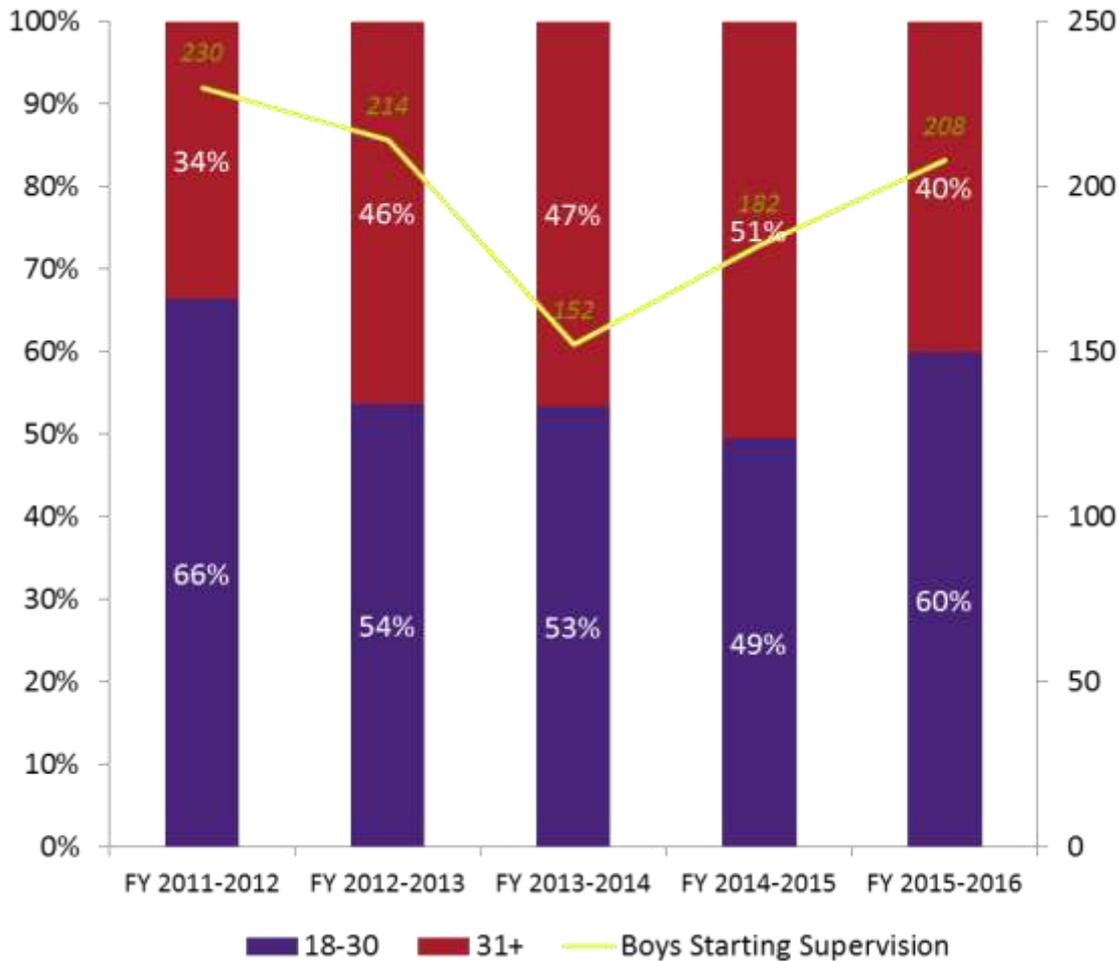
## Increasing Risk: SBARA Scores



n=515 (SBARA)

Although girls' population is declining, the girls currently on probation are **more at risk and have greater need for services.**

## MALE SBARA Scores

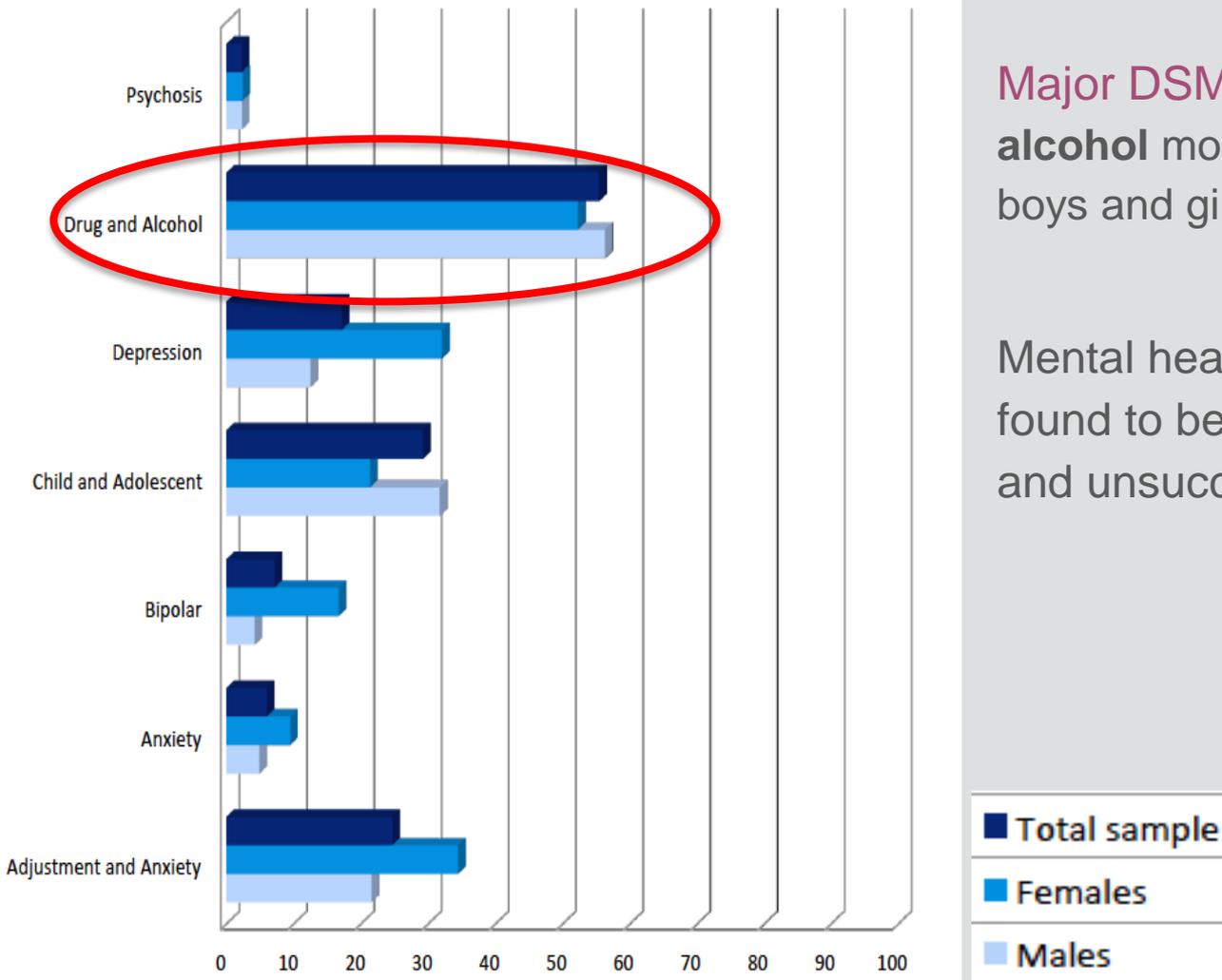


n= 1,515 (SBARA)

Male SBARA scores **do not** show the same trend.

# Mental Health Needs

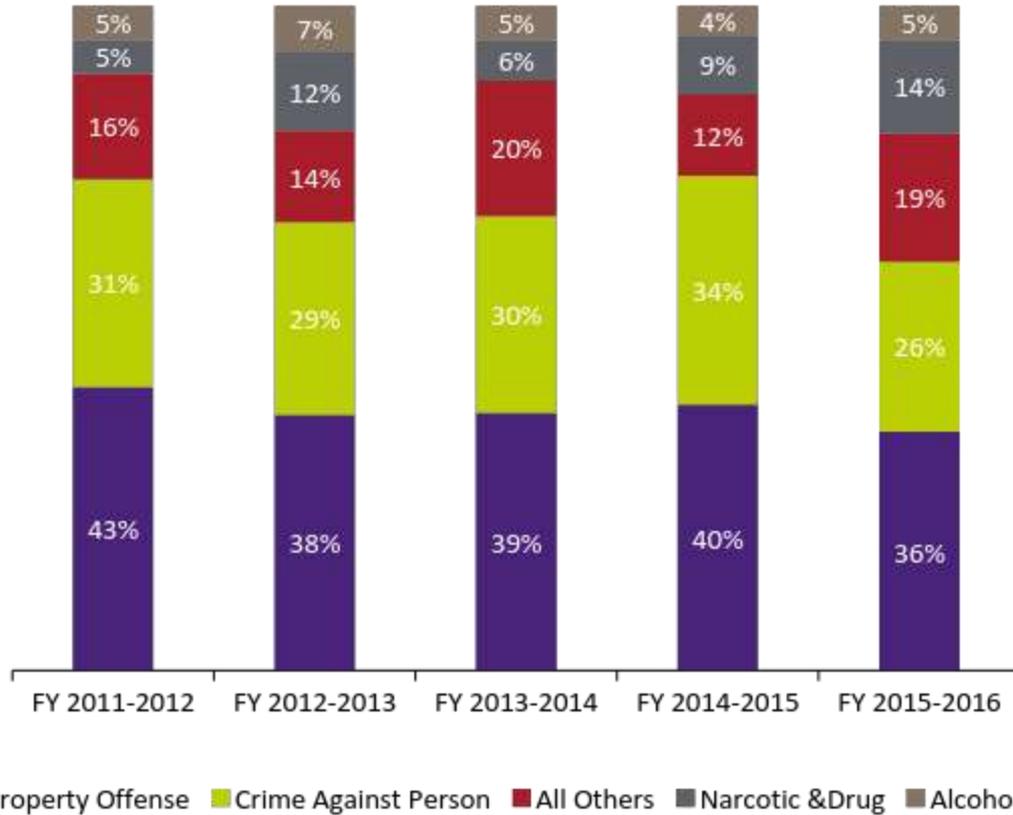
## Primary Diagnosis DSM Groups



Major DSM Diagnoses: **Drugs & alcohol** most common diagnosis for boys and girls.

Mental health status was consistently found to be a **risk factor** for recidivism and unsuccessful probation completion.

## Shift in Committing Offense



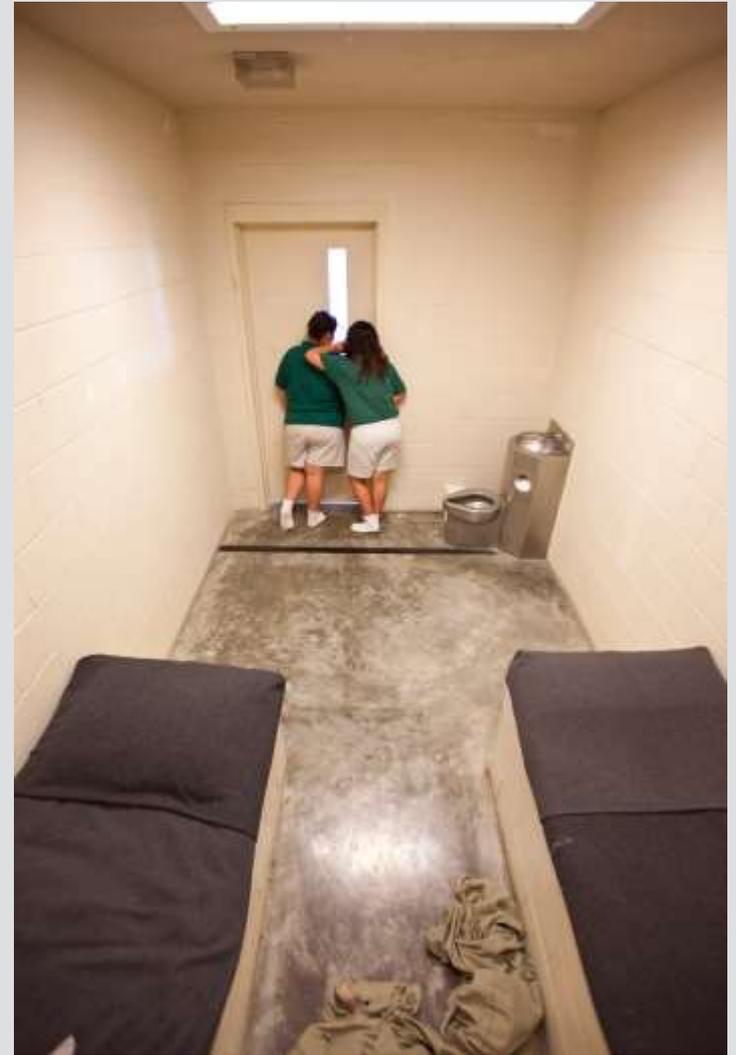
The most serious charge has shifted over time with a **decline in Property Offenses** and an **increase in Narcotic & Drug** offenses.

n=540

## Probation Duration

**Probation Duration:** The longer youth were on probation, the more likely they were to recidivate.

But why is this the case?



## Probation Programs & Recidivism

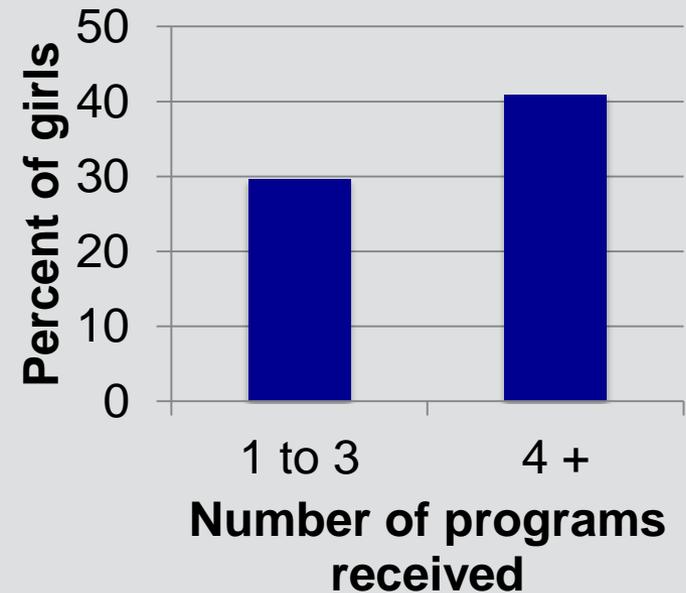
Most common program for girls *and* boys:  
**Supervision and deterrence-based programs (over 70%)**

Programs were **not** associated with a reduction in recidivism or successful probation completion.

However, **successfully completing at least 50% of probation programs** received was associated with a reduction in recidivism and increased likelihood to successfully exit probation.

**Participation and engagement is important.**

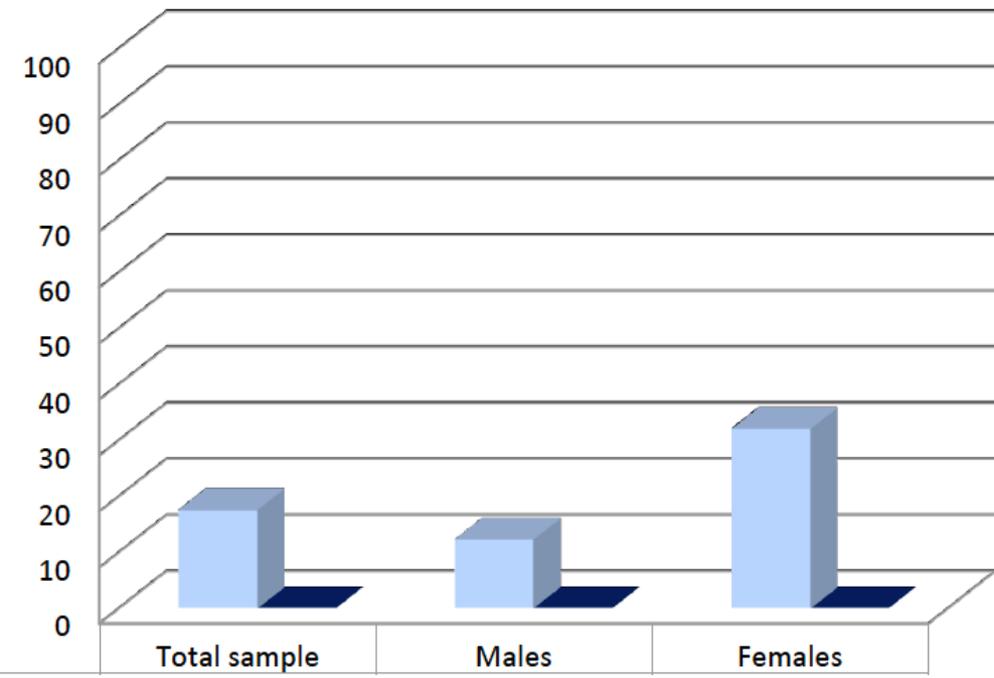
Research is needed on *which* programs are most helpful, for *which youth*.



# Where are our girls?



# Placements & Recidivism



■ MH Admission (at least one)  
■ No MH Admission

**Placements:** A higher percentage of girls (20.2%) than boys (6.8%) received at least one out-of-home placement while on probation.

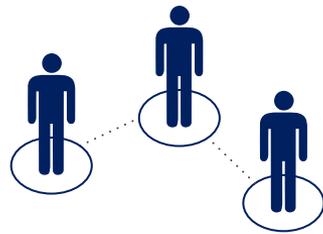
Girls with mental health needs were more likely to receive placements than boys with mental health needs.

**There was a strong association between receiving a placement and recidivism for girls** (association was less strong for boys).

# Placements

A total of **67** individuals were placed into *non-relative foster care* during the last five fiscal years.

Many of these youth had multiple placements either within the county, out of the county or out of the state.



Probation recommends **placement** because of a variety of factors involving **behavior, substance abuse, offending, mental health needs, etc.**

# Services for Girls



# Girls Group

Girls Group increased to 3x/week to maximize treatment support in juvenile hall.

The most frequently reported activities included:

- Wellness activities
- Tea/snack (prosocial engagement)
- Mindfulness activities
- Positive self-regard activities
- Journaling/creative writing



# Focus Group Feedback

## Strengths:

- Girls Group viewed as safe, therapeutic space to learn coping skills
- Enjoy continuity of care provided by RISE on the “outs”
- Starting to feel as though their voices are being heard (thankful for shower shoes!); More open as a result

## Areas for Growth:

- Nutritional concerns, such as too little food and receiving expired/frozen food
- Too few credits earned; Dislike packets
- Would like more assistance with learning life skills, like finding a job or creating a resume
- Expressed frustration with grievance procedures in the hall related to lack of confidentiality & effectiveness



UCSB-led Focus Groups are held on a monthly basis at the SMJH; the girls are beginning to share more candidly

# School Collaboration

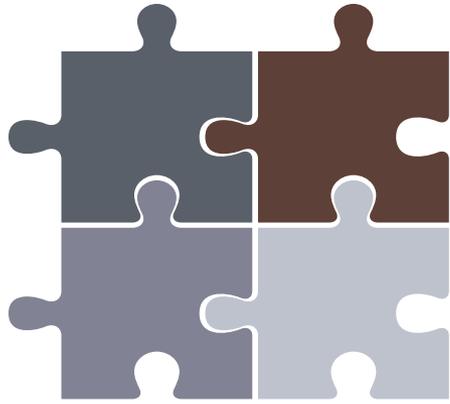


Photo credit: Richard Ross | Juvenile in Justice

**UCSB and School staff at SMJH are working closely together to address feedback from focus groups**

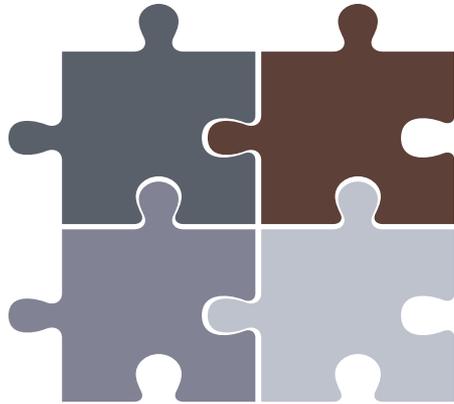
- + School admin. Meet with UCSB researchers monthly
- + School is working to address girls' concerns about the lack of credits & school refusals
- + Working with UCSB to draft social-emotional screener to provide tiered support in the classroom
- + Hoping to create school schedule that is similar to mainstream schools, with changing classes & teachers

## Considerations & Ideas



- + Fewer girls on probation with **more risks & needs**
- + Need for **mental health services** and **alcohol & drug services**
- + Girls want **additional programming** in the Hall
- + Need to ensure that girls are **engaged** and **participating** in programs
- + Programming should be **gender-specific and culturally competent**
- + Girls need **individualized education services**
- + Consider **less time** on probation\*
- + Recommend **trauma-informed evidence-based care**

# Discussion



- + How might we build on our strengths to reduce risks through trauma-informed care?
- + Ideas for programming both in and out of custody?
- + Examples of evidence-based programs already implemented in our county that could be extended to our girls on probation:
  - City of Santa Barbara Youth Employment Training Program
  - ¡Cuidate! (Take care of yourself!)
  - Project Toward No Drug Abuse (Project TND)

**Thank you!**



**Looking forward to  
hearing your feedback and  
ideas!**

**Santa Barbara County Probation**

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<i>Exit Status</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Successful Probation Completion</b>	Having no major violations and successfully completing the terms of probation as specified during disposition.
<b>Unsuccessful Probation Completion</b>	Anyone with new law violations or violations of probation resulting in additional adjudication at the conclusion of their probation period.
<b>Successful Program Exit Status</b>	Anyone completing the assigned program(s) within the probation period. This includes consistent and high levels of participation and attendance, completion of all major aspects of coursework, and achievement of program milestones.
<b>Unsuccessful Program Exit Status</b>	Anyone removed from the program due to refusal to participate or a violation resulting in a consequence that prohibits completion.
<b>Recidivism</b>	Defined for this report as the youth being referred to the criminal justice system for a new misdemeanor, felony, or both.
<b>Probation Duration</b>	Measured in days on probation, or the time elapsing between each youth's probation begin date and probation end date. If a youth had more than one begin date and end date, the total days spent on probation were summed.