

# GENDER AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES AMONG YOUTH ENROLLED IN JUVENILE DRUG COURT – RECLAIMING FUTURES (JDC/RF)

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# Justice System-Involved Girls

- Girls in the juvenile justice system are an understudied population.<sup>1,2</sup>
- In the last two decades, there has been a dramatic increase in girls served by the system<sup>3-5</sup>; currently girls account for nearly 30% of juvenile arrests in the U.S.<sup>4</sup>
- This increased presence is attributed to elevated physical and mental health problems, lower school achievement, substance abuse, family dynamics, and recurrent delinquency.<sup>1,6-7</sup>

# Justice System-Involved Girls

- Girls formally involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely than their male counterparts to report **direct trauma and victimization**, including **sexual and physical abuse, mental health issues, and fragmented families.**<sup>6-11</sup>
- These factors may lead to substance abuse as a coping mechanism in girls.<sup>11-13</sup>
- Delinquent girls are being diagnosed with more than one mental health disorder,<sup>8,10-11,15</sup> and with having more issues with substance abuse compared to delinquent boys.<sup>1,6-8</sup>

# Racial and Ethnic Differences

- Racial and ethnic minorities are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system<sup>16-18</sup>
- Racial and ethnic minority youth have comparable rates of substances abuse to the racial majority,<sup>19-20</sup> however, they are disproportionately more likely to experience arrest due to substance abuse <sup>16,21</sup>
- Racial and ethnic minority youth involved in the juvenile justice system often have undiagnosed mental health issues.<sup>22-23</sup>

# Racial and Ethnic Minority Girls Involved in the Justice System

- Racial and ethnic minority girls are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system.<sup>24-25</sup>
- Racial and ethnic minority girls have an increased likelihood of experiencing previous **trauma**, including **sexual abuse, problems in school, undiagnosed mental health issues, fragmented families, and past history of being a runaway** relative to the majority.<sup>26-27</sup>
  - Less likely to be referred for mental health services.<sup>28-29</sup>
- Overall, there is a lack of research comparing the differences in risk factors between racial and ethnic minority girls and majority girls involved in the juvenile justice system.

# Cross-site Evaluation

- Conducted by University of Arizona's Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW), Chestnut Health Systems, and Carnevale Associates, LLC
- Multi-Site, four-year evaluation of the Juvenile Drug Courts and Reclaiming Futures Initiative
- Charged with evaluating the processes, impact, and cost-effectiveness of integrating the JDC: Strategies in Practice and RF

# Methods

- Findings are from the National Cross-Site Evaluation of Juvenile Drug Courts & Reclaiming Futures (JDC/RF), an evaluation of 8 JDCs across the U.S. implementing JDC/RF.
- Adolescent clients of the JDC/RF programs completed the Global Appraisal of Individual Needs Assessment<sup>30</sup> at intake.
  - Client-level data: characteristics and behaviors
- Independent sample t-tests were used to examine differences between girls and boys and between racial and ethnic minority and majority girls involved in the 8 JDC/RF programs

# Variables of Interest

- Vocational and educational engagement
- Juvenile justice involvement
- Homelessness and living situation
- Substance use and abuse
- Mental health issues
- Victimization and abuse



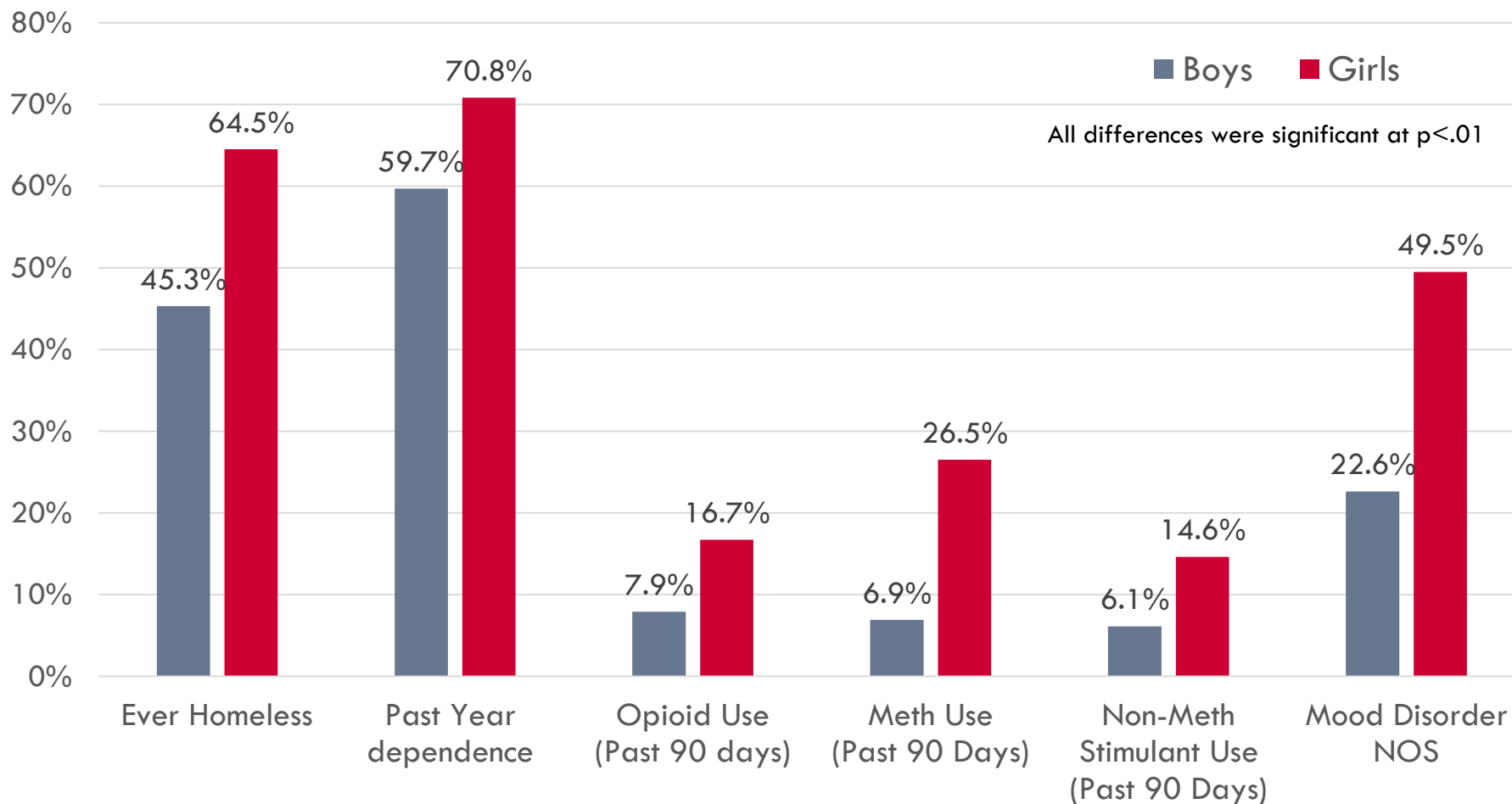
# Results: *Demographics*

- Out of 784 adolescents enrolled in the selected JDC/RF programs, **76.3%** were boys and **23.7%** were girls.
- A larger percentage of the girls were between 11-14 years of age (**14.5%**) compared to boys (**9.5%**).

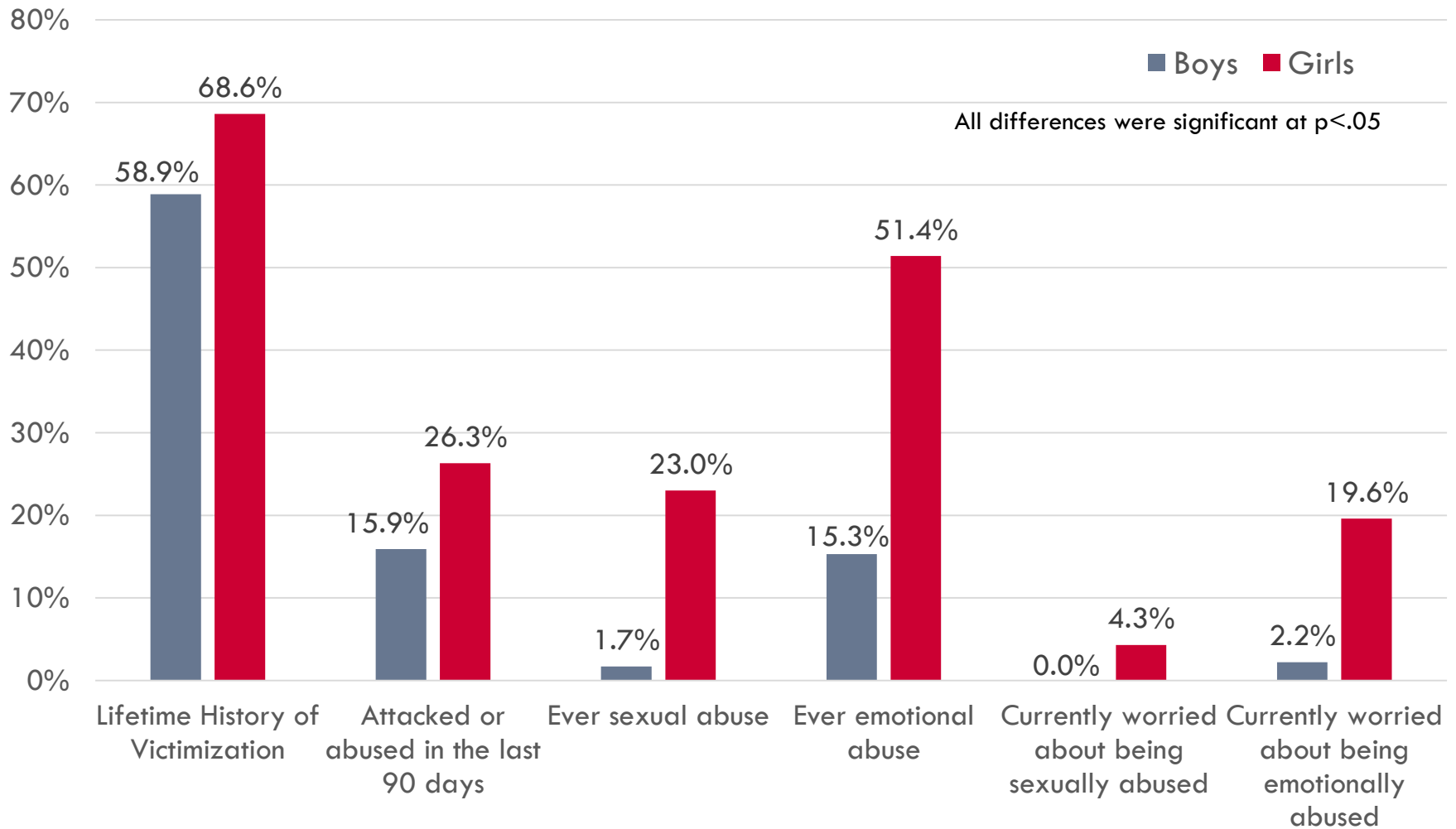
# Results: *Race and Ethnicity*

	<b>Boys</b>		<b>Girls</b>		
<i>Race</i>	N=598		N=186		p value
<b>Caucasian/White</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>36.1%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>53.2%</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>
Multiracial	41	6.9%	17	9.1%	.299
<b>African American/Black</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>.001</b>
Other	18	3.0%	9	4.8%	.233
<b>None of the Above (usually Latin@)</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>36.3%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>.004</b>
<i>Ethnicity</i>					
<b>Hispanic/Latin@</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>31.9%</b>	<b>.007</b>

# Gender Differences: Substance Use, Mood Disorders & Housing



# Gender Differences: Abuse and Victimization



# *Ethnic Differences Among Girls:*

	<b>Hispanic Girls</b>	<b>Non- Hispanic Girls</b>	<b>p value</b>
	N=59	N=127	
In detention last 90 days	45.8%	23.0%	<b>.002</b>
Any past year arrest	67.2%	49.6%	<b>.026</b>
Current juvenile justice involvement	100.0%	93.7%	<b>.050</b>
Past year substance dependence	81.0%	65.9%	<b>.036</b>

# Racial Differences Among Girls:

	Racial Majority Girls	Racial Minority Girls	p value
	N=99	N=87	
Weekly drug use in the community	47.1%	78.0%	<b>.005</b>
Any opioid use in past 90 days	22.2%	10.3%	<b>.030</b>
Attacked or abused in last 90 days	35.4%	16.1%	<b>.003</b>
Ever sexually abused	28.9%	16.3%	<b>.044</b>
Ever emotionally abused	62.6%	38.4%	<b>.001</b>
Both external and internal mental health problems in the past year	59.6%	43.7%	<b>.030</b>
In detention the last 90 days	24.2%	37.9%	<b>.044</b>

# Summary

- Juvenile-justice involved girls experience higher rates of **drug dependence, opioid use, homelessness, mood disorders, and internal and external mental health problems** compared to juvenile justice-involved boys.
- Hispanic girls involved in the juvenile justice system were more likely to experience **past year dependence**, and be **detained** or **arrested** than non-Hispanic girls.
- Racial minority girls involved in the juvenile justice system were more likely to engage in **weekly drug use**, and be **detained** or **arrested** than racial majority girls.
- Racial majority girls experienced higher rates of **opioid use**, and were more likely than racial minority girls to experience **abuse** (physical, sexual and emotional), and have **internal and external mental health problems**.
- Our findings show that racial majority girls have higher opioid use and additional comorbidities. However; racial and ethnic minority girls are disproportionately more likely to experience arrest and detention.

# Policy Implications and Conclusions

- Since **gender-specific**<sup>31</sup> and **culturally-specific**<sup>32</sup> treatment programs and services have been shown to reduce recidivism, such tailored treatments should be implemented within JDCs and other treatment modalities.
- Given the complexity of issues for girls (unstable housing, mental health issues, abuse, victimization, criminality, substance abuse), JDCs need to implement **effective clinical assessments** to determine the array of services needs for each adolescent girl.
- Given the complexity of issues for girls, JDC's should collaborate with a variety of service agencies, with procedures for sharing appropriate levels of client data, to increase treatment effectiveness
- Research is needed on the systemic factors that might result in the overuse of the juvenile justice system for racial and ethnic minority girls, and failure to address the treatment needs of racial and ethnic majority girls.
- Additional research is needed to ascertain the most effective ways to treat and rehabilitate girls involved in JDCs.



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# Questions?



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