

# Pathways Into and Out of Offending for Girls

Dr. Gena Castro Rodriguez, PsyD

Dr. Elizabeth Cauffman, PhD

Moderated by Patricia Lee, San  
Francisco Public Defender's Office



**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM** on  
**Girls in Conflict with the Law**

October 27, 2020  
through  
March 2021

IN  
PARTNERSHIP  
WITH:



Patricia Lee,  
Managing Attorney,  
Juvenile Unit,  
San Francisco Public  
Defender's Office  
(Host Partner)



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Moderated by Patricia Lee

Patricia Lee is the Managing Attorney of the San Francisco Public Defender's Juvenile Unit, where she is overseeing the closure of San Francisco's Juvenile Hall

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Dr. Gena Castro Rodriguez, PsyD

Dr. Gena Castro Rodriguez is Chief of the Victim Services Division of San Francisco District Attorney's Office, where she oversees victim advocacy, mass casualty, restitution, and the California State Victims Compensation Program.

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# AGENDA

- Gendered Violence
- Abuse
- Reactions
- System Response
- Special Considerations



## Gendered Violence

- Sexism
  - Gender Roles
  - Violence Against Women
- 

# Abuse

- Girls are 2xs as likely to report 4 or more ACES
- Emotional: anger, irritability, depression, dissociation, eating disorders, relationship dysfunction & social phobias. Difficulty identifying feelings, inability to predict risk and defend self
- Physical: aggression, anger, violence, intimate partner violence, sexual perpetration, and criminality



- Primary predictor of delinquency
- 70% of victims are girls
- Girls 4xs more likely to be abused than boys
- Girls experience sexual violence at an earlier age
- Reactions
  - Aggression
  - Substance Abuse
  - Self-harm
  - Risky sexual behavior
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Self-destructive behavior
  - Low self-esteem
  - Suicidality

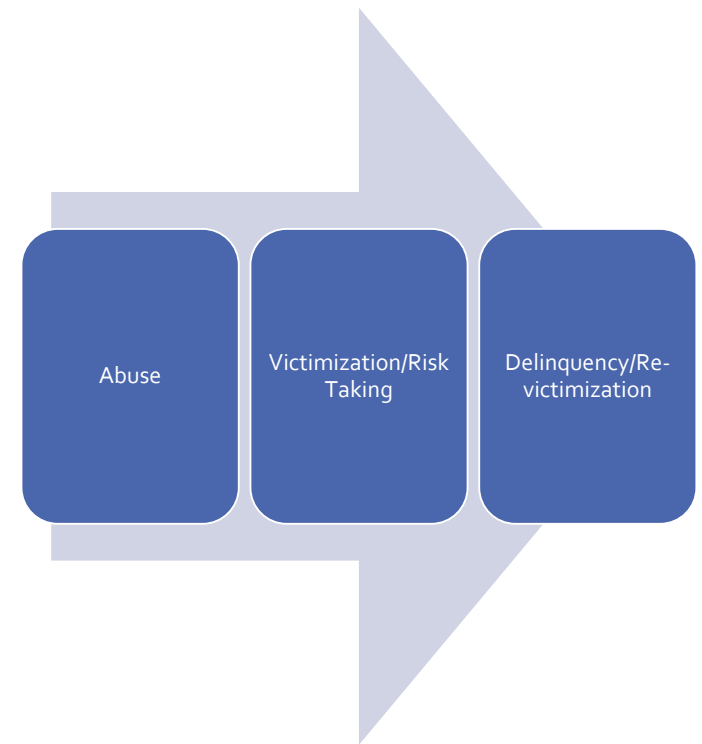
## Sexual Abuse

# Cycle of Violence

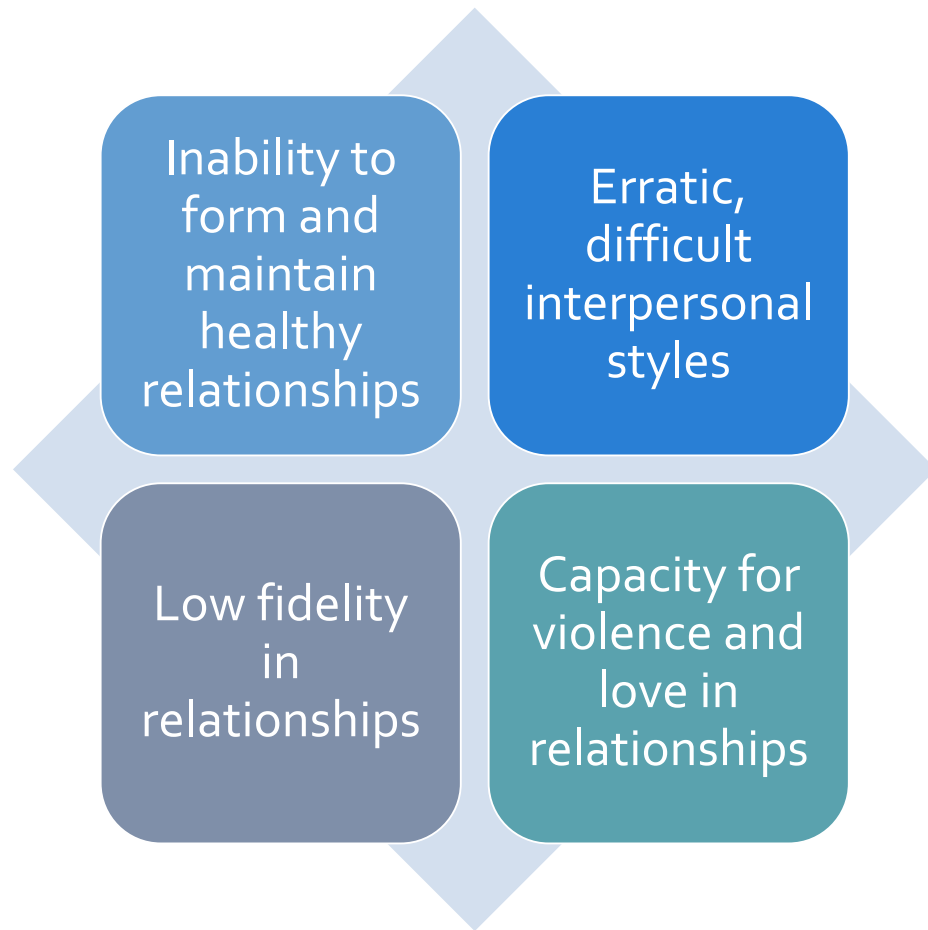
## Risk

- Increased potential for violent behavior
- Increase potential for criminal behavior
- Increased risk for re-victimization

## Sex Abuse to Prison Pipeline



# Betrayal & Complex Trauma



# Brain Development



## Development of pre-frontal cortex

- Control impulses
- Foresee consequences
- Temper emotions and reactions
- Overvalue of reward center of brain
- Under value of risk evaluation in decision making



## Amygdala

Affect emotional regulation



## Hippocampus

- Inability to manage stress
- Inhibit memory formation
- Affect ability to cope with stress

Anger

Aggression

Confrontational

Defiance

Stave off future victimization

Protective  
Reactions

# Impact on World View

Self- beliefs about safety, trust  
and value

Others- potential for harm,  
capacity for love/pain, inability  
to access risks

World- unsafe, unfair,  
dangerous



# Criminal/ Delinquent Behaviors

- Violence - including domestic violence
- Status Offense
  - Running away
  - Truancy
  - Substance use
- Survival Crimes
  - Theft
  - Selling/using drugs
  - Gangs
- Human Trafficking/Prostitution/Exploitation
  - High correlation with child sex abuse
  - Over representation for girls of color

# Delinquency System Response

- High need/low risk to public safety
  - For / with or because
- Over criminalize behaviors
- Status and low-level offenses
- Protectionist rationale
- Incarceration traumatizing
- Re-victimization
- Net widening or upcharging
- Chronic involvement until aging out



- Intersectionality of Race, Class & Gender
- LGBTQ Youth
  - Higher risk for sexual abuse, running away due to abuse, parental rejection
- Girls of Color
  - African American. Latina and Native American girls over-represented

## Special Considerations

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## References

Thank You

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