Problem Evaluation Paper

Shelly McKee

CJA/355

01/25/2018

MARY ELLEN DE FRIAS

**Problem Evaluation Paper**

There exist many issues within the criminal justice system and which needs to be addressed. This paper will focus on the abuse and sexual victimization of juveniles who are detained in correctional facilities. In recent past, a large percentage of incarcerated teens have reported sexual abuse by the staff or other inmates while in detention facilities. This paper will focus on the youth problems of abuse and sexual victimization and will provide statistics on the issue. It will also address why the issue is critical and why it needs to be solved, as well as other possible potential solutions to the problem (Swank & Gagnon, 2016).

**Youth Sexual Victimization in Detention and Correctional Facilities**

The best manner to prove that there is a problem is to recant some actual cases. Back in June 2003, the United States Justice Department investigating two Mississippi training schools found “a widespread use of abusive disciplinary practices, inappropriate use of pepper spray, and frequent staff assaults on youth. The report also showed that youths were pole-tied and hog-tied and that is the reason why their legs and arms were shackled to a pole in a public place while the other youths were made to exercise around them. In one facility, girls were placed in dark rooms and stripped naked. At times they were left for days in the room which had no furniture but just an open drain in the floor which was used as a toilet.

In January 2006, a boy aged 14 years collapsed and stopped breathing some hours after admission in the military-style boot camp fin Florida. A video taken showed at least seven

members of staff shoving the boy against a pole, kneeing him and wrestling him to the ground. The boy severally tried to stand up but unsuccessfully. The staff members started to revive him with Ammonia after they noticed that the boy had lost consciousness and then they called 911. An autopsy conducted showed that the teen died of suffocation as guards shoved ammonia capsules in his nose while covering his face.

The teens who are detained in detention centers or those in adult correctional facilities face high risks of being sexually and physically abused by other inmates and staff members. The re-incarceration rate has increased and in many cases, they more than likely will not finish high school. The cases stated above are just some among the worst cases of abuse. Other lesser cases in form of abuse take place daily. Teens are being sexually and physically abused by people who have been placed in charge to protect them.

**Statistics**

The survey which was conducted by the Bureau of statistics back in the year 2012, it showed that 9.5 percent of the youths in juvenile facilities were or had experienced one or more incidents of abuse sexually, either from a staff member or by another youth. The 2.5 percent had reported that such incidents involved another youth, and 7.7 percent reported that staff members were involved in the incidents. 3.5 percent of the youths reported that they were coerced or forced into a sexual conduct with members of staff. Illinois, Georgia, Ohio, and South Carolina had the combined sexual victimization rate exceeding 15 percent of the national average because of the high rates of sexual misconduct by staff members.

2.8 percent of females and 8.2 percent among males reported sexual activity with staff members. 2.2 percent of males and 5.4 percent of females reported being forced into sexual activities by other youths. The white teens reported the highest rates of sexual by other teens which totaled to 4.0 percent, while the black teens reported higher rates involving members of staff totaling to 9.6 percent. 67.7 percent of the youths reported that they were physically forced or threatened by the use of a force. 25.2 percent were offered protection, while 18.1 percent were drugged or given alcohol in order to engage in sexual activities with other youths, and with 69.6 percent reporting multiple incidences while 37.2 percent reported more than one perpetrator (Van der Kolk, 2017).

89.1 percent of the youths who reported sexual conduct with staff members were males w2who reported sexual conduct with female staffs and 3 percent reported sexual with both female and male members of staff. 85.9 percent reported more than one incident, and 20.4 percent reporting more than eleven incidences. 20.3 percent reported coercion or physical force by the staff member, 12.3 percent being offered protection, and 21.5 percent being given alcohol or drugged by the members of staff. 36.4 percent reported that the sexual conduct was initiated the staff member.

**Why the Problem Should Be Solved**

No person deserves to be sexually or physically abused by another individual. The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 required that agencies be committed to a zero-tolerance of sexual abuse. This should be achieved through actions, and not just by saying. Juvenile facilities should give opportunities for therapy, education, and rehabilitation not traumatizing the youths whom they are put in charge of to protect. Sexual conduct between inmates and staff members is illegal in every state, but still it continues to happen each and every day. These are troubled teens being taken advantage of by the grown-ups put in charge to protect them, and these subjects the youths to developing psychological disorders, conducting sexually transmitted diseases, committing suicides, and becoming pregnant, or even coming out of these facilities worse than they were when they were admitted by learning new criminal behaviors.

**Possible Solutions**

Estimates show that in every day, 70,000 juveniles are held din juvenile facilities. Two-thirds of them are held for non-violent crimes. Early interventions aimed to prevent the risks of teens engaging in offenses can save the state a lot of money which is used to run these facilities.

There are less severe alternatives to incarcerating teens. The community based-programs such as drug treatment, diversion programs, evening reporting centers, family programs, and treatment clinics have been known for helping to keep teens out of trouble.

Teens who commit status offenses such as; running away, truancy, or defying parents would be better if they are placed in a diversion programs where they can be assisted with the help they require in dealing with their specific struggles.

For the teens who have committed violent crimes, and who must be locked in correctional facilities, there should be more protection put for them. The staff requires be giving more training and watching more closely in dealing with these teens. The staff together with the other inmates needs to understand the consequences of engaging into sexual conducts with the

teens and also other inmates. More surveillance by use of video equipment’s should be increased in these facilities (Chaplo, Kerig, Bennett & Modrowski, 2015).

**References**

Chaplo, S. D., Kerig, P. K., Bennett, D. C., & Modrowski, C. A. (2015). The roles of emotion dysregulation and dissociation in the association between sexual abuse and self-injury among juvenile justice–involved youth. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, *16*(3), 272-285.

Swank, J. M., & Gagnon, J. C. (2016). Mental health services in juvenile correctional facilities: A national survey of clinical staff. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *25*(9), 2862-2872.

Van der Kolk, B. A. (2017). Developmental Trauma Disorder: Toward a rational diagnosis for children with complex trauma histories. *Psychiatric annals*, *35*(5), 401-408.