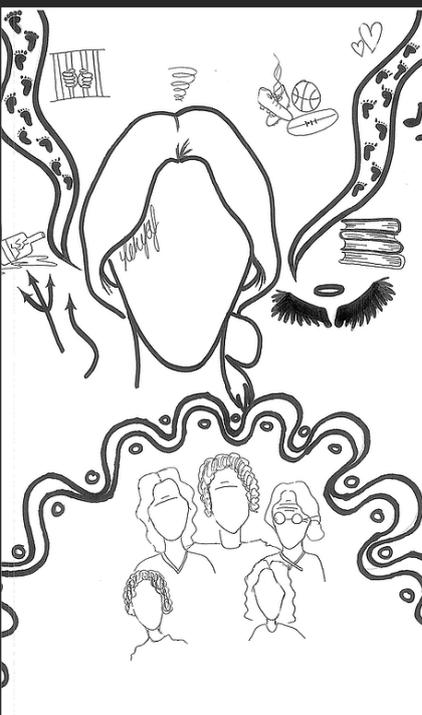




National Picture

In 2010–11, Indigenous young women aged 10–17 were around 16 times as likely as non-Indigenous young women to be under community-based supervision during the year, and 19 times as likely to be in detention.¹

Intergenerational offending was apparent in some young women’s families, impacting their childhood and influencing choices around offending behaviour or ability to seek help from within the family. **Family was an important positive influence** for some participants’ decisions around desisting from offending.



YAWG Project Findings

Most young women in this study (**65%**) had not been in trouble with the police.

Most offending was low-level (e.g. fare evasion and being out after curfew) and did not involve charges.

A small number of young women had been cautioned or charged for offences involving violence. Four had been incarcerated for violent offences.

“Most of my friends have been to Banksia and they do break ins, stealing cars whatever. I always stay away because I know like, I know better, I don’t want to be like, you know all my brothers have been in jail and all my family ... and I just, but it doesn’t interest me. I go to school and I try to stay away from that. Mum went to jail for fraud and Dad went to jail for multiple things” (16 years).



For many, there was a **general distrust** of police/justice system based on fears of being taken away from family.

Recommendations

Participants wanted services to better **understand the barriers young women face** in accessing services and seek to build trust and alleviate shame when working with them. A **relationship-focussed approach** is more likely to be successful with young women.

When seeking to understand what drives offending behaviour among this group, underlying factors such as poverty, intergenerational trauma and discrimination must be considered. **Learning about culture** from trusted adults was experienced as a protective factor.

¹ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/d6cacfce-86ab-41de-af14-876ad7af78a5/14594.pdf.aspx?inline=true>