



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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Contact: Starr Stepp  
(202) 307-0703  
[www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov)

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### Study Finds Trauma Common Among Detained Youth

WASHINGTON –Trauma resulting from past exposure to violence is common among youth in detention, according to a new bulletin released today by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). *PTSD, Trauma, and Comorbid Psychiatric Disorders in Detained Youth* found a majority of youth in detention previously experienced one or more traumatic events.

The bulletin is the second in OJJDP's series on the findings of the Northwestern Juvenile Project, which analyzes data collected from a randomly selected sample of 1,829 youth arrested and detained in Cook County, Ill., between 1995 and 1998. The project is the first large-scale prospective longitudinal study of psychiatric, substance use and behavioral disorders in juvenile detainees.

Among youth participating in the project, 93 percent reported previous exposure to trauma and 57 percent reported exposure to trauma six or more times. Significantly more males than females reported trauma. Eleven percent of study participants met the diagnostic criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the past year. Of these youth, more than half reported witnessing violence as the precipitating trauma and 93 percent had at least one additional, or comorbid, psychiatric disorder.

**TITLE:** *PTSD, Trauma, and Comorbid Psychiatric Disorders in Detained Youth*

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The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).