



**Results from the  
Long-term Inmate Survey:  
Focus on Child Abuse Histories**

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

by

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## RESULTS FROM THE LONG-TERM INMATE SURVEY: FOCUS ON CHILD ABUSE HISTORIES

Child abuse and neglect have been addressed by many disciplines of government for a variety of reasons. Departments of youth services and departments of social work across the country are concerned with intervening such that youth are protected from abuse. These interventions tend to focus on separating the child from the situation with secondary attention towards ameliorating the situation.

Schools and medical doctors are expected (often required by law) to report abuse. Their role is to be the eyes and ears of regulatory agencies (e.g., police, social services). As with police the principal role is to provide information to insure that extant abuse is stopped.

Police intervene to stop the current abuse and insure that the abuser is available for prosecution. Police intervene when as Klockars suggests “Something ought not to be happening about which something ought to be done now” (1985:16).

Courts in concert with corrections also have a role in identification of abuse and assignment of abusers to treatment. Their role is different than others noted above in that their focus is not on the abused child but on the abuser. Courts focus on adjudication of those charged with abuse (both civilly and criminally), assign blame, and prescribe treatment (sentence). Correctional agencies administer the sentence. Correctional agencies are in the unique position to “fix” the abuser, as adjudicated abusers become wards of the correctional system. This offers correctional agencies both the time and opportunity to transform abusers. The only agency of government that focuses on repairing the abuser is corrections—all others focus on separating the child from the abuser (social services often make services available to abusers but their focus is on the child’s welfare). This unique opportunity promises to diminish child abuse by treating the abuser.

The focus on abusers occurs for several reasons. First, there is the hope that successful treatment will result in cession of abusive behavior—a good in its own right. The second reason is that abusers are thought to produce abusers. That is, children who are abused are thought to grow up to be abusers creating a production cycle of abusers. Additionally, there is ample empirical evidence that a history of child abuse is related to a wide range of juvenile and adult behavioral problems, many of which land victims of abuse into the criminal justice system as offenders.

From these considerations come the three focal concerns of the present study: 1) to describe the childhood experiences of a sample of long-term inmates; 2) to address the “cycle of abuse” issue; and 3) present the correlates of abuse which may impact the pattern of offending or inmate functioning. These focal concerns are addressed separately via differing strategies of investigation and analysis.

We have structured our report by extracting the important and most relevant information from the various aspects of our work as an introduction to the complete report. The larger pieces follow and should be consulted for additional detail. We begin by first presenting a review of the literature

concerning not only child abuse in general but also a review of the literature on measuring abuse in correctional populations. Discussions of the data collection processes and the determination of sample biases follow these sections. Next is a presentation of the profile of the long-term inmates who volunteered for the study. The cycle of abuse concern is addressed in the discussion of the personal interview data and is followed by presenting the correlates of abuse. Because the congregate interview is unique, the instrument used is described in great detail along with the data collection instruments used in the other phases.

### **Incidence of Child Abuse in American Society**

The incidence of child abuse in the society is captured in several polls that asked national probability samples of adults if they had been victims of abuse as children. The following three surveys provide a window into the cross-national incidence of child abuse. In 1989 the Gallup organization asked a sample of survey respondents “Were you, yourself, ever a victim of child abuse” (cited in Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1990)—8 percent indicated yes (5 percent for males, 10 percent for females). In 1994 the Gallup organization asked a more focused question “When you were growing up, do you remember any time when you were punched or kicked or choked by a parent or other adult guardian” (cited in Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994)—12 percent indicated yes (13 percent of males, and 10 percent of females). Finally, in 1995 the Gallup organization posed a question focused on child sexual abuse (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996). They asked if parents, as children, had been touched in a sexual way or forced to touch someone else in a sexual way—23 percent indicated they had. The same survey asked if they had been forced to have sex before they were 18—slightly less than 10 percent indicated yes.

What is apparent is that child abuse is frequent—at least if you ask people if they had experienced abuse. Based on these surveys it appear that somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of children in the general population experience some form of abuse.

### **Incidence of Child Abuse Among Prisoners**

The survey of the literature isolated six studies of adult prisoners that are reviewed here. The first of these studies is a Survey of Prisoners, by the U.S. Bureau of the Census on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993); the second and third studies were conducted by Departments of Corrections in Virginia (1983) and Oregon (1993); and the fourth, fifth, and sixth studies by independent researchers with the cooperation of the departments of corrections responsible for the prisoners studied, Weeks and Widom (in press), Dutton and Hart (1992) and Dewey (1997). These six studies sampled prisoners from 45 randomly selected states, Virginia, Oregon, New York, the Pacific Region of Canada, and Alaska respectively. Four of these

studies used personal interviews of the prisoners as their method of data collection, one relied upon official records, and one used a self-administered survey.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (1993) found lower rates of reported abuse than the other studies reviewed here. These rates were 12 percent for males and 31 percent for female prisoners reporting a history of child abuse. Though the BJS publication does not discuss the basis of these estimates, a review of instruments presently in use by BJS suggests that their questionnaire elicits information only about serious assault (shot at or knifed) and serious sexual assault (sexual contact against will). This suggests that the Bureau of Justice Statistics was utilizing a narrow definition of abuse. Further there were few probing questions to stimulate the subjects memory. Thus, it appears likely that instrumentation accounts for the lower incidence of reported abuse in the BJS prisoner's survey.

The Virginia Department of Corrections (1983) study of the child abuse histories of prisoners relied in an abbreviated six item questionnaire (two demographic questions, one abuse question with a follow-up about the abuser, and two questions concerned with whether the inmate had abused his/her children). The abuse question was designed to reflect statutory requirements for legal abuse in place at the time in Virginia. The study isolated rates of child abuse histories among the prisoners of 28 percent for males and 0 percent for females.<sup>1</sup> The authors of the study urged caution in relying on these findings.

The Oregon Department of Corrections (1993) and the Dewey (1997) focused their inquiries on incarcerated women. The Oregon study interviewed a random sample of 89 women housed at the Oregon Women's Correctional Center and the Columbia River Correctional Institution. The Dewey study was based on self selected samples of 49 women at two Alaska correctional facilities, Meadowcreek and Sixth Avenue Correctional Center, who completed self-administered surveys. Both studies reported high rates of child abuse victimization among women prisoners, 72 percent in Oregon and 73.5 percent in Alaska. Neither of these studies defined the terms they used, leaving the respondent to evaluate what was meant by abuse. The Oregon study asked "would you say that you were ever physically abused. . . would you say that you have ever been molested, raped or sexually abused" (Oregon Department of Corrections, 1993, p. 5). Likewise Dewey asked the subjects "if, as a child they had experienced sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse" (Dewey, 1997, p. 35). It is noteworthy that the self-administered questionnaire used in the study of Alaska women and interview instrument used in Oregon produced similar results.

The Weeks and Widom (in press) study focused on male inmates. This study included both the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and the Self-Report of Child Abuse Physical (SRCAP) in their instrument to measure physical abuse. The CTS instrument utilizes a stricter definition than the SRCAP limiting child abuse to the very severe violence level of the scale. The CTS instrument resulted in 34.9 percent of the prisoners reporting child abuse. Using the SRCAP instrument 58.1 percent of the prisoners reported being abused as a child. Combining the two instruments resulted

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<sup>1</sup> Only 18 women responded to the survey, none indicating a history of abuse. The authors of the original study were justifiably skeptical of this result and caution against its use.



in 68 percent of the prisoners reporting some kind of physical abuse as a child. The study also captured information about childhood sexual abuse and neglect. Weeks and Widom found that slightly more than 14 percent of prisoners report some form of sexual abuse and about 16 percent report neglect, both before age 12.

The Dutton and Hart (1992) study used official records as their data source for information about male inmates incarcerated at seven Correctional Service of Canada institutions within the Pacific Rim. These records included criminal records, police reports, medical, psychological and psychiatric evaluations and social services records. Dutton and Hart reported rates of 31 percent for physical abuse, 11 percent sexual abuse and 13 percent other abuse (includes extreme neglect and witnessing interparental physical or sexual assault). These results are similar to that obtained in Weeks and Widom (in press).

If we rely on the Weeks and Widom (in press) and the Dutton and Hart studies we would estimate the male inmate abuse and neglect populations in Alaska's prisons as follows. We would expect that between 30 and 40 percent of male inmates have child physical abuse histories, between 10 and 15 percent have child sexual abuse histories, and that about 15 percent were neglected as children. The studies in Oregon (Oregon DOC, 1993) and earlier in Alaska (Dewey, 1997) present a far different picture for women. Though neither study provided information about types of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, or neglect) both lead us to expect in excess of 70 percent of incarcerated women to have histories of child abuse.<sup>2</sup> (See attached study, "Incidence of Child Abuse and the Relationship to Criminality: Literature Review.")

## **Outline of the Research Project**

In cooperation with the DOC, the Justice Center developed a phased approach to the project that would allow for a substantive description of the general long-term inmate population. The three phases would be:

- 1) a literature review, congregate interview protocol development, and a descriptive report;
- 2) a face to face interviews and official file reviews; and
- 3) an extensive analysis of the combined data to isolate correlates.

Phase One. The first phase began with an extensive literature review of existing inmate surveys addressing the project's concerns that then aided in the development of all of the project's survey instruments. The literature review was further divided into those studies that focused on the definitions of abuse and neglect and those studies which focused on the methods of collecting that

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<sup>2</sup> A 1987 study by the American Correctional Association reports that slightly more than 60 percent of incarcerated women reported childhood physical abuse and nearly 55 percent reported childhood sexual abuse (cited in 1992 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics at p. 651).

type of information from an incarcerated population. The project's congregate interview instrument was developed from the best aspects of the existing surveys, pre-tested upon a small group of inmates and modified slightly for use in Alaska. The literature review also provided guidance on conducting surveys with inmates but we relied heavily on the expertise of DOC personnel on how to recruit inmates for the congregate interviews in the various institutions. The Justice Center has completed congregate interviews with 240 inmates with sentences of 5 years or more (an overall response rate of 35 percent).

Phase Two. The next phase consisted of face-to-face interviews with selected inmates and a review of inmate files. The literature review guided the development of the face to face interview protocol and the coding sheet for the inmate record review.

Phase Three. The last phase involved an extensive and sophisticated analysis of the data to identify underlying relationships not easily visible from the descriptive data.

**Study Subjects.** The original RFP target population was described as "long-term" offenders. DOC defined this as those sentenced to prison for 5 years or more. DOC provided the Justice Center with the list of subjects broken down by institution. Each institution further evaluated the list with respect to the criteria. This final list of inmates was the target population and each of these was given an opportunity to participate. Both male and female inmates were targeted.

During the course of the literature review it became apparent that there are many definitions of childhood physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect that are not well defined in the literature either for the general population or for incarcerated populations. Ours is a hybrid instrument that uses pieces of other instruments that we deemed appropriate to the project. Some of the pieces have been defined by their creators as specific sub-scales and we have tried to keep these sub-scales intact in order to provide comparable data. These sub-scales define physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and we have followed the respective original creators in summarizing and presenting this information. (See attached study, "Measuring Child Abuse and Neglect: A Review of Methods" for an in-depth review of the measurement literature that shaped this study.)

## **Data Collection**

Three distinct data collection efforts were engaged in this effort: congregate interviews, review of inmate "jackets," and in-person interviews with congregate interview participants. The congregate interviews provide information used to describe the child abuse histories of inmates and were the basis of the correlates of abuse study. Data developed from the jackets were used principally to assess biases in the sample. Finally, the interview data were used to probe abuse experience and explore the "cycle of violence" thesis.

**Congregate Interview.** The Justice Center staff worked closely with the individual institution contacts identified by DOC Headquarters. Each institution devised a slightly different method of securing the cooperation of the target population. However, once the final institutional pool was assembled, the survey process was the same. The Justice Center Research Associates explained the nature of the study and its content to the assembled inmates and asked for their voluntary cooperation. Those that remained were given the response booklet and answer sheet. An overhead projector was used in conjunction with reading each question. Some questions required the inmate to fill in their response on a Scantron answer sheet and other questions were answered directly on the response booklet. Every effort was made to minimize interactions and maximize the privacy of the respondents. The Justice Center Research Associates answered individual questions, monitored the inmates as they responded and collected all materials. Some inmates were given incentives to participate and others were not. This did not appear to change the rate of volunteering. Each session took about 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Justice Center staff visited seven institutions and obtained 240 surveys. The Scantron answer sheets were mechanically scored and Justice Center Research Associates coded those written in the response booklets. These data represent the foundation of the study. (See attached study, "Survey Methods and Administration" for a detailed description of the congregated interviews and data collection procedures for collection of official file information.)

**Inmate Jackets.** In an effort to assess the representativeness of the congregated interview sample, data were collected from the official inmate files (both OBSCIS and the paper files) for respondents and a random sample of non-respondents. Data about inmate demographics, sentence, conviction offense, adult and juvenile problems, and adult and juvenile criminal records was developed for 240 congregated interview respondents and 149 non-respondents.

**In-Person Interviews.** The congregated interviews were not able to develop detailed information about abuse experience. In-person interviews were conducted to supplement data developed in congregated interviews. The focus of the in-person interviews was on details of abuse experiences and on information to explore the cycle of abuse hypothesis. Interviews were conducted with a non-random sample of 100 inmates from Hiland Mountain, Palmer Medium, Palmer Maximum, and Spring Creek who had initially participated in the congregated interviews.

## **Sample Biases**

As participation in the congregated interview was voluntary, it was considered important to explore the possibility that those choosing to participate were not representative of the long-term inmate population in Alaska's institutions. As noted above, this was accomplished by comparing respondent and non-respondent information developed from inmate official records. Comparisons were made of race, birth-state, sentence length, current offense, initial security level, work history,

evidence of severe adult or juvenile problems, child abuse histories, and adult and juvenile criminal records.

While some differences were apparent, it appears that the congregate interview sample is “fairly” representative of the larger population. That noted, there are several significant biases. There is a racial bias with Whites over-represented and Alaska Natives under-represented in the congregate interview sample. Also, there appears to be a difference in child abuse histories. Congregate interview participant’s official files were more likely to exhibit evidence of child sexual abuse or neglect than the records of non-participants. (See attached study “An Assessment of Survey Biases” for details.)

### **Child Abuse Histories of Alaska’s Long-term Inmates**

The congregate interviews provide information about the abuse histories of Alaska’s long-term inmates. Abuse was explored along three conceptual dimensions: physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. These conceptions of abuse were measured using self-report instruments adapted from Widom to the congregate interview procedure. The only measures created specifically for this survey was a need series designed to determine whether basic needs were met during childhood. This series complements the Widom neglect measures.

Figures 1 through 3 highlight the specific childhood experiences that were queried and the percent of inmates that indicated they had such experience. Figure 1 presents the percent of respondents who indicated they experienced physical abuse. Two series are presented: the very severe violence scale (VSV), which asks if a family member ever beat, burned, or used a deadly weapon on the inmate while the inmate was a child; and, the self-reported child abuse-physical (SRCAP), which asks if anyone did the specified behaviors to the inmate while he/she was a child. Not surprisingly, ‘more serious’ physical abuse is less frequently reported than ‘more minor’ forms. What is surprising is the percentage of respondents who reported some form of physical abuse. When we focus on physical abuse from a family member (VSV) we note that nearly 50 percent of respondents report some form of physical abuse while children. When the focus shifts to abuse by anyone (SRCAP) we note that over 80 percent indicated they experienced some form of physical abused.

Figure 2 presents percentages of respondents indicating they had been neglected as children. Again two series are presented: the neglect series from Widom and the needs series developed by the Justice Center to measure satisfaction of basic needs. Both series indicate that severe forms of neglect of basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing) are less frequently reported than neglect of nurturing (e.g., adults who care, guidance, mentoring). However, when asked if they had experienced any form of neglect nearly 30 percent of respondents to the Widom neglect series indicated they had while slightly more than 65 percent reported neglect when responding to the Justice Center needs series.

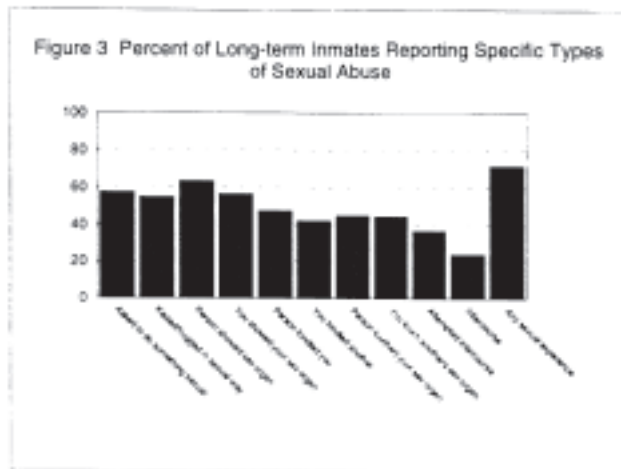
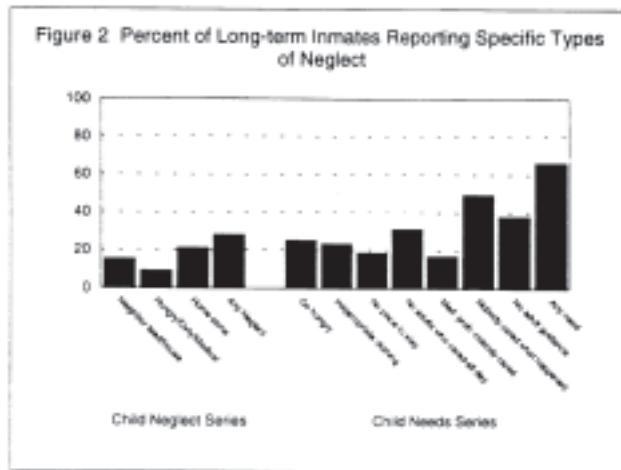
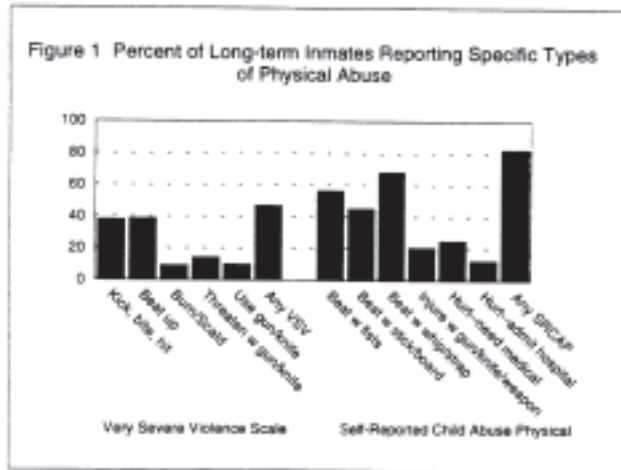


Figure 3 presents percentages of respondents indicating they had specific sexual experiences before they were 12 years of age. Slightly more than 70 percent of respondents indicated that they had one or more of the sexual experiences before they were twelve years of age. While it is evident that a substantial majority of long-term offenders had sexual experience early in childhood just slightly less than 25 percent indicated they consider the experience abuse.

The remaining figures explore child abuse histories by sex, race, and age at first arrest. Figure 4 highlights the different histories of male and female inmates. Women are more likely to report experiencing abuse than men particularly when the abuse measures tap family abuse, neglect, need, and sexual abuse. Another difference appears when women were asked if they considered their early childhood sexual experience abuse. Over 70 percent of the women participating in the congregative interview indicated they consider their experience sexual abuse but just 17 percent of the men felt they had been sexually abused.

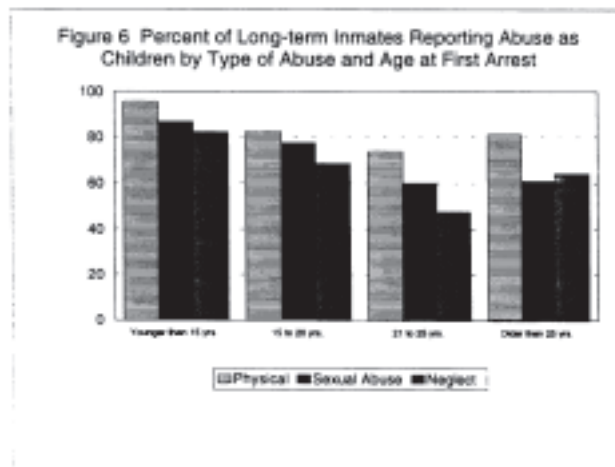
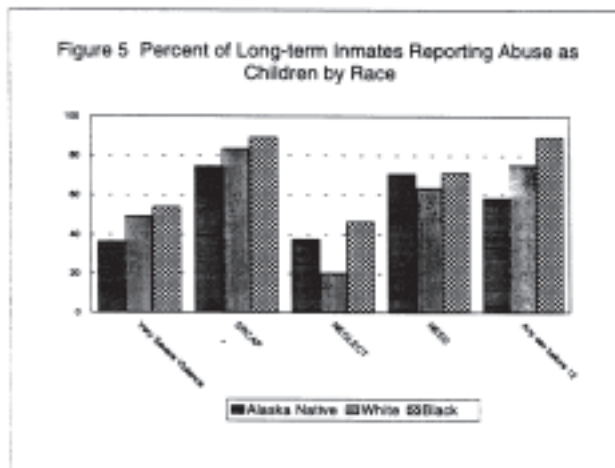
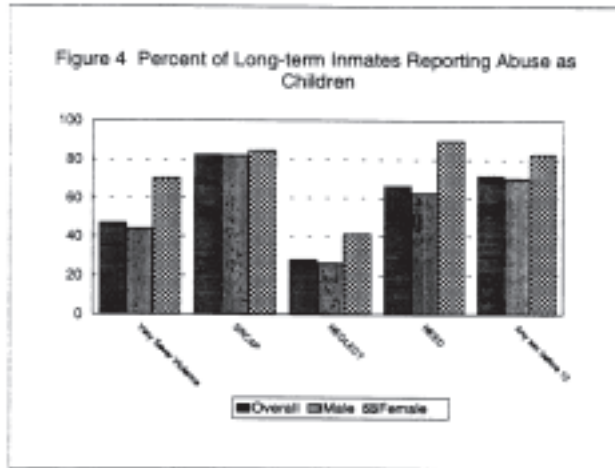
Figure 5 highlights racial differences. A higher percentage of African-American inmates reported physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse than either Whites or Alaska Natives. White inmates were next most likely to report abuse but Alaska Native inmates were more likely to report neglect or unmet needs than Whites.

Figure 6 presents the relationship between forms of abuse and age at first arrest. It is apparent that, regardless of the form of abuse (Physical-SRCAP, Neglect-Needs, and Sexual Experience), inmates who reported early ages of first arrest were more likely to also report a history of abuse as a child.

Other interesting findings (see attached tables, “Tables to Support Profile Analysis,” for detailed descriptive information about the abuse experiences reported) include:

- Inmates who report no juvenile arrests were less likely to report abuse than those with arrest records (see Table 7). In fact 100 percent of the 52 respondents who indicated they had three or more juvenile arrests reported experiencing physical abuse (SRCAP) as a child.
- Inmates who reported growing up in villages, as indicated by attending elementary school in villages, were less likely to report abuse but more likely to report neglect (see Table 7).
- Inmates who reported growing up in a two-parent family were less likely to report a history of abuse or neglect (see Table 7).
- Inmates whose parents abused alcohol or drugs were more likely to report histories of abuse and neglect (see Table 7).

There were very few surprises in these data. The most compelling finding is how much abuse long-term inmates reported. We were not surprised that this population was abused as children but we were not prepared for the magnitude or the rates. Widom, using the same measures of abuse and neglect, found levels of abuse reported among male inmates much lower than those among Alaska’s long-term inmates. The differences could be do to: the class of inmates chosen (i.e., long-term inmates may have histories that are different inmates generally); procedural differences in data collection (Widom used intake interviews; this study relied on congregative interviews); or it could



be that there is a higher level of abuse in Alaska than in the midwestern area that was the focus of Widom's attention. Regardless of the reason the levels of abuse are strikingly high.

## **Cycle of Violence**

The focus of the personal interviews was to provide an alternative to the structure inherent in the congregate interview for obtaining information about the childhoods of these long-term inmates. We used the interview to explore the "cycle of abuse" thesis and to explore areas not covered in the congregate interviews or official records as well as allowing the subject to describe their own childhood and any abuse they may have encountered. Much of the information from the personal interview was coded for analysis, but the insights gained from these one-to-one interviews greatly expanded our appreciation of the more statistical data. (For a detailed discussion of the in-person interview data see attached study, "Personal Interview Administration and Results.")

We conducted 100 open-ended, face-to-face interviews lasting about 30 minutes. All of the eligible female inmates at HMCC and all of the eligible men at MCCC were given an opportunity to volunteer for the personal interview and we had an overall response rate of 85 percent. Many of the original sample had been moved to Arizona or transferred by the time of the interview.

The interview began with the interviewer merely asking the subject to describe what it was like growing up. The interviewer recorded the responses, probed for detail and prompted the subject to recall certain items so that we could obtain a consistent data set. Later, the interviewer rated these responses and coded the data for entry. The subjective judgements as to the nature and extent of abuse were difficult to consistently demonstrate, making the more structured approaches appear to have an advantage when statistical precision is required.

We did not see compelling, statistical evidence for the existence of a "cycle of abuse." Indeed, we found the inmates, almost every one, adamant about *not* treating their kids as they had been treated. The vague recollections or lack of contact with the parents or grandparents hindered precise determination of parental upbringing. For many, the topic of their own parents' abuse had never been raised in the family, and for others the lack of consistent caregivers made the question of parental abuse moot. There were just too many individuals in the child's life to clearly isolate the main "parent." We did see abused parents who abused the subject who, in turn, abused their own children. But we also saw families with no abuse history and still the subject abused their kids.

Overall, the interviews shed considerable light on the quality of the lives of these long-term inmate: they tended to have lived disrupted, unstable and somewhat abusive childhoods.

## **Correlates of Abuse**

The focus of our concern about correlates of abuse was on "plausible consequences" of abuse. We focused on two principal types of consequences: criminal and personality. The focus on



criminal consequences were of two type: the nature of the conviction offense (either violent or sex offenses) and nature of incarceration (length of sentence and initial security level). The personality consequences explored hostility, disassociation, anxiety, coping strategies (rational problem solving or escapist), and histories of psychological treatment.

For several reasons measures had to be developed or refined before the analysis could proceed. First, the abuse measures used in the descriptive discussion were viewed as problematic because they did not account for seriousness of the reported abuse or chronicity. Second, simple summated scores are inappropriate unless it is determined that the resultant scales are one-dimensional. To this end refined measures of abuse and measures of “plausible consequences” were develop through a process of data reduction (factor analysis) to produce a limited number of uni-dimensional scales that were then tested for internal consistency. (See pp. 1-10 of the attached study, “Correlates of Abuse,” for a detailed discussion of measures construction.)

Seven abuse measures were constructed. The Needs series developed by the Justice Center produced one measure, as did the Widom Neglect series. Two physical abuse scales each were produced from the VSV series and the SRCAP series. The two series distinguish less severe abuse (hitting, beating, etc.) from serious physical harm (hospitalization, use of deadly weapons, etc.). The scales developed from the VSV series of questions are labeled Physical Abuse (family) and Physical Harm (family) to indicate less and more severe abuse, respectively, at the hands of family members. The SRCAP measures are label similarly but indicate “any source” of abuse. Finally, the child sexual experience measure was a simple summated scale of the 10 sexual experience items.

Measures of plausible consequences were of several types. First, violent offenders were distinguished from others by a dummy code (0 if non-violent current offense, 1 if violent current offense). Second, sex offenders were distinguished by a similar dummy code. Third, sentence length and initial security level were extracted from official records. Fourth, the disassociation/hostility series captured in the congregate interview was factor analyzed producing three relevant factors: hostility, disassociation, and anxiety. Fifth, the coping strategies for dealing with problems questions captured during the congregate interviews was factor analyzed producing two relevant factors: rational analytical problem solving, and escapist. Finally, a four question previous psychological treatment series was examined and produce a scale titled psychological treatment history.

Once the measures were created two forms of analysis were conducted: first, a bivariate correlation analysis (see pp. 10-11, “Correlates of Abuse”) and, second, a multivariate analysis that in separate equations regressed the plausible consequences on the types of abuse.

The results of the correlates studies are that there appears to be a weak relationship between some measures of abuse (particularly physical abuse in the family and child sexual experience) and several of the personality variables (particularly hostility, anxiety, escapist, and histories of psychological treatment). The type of offense, sentence length, or initial security level were not predicted by any of the forms of child abuse.

## **Conclusions**

We have completed an ambitious project which for the first time has examined the child abuse histories of a significant, and growing, portion of the Department of Corrections. These long-term inmates, those with sentences of 5 years or more, represent a challenge to the Department and to the larger society from which they came. The Department is faced with two questions: What is best for these individual now that they are in custody? and, How do we prevent others from ever making it that far in the first place? Our study cannot hope to be the final answer to either of these complex questions but we have been able to push ahead our knowledge of these people significantly. There are three main facets of this problem about which we now have a much clearer picture:

- **THERE HAS BEEN A GREAT DEAL OF ABUSE IN THE LIVES OF THESE INDIVIDUALS**

We have documented the amount of abuse experienced by these individuals using both our congregate and personal interviews. Clearly, we found a significantly higher percentage of these individuals who have be abused than one sees in other studies of troubled individuals. They have experienced a great deal of physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect. The reasons behind this phenomenon are unclear and require further study.

- **THERE IS NO CLEAR EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE “CYCLE OF VIOLENCE” THESIS**

We have used our personal interviews in an attempt to uncover evidence for a “cycle of abuse” and have found no hard evidence that it exists. Many inmates who were abused as children indicated they would not treat their children that way. We were unable to determine whether parents of abused inmates had themselves been abused, as interview subjects had very little information about their parent’s childhood. Though this statistical analysis does not support a “cycle of abuse” thesis, it is important to note that among the inmates interviewed, inmates who experienced abuse in childhood were more likely to abuse than those who were not. This question will require more precise measures of parental abuse histories than were available from their abused children.

- **ABUSE HISTORIES ARE WEAKLY RELATED TO OFFENSE TYPES AND PERSONALITY PROBLEMS**

The congregate interview provided a large and complex data set and allowed us to perform a multivariate analysis examining the relation between forms of abuse and problem behaviors and feelings. The most important finding from the multivariate analysis is that child abuse histories do not account for problem behaviors and feelings among long-term inmates. While

it remains likely that child abuse is a contributing factor, it is apparent that a great deal more than child abuse must be considered if we are to fully understand these problematic behaviors and feelings. That noted, it is important to remember that the analysis was focus on long-term inmates. A review of other segments of the inmate population may reveal other results.

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**Incidence of Child Abuse and the  
Relationship to Criminality:  
Literature Review**

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

by

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## INCIDENCE OF CHILD ABUSE AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO CRIMINALITY: LITERATURE REVIEW

This review is part of a larger study sponsored by the Alaska Department of Corrections that focuses on the relationship between child abuse and adult criminality. The purpose of this review is to prepare a “backcloth” of information about the incidence of child abuse in the population generally, in the prisoner population, and to explore what is known about the relationship between abuse as a child and future adult criminality. The review presents a brief discussion of incidence of child abuse in the population, followed by discussion of studies that measure reported incidence of child abuse among prisoner populations, and concluding with an examination of studies that have explored the relationship between child abuse and adult criminality.

### Introduction

It is intuitive to most people that child maltreatment would have negative consequences for its victims and that these consequences may continue well into their adult life. Numerous studies have explored this issue and reported a wide range of negative effects on the victims. Some of these effects include: fear of being alone, sleep disorders, low self-esteem, anxiety, the inability to trust others, aggression, depression, and self destructive behavior (Burgess et al. 1987; Beitchman et al. 1992). In addition to these harmful effects a considerable amount of literature has addressed a theory known as the cycle of violence which suggests that violence breeds violence (Curtis 1963). According to the cycle of violence theory, children who grow up exposed to and victims of violent crime will themselves learn to become violent criminals.

The focus of this review is on two types of studies: incidence studies and relational studies. The incidence studies are of two types. One focuses on the incidence of child abuse in the general population. The other, on the incidence of child abuse reported by prisoners. The incidence studies will provide information about levels of child abuse.

The relational studies explore the relationship between child abuse and subsequent adult criminality and/or juvenile delinquency. While many studies have addressed this topic, our review will focus on four of the most rigorous prospective studies. These studies help us specify the relationship between child abuse and subsequent criminality. Not included in the review are “clinical” studies which tend to focus on a small number of subjects who are selected for study in a non-systematic manner.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Review of this body of work is beyond the scope of this project though insights from this literature may be important as treatment programs and protocols are developed.

The contemporary literature regarding child maltreatment's relationship to later negative outcomes is voluminous and stretches back 35 years.<sup>2</sup> This review began with a search of NCJRS and NCCD criminal justice abstracts as well as psychological and sociological data bases at the University of Alaska Anchorage's library.<sup>3</sup> Also searched were the Library Catalog of Western Library holdings and the Internet. From this search 50 relevant articles were acquired. However, much of this literature is not considered here because of serious 'methodological flaws or narrow focus on unique sub-populations.

This review focuses on the findings of ten studies that were either sufficiently broad or/and methodologically rigorous—six are retrospective studies of prisoners and four are prospective studies of abused children. The retrospective studies were limited to self-report histories of adult prisoners. The prospective studies were chosen based on two criteria: (1) use of independent confirmation that abuse had occurred and (2) use of control groups.

## **Incidence of Child Abuse in American Society**

The incidence of child abuse in the society is captured in several polls that asked national probability samples of adults if they had been victims of abuse as children. The following three surveys provide a window into the cross-national incidence of child abuse. In 1989 the Gallop organization asked a sample of survey respondents "Were you, yourself, ever a victim of child abuse" (cited in the 1989 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics)—8 percent indicated yes (5 percent for males, 10 percent for females). In 1994 the Gallop organization asked a more focused question "When you were growing up, do you remember any time when you were punched or kicked or choked by a parent or other adult guardian" (cited in 1993 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics)—12 percent indicated yes (13 percent of males, and 10 percent of females). Finally, in 1995 the Gallop organization posed question focused on child sexual abuse. They asked if parents, as children, had been touched in a sexual way or forced to touch someone else in a sexual way—23 percent indicated they had. The same survey asked if they had been forced to have sex before they were 18—slightly less than 10 percent indicated yes.

What is apparent is that child abuse is frequent—at least if you ask people if they had experienced abuse. Based on these surveys it appear that somewhere between 1 in 10 and 1 in 5 children will experience some form of abuse.

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<sup>2</sup> Curtis' 1963 article "Violence Begets Violence, Perhaps" has gained recognition as the event that focused attention on what has become known as the "cycle of violence theory."

<sup>3</sup> The NCJRS search included material entered in the database between 1970 and November 1, 1997. The NCCD Collection was the 1968 to 1996 database. The Psychological Database accessed through the University of Alaska Anchorage Library included journal articles published between 1974 and September 1997. The Sociological Database was searched through the University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library and included articles Published between 1973 and 1997.

## **Incidence of Child Abuse Among Prisoners**

The survey of the literature isolated six studies of adult prisoners which are reviewed here (see Table 1). The first of these studies is a Survey of Prisoners, by the U. S. Bureau of the Census on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the second and third studies were conducted by Departments of Corrections in Virginia and Oregon; and the fourth, fifth, and sixth studies by independent researchers with the cooperation of the departments of corrections responsible for the prisoners studied, Weeks and Widom (in press), Dutton and Hart (1992) and Dewey (1997). These six studies sampled prisoners from 45 randomly selected states, Virginia, Oregon, New York, the Pacific Region of Canada, and Alaska respectively. Four of these studies used personal interviews of the prisoners as their method of data collection, one relied upon official records, and one used a self-administered survey.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (1993) found lower rates of reported abuse than the other studies reviewed here. These rates were 12 percent for males and 31 percent for female prisoners reporting a history of child abuse. Though the BJS publication does not discuss the basis of these estimates, review of instruments presently in use by BJS suggests that their questionnaire elicits information only about serious assault (shot at or knifed) and serious sexual assault (sexual contact against will). This suggests that the Bureau of Justice Statistics was utilizing a narrow definition of abuse. Further there were few probing questions to stimulate the subjects memory. Thus, it appears likely that instrumentation accounts for the lower incidence of reported abuse in the BJS prisoner's survey.

The Virginia Department of Corrections (1983) study of the child abuse histories of prisoners relied in an abbreviated six item questionnaire (two demographic questions, one abuse question with a follow-up about the abuser, and two questions concerned with whether the inmate had abused his/her children). The abuse question was designed to reflect statutory requirements for legal abuse in place at the time in Virginia. The study isolated rates of child abuse histories among the prisoners of 28 percent for males and 0 percent for females.<sup>4</sup> The authors of the study urged caution in relying on these findings for two principal reasons. First, the response rate for the study was only 51 percent. Second, not a single female inmate responded that she had been the victim of child abuse—highly unlikely event given the rest of the literature.

The Oregon Department of Corrections (1993) and the Dewey (1997) focused their inquiries on incarcerated women. The Oregon study interviewed a random sample of 89 women housed at the Oregon Women's Correctional Center and the Columbia River Correctional Institution. The Dewey study was based on self selected samples of 49 women at two Alaska correctional facilities, Meadowcreek and Sixth Avenue Correctional Center, who completed self-administered surveys. Both studies reported high rates of child abuse victimization among women prisoners, 72 percent in Oregon and 73.5 percent in Alaska. Neither of these studies defined the terms they used, leaving

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<sup>4</sup> Only 18 women responded to the survey, none indicating a history of abuse. The authors of the original study were justifiably skeptical of this result and caution against its use.

**Table 1. Child Abuse Histories of Prisoners**

Study	Method	Definition of abuse	Response rate	Finding % indicating abuse		
Survey of State Prisoners (1991)	Interview Self-report	Sexual abuse was defined as sexual contact against the respondent's will. Physical abuse asked about injuries.	94% of 14,926	Male <sup>1</sup> Female	12% 31%	(n = 175) (n = 462)
Virginia DOC (1983)	Interview Self-report	The study asked the subject if they had been abused as a child. The Virginia legal definition of abuse and neglect was included for purposes of clarification. The study did not clarify how this clarification was done.	51% of 400	Male Female	28% 0%	(n = 51)
Oregon DOC (1993)	Interview Self-report	Undefined – the respondents' evaluation of what constituted physical or sexual abuse was accepted <sup>2</sup>	72% of 123	Female Physical Sexual Both Any abuse	48% 64% 37% 72%	(n = 55) (n = 75) (n = 36) (n = 85)
Dewey (1997)	Self-administered questionnaire	Undefined – the respondents were asked if they had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Terms were not defined.	94% of 52	Female	74%	(n = 36)
Weeks & Widom (in press)	Interview Self-report	Physical Abuse Conflicts Tactics Scale (CTS) –narrowly defined Self-Report of Child Abuse Physical (SRCAP) – broadly defined. Sexual Abuse Subjects consider themselves to have been sexually abused, had sex with an older person, or any sex against their will. Neglect Lack of food, supervision, or bathing.	95% of 317	CTS SRCAP Combined Sex abuse Neglect	35% 58% 65% 14% 16%	(n = 10) (n = 17) (n = 19) (n = 45) (n = 47)
Dutton & Hart (1992)	Records Research	Physical abuse – physical assault that was perpetrated by a parent, stepparent, or guardian. Sexual abuse – sexual assault or molestation perpetrated by an adult or someone at least five years older. Other abuse – witnessing inter-parental physical or sexual assault or extreme physical neglect.	99% of 604	Males Physical Sexual Other Any abuse	31% 11% 13% 41%	(n = 18) (n = 66) (n = 75) (n = 24)

<sup>1</sup> Includes abuse as both an adult and as a child.

<sup>2</sup> In response to questions regarding family relations 56% of the inmates reported low levels of family violence. Only 30% of the respondents reported being physically injured by a parent.



the respondent to evaluate what was meant by abuse. The Oregon study asked “would you say that you were ever physically abused. . . would you say that you have ever been molested, raped or sexually abused” (Oregon Dept. of Corrections, 1993 p. 5). Likewise Dewey asked the subjects “if, as a child they had experienced sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse” (Dewey, 1997 p. 35). It is noteworthy that the self-administered questionnaire used in the study of Alaska women and interview instrument used in Oregon produced similar results.

The Weeks and Widom (in press) study focused on male inmates. This study included both the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and the Self-Report of Child Abuse Physical (SRCAP) in their instrument to measure physical abuse. The CTS instrument utilizes a stricter definition than the SRCAP limiting child abuse to the very severe violence level of the scale.<sup>5</sup> The CTS instrument resulted in 34.9 percent of the prisoners reporting child abuse. Using the SRCAP instrument 58.1 percent of the prisoners reported being abused as a child. Combining the two instruments resulted in 68 percent of the prisoners reporting some kind of physical abuse as a child. The study also captured information about childhood sexual abuse and neglect. Weeks and Widom found that slightly more than 14 percent of prisoners report some form of sexual abuse and about 16 percent report neglect both before age 12.

The Dutton and Hart (1992) study used official records as their data source for information about male inmates incarcerated at seven Correctional Service of Canada institutions within the Pacific Rim. These records included criminal records, police reports, medical, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, and social services records. Dutton and Hart reported rates of 31 percent for physical abuse, 11 percent sexual abuse and 13 percent other abuse (includes extreme neglect and witnessing interparental physical or sexual assault). These results are similar to that obtained in Weeks and Widom (in press).

If we rely on the Weeks and Widom (in press) and the Dutton and Hart studies we would estimate the male inmate abuse and neglect populations in Alaska’s prisons as follows. We would expect that between 30 and 40 percent of male inmates have child physical abuse histories, between 10 and 15 percent have child sexual abuse histories, and that about 15 percent were neglected as children. The studies in Oregon (Oregon DOC, 1993) and earlier in Alaska (Dewey, 1997) present a far different picture for women. Though neither study provided information about types of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, or neglect) both lead us to expect in excess of 70 percent of incarcerated women to have histories of child abuse.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For further discussion of these two instruments see the methods portion of this report.

<sup>6</sup> A 1987 study by the American Correctional Association reports that slightly more than 60 percent of incarcerated women reported childhood physical abuse and nearly 55 percent reported childhood sexual abuse (cited in 1992 Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics at p. 651).

## **Prospective Relational Studies**

Prospective relational studies provide information about the relationship between child abuse and future adult criminality. The studies described here compare the adult criminal histories of people who were abused as children to those who were not and in some cases permit attribution of criminal histories to abusive pasts.

The review of the literature isolated four prospective studies which have been widely cited (see Table 2). These are McCord's (1983) study of men reared in Eastern Massachusetts prior to World War II, Widom's (1989a) study of children abused and neglected in a metropolitan area of the Midwest between 1967 and 1971, the study by Zingraff, et al. (1993) of children in Mecklenberg County, North Carolina, and Smith and Thornberry's (1995) study of Rochester Public School Children. These studies are important because they provide analysis of the relationship between child abuse and later criminal conduct. In addition, they avoid the most serious methodological problems associated with retrospective studies. The problems cited in current literature include: (1) bias of retrospective recall due to the influences of present circumstances and context; (2) failure to use control samples for comparison of sample rates with base rates of the population; (3) Weak sampling techniques that make use of convenience samples, samples drawn from deviant groups render deviance a constant as opposed to a dependent variable; (4) failure to control for other factors that may influence the maltreatment-delinquency relationship; and (5) use of self-report data without independent confirmation (Widom 1988, 1989a ; Zingraff, et al. 1993; Kaufman and Zigler 1987).

The McCord study (1993) is the earliest of the prospective studies examined in this literature review. This study re-examined data from a prior youth study that had focused on delinquency prevention. During the 1930s and 1940s, 232 cases of boys who grew up in transitional neighborhoods were analyzed.<sup>7</sup> In 1936 and 1937 teachers filled out trait cards describing the boys behavior. Between 1939 and 1945 social workers followed up on the boys by visiting them and their parents at home. These social workers documented their findings during the visits. The original coding of the boys as either loved, rejected, neglected, or abused was done in 1957. As would be expected the loved category of boys had the lowest level of serious delinquency (7%) and overall criminal activity (23%).<sup>8</sup> The rejected category, however, had the highest level of both juvenile and adult convictions, 29 and 53 percent respectively. This compares to 10 and 39 percent for abused and 15 and 35 percent for neglected. In addition to these findings, rejected boys were most likely to be exposed to: alcoholic or criminal models, aggressive parents, low expectations, or have fathers who were not dominant. The abused boys were likely to have dominant fathers and aggressive parents with high expectations. Neglected boys were the least likely to be exposed to parental

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<sup>7</sup> The original study included 252 boys from 232 families. Only one boy per family was considered in the study.

<sup>8</sup> Only convictions were considered, the overall category includes both juvenile and adult convictions.

**Table 2. Major Prospective Studies of Child Maltreatment and Later Criminality Using Control Samples**

Study	Subjects	Criteria for abuse	Criteria for record	Finding		
				% of sample with a delinquency/criminal record		
McCord (1983)	232 males living in transitional neighborhoods prior to World War II.	Coded based on social workers case reports made between 1939 and 1945.	Juvenile and adult convictions	Neglected group Abused group Rejected group Loved control group	35% 39% 53% 23%	(n = 48) (n = 48) (n = 34) (n = 10)
Widom (1989)	908 children drawn from juvenile court petitions of a Midwest metropolitan area between 1967 and 1971. A cohort of 667 subjects was used as a control.	Court findings that abuse or neglect occurred.	Adult arrests	1-Male Abuse/neglect Control 2-Female Abuse/neglect Control	42% 33% 16% 9%	(n = 44) (n = 33) (n = 46) (n = 33)
Zingraff, et al. (1993)	633 children with reports of maltreatment substantiated by county departments of social services. Control groups included 387 children randomly selected from a general school population and 280 children randomly selected from rolls of those receiving economic assistance. Attempts were made to weed out abused and neglected children from the control groups.	Reports made to local social service agencies and substantiated by social workers.	Complaints to juvenile court	Abuse/neglect Poverty control School control	14% 9% 5%	(n = 63) (n = 28) (n = 38)
Smith & Thornberry (1995)	1,000 Rochester public school children, sample was weighted to over-represent at risk youth.	Reports made to Monroe County Department of Social Services and substantiated by a social worker.	1-Police contacts 2-Self-report	1-Using police contacts Abuse/neglect Control group 2-Using self-report delinquency Abuse/neglect Control group	45% 32% 79% 70%	(n = 13) (n = 86) (n = 13) (n = 86)

conflict. These findings suggest that child maltreatment may be correlated with other variables associated with parental criminality.

Widom (1989) sampled 908 cases of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect that were substantiated by a court in a Midwestern metropolitan community between 1967 and 1971. This sample consisted of only court-substantiated cases, thus limiting it to only what may have been the most severe instances of abuse or neglect. The study also included a matched comparison group who were matched on age, race, sex, and to some undefined extent on family socioeconomic status. Overall 28.6 percent of the abused and neglected group compared to 21.1 percent of the control group had adult criminal records. The results also suggest that child maltreatment more seriously affects women and blacks than it does white males. With regard to the cycle of violence theory, the report indicated that 8.5 percent of the abused and neglected group, as compared to 6.2 percent of the control group, had been arrested for violent criminal behavior. Although the abused and neglected group did have a higher rate for violent crime the difference was not enough to meet customary standards of significance. Arrest for child abuse among the abuse and neglected group and the comparison group are almost identical, 1.1 and 1.0 percent respectively. These results seem to conflict with the cycle of violence theory which would predict significantly higher levels of violent crime and particularly for child abuse and neglect.

Zingraff, et al. (1993) compared subsequent delinquency records of maltreated children with a sample of same age school children and a sample of same age children drawn from public assistance roles. Their findings suggest that the maltreatment-delinquency relationship has been exaggerated. In general, the association between maltreatment (conceptualized as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect) and future delinquency vanished in their models as other factors were controlled (notably age—older children were more likely to have delinquency records than younger children). However, they note that jointly (versus independently) maltreatment plays a modest role in predicting future delinquency when the effects of a number of family and demographic variable are statistically controlled. It is important to note that Zingraff, et al., did not follow their cohorts into adult life so their conclusions are restricted to predicting juvenile delinquency rather than adult criminality.<sup>9</sup>

Smith and Thornberry (1995), in contrast to Zingraff, et al., (1993) concluded that child maltreatment and subsequent delinquency (both official and self-reported) are positively related and that the relationship holds even when controlling for other factors. In addition they concluded that the seriousness of the maltreatment was related to subsequent delinquency. They based their conclusion on a multivariate analysis of data from the Rochester Youth Development Study (RYDS). The RYDS project collected eight waves of information from a stratified sample of 1,000 seventh and eighth grade students and their caregivers during the period between 1988-92. The database includes both official and self-report. The official data are drawn from police and social service records. The self-report data were drawn from interviews of students and their caregivers. The

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<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Zingraff, et al., found that the most important maltreatment-delinquency correlate was between maltreatment and status offenses. Maltreated children were marginally more likely to be adjudicated status offenders. Status offenses cease to be adjudicable when a child reaches majority.

study purposefully over sampled from high-crime areas and males but study results are presented as weighted statistics to reflect the general population.

Taken as a whole the prospective studies are a source of considerable optimism. Though there is evidence that abuse and neglect experienced in childhood increases the probability of serious juvenile delinquency and adult criminality it also is apparent that the criminogenic effects of abuse are usually overcome. This suggests that there is a significant role for treatment.

## **Summary**

This review focused on developing a picture of the incidence of child abuse in the larger society, among prisoner, and on the relationship between abuse as a child and adult criminality. The purpose of the review was to develop a starting point for the abuse profile study in Alaska. Based on the review we find, as many others have before, prisoners are much more likely to have a history of child abuse than people who are not incarcerated. A majority of people with child abuse histories do not develop serious adult criminal records. That the relationship between abuse as a child and adult criminality may well be confounded by other factors correlated with criminality and abuse. Finally, it is important to note that women who are incarcerated appear to experience much higher rates of abuse as children than men.

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# Measuring Child Abuse and Neglect: A Review of Methods

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

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## MEASURING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: A REVIEW OF METHODS

The design of this study seeks to apply instrument design and interview techniques which appear to have the highest degree of validity and reliability. The following section presents a discussion of the principal design elements of this study: the source of the measurement instruments, elements and interpretation of the measurement instruments, and the interview administration techniques to be used.<sup>1</sup>

### Sources of Instruments

In general, the methodological complications which have arisen in this field derive from the personal and sensitive nature of the phenomena being studied, and the extent to which this phenomena is associated with the inherently distant realm of early childhood experiences. The three decades of research on this issue has principally been retrospective in nature (Widom, 1995), in that it typically has relied on the present day memories of victims to relate the nature of the abuse or neglect they experienced as children.

Numerous methodological concerns have been raised regarding this approach, including: the distortion of memories over time (Squire, 1989), redefinition of past events due to present concerns (Ross, 1989), redefinition of past events due to present influences (Fivush, 1993). As summarized by Brewin, Andrews and Gottlib (1993) the retrospective approach is affected by: "...both internal and external forces. Social influences, childhood amnesia, and the simple fallibility of memory all impose limitations on the accuracy of recall."

Attempts to assess the extent of these distortions have not been encouraging. Della Femina, Yeager, and Lewis (1990) examined self-reports of childhood physical abuse among detainees in a Connecticut prison and found that 53 percent gave reports which differed from actual records and documents discovered by the researchers. The researchers speculated that these distortions arise from: "embarrassment, a wish to protect parents, a sense of having deserved the abuse, a conscious wish to forget the past, and a lack of rapport with the interviewer."

As is the nature of research, inquiry on the subjects of childhood sexual and physical abuse have been conducted on separate, yet parallel tracks. And while much of the methodological work has been focused exclusively within these separate domains, the findings regarding methodological concerns have tended to be convergent and concordant, as demonstrated by the methodological works authored by Widom and Shepard (1996) and Widom and Morris (1996).

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion relies heavily on the methodological articles authored by Widom and Shepard (1997) and Widom and Morris (1997).

In the interest of addressing these concerns, a benchmark study was undertaken with grants from both the National Institutes of Mental Health, Justice, and Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (Widom, 1989c). This study adopted a cohorts–design which offered an opportunity to assess the quality of retrospective measures in light of historical records consisting of documented findings by the court of child abuse and neglect. This study identified abused or neglected individuals (subject cohort) through court record checks, matching them with individuals who had no court record of abuse or neglect (control cohort) on a series of demographic variables, and then sought to interview both the subjects and the controls using several measurement instruments derived from leading research in the field.

The instruments used in Widom’s study consist of two scales designed to assess childhood physical abuse, a series of questions to assess childhood sexual abuse, and a short question series used to assess childhood neglect. Analysis of the data generated by the initial waves of this study has provided evidence of the level of validity of these instruments (Widom and Morris, 1997) (Widom and Shepard, 1997). This study will utilize adaptations of these measurement instruments. The necessity to adapt these instruments arises from the administrative and fiscal matters that distinguish this study from Widom’s work. As noted in the following discussion of the instrumentation, these adaptations should not preclude comparisons with results of other studies which utilized these instruments.

## **Abuse and Neglect Measures**

The **childhood physical abuse** measurement instrument consists of two scales: the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) developed by Straus (1979), and the Self-Report of Childhood Abuse Physical (SRCAP) developed by Widom and Shepard (1996). The CTS has been used by various researchers to determine the amount and severity of family violence (e.g. Brutz and Ingoldsby, 1984; Dembo, Derke, LaVoie, Borders, Washburn, and Schmeidler, 1987; Gelles and Edfeldt, 1986; Giles-Sims, 1985; Kruttschnitt and Dornfeld, 1992; Meredith, Abbott, and Adams, 1986). A subscale portion of the CTS labeled by Straus and Gelles (1990) as the Very Severe Violence (VSV) scale has been used to measure the absence or presence of childhood physical abuse. The VSV consists of a series a questions regarding behaviors which could have resulted in physical injury, including: kick, bit or hit with a fist, beat up, burned or scalded, threatened with a knife or gun, or used a knife or gun. The CTS index series is introduced to respondents as concerning: “...things that your parents or the people in your family might have done when they had a disagreement with you when you were growing up, that is, up to the time you finished elementary school”, which effectively limits responses to events which occurred during early childhood.

The SRCAP is an alternate measure designed to enable self-report of childhood physical abuse. The SRCAP asks respondents about whether “Up to the time you finished elementary school, did anyone inside or outside of your family ever:” 1) beat or really hurt you by hitting you with a bare hand or fist; 2) beat or hit you with something hard like a stick or baseball bat; 3) injure you with a

knife, shot you with a gun, or use another weapon against you; 4) hurt you badly enough so that you needed a doctor or other medical treatment; 5) physically injure you so that you were admitted to a hospital; and 6) beat you when you didn't deserve it. A positive response to any of the VSV or SRCAP items would be considered an indication of childhood physical abuse.

The article by Widom and Shepard (1997), discusses the validity of these measurement instruments. A comparative analysis of the retrospective self-reports of childhood physical abuse as measured by the CTS-VSV and SRCAP instruments and official records of physical abuse demonstrate a relative improvement over chance (RIOC) level of 40 percent. This means that by using the CTS-VSV and SRCAP instruments, a researcher gains a 40 percent improvement over random assignment when classifying a subject as having been physically abused during childhood, when official records regarding physical abuse is used as the test of validity.

Another measure of validity presented by Widom and Shepard (1997) compares the measurement results to correlates of official reports childhood physical abuse. This form of accuracy assessment is known as construct validity. In this case, the authors cite research findings that indicate an official finding of childhood physical abuse to be an effective predictor of later arrests for violence (Widom, 1989c). Thus, if the measurement instruments are valid measures of childhood physical abuse, they should also be effective predictors of arrests for violence. While the authors did not find this particular relationship to exist, they did find that the instruments were effective predictors of self-reported violent behavior. The authors consider the behaviors which result in self-reported violence, to be a logical correlate of the behaviors that result in arrests for violence. Therefore, the strength of the relationship between the self-report of childhood physical abuse and the self-report of violent behavior is interpreted as an indication of validity achieved when assessing the incidence rate of childhood physical abuse using the CTS-VSV and SRCAP instruments.

**Childhood sexual abuse** is to be measured using instruments developed from the research of Finkelhor (1979, 1986) and Russell (1983) by Widom and Morris (1997). The instrument is designed to utilize a three pronged approach to enable self-report of childhood sexual abuse. The three instruments consist of: #1) eliciting a recounting of childhood sexual activity using a list of common behaviors, and then asking is any of this activity was considered sexual abuse by the respondent, #2) a series of questions which allow self-report of any childhood sexual activity with someone 10 years older than the respondent, and #3) a question which allows self-report of sexual activity or attempted activity against the will of the respondent during childhood. An affirmative response to the single items in tests #1 or #3, or an affirmative response to any of the items comprising test #2 would be classified as a retrospective account of childhood sexual abuse.

The article by Widom and Morris (1997), discusses the level of validity achieved by the use of these measurement instruments. Fifty-four percent of the respondents who were known to have official records of childhood sexual abuse were determined to have experienced childhood sexual abuse using the self-report measurement instrument #1, 32 percent were determined abused by instrument #2, and 47 percent were determined abused by instrument #3. This compared to levels in the control group (no official record of childhood sexual abuse) of 14 percent using instrument #1, 5 percent using instrument #2 and 10 percent using instrument #3. The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) significance

level of this finding is  $p \leq .001$ . The authors note that since these cases actually consist of court findings regarding childhood sexual abuse, it certainly underscores the concerns regarding weaknesses of using retrospective accounts to measure incidence levels of these experiences.

The RIOC scores were 45 percent for instrument #1, 29 percent for instrument #2, and 38 percent for #3. Note that the greatest gain over random assignment derives from instrument #1 which essentially focuses on the subjects' self-perception of whether childhood sexual activity was abuse. This reflects an interesting finding noted by the authors. In the process of seeking to examine the construct validity of the instruments, association analysis was conducted examining the relationship between the self-report of childhood sexual abuse (instrument #1) and diagnoses regarding depression (current or remitted), alcohol abuse/dependence and suicide attempts. These diagnoses were derived from results of the revised third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III-R)*; American Psychiatric Association, 1987) which was also administered to the subjects and controls in the course of the Widom study.

The authors (Widom and Morris, 1997) found that the associations between the self-report measures (#1, #2, and #3) of childhood sexual activity and the diagnoses of depression, alcoholism and suicide were stronger than the association between actual court findings of childhood sexual abuse and the diagnoses (Widom and Morris [1997]; Table 8, p. 43). Thus, whether there was a court finding of abuse or not, those who tested positive for abuse on the self-report instruments were much more likely to also test positive for depression, alcoholism, and suicide attempts. Conversely, those who did not report abuse, even if they had been judged victims of childhood sexual abuse by a court, were much less likely to be positive for depression, alcoholism, or suicide attempts.<sup>2</sup>

While these findings did not support the authors' hypothesis regarding construct validity, but they may indicate: a) the degree of harm inflicted on some victims of childhood sexual abuse, or b) the extent to which the individual's state of mental health is intricately related to their perception of life events and their willingness or ability to recall negative childhood events. The authors speculate that these findings may indicate that persons who have an unpleasant perception of their lives (resulting in or from depression, alcoholism and/or a proclivity to suicide) are more likely to have accentuated perceptions and recall of the negative events in their lives. Regardless of the dynamic at work, it would appear that these findings provide strong evidence that these self-report instruments are capable of allowing individuals who perceive themselves to have been abused to report that perception.

The Weeks and Widom (in press) measurement of **Childhood Neglect** consists of a three item series consisting of the following questions: 1) "Were there ever times when you were a young child that a neighbor fed you or cared for you because your parents didn't get around to shopping for food or cooking, or when neighbors or relatives kept you overnight because no one was taking care of you at home?" 2) When you were a young child, did anyone ever say that you weren't being

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<sup>2</sup> This analysis contained female subjects and controls only. The authors restricted their analysis due to the low level of male subjects (N=19) in their study with a court finding of childhood sexual abuse).

given enough to eat, or kept clean enough, or that you weren't getting enough medical care when it was needed?", and 3) "When you were a very young child, did your parents ever leave you home alone while they were out shopping or doing something else?" An answer of "yes" to any of these three items will be considered a self-report of child neglect.

While there has been no discussion of validity issues yet published with regards to this child neglect measure instrument, there are intriguing findings. In assessing the validity of their measurement instruments, Weeks and Widom (in press) examined the level of association between violent and non-violent criminals and their measures of childhood neglect and physical and sexual abuse. Of the three abuse measures, only neglect appeared to differentiate between violent and non-violent criminals, as violent offenders were more likely to be assessed as having been neglected (19.8%) than were non-violent offenders (5.6%). As a result, the authors encourage further examination of the incidence levels and impacts of childhood neglect.

In operationalizing their measurement of childhood neglect, Weeks and Widom (in press) have devised items which are intended to cover the various dimensions of the concept as codified in laws throughout the United States. These laws tend to reflect the definition child neglect provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This definition specifies neglect as a lack of parental care, which is derived from the perception that a certain level of parental care is necessary to meet a child's biological and survival needs. Parental care is defined as: "The child has the right to expect, and the parent has a duty to reasonably and prudently provide, food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, nurturance, and teaching." (#NCJ 161841)

Unfortunately, this definition (and the Weeks and Widom instrument) is not entirely appropriate given the unique cultural settings in which some Alaskans live. One of the features of communal living, for example, involves a diminution of parental responsibilities and an increase in the level of responsibility born by the extended family or community at large. As a result, item #1 which seeks to gauge the level of parental care by inquiring as to the level of care received from non-parental figures will not provide a valid measure of childhood neglect for a significant proportion of the population to be studied. Item #2 seeks to determine neglect based on opinions voiced to the subject during childhood. This may not be an effective measure if that opinion came from an 'outsider' who was voicing a cultural bias, and was not giving an informed or culturally sensitive judgement of the subject's condition.

In light of these concerns, this study will seek to augment the Weeks and Widom (in press) measurement instrument by focusing on the specific need elements incorporated in the definition of child neglect, without attaching the parental duty aspect. As delineated in Maslow's seminal work *Motivation and Personality* (1970) there are a hierarchy of needs universal to all humans, which the definition of neglect does incorporate, however it is not necessarily universal that parents be entirely responsible for meeting those needs. As a result, childhood neglect would be a condition in which these essential needs are not met, regardless of whom is responsible for them not being met. This study will supplement the Weeks and Widom (in press) with an item series focusing on

the extent to which the subject's essential needs were met during childhood without focusing on the extent to which their parents were responsible for meeting those needs.

A series of individual items will be asked of the respondents, to which the respondent will indicate how often they were: underfed, ill-clothed, lacking adequate shelter, lacking adequate supervision, lacking medical care, lacked nurturance, and lacked guidance. An answer of 'often', or 'very often' on any of the items will result in the individual being assessed as having experience childhood neglect.<sup>3</sup>

## **Administration of the Survey**

Administration of this survey instrument required several decisions to be made regarding the relative costs and benefits of the methodologies to be used. Traditionally, research in this realm has relied heavily on face to face interviews, with sufficient amounts of time for a professional interviewer to gain rapport with the respondent. This has been considered of primary importance by many researchers due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, the need for time to recall distant and unpleasant events, and the need for a trained interviewer to steer respondents through complex series of questions. In addition, that the interviews are to be conducted in correctional facilities introduced another level of concerns. For example, as noted by Weeks and Widom (in press), their interviews of convicted felons was conducted as inmates were being processed into a particular facility, in order to "reduce the possibility of contagion of knowledge about the research."

Thus, in order to devise an administration protocol for this particular study, it was necessary to confront several issues related to practical and methodological considerations. Integral to this consideration is the time frame and resources available to research team. Given the temporal parameters established by the granting agency, it will not be practical to conduct face to face interviews with the number of inmates required for statistical analysis of results. Conversely, there are serious concerns regarding implementing this survey in large group settings, particularly given the nature of the population being studied and the subject matter to be covered. Additional concerns include literacy levels in the subject population, privacy issues which could affect the health and safety of the subjects, and group dynamics during the survey administration.

In light of these concerns, the research team proposes to administer the survey instrument in small group settings,<sup>4</sup> using a directed technique involving an interviewer reading the questions to the subjects, with responses to much of the instrument recorded on Scantron sheets contained in small paper 'privacy' shields. The interviewer will have at least two 'facilitators' assisting the

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<sup>3</sup> The specific wording of this series is under development, and will be finalized after the focus group phase of the study.

<sup>4</sup> Group size will need to be a function of a number of factors, including: facilities available, logical units of subjects per institutional configuration, and recommendations of facility staff. The 'damage' a disruptive individual can produce is minimized in smaller groups, so that when possible group size will be restricted to between 10 to 20 subjects.



subjects during the course of the interview. This method of administration should minimize concerns regarding literacy, sensitive material and nature of the subject population.

Aids (i.e. overhead projections, placards, etc.) will be developed to facilitate this form of administration. Given this approach to the administration of the measurement instrument, the format of the instrument needed to reflect practical considerations of implementation and execution. The research team has developed an instrument design with regard to adapting the instrument for administration in this setting.

The instrument design to be used in this study is an adaptation of the Weeks and Widom (in press) interview schedule with items added from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics Survey of Prisoners. The Weeks and Widom (in press) instruments will measure childhood abuse and neglect as well as the aspects of the respondents' family life and cultural setting during childhood. The Survey of Prisoners portions will address the elements of the respondents' education, family life, medical problems, mental health and offense history (a working draft of the questionnaire including indication of the sources of questions and a consent form is attached).

This design adaptation incorporates the core elements of the original instruments. Detailed loops developed to gain in depth information about the nature of the various experiences explored during the course of the survey will not be included in the group administered instrument. The study will incorporate those inquiries in a follow up interviews which will be administered during face to face interviews with a subsample of the subjects. The core group administered instrument will provide a detailed profile of the population, while the supplemental face-to-face interview will insure that important in-depth information necessary for the programmatic phase of this study will be available.

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# Survey Methods and Administration

Report to the  
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## **SURVEY METHODS AND ADMINISTRATION**

The following section describes the three types of surveys used to collect data during the course of this study, the methods by which these surveys were administered, and the outcomes associated with those administrations. The surveys consisted of: congregate interviews, personal interviews, and an inmate casefile jacket survey.

The congregate interview was a personal interview conducted in a group setting. The personal interviews were conducted one-on-one in private settings with only the interviewer and the subject present. The inmate casefile jacket survey consisted of an examination of inmate casefile jackets for various types of references.

These surveys were designed to gather the data necessary to address the research objectives of this study, and to provide a level of confidence as to the accuracy of those data. The congregate interview contained a battery of measurement instruments principally focused on the inmates' personal histories regarding various forms of abuse and neglect. The person interview allowed further exploration of those histories with a subset of the participants, thereby providing a level of confidence regarding interpretation of the congregate interview findings. The inmate casefile jacket survey allowed for comparisons between participants and a random sample of non-participants on a series of demographic variables, thus providing a level of confidence in the representativeness of the congregate interview findings.

The surveys, the methods used to administer these surveys, and the outcomes of those administrations are detailed below.

### **Congregate Interview**

This section describes the congregate interview, the reasons this form of survey was selected, the method by which the survey was administered, the outcomes of those administrations, and the experiences and observations of the survey team at the various survey sites.

This survey consisted of a complex interview instrument containing series of items designed to measure various aspects of an inmate's developmental background, including their family history and exposures to various forms of abuse and neglect. Inmates were gathered in a room, recruited for participation, and then administered the interview. Each questionnaire item was read aloud and projected on a wall or screen using an overhead projector. Inmates filled in both a Scantron bubble-type answer sheet and a fill-in answer sheet during the course of the interview.

The survey was conducted in a group setting for three principal reasons: 1) the lengthy series of items contained in the survey contained multiple-response questions and could therefore be administered very efficiently to almost any number of subjects simultaneously, 2) the subjects were allowed to answer extended series of very personal questions in relative anonymity, and 3) the

flexibility of this form of survey administration allowed the team to conduct the interviews with a minimum of impact on the facilities and their staff members.

Initially, the research team considered the subjects’ need for privacy during the series of personal questions possible grounds for not using group administration of this interview. To address this concern, the research team devised a form of ‘privacy shield’ out of a legal-sized manila folder and attempted to encourage its use at the pretest and first three administrations of the survey. However, the team found that the inmates did not consider the shield necessary, and were generally very respectful of each other’s privacy during the administration of the interview. In fact, as will be noted in the discussion below, the group administration engendered a sense of anonymity that was much more important to an inmate’s decision to participate than any concerns regarding confidentiality between subjects.

The following table describes the survey response rates at the various sites. Using the congregate interview protocol, 240 inmates were interviewed during 13 sessions at 7 institutions in March and April of 1998. Two groups consisting of twenty-nine individuals were the largest groups interviewed, while the smallest group consisted of four individuals. Administration time for the survey itself averaged just under one hour, while time for setting up and shutting down averaged at under one half hour, so that total administration time was under one and one-half hours.

**Table 1: DOC Inmate Profile Response Rates by Facility**

Facility	DOC list of eligibles	Staff list of eligibles	Eligibles surveyed	Percentage of eligibles surveyed
Palmer Medium	86	56	23	41%
Palmer Minimum	81	59	22	37%
Hiland (women)	106	34	29	85%
Hiland (men)	43	24	18	75%
Spring Creek	533	385	79	21%
Wildwood	106	62	27	44%
Meadow Creek	30	30	29	97%
Lemon Creek	66	39	13	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>35%</b>

The following sections describe the methods used to administer this survey and the administration of the survey at the various sites.

**Methods of Administration**

The methods used for administration of the congregate interview were designed to survey different sized groups of inmates in a variety of different settings. Materials necessary for this administration (see Appendix) included: a consent form; a scantron answer sheet; an answer sheet for the subjects to record their responses to open-ended questions; almost 200 overhead projector slides, each containing a single question and any accompanying answer categories; pencils; a “scripted” version of the questionnaire; and an overhead projector (all of the facilities had an overhead projector available).

At a pre-test of the survey instrument, the team administered the survey by reading the questions aloud while projecting only the appropriate answer categories on the wall. This approach resulted in too many interruptions for clarification and/or a re-reading of the questions. During all subsequent survey sessions, each question and its answer categories (when appropriate) were projected on a wall or screen surface, while the text of the question itself was read out loud.

Administration at all of the facilities followed the same general sequence with only slight variations between facilities. Inmates were summoned to the survey site by facility staff, followed by a brief introduction, a discussion of the consent form, and a brief orientation regarding the scantron and fill-in answer sheets. The survey team found it was important to move quickly to beginning the survey, as any deviation tended to spawn protracted question and answer sessions which could only yield additional refusals.

At all but one of the sites, the subjects' principal concerns focused on the purpose of the survey and the issue of anonymity. The survey was described to the subjects as a survey of childhood experiences, part of a study intended to give the DOC Programs Division information regarding the needs of the inmate population. It was also noted that similar surveys were being used elsewhere with other types of populations. The consent form was described as establishing a 'contract' between the research team and the subjects which placed a legal burden on the team not to disclose any of the survey data in a form from which any individual could be identified.

Only at the Meadow Creek facility was the issue of anonymity not an expressed concern of the subjects. That facility is the site of the Sex Offender Treatment Program, a rehabilitative program which requires complete self-disclosure from all participants as a principal element of the treatment. This disclosure oriented environment appeared to mitigate the inmates' privacy concerns.

At the other facilities, concerns regarding privacy tended to focus on whether the information could in some way be used against the inmate at a later date. The survey team discovered the magnitude of this concern during the very first fielding of the questionnaire, when the subjects were asked to record their OBSCIS number on the answer sheets. This resulted in a virtual wave of refusals, and led the research team to devise an alternate means of attaching the inmates' id numbers to their answer sheets.

The team's solution to the inmates' aversion to placing a personal identifier on the answer sheets relied on the consent form. As the consent form had to be signed for the survey to be considered valid, it was not unreasonable for the survey team to require a legibly signed consent form to accompany each set of answer sheets as they were collected from subjects. By stacking these answer sheet and consent form combinations with the consent form always on top, it was very easy to apply the appropriate OBSCIS number to each of the answer sheets after the inmates had exited the survey site. Subject lists which contained both the names and OBSCIS numbers of the subjects present at that facility were used in this process.

Although the team had a subject list for each facility, the acquisition of these lists and how they were compiled represents the principle variation in the survey administration at the seven facilities. Initially, DOC intended to provide a universe list of all inmates who met the selection criteria at each of the facilities to be included in the study. Due to database limitations and a

historically unprecedented high volume of inter-facility transfers, DOC was only able to provide a list which represented an approximation of the universe.

As a result, prior to arrival at each facility, the survey team provided the staff at each facility with the portion of the DOC universe list specific to that facility, requesting that staff establish who on the list was eligible (present at the facility, available to participate at the time of the survey, and meeting the selection criteria). In this fashion, the approximate universe list provided by the DOC was assessed at each facility prior to the arrival of the survey team, with one exception.

At the Spring Creek facility, the staff indicated that it would be too difficult to assess the list of over 500 individuals on a case by case basis, so they proposed to post sign-up sheets within the facility that specified the criteria, time of survey sessions, and a \$5 incentive. Prior to the survey teams arrival, the lists of names on the sign-up sheets were assessed by the staff in order to confirm the signees eligibility. Subsequent to the interview sessions, the survey team obtained a complete list of all inmates present at the facility the day of the survey. Using this list and the facility's records files, the survey team went through that list assessing how many of the inmates at the facility that day met the eligibility criteria.

## **Administration Outcomes**

This section contains descriptions of the survey administration specific to each of the facilities visited, as well as the survey team's experiences and observations related to the survey's administration at those facilities.

The survey was administered at seven different sites during 13 sessions. In addition, a pre-test was conducted at the at the Cook Inlet Pretrial Facility. While none of the pre-test participants met the study's selection criteria, the team found it a valuable opportunity to field test the instrument. As described in the preceding section, the most important outcome from this pre-test involved the decision to provide a full visual presentation of the text associated with each question using the overhead projector, instead of just providing the answer categories.

In addition, the research team found that the method of administration selected for this survey was very robust, considering that the survey was completed in a very timely and efficient manner even though there were several fairly disruptive subjects present. The team was further encouraged when staff noted that this would be the most disruptive population of inmates we would encounter at the seven sites. According to the facility's staff, pre-trial inmates tend to have more unrestrained attitudes than those who are already serving a sentence.

The first survey site was the Palmer Medium facility. For this facility, DOC provided a list containing 86 potential subjects. Facility staff indicated that of those 86, only 56 met the criteria (10 didn't meet the 5+ year criteria, we don't know about the other 20). Staff indicated to us that they had verbally notified all inmates on their list of eligibles about the survey, and at the time of the survey, intended to make an announcement over the public address system calling the inmates to the survey, half for the first interview session and half for the second session.



At the first session, the physical location of the survey site compounded an error made by the survey team. The survey site was located in a classroom that was accessed by a fairly narrow hallway. The survey team, after giving assurances of anonymity to the early-arriving subjects as they examined the consent form, asked the subjects to record their OBSCIS numbers on the fill-in answer sheet. While this request was meant only to insure that data was properly matched with the other answer sheet data acquired from the inmate and to insure that the subjects were eligible to participate, the inmates were unsettled at the contradictory nature of the information they were receiving, and approximately 12 potential subjects walked out before the survey began. Unfortunately, as these refusals worked their way out of the room and down the hall, they came into contact with late arrivals, creating numerous additional refusals.

For the second session fewer individuals arrived at the survey site, and approximately 10 stayed to participate. It was the survey teams' impression that more inmates were called to the first session than were called to the second session, as most who came to the second session stayed to participate. The team did not mention the OBSCIS number at the second session, and at most, there were only 1 or 2 refusals. Linkage between the two answer sheets and the subject's name was established by stacking the answer sheets with the consent form. Subsequently, the team used the list of eligible subjects to identify the subjects and log the appropriate OBSCIS number on the answer sheets. (The team also learned not to accept this paperwork from the inmates unless the names were legible.) During the two sessions, a total of 23 subjects completed the survey.

The Palmer Minimum DOC list had 81 names, which the facility staff reduced to 59 (they excluded both transferees and those who were "off the hill" working in prison industries). The remaining names were read over the intercom, and the prisoners arrived en masse. Unfortunately, the layout was such that everyone arrived at once, and the initial refusers left through those still heading towards the survey site, turning away many in the process. A number of the refusers indicated that they had jobs or classes which were much more important to them. One refusing inmate declared that his childhood was "locked away in a vault." Of the 59 called to the survey site, 22 participated in the survey.

In retrospect, the survey team decided that the problems encountered at the Palmer facilities could be avoided if: a) subjects were not handed the materials until it appeared that most had arrived and were seated, b) subjects were told about the survey once they were seated, not as they arrived, c) any mention of the subjects' OBSCIS numbers were avoided.

The DOC subject list for the Hiland and Meadow Creek facilities had 135 potential subjects. DOC's database does not discriminate between these two adjacent facilities, so the same list contained inmates housed at both facilities.

Hiland facility staff told us there were a total of 34 eligible female participants (39 were on the DOC list, 3 of whom were unavailable because they were in segregated quarters). Four refused to participate, one did not show up, and 29 completed the survey, for a response rate of 85 percent. Of the Hiland men, staff indicated there were 19 eligible participants, 19 of whom completed surveys (there were approx. 25 on the DOC list, but 4 had been transferred and two were in segregated quarters), for a response rate of 79 percent. At Meadow Creek, staff indicated there were 30 eligible

participants, one of whom failed to attend, resulting in 29 completed surveys for a response rate of 97 percent.

Several inter-connected elements at these two facilities appear to have contributed to their high level of participation, including: the way subjects were brought to the survey site, the programmatic orientation of these facilities, and the overarching objective of this programmatic approach.

First, the way that the subjects were brought to the survey site guaranteed that almost all potential subjects were present at the survey site. Facility staff notified everyone who met the criteria by both posted notice and staff ‘walk and talks’ that their appearance at the survey site would be mandatory, without indicating the reason for this appearance. Upon the subjects’ arrival at the survey site, they were informed as to the scope and voluntary nature of the survey, and then asked to sign the consent form and participate. This approach seemed to be very effective, in that it brought all of the prospective subjects to one place, allowing the survey team an opportunity to obtain consent without the inmates having time to discuss the survey among themselves.

Second, the atmosphere of these facilities were unique in that they seem more like a community college than a penal institution. In general, inmates at both of these facilities appeared to be open, comfortable, and even supportive of one another. This atmosphere appeared to result from the degree of interaction and familiarity the inmates encounter in the classes, workshops and group therapy sessions integral to these facilities. At other facilities we witnessed more typical inmate behaviors, such as closed or guarded posturing, avoidance of eye contact with other inmates, and verbal interactions limited to small groups of individuals. It seems reasonable to assume that the relaxed environment contributed to the higher levels of survey participation at these facilities.

Third, the programmatic approach at these facilities appears predicated on the assumption that when one is able to examine life’s problems and explore personal shortcomings through self-disclosure in a supportive setting there is an opportunity for personal growth and understanding, which will yield better personal choices and fewer societal problems. As a result, inmates at these facilities are regularly encouraged to revisit and disclose the dysfunctional elements of their past, both as a means of enabling and demonstrating their rehabilitation. Therefore the subjects were likely to have found the survey’s objectives to be compatible with their current personal objectives.

At the Spring Creek facility, the staff posted a notice and sign-up sheet for the survey (with a \$5 incentive included) which specified the time, place and participation criteria. Prior to the team’s arrival, staff evaluated those who signed up in order to verify that they met the selection criteria. Once the lists were verified, the time and place of the survey sessions was posted along with lists for each session. Inmates were told to bring their prison id card, and were required to show it at the door and to be on the pre-approved list in order to enter the survey room. A total of 79 inmates completed surveys.

Subsequent to the survey administration, the survey team obtained a complete listing of all inmates housed at Spring Creek the day of the survey, and evaluated that list using the ‘jackets’ stored in the facility’s records room. While the original DOC list contained 533 names, we determined there were only 385 inmates who met the criteria at the facility on the day of the survey. We know

that a subset of these ‘eligibles’ were actually not available (segregated, etc.) and should not have been considered eligible, but we were unable to make that type of determination.

The DOC list for Wildwood contained 106 names, but facility staff reduced it to 63 names. Individual invitations were sent by staff to these inmates, including an offer of a \$5 incentive. Because of this method of notification, staff had no way of knowing how many of the invitees would actually attend, so they reserved the facility’s cafeteria for the survey site. This site was less than optimal, but did demonstrate the robustness of the survey’s administration methods. The combination of cafeteria seating (round or long tables), several columns which blocked out portions of the room from the overhead projector screen, and a variety of ongoing activities (some fairly noisy), were distracting, but did not actually affect the survey’s administration. Of the 63 inmates eligible to participate, 29 subjects completed the survey.

Lemon Creek staff determined there were 39 eligible inmates on the DOC list of 66. These inmates were notified by word-of-mouth, including mention of a \$5 incentive. Three sessions were scheduled, with 4 subjects completing the survey during the first session, and 9 completing it during the second session, for a total of 13. There were no inmates who attended the third session (we were told that ‘a bunch’ wanted to attend the evening before, but the 9 AM session time may have dissuaded them).

The congregate interview administrations at the final sites went very smoothly with almost no on-site refusals occurring. While the financial incentives may have been a factor, the survey team felt that the ‘learning curve’ had produced a very effective method of administration that minimized these refusals. Key elements of this method included:

- Wait for all subjects to arrive prior to distributing the survey materials (consent form and answer sheets)
- The survey team should stay ‘busy’ prior to the survey session, so as not to become engaged in discussions with early arrivers at the site
- Once the subjects have arrived, move very quickly through the discussion of the consent form and directly into the survey interview
- Avoid any mention of personal identifiers
- Collect only legibly signed consent forms with the answer sheets to ensure the teams’ ability to apply an identifier to all answer sheets.
- Start the survey with a very generic first question. Placing it on the projector as subjects arrive provides a prop during the introduction and orientation stages, and allows you to begin the interview at the earliest possible moment.
- Avoid disruptions by having 2 assistants, one to work the transparencies on the overhead projector, and one to ‘float’ among the subjects fielding inquiries.

It should also be noted that DOC employees at all of the facilities visited made the survey team feel most welcome as the facilities’ staff members went to great lengths to assist the team with the survey process. This high level of cooperation included: rescheduling classes so that classrooms

could be used as a survey site, distributing notices and one-on-one recruitment efforts, locating and providing overhead projectors, and assisting the survey team by refining the subject lists. At Spring Creek, staff even provided ice cream and cookies to be shared among the subjects at the end of the survey sessions. This level of cooperation certainly was appreciated by the survey team, and is sure to have been a major element in producing the level of inmate participation achieved by this study.

## **Personal Interview**

There were three main goals of the personal interview: 1) to verify supposedly objective information obtained in the congregate interviews and inmate records, e.g., educational level; 2) to assess the existence of a “cycle of abuse” from parents, through the subject, to their children; and 3) to assess the nature and quality of their childhood experience as an antecedent to eventual incarceration. We accomplished these goals by interviewing those individuals who were still available and volunteered to spend approximately one-half hour describing their childhood experiences in an open-ended, private interview. These responses were then rated by the interviewer and entered into the database for further analysis.

The objective of the personal interview was to allow the subjects to discuss their early childhood experiences in their own words. We felt that it would enhance our understanding of any abuse experience if the subject did not feel constrained to use forced-choice answers and terms with which they may not feel comfortable. Our subsequent ratings of these experiences would then be based on the insights gained from this more personal account.

The original intent was to conduct a personal interview with each individual who completed a congregate interview. However, many had been sent to Arizona, some were moved to other facilities, a few were “de-selected” by the facility staff due to disciplinary or psychological reasons, and we did not return to Wildwood or Juneau. The following table indicates the personal interview response rates at the facilities to which we returned. Due to time constraints we were unable to request an interview from every eligible inmate at every facility and this was most apparent at Palmer Minimum.

The personal interview followed the congregate interview and official record searches. We contacted our facility coordinator to arrange for the visit by the interviewers and sent them a list of those who had participated in the congregate interview so that they could determine who would be available. The staff at the institutions at the time of the interviews further refined this list. It is from this reviewed list that the actual number of eligible interviews was determined.

The refusal rate was extremely low. Every eligible inmate at Palmer Medium, Hiland Mountain (women and men) and Meadow Creek was asked to volunteer for the interview by one of the two interviewers. Of the 64 individuals asked to participate in the interview at these three facilities, 55 agreed (85%).

**Table 2: Personal Interviews by Facility**

Facility	Group survey	Staff list of eligibles	Eligibles surveyed	Percentage of eligibles surveyed
Palmer Medium	23	4	4	100%
Palmer Minimum	22	17	7	41%
Hiland (somen)	29	25	22	88%
Hiland (men)	18	6	4	67%
Spring Creek	79	52	36	69%
Wildwood	27	14	0	0%
Meadow Creek	29	29	27	90%
Lemon Creek	13	8	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>65%</b>

### *Method of Administration*

There were two important instruments used to capture the information from the personal interviews. The first was the interview response form used during the interview itself and the second was the coding sheet from which the data was entered for analysis.

### *Interview Response Form*

The interviewer's notes were recorded on a form designed to prompt the interviewer to cover important areas and to record the open-ended responses of the subject. The design allowed the subject to describe his or her early childhood experiences without feeling constrained by predetermined choices and then later the interviewer would rate the quality of that experience or otherwise capture important information. The interviewer's goal was to elicit a description of the subject's childhood and make certain that topics relevant to the study were touched upon, i.e., the various types of abuse, drug and alcohol use, educational achievement, home life, etc.

Dr. Barnes used the initial Interview Response Form at Palmer Medium and Palmer Minimum. This experience led to minor modifications in the form such that there were specific areas added to the form to record recurring responses, i.e., who specifically gave them guidance and emotional support, where did the sexual abuse occur, etc. These modifications allowed a greater consistency of recording and help insure that important topics were discussed. This modified form was used in all subsequent interviews.

### *Coding Sheet*

This form contains 16 items to be coded from the Interview Response Form. Three of the items are scored as present or absent, e.g., was alcohol present in the home? On eight of the items a three-point range was offered to the rater such as definitely no, maybe or definitely yes. This allowed the rater to make determinations about the quality of the abuse experienced. Lastly, specific information was obtained regarding their highest grade level achieved, the age they were "on their own," and the age they began using drugs and/or alcohol. The two and three item response scales allowed these childhood experiences to be included in the more quantitative analysis. The educational level achieved was to serve as a reliability and validity check of the interview since this information was available from the congregate interview and in the inmate record.

The coding sheet asked for the highest academic level achieved by the subject. The codes used by OBSCIS were used such that direct comparisons could be made with the other two sources of this variable. To assess the existence of a “cycle of abuse,” the coding sheet also asked the rater to indicate the subject’s perception of their parents’ abuse as children and then, if they had raised any children, rate the abuse they had inflicted upon their own children. In addition to rating the physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect experienced by the subjects, the coding sheet also asked the rater to indicate levels of stability in the home, the subject’s treatment with respect to other siblings, and the potential of having experienced a serious head injury.

### *Administration Outcomes*

The personal interviews were administered in private such that the staff or other inmates could not hear the conversation. The inmates were summoned to the interview either by a staff person or by the “phone runner.” Both methods worked well. Refusals to participate were made to the interviewer face to face. The settings ranged from offices, visiting rooms, conference rooms, and classrooms to a law library and a barbershop. All were satisfactory and provided a quiet, focused atmosphere free of distractions. Each interview lasted between 20 and 45 minutes with the bulk of them taking 30 minutes to complete. The interview process necessarily accommodated the institutional schedules with the result that we were able to complete approximately three surveys every two hours per interviewer during those periods when interviewing could take place.

The interviewer greeted each inmate upon arrival and explained the nature of the interview request. They told each subject that their participation was voluntary and that they did not have to answer any question and that they could leave at any time. Once the inmate agreed to be interviewed, the session began by asking what it was like growing up. This initial open-ended question generated additional probing by the interviewer in order to elicit a fuller explanation or description of events. The interviewer often prompted the subject by asking questions from the Interview Response Form and recording relevant responses in the spaces provided. The interviewer informed the subject that the period of interest was generally that time from birth to the end of the 8th grade (generally age 13 or 14). The interviewer did not ask questions about the instant offense or their later juvenile and adult lives beyond that necessary to complete the Personal Interview Response Form. At the end of the interview, the interviewer thanked the subject for participating and informed the staff coordinator or inmate “phone runner” that they were available to see another inmate.

### **Inmate Casefile Jacket Survey**

The following section describes the inmate casefile jacket survey, the reasons this form of survey was conducted, the method by which this survey was administered, and the experiences and observations of the survey team at the site.

This casefile jacket survey was originally designed to address two principal research objectives: a) to examine DOC disciplinary records in order to assess ongoing behavioral problems, and b) to

provide specific demographic data for congregate interview participants and a random sample of non-participants. However, once the study team examined numerous casefile jackets, it became apparent that the disciplinary records were not entered into the jackets in any systematic fashion, which made any form of reconstruction and entry too costly to address. As a result, the primary objective of this survey became to collect data elements which would assist the study team in addressing concerns regarding the extent to which the survey participants resemble the non-participants.

This survey required data collectors to quickly peruse inmate casefile jackets looking for a number of demographic variables, indications of certain childhood and adult behavioral and/or mental health problems, mention of childhood abuse or neglect, and histories of repeated offending.

Outcomes of this survey were contingent upon the data collecting teams' ability to actually locate the casefile jackets of the congregate interview participants and those of the randomly selected non-participants. As shown in the following table, the overall "hit" rate of this survey was 92 percent. The highest "hit" rate of 96 percent indicates that of the 27 congregate interview participants at the Wildwood facility, the data collection team was able to locate 26 of the casefile jackets.

**Table 3: DOC Inmate Casefile Jacket Surveys by Facility**

Facility	Sample	Jacket surveyed	Percentage of sample surveyed
Nonparticipants	160	149	93%
Palmer Medium	23	20	87%
Palmer Minimum	22	21	95%
Hiland (women)	29	25	86%
Hiland (men)	18	15	83%
Spring Creek	79	74	94%
Wildwood	27	26	96%
Meadow Creek	29	26	90%
Lemon Creek	13	11	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>92%</b>

The following sections describe the method used to administer this survey, and outcomes of that administration.

### Method of Administration

The DOC records archive contains casefile jackets for each inmate currently housed by DOC. Data collectors went to the archive in order to gather data from the jackets of congregate interview participants and a random sample of non-participants. Jackets were located in the archive and examined for a series of data points. Subsequently, the data was entered into an MS Access database, and ported over to the master file. This section contains a description of the methods used for acquiring the data from the jackets and an the method used to generate the random sample.

The data collectors were given entry forms to complete as they examined each jacket (see the Microsoft Access data entry screen in the Appendix). Due to limited resources and the fairly idiosyncratic and prolific nature of these files, collectors were encouraged to restrict their examination

of each jacket to 10 minutes. For each jacket they recorded several specific data points and sought to ascertain the presence or absence of references to various types adult and juvenile problems, prior adult and juvenile adjudications, and references to several forms of childhood abuse.

The random sample was generated by first removing all congregate interview participants from the list of potential subjects originally provided by DOC personnel and then using SPSS to select a random sample of 160 OBSCIS numbers from the remaining records. Eighty-nine percent (n=142) of the random sample's jackets were located and examined. Not all of the jackets were available as the data collection corresponded with a period of heavy inmate movement within the DOC system.

### **Administration Outcomes**

Training of the data collectors consisted of a review of the materials commonly found in the jackets, and a discussion of the types of information and references being sought in the casefile jackets. Early in this collection effort, inter-coder reliability was assessed. All four collectors were asked to gather data from the same four jackets. While the nature of this collection task was to briefly scan through the numerous forms and detailed reports frequently contained in the jackets, reliability seemed fairly high. On all 47 items, there was an average agreement level of 90 percent. There were 7 factual items which had an average agreement level of 94 percent, while the 40 remaining items which were more subjective in nature had an average agreement level of 90 percent.

The data were originally to be entered directly into a Microsoft Access database, using a custom designed screen for entry (see Appendix). However, due to technical complications associated with various versions of the software being installed on the team's laptops, it became necessary to enter the data first on a paper version of the MS Access screen, which was then entered into the database back at the office.



## **APPENDIX**

Consent Form

Scantron Form

Fill-In Answer Sheet

Overhead Projector Slide

Microsoft Access Data Screen

Offender Profile Questionnaire

Inmate Interview Response Form

Inmate Interview Data Coding Sheet

Consent Form

**Consent Form**

I agree to be interviewed for a study of human development being conducted by researchers from the University of Alaska Anchorage and sponsored by the Alaska Department of Corrections. I understand that the general purpose of the research is to understand how a variety of positive and negative childhood experiences affect adult functioning.

I understand that this research is not being conducted for any profit motive, but strictly in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. I have been told about the procedures to be followed and how much time is involved. I will be asked to respond to a structured interview taking approximately 45 minutes.

I understand that the information I provide is voluntary and will be handled in the strictest confidence. All information will be kept in a locked file and any identifying data will be destroyed after the study is completed. My answers will not be made available to any persons other than the University research staff. Also, any research report will be made in such a way that I cannot be identified. Any publications arising from this study will refer only to group information.

I understand that I have the right to ask questions at any time and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw my consent at any time without fear of any negative consequences.

I agree to take part in this project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Scantron Form

SIDE 2

GENERAL PURPOSE  
NCS<sup>®</sup>  
ANSWER SHEET  
form no. 4521

A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
101 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	111 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	121 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	131 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	141 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
102 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	112 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	122 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	132 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	142 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
103 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	113 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	123 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	133 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	143 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
104 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	114 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	124 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	134 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	144 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
105 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	115 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	125 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	135 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	145 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
106 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	116 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	126 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	136 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	146 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
107 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	117 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	127 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	137 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	147 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
108 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	118 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	128 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	138 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	148 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
109 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	119 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	129 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	139 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	149 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
110 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	120 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	130 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	140 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	150 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
151 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	161 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	171 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	181 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	191 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
152 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	162 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	172 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	182 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	192 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
153 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	163 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	173 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	183 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	193 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
154 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	164 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	174 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	184 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	194 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
155 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	165 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	175 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	185 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	195 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
156 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	166 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	176 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	186 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	196 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
157 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	167 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	177 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	187 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	197 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
158 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	168 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	178 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	188 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	198 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
159 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	169 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	179 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	189 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	199 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )
A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E	A B C D E
160 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	170 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	180 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	190 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )	200 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

<p><b>EXAMPLES</b></p> <p><b>WRONG</b></p> <p>1 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )</p> <p><b>WRONG</b></p> <p>2 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )</p> <p><b>WRONG</b></p> <p>3 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )</p> <p><b>RIGHT</b></p> <p>4 ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) ( )</p>	<p><b>IMPORTANT DIRECTIONS FOR MARKING ANSWERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use #2 pencil only.</li> <li>• Do NOT use ink or ballpoint pens.</li> <li>• Make heavy black marks that fill the circle completely.</li> <li>• Erase clearly any answer you wish to change.</li> <li>• Make no stray marks on the answer sheet.</li> </ul>
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DO NOT  
WRITE  
IN THIS  
SPACE

NAME (Last, First, MI)

SEX  M  F

GRADE  9  10  11  12  13  14  15  16  17  18  19  20  21  22  23  24  25  26  27  28  29  30

BIRTHDATE		IDENTIFICATION NUMBER												SPECIAL CODES														
MO.	DAY	YR.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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SIDE 1

**GENERAL PURPOSE - NCS® - ANSWER SHEET**  
SEE IMPORTANT MARKING INSTRUCTIONS ON SIDE 2

1	A B C D E	11	A B C D E	21	A B C D E	31	A B C D E	41	A B C D E
2	A B C D E	12	A B C D E	22	A B C D E	32	A B C D E	42	A B C D E
3	A B C D E	13	A B C D E	23	A B C D E	33	A B C D E	43	A B C D E
4	A B C D E	14	A B C D E	24	A B C D E	34	A B C D E	44	A B C D E
5	A B C D E	15	A B C D E	25	A B C D E	35	A B C D E	45	A B C D E
6	A B C D E	16	A B C D E	26	A B C D E	36	A B C D E	46	A B C D E
7	A B C D E	17	A B C D E	27	A B C D E	37	A B C D E	47	A B C D E
8	A B C D E	18	A B C D E	28	A B C D E	38	A B C D E	48	A B C D E
9	A B C D E	19	A B C D E	29	A B C D E	39	A B C D E	49	A B C D E
10	A B C D E	20	A B C D E	30	A B C D E	40	A B C D E	50	A B C D E
51	A B C D E	61	A B C D E	71	A B C D E	81	A B C D E	91	A B C D E
52	A B C D E	62	A B C D E	72	A B C D E	82	A B C D E	92	A B C D E
53	A B C D E	63	A B C D E	73	A B C D E	83	A B C D E	93	A B C D E
54	A B C D E	64	A B C D E	74	A B C D E	84	A B C D E	94	A B C D E
55	A B C D E	65	A B C D E	75	A B C D E	85	A B C D E	95	A B C D E
56	A B C D E	66	A B C D E	76	A B C D E	86	A B C D E	96	A B C D E
57	A B C D E	67	A B C D E	77	A B C D E	87	A B C D E	97	A B C D E
58	A B C D E	68	A B C D E	78	A B C D E	88	A B C D E	98	A B C D E
59	A B C D E	69	A B C D E	79	A B C D E	89	A B C D E	99	A B C D E
60	A B C D E	70	A B C D E	80	A B C D E	90	A B C D E	100	A B C D E



**Fill-In Answer Sheet**

**Fill-In Answer Sheet**

OBSCIS# -----

—

11. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community]

12. \_\_\_\_\_ [State/Country]

13. \_\_\_\_\_ [ Offenses ]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ [this time?]

15. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ [ Month / Day / Year ]

16. \_\_\_\_\_ [ # of times - adult]

17. \_\_\_\_\_ [ # of times - juvenile ]

17a. \_\_\_\_\_ [ Age in years]

18. \_\_\_\_\_ [ First ]

\_\_\_\_\_ [ Year of First ]

19. a. YES      b. NO      c. Don't know/ No response      [Circle appropriate response]

20. \_\_\_\_\_ [ Type of work ]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

>>> ——— {Use the *Scantron Answer Sheet* For the Next Questions, Start With Item #22 } ——— <<<

31. \_\_\_\_\_ [ # of brothers ]

32. \_\_\_\_\_ [Most serious offenses ]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

33. \_\_\_\_\_ [ # of sisters ]

34. \_\_\_\_\_ [Most serious offenses ]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

35a. \_\_\_\_\_ [Relation?] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ [Relation?] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ [Relation?] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

35b. \_\_\_\_\_ [Relationship?] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ [Relationship?] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ [Relationship?] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

36. \_\_\_\_\_ [Age of Child 1]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Age of Child 2]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Age of Child 3]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Ages of other children ]

37. \_\_\_\_\_ [ Who children under 18 are staying with ]

38. \_\_\_\_\_ [Who children under 18 were staying with ]

39. \_\_\_\_\_ [Son/Daughter served time ] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Son/Daughter served time ] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Son/Daughter served time ] \_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Offense(s)]





43. { Persons who visited you while in jail during last 30 days - Don't use names, just relationship }

_____	[Who]	_____	[Number of visits]
_____	[Who]	_____	[Number of visits]
_____	[Who]	_____	[Number of visits]
_____	[Who]	_____	[Number of visits]
_____	[Who]	_____	[Number of visits]
_____	[Who]	_____	[Number of visits]

44. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community you were born in]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

44a. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community your parents lived in when you were born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

45. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community where your father was born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

46. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community where your mother was born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

47. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community where your mother's mother was born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

48. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community where your mother's father was born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

49. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community where your father's mother was born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

50. \_\_\_\_\_ [Community where your father's father was born]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [State]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Country]

51. \_\_\_\_\_ [ Countries/parts of world your ancestors came from  
] \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

52. \_\_\_\_\_ [Part of ancestry you feel closest to]

53. \_\_\_\_\_ [When people ask, what do you tell them?]

54. \_\_\_\_\_ [What you think, if it's different than #53]

55. a. Very Important [ circle appropriate response ]  
b. Somewhat Important  
c. Not Important  
d. Don't Know/No Response

56. a. Very Upset [ circle appropriate response ]  
b. Somewhat Upset  
c. Not Upset  
d. Don't Know/No Response

57. \_\_\_\_\_ [Language you usually speak now]

58. \_\_\_\_\_ [Language you speak when not incarcerated]

59. \_\_\_\_\_ [Languages you speak well]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

60. \_\_\_\_\_ [Language you prefer to speak]

61. a. Once a day [circle appropriate response]

b. Once a week

c. A few times a month

d. A few times a year

e. Never

f. Don't Know/No Response

>>>—{ Use the Scantron Answer Sheet For the Next Section, Start with Item #62 }—<<<

177. a. Yes [circle appropriate response]  
b. No  
c. Don't Know/No Response

178. \_\_\_\_\_ [Relationship to you]

179. a. Yes [circle appropriate response]  
b. No  
c. Don't Know/No Response  
d. Does not Apply

180. \_\_\_\_\_ [Number of Years]

181. a. Yes [circle appropriate response]  
b. No  
c. Don't Know/No Response

- 181a. a. Yes [circle appropriate response]  
b. No  
c. Don't Know/No Response  
d. Does not Apply

182. a. Yes [circle appropriate response]  
b. No  
c. Don't Know/No Response

- 182a. a. Yes [circle appropriate response]  
b. No  
c. Don't Know/No Response  
d. Does not Apply

183. \_\_\_\_\_ [Ethnicity of Friend #1 ]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Ethnicity of Friend #2 ]  
\_\_\_\_\_ [Ethnicity of Friend #3 ]

184. \_\_\_\_\_ [Ethnic or religious  
holidays]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

185. \_\_\_\_\_ [Your Race]

186. \_\_\_\_\_ [Your Religion]

187. a. Extremely Important [ circle appropriate response ]  
b. Very Important  
c. Somewhat Important  
d. A Little Important  
e. Not At All Important  
f. Don't Know/ No Response

188. a. Only from your ethnic group [ circle appropriate response ]  
b. Mostly from your ethnic group  
c. About equally from your ethnic group and from other groups.  
d. Mostly from other ethnic groups  
e. Only from other ethnic groups  
f. Don't Know/ No Response

189. a. Extremely Important [ circle appropriate response ]  
b. Very Important  
c. Somewhat Important  
d. A Little Important  
e. Not At All Important  
f. Don't Know/ No Response

# #10. Where did you first attend Elementary School?

- a) Anchorage/ Other Alaskan City
- b) Village in Alaska (On the road system)
- c) Village in Alaska (Not on the road system)
- d) Small Community outside Alaska
- e) Large Community outside Alaska
- Blank)** Don't know/ No response

Microsoft Access Data Entry Screen

**OFFENDERS Query1**

Data entered by:

OBSCIS:  Current offense:

Actual sentence (days):  Release date:  Security level:

Est annual income:  Work history:

**Severe Problems**

<b>Adult</b>	<b>Childhood</b>
Alcoholism <input type="checkbox"/>	Alcoholism <input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs <input type="checkbox"/>	Drugs <input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health <input type="checkbox"/>
Hostility/temper <input type="checkbox"/>	Hostility/temper <input type="checkbox"/>
Depression <input type="checkbox"/>	Depression <input type="checkbox"/>
Suicidal <input type="checkbox"/>	Suicidal <input type="checkbox"/>
No basis <input type="checkbox"/>	No basis <input type="checkbox"/>

**Reports of Childhood Abuse**

Physical   
 Psychological   
 Sexual   
 Neglect   
 No basis

**Adult**

<b>Offenses</b>	<b>Chronic</b>
Violent <input type="checkbox"/>	Violent <input type="checkbox"/>
Property <input type="checkbox"/>	Property <input type="checkbox"/>
Public order <input type="checkbox"/>	Public order <input type="checkbox"/>
Drug <input type="checkbox"/>	Drug <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex offenses <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex offenses <input type="checkbox"/>
No basis <input type="checkbox"/>	No basis <input type="checkbox"/>

**juvenile**

<b>Offenses</b>	<b>Chronic</b>
Violent <input type="checkbox"/>	Violent <input type="checkbox"/>
Property <input type="checkbox"/>	Property <input type="checkbox"/>
Public order <input type="checkbox"/>	Public order <input type="checkbox"/>
Drug <input type="checkbox"/>	Drug <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex offenses <input type="checkbox"/>	Sex offenses <input type="checkbox"/>
No basis <input type="checkbox"/>	No basis <input type="checkbox"/>

Record:  1 of 1

## Offender Profile Questionnaire

### Item Series and Sources

Education/Military Background – Widom et al..

Current Offense/Detention -B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Arrest Record - B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Employment History - B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Family History - B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Cultural Background - Widom et al.

Substance Use/Abuse- B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Medical Condition – B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Mental or Emotional Health – B.J.S. Survey of Prisoners

Dissociation and Hostility – Widom et. al.

Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) – Strauss et al.

Self-Report of Childhood Abuse Physical (SRCAP) Scale – Widom et. al.

Childhood Neglect Series - Widom et al.

Childhood Needs Series - Curtis et al.

Childhood Sexual Abuse – Widom et. al.

Coping Strategies – Widom et. al.



**OFFENDER PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE**

>Begin with the Scantron Sheet

**Educational/Military Background**

1. Did you graduate from high school or receive a GED?

- a. GED
- b. Graduated from high school
- c. Not a H.S. Grad/ No GED
- d. DK/NR

2. (if GED (a) or HS (b) to q.1) Did you receive any other degrees?

- a. No
- b. Masters
  - c. Phd.
  - d. Other
- e. DK/NR  
blank. Does not Apply

3. (if no (c) to q.1) When did you last attend school? During...

- a. Elementary School
- b. Middle School
- c. High School
- d. DK/NR
- e. Does not Apply

> (And now some yes/no quess) Have you ever...:

4. Attended a technical, trade, or vocational school?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR

5. Taken part in an apprenticeship or on-the-job training program?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR

6. Attended a junior or community college?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c..DK/NR

7. Been in the armed forces?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c..DK/NR

8. (If YES (a) to q.7) In which Service did you serve?

- a. Army
- b. Air Force
- c. Navy/Marines
- d. National Guard
- e. DK/NR

Blank. Does not Apply

8. (If YES (a) to q.7) What is your Discharge Status?

- a. Honorable Discharge
- b. Other than Honorable Discharge
- c. Other
- d. DK/NR
- e. Does not Apply

10. Where did you first being attending elementary school? In Anchorage or another Alaskan city, a village in Alaska on the road system, a village in Alaska not on the road system, a small community outside of Alaska, or a large community outside of Alaska?

- a. Anchorage/ Other Alaskan City
- b. Village in Alaska (on the road system)
- c. Village in Alaska (not on the road system)
- d. Small community outside of Alaska
- e. Large city outside of Alaska

Blank. DK/NR

**>Now, you'll need to write the answers to the next series of questions on the Fill-In Answer Sheet**

11. **In space #11 on the fill-in sheet, write** the name of the community where you first began attended elementary school.

12. **In space #12, write** the state of that community. If it wasn't in the United States, put the country where you first attended elementary school.

**Current Offense/Detention**

13. **In space #13, write** the offense(s) are you currently being held for.

14. **In space #14, using years and months,** write how long have you been incarcerated this time.

15. **In space #15, write** your anticipated release date.

**Arrest Record**

> Now, I'm going to ask you some questions about any prior offenses and arrests.

- 16. **In space #16, write the number of times you have been arrested as an adult. If too many to count, please estimate.**
- 17. **In space #17, write the number of times you were arrested as a juvenile. If too many to count, please estimate.**
- 17a. **In space #17a, write how old you were the first time you were arrested for an offense.**
- 18. **And, in space #18, write the first offense you were arrested for and the year of that arrest.**

**Employment History**

- 19. Have you ever been employed, that is paid for working? **(Circle the Yes or No on #19)**
- 20. **(If you put yes (a)) In #20, write the type of job you had prior to your current incarceration. If you had no job write “unemployed”.**
- 21. **If you were unemployed, in #21 write down the type of work you were looking for. If you weren't looking for work, write down why you weren't looking for work.**

**Family History**

> Now back to the Scantron answer sheet for series of yes/no questions. The answer categories for these items are (A) for Yes, (B) for No, and (C) for Don't Know or No Response

- 22. Did you live with both your natural mother and natural father from the time you were born until you were 18 years of age?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NA
- 23. Did you live in a foster care home while you were under 18 years of age.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NA
- 24. When you were growing up, did any of your parents or guardians ever receive government assistance, for example, AFDC, food stamps, Medicaid or WIC?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

24. While you were growing up, did you ever live in public housing or publicly subsidized housing, for example Section 8 housing?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
  -
24. While you were growing up, did any of your parents or guardians abuse alcohol?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
24. Did they abuse drugs? **\*\*In person interview, examine substances used, amount and frequency\*\***
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
24. While your mother was pregnant with you, did she consume alcohol?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
24. Has anyone ever told you that you were damaged in some way by her drinking during pregnancy?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
24. Do you feel you were damaged in any way by her drinking during pregnancy?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR

**\*\*In Person interview – explore nature of damage attributed to drinking behavior of mother\*\***

**> Write the following answers on the fill-in sheet.**

31. **On item #31, write** how many brothers you have (including half-brothers).
32. If any of your brothers have served time in jail, **write in #32** the most serious offenses they have served time for.
33. **In #33, write** how many sisters you have (including half-sisters).
34. If any of your sisters have served time in jail, **write in #34** the most serious offenses they have served time for.

- 35a. If any of your parents or guardians served time in jail, **write in #35a** who it was, and the most serious offenses they served time for. **Don't put the person's name, just their relationship to you, like father, mother, etc.**
- 35b. Before you were incarcerated here, if any of your spouses, significant others, boyfriends or girlfriends served time **write in #35b** who it was, and the most serious offenses they served time for. **Don't put the person's name, just their relationship to you.**
36. **In item #36 write** your childrens' ages . **(If you have no children, put a zero)**
37. (If any of your children are under 18) **Write in #37** who they are staying with now. **Don't use the person's name, just their relationship to you and the children.**
38. (If any of your children were under 18 when you became incarcerated this time) **Write in #38** who they were staying with at the time you became incarcerated. **Don't put the person's name, just their relationship to you and the children.**
39. If any of your children have served time in jail, **write in item #39** whether it was a son or daughter, and the most serious offenses they served time for. **Do not use their name.**
40. **In #40**, write the relationship to you of anyone you've talked to on a jail phone during the last 30 days, and how many times.
41. **In #41**, write the relationship to you of anyone you've sent personal mail to from jail during the last 30 days, and how many times.
42. **In #42**, write the relationship to you of anyone who has sent you mail while you were in jail during the last 30 days, and how many times.
43. **In #43**, write the relationship to you of anyone who has visited you in jail during the last 30 days, and approximately how many times they've visited you.

**CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

44. **On item #44** write the community, state, and country where you were born.
- 44a. **On item #44a** write the community, state, and country your parents lived in when you were born.
45. **In #45** write the community, state, and country where your father was born.
46. **In #46** write the community, state, and country where your mother was born.
47. **In #47** write the community, state, and country where your mother's mother was born. **(If you don't know exactly, put what you do know)**
48. **In #48** write the community, state, and country where your mother's father was born. **(If you don't know exactly, put what you do know)**
49. **In #49** write the community, state, and country where your father's mother was born. **(If you don't know exactly, put what you do know)**

50. **In #50** write the community, state, and country where your father's father was born. **(If you don't know exactly, put what you do know)**
51. **In #51**, write the countries or parts of the world your ancestors come from. **(If you don't know exactly, put what you do know)**
52. **On #52**, write the parts of your ancestry background you feel closest to.
53. **Item #53:** When people ask you what your ethnic background is, what – in your own words – do you answer?
54. If your answer in #53 isn't the way you in fact think of yourself, write in **item #54** what you really think your ethnic background is.
55. How important is your ethnic background to you? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, or not important. **(circle the appropriate response on item #55).**
56. How about if you were criticized for not being a good member of your ethnic group by someone of your group? Which would best represent how you feel: very upset, somewhat upset, or not upset?. **(circle the appropriate response on item #56).**
57. **On item #57**, write the language that you usually speak these days?
58. **In #58**, write the language that you usually speak when you are not incarcerated?
59. **In #59**, write the languages that you speak well.
60. **In #60**, write the language that you prefer to use?
61. Before you were in jail, how often did you eat foods of your ethnic background? At least once a day, at least once a week, a few times a month, a few times a year, or did you never eat any foods of your ethnic background? **(circle the appropriate response on item #61)**

> Use the Scantron answer sheet for the following section, starting with item #62

**Substance Use and Abuse**

>In your entire life, have you ever...

62. Had as much as a fifth of liquor in one day?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

63. **Have you ever...**Had arguments with your spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, family, or friends because you had been drinking?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
64. **Have you ever...**Lost a job because of your drinking?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
65. **Have you ever...**Had job or school trouble because of your drinking?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
66. **Have you ever...**Been held at a police station because of your drinking?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
67. **Have you ever...**Been arrested for committing a crime while you were drunk?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
68. **And, have you ever...**Gotten into a physical fight while drinking or right after drinking?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

**>Have you ever used...**

69. Marijuana or Hashish?
- a. Yes
  - a. No
  - b. DK/NR
70. Methamphetamine?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

71. Crack?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
72. Cocaine other than crack?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
73. Heroin?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
74. PCP?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
75. LSD or other Hallucinogens?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
76. Have you ever inhaled or sniffed substances to get high, for example, glue, lighter fluid, or gasoline?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
77. Have you ever drunk over the counter products like Lysol or hairspray to get high?

\*\*\* In person interviews, examine frequency & duration of usage for each of the substances used \*\*\*

78. Have you ever attended any kind of alcohol or drug treatment program?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR



79. (If yes(a) to q.78) Did any of those programs help you to reduce or stop your drug or alcohol use?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
  - d. Does not Apply
80. (If yes(a) to q.78) Was the program that helped you one you attended while in prison?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
  - d. Does not Apply

\*\* In person interview, probe for opinions and effectiveness of treatment programs \*\*\*

**MEDICAL CONDITION**

\*\* In person, probe for other medical problems/diagnoses \*\*\*

**>When you began this stay in detention...**

81. Were you sick, injured, high or intoxicated?
- a.Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
82. **When you began this stay in detention...**Did they ask you any questions about your health or medical history?
- a.Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR

\*\*In person – What did you tell them\*\*

83. **When you began this stay in detention...**Did they ask you if you had ever thought about or attempted suicide?
- a.Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
84. (if yes(a) to q.81) How did you answer that question?
- a.Yes/b.No/c. DK/NR /d. Does not Appy
85. Since admission, has anyone pricked your skin for a TB test?
- a.Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR

86. (if yes(a) to q.85) Was it positive for TB?  
a. Yes/b. No/c. DK/NR /d. Does not Apply
87. Since admission, have you had a medical exam?  
a. Yes / b.No / c. DK/NR
88. Have you ever had your blood tested for the virus that causes AIDS?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
89. (If yes(a) to q.88) Was the test positive for AIDS?  
a. Yes/b. No/c. DK/NR /d. Does not Apply

**MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

\*\*In person, probe for details \*\*

- > **Now I am going to ask you about services you may have received for emotional or mental health problems other than those related to drug or alcohol abuse.**
- > **Because of Emotional or Mental Problem, have you ever....**
90. Taken a medication prescribed by a psychiatrist or other doctor?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
91. **Because of Emotional or Mental Problem, have you ever....**Been admitted to a mental hospital, unit or treatment program?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
92. **Because of Emotional or Mental Problem, have you ever....**Received counseling or therapy from a trained professional?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
93. **Because of Emotional or Mental Problem, have you ever....**Received any other mental health services?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR

**>Do you have..**

94. A learning disability?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR
95. A speech disability?  
a. Yes/b.No/c.DK/NR

96. Or, a mental or emotional condition?  
 a. Yes/b. No/c. DK/NR

**DISSOCIATION & HOSTILITY**

> Here is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. Please indicate how often during the past year you always or almost always, frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never felt this way.

- a. Almost or almost always
  - b. Frequently
  - c. Occasionally
  - d. Rarely
  - e. Never
- blank. Don't know]

>In the past year, how often have you...

- 97. **In the past year, how often have you...** Felt easily annoyed or irritated?
- 98. **In the past year, how often have you...** Felt outside of your body?
- 99. **In the past year, how often have you...** Had temper outbursts you could not control?
- 100. **In the past year, how often have you...** Not felt like your real self?
- 101. **In the past year, how often have you...** Felt fearful?
- 102. **In the past year, how often have you...** Had urges to beat, injure, or harm someone?
- 103. **In the past year, how often have you...** “Spaced Out”?
- 104. **In the past year, how often have you...** Had urges to break or smash things?
- 105. **In the past year, how often have you...** Lost touch with reality?
- 106. **In the past year, how often have you...** Gotten into arguments?
- 107. **In the past year, how often have you...** Watched yourself from far away?
- 108. **In the past year, how often have you...** Shouted or threw things?
- 109. **In the past year, how often have you...** Felt tense or keyed up?

***Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)***

- > **No matter how well families get along, there are times when people disagree about decisions, get annoyed about something another person does, or have disagreements or fights because they're in a bad mood or some other reasons. People use different ways of trying to settle differences.**
- > **Here is a list of some things that your parents or the people in your family might have done when they had a disagreement with you when you were growing up, that is, up to the time you had finished elementary school. For each one, how often would they do this?**

- a. Never
- b. Once or Twice
- c. Sometimes
- d. Frequently
- e. Most of the time
- blank. DK/NR

- > **How often would they...**
- 110. Discuss an issue calmly?
- 111. **How often would they...**Get information to back up their side of things?
- 112. **How often would they...**Bring in or try to bring in someone to help settle things?
- 113. **How often would they...**Insult or swear at you?
- 114. **How often would they...**Sulk and/or refuse to talk about it?
- 115. **How often would they...**Stomp out of the room or house?
- 116. **How often would they...**Cry?
- 117. **How often would they...**Do or say something to spite you?
- 118. **How often would they...**Threaten to hit or throw something at you?
- 119. **How often would they...**Throw, smash , hit or kick something?
- 120. **How often would they...**Throw something at you?
- 121. **How often would they...**Push, grab, or shove you?
- 122. **How often would they...**Slap or spank you?
- 123. **How often would they...**Kick, bite, or hit you with a fist?
- 124. **How often would they...**Hit you or try to hit you with something?
- 125. **How often would they...**Beat you up?
- 126. **How often would they...**Burn or scald you?
- 127. **How often would they...**Threaten you with a knife or gun?
- 128. **How often would they...**Use a knife or gun?

129. Did either of your parents ever beat you when you didn't deserve it?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

**SELF-REPORT OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE PHYSICAL (SRCAP) SCALE**

\*\*Follow up in interview: Relationship of perpetrator, number of events, age at the time/first time \*\*

- > **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

130. **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**Beat or really hurt you by hitting you with bare hand or fist?
131. **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**Beat or hit you with something hard like a stick or baseball bat?
132. **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**Beat or hit you with a whip, strap, or belt?
133. **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**Injure you with a knife, shoot you with a gun, or use another weapon against you?
134. **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**Hurt you badly enough so that you needed a doctor or other medical treatment?
135. **Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...**Physically injure you so that you were admitted to a hospital?

**CHILDHOOD NEGLECT**

136. Were there ever times when you were a young child that a neighbor fed you or cared for you because your parents didn't get around to shopping for food or cooking, or when neighbors or relatives kept you overnight because no one was taking care of you at home?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

137. When you were a young child, did anyone ever say that you weren't being given enough to eat, or kept clean enough, or that you weren't getting enough medical care when it was needed?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
138. When you were a **very** young child, did your parents ever leave you home alone while they were out shopping or doing something else?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR

**CHILDHOOD NEEDS SERIES**

- > **Many people have important needs that are not met during their childhood. Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**
- a. **Never**
  - b. **Once or Twice**
  - c. **Sometimes**
  - d. **Frequently**
  - e. **Most of the Time**
  - Blank. **DK/NR**
139. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**Did you get so little food that you were hungry all day, and then went to bed hungry?
140. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**did you not have the right kind of clothing to stay comfortable when you went outside?
141. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**was there really no place for you to stay, or the place you stayed at was not a good place to stay?
142. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**Were there no adults who cared about what you were doing all day?
143. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**When you had a medical problem did nobody care or do anything about it?.
144. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**Did you feel that no one cared about what happened to you?
145. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...**Were there no adults who cared enough about you to give you guidance on the important things in life?

**CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE**

- > **It is now generally realized that most people have sexual experiences as children and while they are still growing up. Some of these are with friends and playmates, and some with relatives and family members. Some are very upsetting and painful, and some are not. Some influence people's later lives and some are practically forgotten. Although these are often important events, very little is actually known about them.**
- > **Try to remember the sexual experiences you had while growing up. By "sexual," we mean a broad range of things, in fact, anything that might have seemed sexual to you.**
146. How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?
- 18 years of age or older
  - Age 15 to 17
  - Age 13 to 14
  - Under age 12
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply
147. Was the person you had sex with the first time older or younger than you?
- Older
  - Younger
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply
148. **(If Older(a) or Younger (b) on q.147)** How much of an age difference was there?
- Under 5 years
  - 5 to 9 years
  - 10 years or more
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply
149. Have you ever had a sexual experience with anyone 10 years older or 10 years younger than you?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply
150. **(If yes (a) to q.149)** How old were you when this happened the first time?
- 12 years of age or younger
  - 13 to 17 years of age
  - 18 or older
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply

151. How old was your partner at that time?

- a. 12 years of age or younger
- b. 13 to 17 years of age
- c. 18 or older
- d. DK/NR
- e. Does not Apply

> **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have any of the following experiences:**

\*\*Follow up in interview: Relationship of perpetrator, number of events, age at the time/first time \*\*

152. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...An invitation or request to do something sexual?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR

153. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...Kissing and hugging in a sexual way?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR

154. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...Another person showing his or her sex organs to you?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR

155. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...You showing your sex organs to another person?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR

156. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...Another person fondling you in a sexual way?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. DK/NR



157. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...** You fondling another person in a sexual way?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
158. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...** Another person touching your sex organs?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
159. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...** You touching another person's sex organs?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
160. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...** Attempting intercourse, but without penetration?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
161. **Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...** Intercourse?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
162. Do you consider any of these experiences to have been sexual abuse?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply
163. Has anyone ever bothered you sexually or tried to have sex with you against your will?
- Yes
  - No
  - DK/NR
164. **(If Yes (a) to q.163)** How old were you when this happened the first time?
- 12 years of age or younger
  - 13 to 17 years of age
  - 18 or older
  - DK/NR
  - Does not Apply

165. (If Yes (a) to q.163) Did you tell anyone about it at the time?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
  - d. Does not Apply

\*\*Follow up in interview: Relationship of person(s) told, what happened post report\*\*

**COPING STRATEGIES**

> Here is a list of things people do to help them deal with difficult or bad situations that happen to them. For each statement, how often do you do things like this when a bad thing happens to you. The answer categories are a lot, sometimes, almost never, or never.

- a. A lot
- b. Sometimes
- c. Almost Never
- d. Never
- e. DK/NR

166. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Do things to take your mind off the situation—like going out, watching TV, driving around, or doing something entertaining?
167. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Try to get more information about the problem or how to deal with problems like this?
168. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Take it out emotionally on other people?
169. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Accept that nothing could be done about the situation?
170. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Try to see the situation in a different way?
171. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Pray?
172. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Seek emotional support from loved ones, friends, or professional?
173. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Try to make yourself feel better by drinking or taking drugs?
174. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Think about possible ways to improve the situation?
175. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Do something to relax tension?
176. When a bad thing happens to how often do you...Do things to try to improve the situation?

> For the next few final questions, please use the fill-in answer sheet starting with question #177 <

**SOCIAL SUPPORT**

177. Was there any adult in your childhood (other than your mother and father) with whom you felt really close?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
178. What was their relationship to you?
179. Is this person still alive?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
  - d. Does not Apply
180. How long have you known this person?
181. Did you know your mother?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
- 181a. (If yes(a) to q.181) During your childhood did you feel really close to your mother ?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
  - d. Does not Apply
182. Did you know your father?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
- 182a. (If yes(a) to q.182) During your childhood did you feel really close to your father ?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. DK/NR
  - d. Does not Apply
183. In your view, what is the ethnic identity of your three closest friends in here?
- Friend #1 (write ethnicity here) \_\_\_\_\_
- Friend #2 (write ethnicity here) \_\_\_\_\_
- Friend #3 (write ethnicity here) \_\_\_\_\_

184. Write any ethnic or religious holidays or festivals that you observed regularly prior to this incarceration?

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185. When people ask you what your race is, what – in your own words – do you answer?

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186. When people ask what your religion is, what – in your own words – do you answer?

187. How important is it for you to hang out mostly with people of your ethnic group? Would you say it is: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

- a. Extremely Important
- b. Very Important
- c. Somewhat important
- d. A little important
- e. Not at all important
- blank. Don't know/ Refused

188. Your close friends are: Only from your ethnic group, mostly from your ethnic group, about equally from your ethnic group and from other ethnic groups, mostly from other ethnic groups, only from other ethnic groups?

- a. Only from your ethnic group
- b. Mostly from your ethnic group
- c. About equally from your ethnic group and from other groups
- d. Mostly from other ethnic groups
- e. Only from other ethnic groups
- blank. Don't know/ Refused

189. How important is it for you to keep alive some of the customs and traditions of your ethnic group? Would you say it is: Extremely important, very important, somewhat important, a little important, or not at all important?

- a. Extremely important
- b. Very important
- c. Somewhat important
- d. A little important
- e. Not at all important
- blank. Don't know/ Refused

## **Inmate Interview Response Form**

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ OBSCIS No.: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Inmate Interview**

**Directions:** Introduce yourself and explain that you are here to follow-up on the interview they participated in earlier. Show them the consent form they signed at the first session. Remind them that their participation is voluntary and that they may stop at any time during the 30-minute session. Remind them also that all of their answers will be confidential and no personal information will be shared or reported to anyone. Explain the purpose of the follow-up, which is to learn more about their childhood and the significant things that happened to them.

#### **1. What was it like growing up as a child, up to and including 6th grade?**

**Sibling order:**

**Highest Education:**

**Father figure:**

**Mother figure:**

**Who was treated the BEST/WORSE:**

**Alcohol/Drugs:**

**Stability of home:**

**Raised by:**

**Began on their own:**

**Person who gave them most guidance:**

**Person who gave them most emotional support:**

#### **2. How did your parents (Guardian) discipline you/your siblings? What provoked it?**

**Method:**

**Chronic/Cyclic/Exception:**

**“We have covered some important areas so far, but one other topic given some attention on the previous survey was sexual activities.”**

**3. Did you ever experience any sexual activity as a child? Tell me about them.**

**Chronic/Cyclic/Exceptional:**

**Intensity:**

**4. How were your parents raised? Were they abused/neglected?**

**Alcohol/Drugs:**

**5. Kids: how did/would you treat them? Discipline them?**

**What provoked you:**

**Ever harmed them:**

**6. How was your health?**

**Unconscious/Head Injuries:**

**Drugs/Alcohol began:**

**7. What could have changed in your life so that you might not have wound up here?**

**Thanks for sharing this information.**

## Inmate Interview Coding Sheet

Obscis	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	-			+	
1a. Physical	1	2	3		
1b. Neglect	1	2	3		
1c. Emotional	1	2	3		
2. Education	___	___			
			[00=none	13-16=HS+	17-21=Grad.School]
	-	=		+	
3. Best/Worse	1	2	3		
			<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
4. Alcohol/Drugs in Home			1	2	
		<u>Stable</u>	<u>Not Stable</u>		
5. Stability of Home	1	2			
6. Home Atmosphere	1	2			
7. On their Own (physical)	_____	_____			[98 never did]
8. On their Own (mental)	_____	_____			[98 never did]
		<u>None</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>Alot</u>	
9. Sex Activity	1	2	3		
		<u>In home</u>	<u>Outside Home</u>	<u>In/Out</u>	<u>None</u>
10. Sex Activity Locus		1	2	3	4
		<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Yes</u>	
11. Parents Abused	1	2	3		
12. Abuse Kids	1	2	3		
13. Head Injuries	1	2	3		
14. Began Drugs/Alc.	_____	_____			[98 Never used 99 Unknown]



# **An Assessment of Survey Biases**

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

by

Robert H. Langworthy

Justice Center  
University of Alaska Anchorage



JC 9809.02D

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## AN ASSESSMENT OF SURVEY BIASES

The initial sample for the congregate interviews was designed to insure that we would question a sample of qualified respondents at the Spring Creek Correctional Center and all qualified respondents at the other institutions. We were not surprised when that objective was not met but were concerned that the response rate was so low in several of the institutions. Table 1 reports response rates by facility. Of those eligible to be included in the congregate interview just 35 percent completed the survey. The low survey response rate caused us to be concerned that sample might not be representative of the larger long-term inmate population. This study was done in an effort to better understand how survey respondents compare to the larger eligible population so that we might interpret the findings with an appreciation of biases inherent in the sample.

We are satisfied that the congregate interview sample is “fairly” representative of the larger long-term inmate population. That noted there are several significant biases apparent in the sample. There is a racial bias with Whites overrepresented and Alaska Natives under-represented in the survey sample. Also there is an apparent child abuse history bias. The files of those included in the survey sample to more likely exhibit evidence of child sexual abuse or neglect than the files of the non-survey sample.

**Table 1: DOC Inmate Profile Response Rates by Facility**

Facility	DOC list of eligibles	Staff list of eligibles	Eligibles surveyed	Percentage of eligibles surveyed
Palmer Medium	86	56	23	41%
Palmer Minimum	81	59	22	37%
Hiland (women)	106	34	29	85%
Hiland (men)	43	24	18	75%
Spring Creek	533	385	79	21%
Wildwood	106	62	27	44%
Meadow Creek	30	30	29	97%
Lemon Creek	66	39	13	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>35%</b>

The present study seeks to answer the question “Are the survey respondents, in aggregate, the same as or different than eligible non-respondents?” If the answer to that question is that they are the same then we will assume that the survey respondents are representative of the long-term inmate population as a whole. If the answer is that they are different then we will know the survey sample is biased and we will have some information about the nature of the biases that will help us interpret our findings.

To conduct these tests we compared respondents and non-respondents on information developed from a review of their official files. The files were reviewed for race, birth state, sentence length, current offense, initial security level, work history, evidence of serious problems as adults, as children, evidence of child abuse histories, and adult and juvenile criminal records.

## Race

Table 2 presents a comparison of non-respondents and survey respondent racial characteristics. When the distributions across racial categories are compared it is evident that there are statistically significant differences (chi square=9.91 with 3 degrees of freedom). It appears that Alaska Natives are under-represented and Whites overrepresented among survey respondents.

**Table 2: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Race and Sample**

Race	Non-respondent (n = 134)	Survey respondent (n = 237)
Black	14.2%	11.4%
Alaska Native	40.3	26.6
White	38.8	54.0
Other Race	6.7	8.0

## Birth State

Table 3 presents a comparison of non-respondents and survey respondents birth state. When the distributions of in-state and out-of-state birth are compared statistically significant differences are not evident (chi square=3.21 with 1 degree of freedom).

**Table 3: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Birth State and Sample**

Birth state	Non-respondent (n = 134)	Survey respondent (n = 237)
Alaska	49.3%	39.7%
Other State	50.7	60.3

## Sentence Length

Comparison of non-respondent and survey respondent survey length reveals no statistically significant difference. Non-respondent's mean sentence length was 24.5 years. Survey respondent's mean sentence length was 24.1 years. These means are not statistically different from each other (t=.051, 365 degrees of freedom). These are highly skewed distribution but the means remain statistically the same even when extreme values are trimmed.

## Current Offense

Table 4 presents the distributions for survey respondents and non-responding eligibles by current offense. Statistical “goodness of fit” (chi square=.858, 4 degrees of freedom) confirms that the two groups are similar with respect to current offense suggesting that the survey sample would not be biased by charge.

**Table 4: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Type of Crime and Sample**

Charge	Non-respondent (n = 148)	Survey respondent (n = 219)
Violent	48.6%	44.7%
Property	6.8	6.8
Drugs	4.1	5.5
Other	1.4	1.8
Sex offenses	39.2	41.1

## Initial Security Level

Each inmate begin their period of incarceration with an initial assessment designed to assign a security classification. The mean initial security level score for non-respondents was 15.19. For respondents the mean initial security level was 13.93, statistically lower than for non-respondents ( $t=2.301$ , 359 degrees of freedom). Though there is a statistically significant difference between respondents and non-respondents review of the comparison of respondent and non-respondent distributions of classifications across levels resulting from those scores suggests that the statistical difference may not be substantive. Table 5 presents the distributions for the two samples and confirms the slight difference between the two groups with non-respondents marginally more likely to be security risks than respondents.

**Table 5: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Initial Classification Level and Sample**

Initial security classification	Non-respondent (n = 148)	Survey respondent (n = 219)
Low (1-7)	0.7%	5.1%
Medium (8-14)	52.1	55.1
High (15 +)	47.2	39.8

## Work History

Table 6 permits comparison of the work histories of non-respondents and respondents. Work histories were described as fully employed at the time of incarceration, usually employed and/or subsistence employment, chronically underemployed or unemployed, and no basis on which to

determine degree of employment. It is clear when the data are reviewed that there was a greater likelihood that respondents were employed at the time they were incarcerated than non-respondents (chi-square=15.4, 3 degrees of freedom). This suggests that the survey is bias toward conventionality and more complete social functioning.

**Table 6: Distribution of Long-term Inmates by Work History and Sample**

Work history	Non-respondent (n = 147)	Survey respondent (n = 219)
Fully employed	14.3%	27.4%
Usually employed/ subsistence	21.8	23.7
Chronically unemployed/ under-employed	40.1	23.3
No basis	23.8	25.6

**Evidence of Severe Problems as Adults**

The files were also examined for evidence of serious noncriminal problems. Specifically the files were examined to see if there was evidence of alcoholism, other drug addiction, mental health problems, hostility or temper problems, depression, or if the individual was suicidal. When the files were reviewed the lack of information was also noted if the file did not contain an assessment of adult problems. Table 7 presents a comparison of evidence of adult problems for non-respondents and respondents. It appears that the two groups a similar with the exception of adult histories of drug problems—the survey appears to overrepresent long-term inmates with adult drug problems.

**Table 7: Percent Evidence of Severe Adult Problems by Type of Problem and Sample**

(Percent, yes)

Type of problem	Non-respondent (n = 136)	Survey respondent (n = 197)
Alcoholism	54.4%	51.8%
Drugs*	28.7	41.1
Mental Health	15.4	20.8
Hostility/Temper	27.2	20.3
Depression	5.9	9.6
Suicidal	6.6	12.7
No basis	8.7 (149)	10.0 (219)

**Evidence of Severe Problems as Children**

Table 8 presents the same comparative information as above but the focus is on whether there was evidence in the file of severe problem when the long-term inmate was a child. As in the preceding case only a childhood drug problem distinguishes the non-respondents and respondents.

**Table 8: Percent Evidence of Severe Children Problems by Type of Problem and Sample**

(Percent, yes)

Type of problem	Non-respondent (n = 113)	Survey respondent (n = 155)
Alcoholism	22.1%	19.4%
Drugs*	15.0	25.2
Mental Health	9.7	16.8
Hostility/Temper	17.7	18.1
Depression	4.4	1.9
Suicidal	1.8	2.6
No basis	24.2 (149)	29.2 (219)

## Child Abuse Histories

The files often presented information about child abuse histories. Table 9 provides a summary of evidence from the files that long-term inmates experienced abuse as children. The forms of child abuse experienced by inmates are physical, psychological, sexual, and neglect. Review of the table reveals that survey respondents differed from non-respondents in that survey respondent files were more likely to note a history of neglect or sexual abuse while a child. The disparity between non-respondents and respond records suggests that those with histories of child sexual abuse and neglect may be overrepresented in the sample.

**Table 9: Percent Evidence of Child Abuse While Child by Type of Abuse and Sample**

(Percent, yes)

Type of abuse	Non-respondent (n = 102)	Survey respondent (n = 155)
Physical	16.7%	24.4%
Psychological	10.8	16.0
Sexual*	10.8	21.8
Neglect*	10.8	20.5
No basis	31.5	28.8

## Adult Criminal Record

The files provided information that allowed examination of prior record. The cases were coded as whether the inmate had a record of one or more violent offenses, property offenses, public order offenses, drug offenses, or sexual offenses. An effort was made to capture chronicity, that is if there was an indication in the record that someone was a “lifelong” thief, or had three or more charges of the same type they were classified as a chronic offender. Table 10 presents data that permit comparison of non-respondent and respondent adult prior offense records. The adult criminal records of non-respondents and respondents are remarkably similar. Of the ten comparisons below

just two reveal statistically significant differences. Non-respondents were more likely to have a chronic violent adult record and a drug offense record than survey respondents.

**Table 10: Prior Adult Records by Type of Offense and Sample**

(Percent, yes)

Type of offense	Non-Chronic		Chronic	
	Non-respondent (n = 149)	Survey respondent (n = 218)	Non-respondent (n = 142)	Survey respondent (n = 213)
Violent	69.1	62.4	31.7*	20.7
Property	47.0	41.3	12.7	16.9
Public Order	55.0*	42.2	18.3	19.2
Drugs	14.1	15.6	5.6	8.9
Sexual	43.6	45.0	21.1	18.3

## Juvenile Criminal Record

Table 11 presents data that permit comparison of non-respondent and respondent juvenile prior offense records. The juvenile criminal records of non-respondents and respondents are remarkably similar. None of the twelve comparisons below reveal statistically significant differences.

**Table 11: Prior Juvenile Records by Type of Offense and Sample**

(Percent, yes)

Type of offense	Non-Chronic		Chronic	
	Non-respondent (n = 149)	Survey respondent (n = 218)	Non-respondent (n = 142)	Survey respondent (n = 213)
Violent	21.2	12.8	8.8	3.9
Property	29.8	19.9	11.8	11.1
Public Order	22.1	14.1	9.8	7.2
Drugs	6.7	6.4	1.0	3.9
Sexual	4.8	5.1	2.0	2.0
No basis	30.2 (149)	28.8 (219)	31.5 (149)	30.1 (219)

## Summary

The foregoing analysis comparing congregate interview respondents to a sample of individuals eligible to participate revealed a number differences and similarity. The two groups differed in racial composition—Alaska Natives were under-represented and Whites were overrepresented in the congregate interview sample. Respondents were more likely than non-responding eligibles to have histories of drug problems as adults and juveniles, and more likely to have had child sexual abuse or neglect histories. Additionally, there was a marginal difference in initial security levels with survey respondents somewhat less likely to be classified high than non-respondents. The final

substantial difference was across work histories. Survey respondents were less likely to have been chronically unemployed than non-respondents.

There also was a substantial degree of concordance between the two groups. There were no differences in birth state distributions, sentence length, the distribution of current offenses, adult and juvenile alcoholism records, adult and juvenile mental health problem records, hostility/temper problem records, or records of depression or suicidal tendency. Indeed the adult and juvenile “severe problem” records were very similar across the two groups. When the focus shifts to records of child abuse there is no evidence of a difference in incidence of physical or psychological abuse across the two groups. Finally when the comparison turn to adult and juvenile criminal records just two of the twenty comparison revealed a difference (adult records of chronic violence and for non-chronic public order offenses higher for non-respondents) across the two groups.



# Tables to Support Profile Analysis

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

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**Table 1: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Physical Abuse by Gender and Race**  
*Percent abused.*

Note: The very severe violence sub-scale of the Conflict Tactics Scale elicits frequency responses to the following questions “Here is a list of some things that your parents or the people in your family might have done when they had a disagreement with you when you were growing up, that is, up to the time you had finished elementary school. For each one, how often would they do this (never, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time, DK/NR)?”

The SRCAP scale (Self-Reported Childhood Abuse Physical) elicits an incidence response to the following questions. “Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever....(yes, no, DK/NR)?”

Type of Physical Abuse	Overall (n = 243)	Gender		Race			
		Males (n = 212)	Females (n = 29)	Natives (n = 72)	White (n = 129)	Black (n = 28)	Other (n = 14)
<b>Very Severe Violence (VSV):</b>							
Kick, bite, or hit you with a fist?	<b>38.0%</b>	35.3%	59.3%	26.2%	43.9%	39.3%	38.0%
Beat you up?	<b>38.7</b>	35.7	63.0	28.1	41.0	42.9	61.5
Burn or scald you?	<b>9.1</b>	8.4	14.8	10.6	8.1	10.7	7.7
Threaten you with a knife or gun?	<b>14.2</b>	11.2	37.0	11.9	10.4	35.7	15.4
Use a knife or gun?	<b>9.9</b>	8.8	18.5	9.0	8.1	17.9	15.4
<b>Any VSV</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>36.5%</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>53.6%</b>	<b>61.5%</b>
<b>SRCAP:</b>							
Beat or really hurt you by hitting you with a bare hand or fist?	<b>56.4%</b>	55.1%	64.3%	45.5%	62.5%	50.0%	66.7%
Beat or hit you with something hard like a stick or baseball bat?	<b>45.1</b>	43.3	57.1	39.7	46.9	42.9	61.5
Beat or hit you with a whip, strap, or belt?	<b>68.1</b>	66.0	82.1	48.5	73.6	82.1	84.6
Injure you with a knife, shoot you with a gun, or use another weapon against you?	<b>20.5</b>	19.3	26.9	21.2	16.5	35.7	23.1
Hurt you badly enough so that you needed a doctor or other medical treatment?	<b>25.0</b>	23.7	32.1	19.4	25.0	42.9	15.4
Physically injure you so that you were admitted to a hospital?	<b>12.3</b>	10.6	21.4	10.4	8.6	28.6	23.1
<b>Any SRCAP</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>82.2%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>74.6%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>89.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 2: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Physical Abuse by Offense**  
*Percent abused.*

NOTE: The very severe violence sub-scale of the Conflict Tactics Scale elicits frequency responses to the following questions “Here is a list of some things that your parents or the people in your family might have done when they had a disagreement with you when you were growing up, that is, up to the time you had finished elementary school. For each one, how often would they do this (never, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time, DK/NR)?”

The SRCAP scale (Self-Reported Childhood Abuse Physical) elicits an incidence response to the following questions. “Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever....(yes, no, DK/NR)?”

Type of Physical Abuse	Overall (n = 243)	Type of Offender					Missing (n = 34)
		Violent (n = 62)	Property (n = 65)	Drugs (n = 18)	Sexual (n = 21)	Other (n = 43)	
<b>Very Severe Violence (VSV):</b>							
Kick, bite, or hit you with a fist?	<b>38.0%</b>	30.5%	60.0%	16.7%	47.6%	36.6%	16.7%
Beat you up?	<b>38.7</b>	37.9	56.7	27.8	38.1	31.7	20.7
Burn or scald you?	<b>9.1</b>	10.2	8.1	11.1	15.0	7.3	9.1
Threaten you with a knife or gun?	<b>14.2</b>	22.0	17.7	0.0	14.3	11.9	3.2
Use a knife or gun?	<b>9.9</b>	16.9	9.7	5.6	10.0	7.1	3.2
<b>Any VSV</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>55.0%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>
<b>SRCAP:</b>							
Beat or really hurt you by hitting you with a bare hand or fist?	<b>56.4%</b>	58.3%	62.9%	41.2%	52.4%	65.1%	38.7%
Beat or hit you with something hard like a stick or baseball bat?	<b>45.1</b>	45.8	50.0	22.2	42.9	53.5	37.5
Beat or hit you with a whip, strap, or belt?	<b>68.1</b>	66.7	75.0	55.6	85.7	69.8	50.0
Injure you with a knife, shoot you with a gun, or use another weapon against you?	<b>20.5</b>	27.1	21.9	11.1	15.0	16.3	20.0
Hurt you badly enough so that you needed a doctor or other medical treatment?	<b>25.0</b>	25.4	25.0	27.8	33.3	21.4	21.9
Physically injure you so that you were admitted to a hospital?	<b>12.3</b>	13.6	15.6	11.1	4.8	9.5	12.5
<b>Any SRCAP</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>65.5%</b>

**Table 3: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Neglect by Gender and Race**  
*Percent neglected.*

NOTE: The childhood neglect series are a series of questions developed by Widom to focus on incidence of types of neglect. The questions elicit a yes, no, or DK/NR response. The childhood needs series are a series of questions developed for this project to focus on needs. The childhood needs questions asked “Many people have important needs that are not met during their childhood. Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often.....? (never, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time, DK/NR)?”

Type of Neglect	Overall (n = 243)	Gender		Race			
		Males (n = 212)	Females (n = 29)	Natives (n = 72)	White (n = 129)	Black (n = 28)	Other (n = 14)
<b>Childhood Neglect Series:</b>							
Neighbor had to feed or house?	<b>15.2%</b>	13.0%	32.1%	26.5%	5.5%	32.1%	15.4%
When young did anyone say you weren't weren't being fed enough, kept clean, or getting appropriate medical care?	<b>9.2</b>	7.1	25.0	11.6	5.4	21.4	7.7
Left home alone when very young?	<b>21.0</b>	19.1	35.7	29.0	16.4	32.0	0.0
Any of the above?	<b>28.0%</b>	<b>26.4%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>46.4%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>
<b>Childhood Needs Series:</b>							
Did you get so little food that you were hungry all day, and then went to bed hungry?	<b>25.2%</b>	24.8%	29.6%	29.9%	19.0%	46.4%	15.4%
Did not have the right kind of clothing to stay comfortable when you went outside?	<b>23.4</b>	20.8	23.4	23.9	22.0	32.1	15.4
Was there really no place for you to stay, or the place you stayed at was not a good place to stay?	<b>18.6</b>	16.8	33.3	19.1	17.3	28.6	7.7
Were there no adults who cared about what you were doing all day?	<b>31.2</b>	29.8	42.3	45.1	26.6	32.1	15.4
When you had a medical problem did nobody care or do anything about it?	<b>16.8</b>	14.6	34.6	17.5	14.1	25.0	23.1
Did you feel that no one cared about what happened to you?	<b>49.4</b>	44.2	88.5	40.0	52.0	64.3	38.5
Were there no adults who cared enough to give you guidance on the important things in life?	<b>37.9</b>	34.5	72.0	37.9	35.7	50.0	33.3
<b>Any of the above?</b>	<b>66.3%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>	<b>89.7%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>	<b>63.6%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>57.1%</b>

**Table 4: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Neglect by Offense***Percent neglected.*

NOTE: The childhood neglect series are a series of questions developed by Widom to focus on incidence of types of neglect. The questions elicit a yes, no, or DK/NR response. The childhood needs series are a series of questions developed for this project to focus on needs. The childhood needs questions asked "Many people have important needs that are not met during their childhood. Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often.....? (never, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time, DK/NR)

Type of Neglect	Overall (n = 243)	Type of Offender					
		Violent (n = 62)	Property (n = 65)	Drugs (n = 18)	Sexual (n = 21)	Other (n = 43)	Missing (n = 34)
<b>Childhood Neglect Series:</b>							
Neighbor had to feed or house?	<b>15.2%</b>	13.3%	18.8%	11.1%	5.0%	9.3%	28.1%
When young did anyone say you weren't weren't being fed enough, kept clean, or getting appropriate medical care?	<b>9.2</b>	8.3	9.4	5.6	4.8	9.3	15.2
Left home alone when very young?	<b>21.0</b>	23.3	20.3	16.7	20.0	14.0	30.3
<b>Any of the above?</b>	<b>28.0%</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>25.6%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>
<b>Childhood Needs Series:</b>							
Did you get so little food that you were hungry all day, and then went to bed hungry?	<b>25.2%</b>	28.3%	26.2%	16.7%	19.0%	23.3%	29.0%
Did not have the right kind of clothing to stay comfortable when you went outside?	<b>23.4</b>	26.7	22.6	11.1	23.8	16.3	35.5
Was there really no place for you to stay, or the place you stayed at was not a good place to stay?	<b>18.6</b>	18.3	25.8	0.0	14.3	16.3	21.9
Were there no adults who cared about what you were doing all day?	<b>31.2</b>	26.7	27.0	33.3	33.3	30.2	48.3
When you had a medical problem did nobody care or do anything about it?	<b>16.8</b>	20.0	17.5	0.0	15.0	16.3	21.4
Did you feel that no one cared about what happened to you?	<b>49.4</b>	42.3	63.5	33.3	52.6	46.5	43.3
Were there no adults who cared enough to give you guidance on the important things in life?	<b>37.9</b>	39.0	40.3	33.3	15.0	33.3	41.9
<b>Any of the above?</b>	<b>66.3%</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>58.1%</b>	<b>61.9%</b>	<b>70.6%</b>

**Table 5: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Sexual Abuse by Gender and Race**  
*Percent abused.*

NOTE: The sexual abuse series of questions asks “Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have any of the following experiences:.....? (yes, no, DK/NR)”

Type of Sexual Abuse	Overall (n = 243)	Gender		Race			
		Males (n = 212)	Females (n = 29)	Natives (n = 72)	White (n = 129)	Black (n = 28)	Other (n = 14)
Requested to do something sexual?	57.5%	54.9%	78.6%	37.9%	61.4%	82.1%	66.7%
Kissed/hugged in sexual way?	54.9	51.9	78.6	37.7	56.3	82.1	75.0
Person showed sex organ?	63.6	60.9	82.1	44.9	70.1	82.1	58.3
You showed another your sex organ?	56.5	55.8	64.3	39.1	63.3	71.4	50.0
Person fondled you sexually?	47.5	43.5	75.0	31.9	50.8	66.7	58.3
You fondled another sexually?	42.2	41.3	46.4	30.4	45.3	57.1	41.7
Person touched your sex organs?	45.0	40.7	75.0	30.4	50.0	60.7	38.5
You touched another’s sex organ?	44.5	42.1	60.7	33.3	47.7	57.1	46.2
Attempted intercourse?	36.7	33.7	60.7	25.0	35.9	67.9	38.5
Intercourse?	23.9	22.5	35.7	18.8	20.3	53.6	23.1
<b>Any of the above before age 12</b>	<b>71.6%</b>	<b>70.3%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>58.3%</b>	<b>75.2%</b>	<b>89.3%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>
<b>Do you consider any of these experiences to have been sexual abuse?</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>

**Table 6: Percent of Long-term Inmates Reporting Sexual Abuse by Offense**  
*Percent abused.*

NOTE: The sexual abuse series of questions asks “Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have any of the following experiences:.....? (yes, no, DK/NR)”

Type of Sexual Abuse	Overall (n = 243)	Type of Offender					
		Violent (n = 62)	Property (n = 65)	Drugs (n = 18)	Sexual (n = 21)	Other (n = 43)	Missing (n = 34)
Requested to do something sexual?	57.5%	56.7%	76.2%	66.7%	42.9%	52.5%	32.3%
Kissed/hugged in sexual way?	54.9	56.7	77.8	61.1	33.3	42.9	33.3
Person showed sex organ?	63.6	66.1	84.1	55.6	52.4	52.4	45.5
You showed another your sex organ?	56.5	60.0	71.4	38.9	57.1	47.6	42.4
Person fondled you sexually?	47.5	46.7	58.7	35.3	33.3	54.8	33.3
You fondled another sexually?	42.2	48.3	52.4	33.3	38.1	33.3	30.3
Person touched your sex organs?	45.0	46.7	54.7	33.3	28.6	50.0	33.3
You touched another’s sex organ?	44.5	46.7	60.9	27.8	33.3	40.5	30.3
Attempted intercourse?	36.7	43.3	50.8	27.8	23.8	28.6	21.2
Intercourse?	23.9	25.0	29.7	27.8	23.8	21.4	12.1
<b>Any of the above before age 12</b>	<b>71.6%</b>	<b>71.0%</b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>61.9%</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>58.8%</b>
<b>Do you consider any of these experiences to have been sexual abuse?</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>25.8</b>

**Table 7: Reported Types of Childhood Abuse by Selected Characteristics of Long-term Inmates**

*Percent abused.*

NOTE: Physical indicates that the inmate reported childhood physical abuse (SRCAP). Sexual indicates that the inmate reported sexual abuse (any sexual experience before 6<sup>th</sup> grade). Neglect indicates that the inmate reported neglect (any need from the need series).

Characteristic	Physical (189)	Sexual (174)	Neglect (161)	Characteristic	Physical (189)	Sexual (174)	Neglect (161)
<b>Sex</b>				<b>Where attended elementary school</b>			
Male (212)	82.2%	70.3%	62.7%	Anchorage (51)	86.0%	70.6%	56.9%
Female (29)	84.6	82.8	89.7	Alaska village—on road (14)	75.0	64.3	71.4
				Alaska village—not on road (43)	75.6	60.5	76.7
<b>Race</b>				Small community—outside (52)	88.2	75.0	61.5
Alaska Native (72)	74.6%	58.3%	70.8%	Large community—outside (69)	82.1	79.7	66.7
White (129)	83.3	75.2	63.6				
Black (28)	89.3	89.3	71.4	<b>Drug use</b>			
				Marijuana (199)	85.5%	74.9%	67.8%
<b>Age</b>				Methamphetamine (91)	88.8	85.7	72.5
Younger than 25 (26)	80.0%	69.2%	57.7%	Crack (64)	96.8	92.2	82.8
25-34 (69)	81.0	75.4	69.6	Cocaine (123)	88.3	82.1	71.5
35-44 (89)	91.9	71.9	68.5	Heroin (55)	90.6	87.3	72.7
Older than 45 (58)	70.4	67.2	66.1	PCP (59)	87.7	84.7	74.6
				LSD (123)	88.2	83.7	72.4
<b>Education</b>				Huffed (63)	93.3	84.1	79.4
No GED/HS (27)	87.5%	74.1%	70.4%				
GED (109)	88.5	78.9	77.1	<b>Number of juvenile arrests</b>			
High school (91)	75.3	64.8	50.5	None (135)	77.5%	64.4%	56.3%
				1 or 2 (54)	82.4	81.5	81.5
<b>Marital status</b>				3 or more (52)	100.0	80.8	76.9
Single (92)	81.9%	70.7%	68.5%				
Married (47)	78.3	63.8	59.6	<b>Number of adult arrests</b>			
Divorced (21)	85.0	85.7	81.0	1 (83)	81.3%	63.9%	61.4%
				2 or 3 (57)	80.4	82.5	59.6
<b>Number of children</b>				4 or more (101)	86.5	72.3	74.3
None (96)	82.0%	68.8%	65.6%				
1 or 2 (75)	81.9	72.0	69.3	<b>Age at first arrest</b>			
More than 2 (70)	86.4	75.7	64.3	Younger than 15 (45)	95.5%	86.7%	82.2%
				15 to 20 (89)	82.6	77.5	68.5
<b>Employed at time of incarceration</b>				21 to 25 (40)	73.7	60.0	47.5
Unemployed (29)	85.7%	79.3%	75.9%	Older than 25 (67)	81.4	61.2	64.2
Employed (207)	82.6	71.0	64.7				
<b>Family history</b>							
Lived with parents (98)	74.0%	64.3%	53.1%				
Lived in foster home (48)	88.9	83.3	81.3				
Parents received aid (69)	88.1	75.4	78.3				
Lived public housing (34)	97.0	88.2	85.3				
Parents abused alcohol (122)	88.8	79.5	77.9				
Parents abused drugs (30)	96.4	90.0	90.0				





# Personal Interview Administration and Results

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

by

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## PERSONAL INTERVIEW ADMINISTRATION AND RESULTS

### Purpose

There were three main goals of the personal interview: 1) to verify supposedly objective information obtained in the congregate interviews and inmate records, e.g., educational level; 2) to assess the existence of a “cycle of abuse” from parents, through the subject, to their children; and 3) to assess the nature and quality of their childhood experience as an antecedent to eventual incarceration. We accomplished these goals by interviewing those individuals who were still available and volunteered to spend approximately one-half hour describing their childhood experiences in an open-ended, private interview. These responses were then rated by the interviewer and entered into the database for further analysis.

The intent of the personal interview was to allow the subjects to discuss their early childhood experiences in their own words. We felt that it would enhance our understanding of any abuse experience if the subject did not feel constrained to use forced-choice answers and terms with which they may not feel comfortable. Our subsequent ratings of these experiences would then be based on the insights gained from this more personal account.

### The Subjects

The original intent was to conduct a personal interview with each individual who completed a congregate interview. However, many had been sent to Arizona, some were moved to other facilities, a few were “de-selected” by the facility staff due to disciplinary or psychological reasons, and we did not return to Wildwood or Juneau. The following table indicates the personal interview response rates at the facilities to which we returned. Due to time constraints we were unable to request an interview from every eligible inmate at every facility and this was most apparent at Palmer Minimum.

The personal interview followed the congregate interview and official record searches. We contacted our facility coordinator to arrange for the visit by the interviewers and sent them a list of those who had participated in the congregate interview so that they could determine who would be available. The staff at the institutions at the time of the interviews further refined this list. It is from this reviewed list that the actual number of eligible interviews was determined.

The refusal rate was extremely low. Every eligible inmate at Palmer Medium, Hiland Mountain (women and men) and Meadow Creek was asked to volunteer for the interview by one of the two interviewers. Of the 64 individuals asked to participate in the interview at these three facilities, 55 agreed (85%).

**Table 1: Personal Interviews by Facility**

Facility	Group survey	Staff list of eligibles	Eligibles surveyed	Percentage of eligibles surveyed
Palmer Medium	23	4	4	100%
Palmer Minimum	22	17	7	41%
Hiland (women)	29	25	22	88%
Hiland (men)	18	6	4	67%
Spring Creek	79	52	36	69%
Wildwood	27	14	0	0%
Meadow Creek	29	29	27	90%
Lemon Creek	13	8	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>65%</b>

## The Instruments

There were two important instruments used to capture the information from the personal interviews. The first was the interview response form used during the interview itself and the second was the coding sheet from which the data was entered for analysis. (Copies of both are included in the Appendix to the report *Survey Methods and Administration*.)

**Interview Response Form.** The interviewer's notes were recorded on a form designed to prompt the interviewer to cover important areas and to record the open-ended responses of the subject. The design allowed the subject to describe his or her early childhood experiences without feeling constrained by predetermined choices and then later the interviewer would rate the quality of that experience or otherwise capture important information. The interviewer's goal was to elicit a description of the subject's childhood and make certain that topics relevant to the study were touched upon, i.e., the various types of abuse, drug and alcohol use, educational achievement, home life, etc.

The interview protocols were pretested at Palmer Medium and Palmer Minimum. This experience led to minor modifications in the form such that there were specific areas added to the form to record recurring responses, i.e., who specifically gave them guidance and emotional support, where did the sexual abuse occur, etc. These modifications allowed a greater consistency of recording and help insure that important topics were discussed. This modified form was used in all subsequent interviews.

**Coding Sheet.** This form contains 16 items to be coded from the Interview Response Form. Three of the items are scored as present or absent, e.g., was alcohol present in the home? On eight of the items a three-point range was offered to the rater such as definitely no, maybe or definitely yes. This allowed the rater to make determinations about the quality of the abuse experienced. Lastly, specific information was obtained regarding their highest grade level achieved, the age they were "on their own," and the age they began using drugs and/or alcohol. The two and three item response scales allowed these childhood experiences to be included in the more quantitative analysis. The educational level achieved was to serve as a reliability and validity check of the interview since this information was available from the congregate interview and in the inmate record.

The coding sheet asked for the highest academic level achieved by the subject. The codes used by OBSCIS were used such that direct comparisons could be made with the other two sources of this variable. To assess the existence of a “cycle of abuse,” the coding sheet also asked the rater to indicate the subject’s perception of their parents’ abuse as children and then, if they had raised any children, rate the abuse they had inflicted upon their own children. In addition to rating the physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect experienced by the subjects, the coding sheet also asked the rater to indicate levels of stability in the home, the subject’s treatment with respect to other siblings, and the potential of having experienced a serious head injury.

## **Administration**

The personal interviews were administered in private such that the staff or other inmates could not hear the conversation. The inmates were summoned to the interview either by a staff person or by the “phone runner.” Both methods worked well. Refusals to participate were made to the interviewer face to face. The settings ranged from offices, visiting rooms, conference rooms, and classrooms to a law library and a barbershop. All were satisfactory and provided a quiet, focused atmosphere free of distractions. Each interview lasted between 20 and 45 minutes with the bulk of them taking 30 minutes to complete. The interview process necessarily accommodated the institutional schedules with the result that we were able to complete approximately three surveys every two hours per interviewer during those periods when interviewing could take place.

The interviewer greeted each inmate upon arrival and explained the nature of the interview request. They told each subject that their participation was voluntary and that they did not have to answer any question and that they could leave at any time. Once the inmate agreed to be interviewed, the session began by asking what it was like growing up. This initial open-ended question generated additional probing by the interviewer in order to elicit a fuller explanation or description of events. The interviewer often prompted the subject by asking questions from the Interview Response Form and recording relevant responses in the spaces provided. The interviewer informed the subject that the period of interest was generally that time from birth to the end of the 8th grade (generally age 13 or 14). The interviewer did not ask questions about the instant offense or their later juvenile and adult lives beyond that necessary to complete the Personal Interview Response Form. At the end of the interview, the interviewer thanked the subject for participating and informed the staff coordinator or inmate “phone runner” that they were available to see another inmate.

## **Data Verification and Inter-rater Reliability**

After all of the interviews had occurred, the interviewers filled out the Coding Sheet. There were 100 personal interviews to be coded and entered. Each interviewer coded his own interviews using a coding sheet designed to capture selected pieces of the interview. The data were then

entered and verified and inter-rater reliability was assessed. A random sample of 10 surveys was selected, 5 from each interviewer, and the entered data were compared to the hand coded sheets and then, where appropriate to the original interview notes. Only one number had been entered incorrectly due to misreading the hand coded information.

The five interviews not originally coded by that interviewer were then coded by the other interviewer to obtain estimates of inter-rater reliability. The interviewers then met to review the differences and make any adjustments.

There were approximately 5 differences per interview between the two interview ratings over the 10 cases selected. The number of differences ranged from a low of 2 to high of 9 over the 16 pieces of information obtained. The vast majority of these differences were the result of the second coder not understanding the notes of the original coder or the second coder not feeling that there was sufficient information to make a determination, a problem the original coder did not experience based on a broader understanding of the interview notes. Less than 1 change per case was made as a result of this process and a large portion of those changes occurred on one case when the sexual abuse reported was found not to have occurred during the reporting period as first determined.

There were very few instances of direct difference between the two coders. Most of these cases involved rating the degree of physical abuse or neglect suffered by the subject or of the subject's parents. There were no disagreements concerning the sexual abuse area and several other questions. On several questions, the subject could not recall an age but rather a grade in school and that produced many of the remaining differences as each attempted to determine the corresponding age of the subject.

The important differences between the two interviewers were mainly due to the second rater not having the benefit of knowing the context of the original interviewer's notes. In all situations, the original rater's determination of degree of abuse was upheld in the discussions that followed. This points to the rather subjective nature of making these types of ratings and the difficulty in operationalizing these concepts. Although the differences were small, they were not insignificant and should be considered in interpreting these results and in planning for future studies where personal interviews will be employed.

## **Results**

The results of the interviews are presented in three sections: 1) replicating information from other sources as a method of checking the validity of the responses in the interview; 2) examining the "cycle of abuse" concept; and 3) assessing the nature and quality of early childhood experiences.

**Replication.** The educational level of the subject was chosen as the variable to replicate in as much as it was thought initially that obtaining a consistent measure on this would be a relatively simple task. However, it turned out that the long term nature of the sampling pool had allowed the subjects to obtain GEDs while in prison and this confounded the attempts to record "highest grade

completed.” Thus we were unable to exactly match educational levels across all three sources of data: congregate interview, personal interview and official inmate record.

Table 2 lists the educational levels achieved as reported by those interviewed.

**Table 2. Highest Grade Achieved**

GEDs combined with value 12.

Grade level	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1	1	1.0 %	1.0 %	1.0 %
3	1	1.0	1.0	2.0
6	1	1.0	1.0	3.0
7	3	3.0	3.0	6.1
8	6	6.0	6.1	12.1
9	6	6.0	6.1	12.1
10	10	10.0	10.1	28.3
11	12	12.0	12.1	40.4
12	31	31.0	31.3	71.7
13	8	8.0	8.1	79.8
14	13	13.0	13.1	92.9
15	2	2.0	2.0	94.9
16	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
21	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99.0 %</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	

**Cycle of Abuse.** We found only a little support for the “cycle of abuse” theory in our personal interview sample. We recoded the variables relating to their own abuse, their parents abuse and whether or not they had abused their own kids into simple dichotomies: either no abuse or at least some evidence of abuse. Although using this rather broad and liberal definition of abuse did not create any statistically significant relationships in our sample we can see in Table 3 that the direction of some of the categories is interesting. About half of those subjects who were abused, or whom we strongly suspect may have been abused, went on to abuse their own kids and two thirds of all those who may have abused their kids were both suspected of being abused themselves and had one or more parent who may have been abused. However, nearly one quarter of the not abused subjects went on to abuse their children. All of the types of abuse are subsumed in this comparison: physical, neglect, emotional and sexual. Table 3 is based on only those cases for which all three variables have valid values, 61 percent of all personal interviews.

**Table 3. Cycle of Abuse Results from Personal Interviews**

Frequencies (N = 100).

Parents of subject	Subject	No evidence they abused their children	At least some evidence they abused their children	Totals
Not abused	Not abused	7	3	10
Not abused	Some abuse	10	3	13
Abused	Not abused	5	0	5
Abused	Some abuse	21	12	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>61</b>

A common response to the interviewers' prompts concerning their own disciplinary treatment of their kids was that they refused to treat their own kids as badly as they had been treated. Many stated that they would never strike a child because they remember the trauma such experiences created in them. Many expressed a propensity toward talking, time-outs, taking privileges or any number of non-corporal punishments. Of course we had no way to ascertain how they truly responded to their children when drunk or angry but both of the interviewers were impressed with the depth of feeling concerning how they wished to avoid repeating the mistakes of their own parents.

**Early Childhood Experience.** Table 4 describes the types and qualities of abuse experienced by our sample. The items taken singularly indicate that the majority did not experience non-sexual abuse. But when one looks at the frequency of having at least one indication of abuse, the majority of the sample (61%) may have experienced one of the types of non-sexual abuse as children.

*Physical Abuse.* Most of the physical abuse stemmed from "discipline" received for such things as talking back, poor school performance, failure to do chores properly, etc. The cruelest forms of a physical abuse were rare, e.g., cigarette burns, torture, broken bones, etc. Reminiscent of spousal domestic violence, many of the subjects blamed themselves for their abuse or did not see the obvious severity.

*Neglect.* Many of the traditionally raised native inmates from small villages reported eating and sleeping at various houses which may have been seen as neglect in other studies. However, there were individuals who experienced chronic hunger, lack of proper clothing and adequate supervision. Neglect seemed to be mainly a function of the alcohol or drug dependency of the caregivers in almost every instance.

*Emotional Abuse.* The types of emotional abuse ran from completely ignoring the subject to the more common abuse of telling the subject they were not wanted or not loved. A few individuals reported constant criticism or demanding impossibly perfect goals for the subject.

*Sexual Abuse.* As we can see from Table 4, the majority reported no sexual abuse during childhood. We used the category of "little" if the activity of a sexual nature was neither intense nor dramatic and did not occur over an extended period. The older baby sitter that attempted some sexual activity on one occasion or family "friend" who engaged in fondling on one or two occasions would be examples of this value. The more definite level of abuse included parental rapes, both

**Table 4. Distribution of Type and Degree of Abuse**

Frequencies (N = 100).

Abuse type	No evidence of abuse	Some indication of abuse	Definite evidence of abuse	Total
<b>Non-sexual abuse</b>				
Physical	54	20	26	100
Neglect	62	19	19	100
Emotional	51	24	25	100
Any of the above	39	61	*	100
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	57	18	24	99
<b>At least one type of abuse</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>99</b>

forcible and non-forcible, repetitive forced oral sex, fondling or kissing, any chronic or cyclic sexual activity with an adult, etc. The sexual abuse often contained physical or emotional abuse but these were not inextricably linked. The location of the abuse was almost nearly split between in and out of the home.

**On Their Own.** We noted three important age markers in our interviews: 1) the age at which they physically moved out on their own, 2) the age they felt all alone and feeling that they had to begin to fend for themselves and 3) the age they began regular use of alcohol or drugs. Table 4 presents the mean ages for these variables. Interestingly, the age that they physically become on their own roughly corresponds to the decision to quit school whereas the feeling of being emotionally on ones own is very closely linked to the onset of drug and alcohol use. We saw subjects turning to these substances almost as coping mechanisms in order to deal with a deleterious home situation.

**Table 5. Mean Age of Life-course Markers**

	Physically moved out on their own (N = 79)	Mentally or emotionally felt like they had to "take care of themselves" (N = 68)	Began regularly using drugs or alcohol (N = 80)
Mean	16.99 years	13.41 years	14.14 years
Standard deviation	3.61 years	4.28 years	3.97 years
Median	17.0 years	13.5 years	14.0 years

**Head Injury.** We found that about 50 percent had no evidence of head injury at all and had never been unconscious. However, 34 percent did have definite periods of coma and head injury. Additionally, almost 16 percent may have had some type of head trauma of a severe nature.

**Conclusion**

The personal interviews painted a particularly poor childhood for most of our sample. They experienced some form of abuse, began to feel they were mentally and physically on their own at an early age and began to abuse drugs and alcohol at about the same time. Not all of the subjects came from troubled homes, however. It was the bleak childhoods of pain and suffering for some which would lead to the obvious link between early childhood development and later adult criminality. At the same time there were those individuals for whom no identifiable event or upbringing could be found. It seems natural to conclude from our interviewing experiences that child abuse in any form contributes significantly to future potential criminality, but does not cause criminality. Our interviews did not shed light on those additional factors.





# Correlates of Abuse

Report to the  
Alaska Department of Corrections

by

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## **CORRELATES OF ABUSE**

Our interest in the study of child abuse among long-term inmates is to first understand the magnitude of the experience and then to begin to develop an understanding of the consequences of that experience. The focus of this section is on correlates of abuse with particular attention to “plausible consequences” (criminal experience, hostility, disassociation, anxiety, coping strategies, and history of psychological treatment). The study is presented in four parts: 1) derivation of the measures of abuse used; 2) derivation of measures of plausible consequences; 3) correlates of abuse; and 4) multivariate prediction of plausible consequences from types of abuse.

### **Measures of Abuse**

Studies of self-report child abuse historically have asked respondents to report their childhood histories. Initial instruments simply asked the respondent to indicate whether they had been abused. These instruments were then refined to specify the type of abuse asking whether the respondent had been physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected. The problem with these instruments was that the definition of abuse was left to the respondent. This leads to the situation where two people having the same experience would define it differently. For example, a person may have experienced unprovoked daily beatings by a parent and not consider it abuse—it may simply be viewed as the way people relate to one another. By contrast, another person may feel abused if a hand was ever raised to them—it may simply be that they have concluded that any physical violence constitutes abuse.

In an effort to overcome these definitional problems researchers began to develop measures based on experiences. The logic underlying the use of experiential measures was that the ambiguity injected into the measurements of abuse would be lessened by more clearly specifying behaviors linked to abuse. So, instead of asking “were you abused as a child?” the respondent was asked a series of questions about specific experiences (were you beaten by fists? were you beaten with belts or sticks? were you injured by a knife or gun? etc.). There were different series of abuse questions designed to measure different types of abuse: physical, sexual, and neglect. These series have been asked in both yes/no formats that indicate whether the respondent had that experience as a child or not, and a frequency scores (e.g., never experienced the behavior, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time).

While the experiential measures are an improvement over the ambiguous global measures, the scoring of these indices has been problematic. Most frequently scoring has defined an individual as abuse if they had any of the experiences listed in the series of questions. This results in two problems: 1) it does not distinguish serious abuse from less abuse; and, 2) the scoring does not indicate

chronicity. This has the effect of someone who once was involved in a schoolyard fight being classified the same as someone whose parent routinely used them as an ashtray.

This study is an effort to develop improved measures of abuse that incorporates seriousness. Our effort focused on creating uni-dimensional scales that are internally consistent from series of questions asked to measure experiences thought to reflect physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect (the specific series items are addressed in another part of the report). We addressed this task by first factor analyzing each of the question series to: 1) determine if the question series was uni-dimensional or if it appears to tap several independent conceptions of abuse; and, 2) if the series appears multi-dimensional, to isolate variables that constitute sub-elements of abuse. Scales were created as simple sums of variables that the factor analysis suggests represent uni-dimensional sub-elements of items. Second, we conducted a reliability analysis of each of the scales or sub-scales to determine whether scales were internally consistent.

Table 1 highlights the resultant measures presenting the measures means and Chronbach Alpha scores that assess internal consistency. The Chronbach Alpha scores indicate that each of the scales has a high degree of internal consistency.

**Table 1: Measures of Child Abuse**

Measure	Mean	Range	Chronbach Alpha
Conflict Tactics Scale (four sub-scales):			
Physical/Verbal (10 items)	23.22	10-50	.94
Serious Physical Harm (3 items)	3.50	3-15	.69
Self-Report Child Abuse, Physical (SRCAP, two sub-scales):			
Hit/Beat (3 items)	1.73	0-3	.66
Serious Injury (3 items)	.58	0-3	.70
Child Sexual Abuse (10 sexual experience items):	4.80	0-10	.93
Neglect (two series):			
Need Scale (7 items)	11.25	0-10	.88
Neglect Series (3 items)	.45	0-3	.69

## Physical Abuse Measures

The physical abuse scales were constructed from two series of questions. The first is a 19 item series that asks about methods respondent's family used to settle conflicts (Conflict Tactics Scale). The items were scored by frequency of occurrence (never, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time). When the Conflict Tactics Scale series of questions were examined four factors were isolated (physical/verbal abuse, serious physical harm, rational discussion, sulking). Two of the factors, physical/verbal abuse and serious physical harm, were examined<sup>1</sup> further. The Physical/Verbal Abuse score is composed of the following items in response to the question, "How often would they [*family members*] ....:

<sup>1</sup> The others (rational discussion, sulking) were not explored as measures of abuse.

- Insult or swear at you (.638)<sup>2</sup>
- Do or say something to spite you (.553)
- Threaten to hit or throw something at you (.842)
- Throw, smash, hit or kick something (.764)
- Throw something at you (.761)
- Push grab or shove you (.851)
- Slap or spank you (.775)
- Kick, bite, or hit you with a fist (.764)
- Hit or try to hit you with something (.853)
- Beat you up (.792)

An extremely high score (50 is the highest possible score) on this scale indicates that the respondent experienced each of the forms of abuse “most of the time.” An extremely low score (10 is the lowest possible score) means that you rarely experience abuse. Scores in the middle indicate that either you occasionally experienced many forms of abuse or that you frequently experience several forms of abuse. For example, the mean Physical/Verbal Abuse score, 23.22, indicates that the respondent experienced all listed forms of abuse “once or twice” or up to four of the listed forms of abuse “most of the time” (five or 6 items-frequently, 7 or 8 items sometimes, etc.).

The second factor from the CTS scale is associated with a history of serious physical harm. The Serious Physical Harm scale includes the following items, again in response to the question, “How often would they [*family member*]....:

- Burn or scald you (.693)
- Threaten you with a knife or gun (.771)
- Use a knife or gun (.836)

As with the Physical/Verbal Abuse scale score, an extremely high value (15 is the highest possible score) would indicate that the respondent experience each of the items “most of the time.” An extremely low score (3 is the lowest possible score) would indicate that the respondent had none of the listed experiences. The mean score for Serious Physical Harm, 3.50, indicates that very few respondents experience assaults likely to produce serious physical harm within the family.

Physical abuse measures also were developed from the Self-Report Child Abuse Physical (SRCAP) series of questions. The factor analysis revealed two underlying constructs that, as above, distinguish different degrees of seriousness. The first scale, Beat/Hit is composed of the following items in response to the question, “Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside of your family ever...:

- Beat or really hurt you by hitting you with a bare hand or fist (.790)

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<sup>2</sup> The numbers in parentheses are factor loadings.

- Beat or hit you with something hard like a stick or baseball bat (.704)
- Beat or hit you with a whip, strap, or belt (.744)

These questions elicit either yes or no answer so frequency of the experience is not addressed. The scores on the Beat/Hit scale range from zero to three with a mean of 1.72. This suggests that most of the survey respondents had experience one or two of the items in the scale.

The second abuse scale extracted from the SRCAP series indicates serious injury experience. The second scale, Serious Injury, is composed of the following items in response to the question, “Up to the time you finished elementary school or were 12 years old, did anyone either inside or outside or your family ever...:

- Injure you with a knife, shoot you with a gun, or use another weapon against you (.738)
- Hurt you badly enough so that you needed a doctor or other medical treatment (.755)
- Physically injure you so that you were admitted to a hospital (.844)

As with the Beat/Hit scale the scores for the Serious Injury scale range from zero to three but with a lower mean, 0.58. This suggests that about half of the respondents experienced one of the items. The serious injury experience is much less prevalent than is being beaten or hit.

### **Child Sexual Abuse**

Congregate interview participants were asked a series of childhood sexual experience questions, 10 items, that focused on their experiences before they finished 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The factor analysis revealed just one factor on which all ten of the childhood sexual experience questions loaded. The Child Sex Abuse scale is composed of the following items in response to the question, “Up to the time you finished elementary school (before 6<sup>th</sup> grade), did you ever have the experience of...:

- An invitation or request to do something sexual (.779)
- Kissing and hugging in a sexual way (.715)
- Another person showing his or her sex organs to you (.800)
- You showing your sex organs to another person (.781)
- Another person fondling you in a sexual way (.881)
- You fondling another person’s in a sexual way (.837)
- Another person touching your sex organs (.879)
- You touching another person’s sex organs (.871)
- Attempting inter course, but without penetration (.724)
- Intercourse (.624)

The Child Sex Abuse scale scores range from zero, indicating none of the listed experiences before finishing elementary school, to ten which indicates that the respondent had experienced all of the

behaviors listed. Table 2 presents the distribution of the Child Sex Abuse scores. Review of the table reveals that about 25 percent reported none of the listed experiences but nearly half report experiencing six or more of the listed behaviors.

**Neglect**

Two neglect series were examined. First, a three item series developed by Weeks and Widom that asked whether as a young child the respondent had been fed, clothed or housed because parents didn't get around to it; was there talk in the community about their being neglected; or were they left home alone. The second series asked how frequently basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, caring, medical attention, guidance) were not met. Factor analysis of each of the series isolated single dimension on which all items loaded.

The Neglect scale is composed of the following yes/no items:

- Were there times when you were young that a neighbor fed you or cared for you because your parents didn't get around to shopping for food or cooking, or when neighbors or relatives kept you overnight because no one was taking care of you at home (.851)
- When you were a young child, did anyone ever say that you weren't being given enough to eat, or kept clean enough, or that you weren't getting enough medical care when it was needed (.796)
- When you were a very young child, did your parents ever leave you home alone while they were out shopping or doing something else (.728)

Scores on the Neglect scale range from zero indicating a no answer to all questions to three indicating yes to all answers. Table 3 presents the distribution of Neglect scale scores. The majority of congregare interview participants reported experiencing none of the Neglect series items as a child.

The second scale, Need, was developed from a seven item list of basic needs that were scored by frequency of the experience (never, once or twice, sometimes, frequently, most of the time). The Need scale is composed of the following items in response to the question, "Up to the time you finished elementary school (up to age 12), how often...:

- Did you get so little food that you were hungry all day, and then went to bed hungry (.740)
- Did you not have the right kind of clothing to stay comfortable when you went outside (.761)

**Table 2: Child Sex Abuse Scores for Long-term Inmates Participating in the Congregate Interview**

Score	Percent
0=None	25.7
1	5.2
2	7.0
3	4.8
4	6.5
5	4.3
6	5.7
7	6.1
8	6.1
9	13.5
10	15.2

**Table 3: Neglect Scores for Long-term Inmates Participating in the Congregate Interview**

Score	Percent
0= None	71.7
1	16.9
2	5.9
3	5.5

- Was there really no place for you to stay, or the place you stayed at was not a good place to stay (.790)
- Were there no adults who cared about what you were doing all day (.755)
- When you had a medical problem did nobody care or do anything about it (.756)
- Did you feel that no one cared about what happened to you (.786)
- Were there no adults who cared enough about you to give you guidance on the important thing in life (.786)

Need scale scores range from 7, indicating that the respondent never experienced any of the listed need items, to 35 indicating that the respondent experienced each of the items most of the time. The mean Need scale score, 11.25, suggests that on average one or two of the needs were unmet infrequently.

### **Measures of Criminal Experience, Hostility, Disassociation, Anxiety Coping Strategies and Psychological Treatment History**

Measures of plausible consequences of child abuse were created in the same manner as the measures of abuse with exception of the criminal experience measures. That is, a series of response items were reduced to uni-dimensional factors by factor analysis, and reliability of resultant scales was assessed. The criminal experience variables were single item scores drawn directly from the congregate interview or information taken from the inmates institutional file.

Table 4 highlights the resulting measures presenting means, range, and scale score Chronbach alphas.

**Table 4: Measures of Plausible Consequences**

Measure	Mean	Range	Chronbach's Alpha
Violent Offense	.52	0-1	na
Sex Offense	.32	0-1	na
Sentence Length (years)	20.09	2-198	na
Initial Security Level	13.96	2-35	na
Disassociation/Hostility Series (three sub-scales):			
Hostility	9.24	4-20	.8252
Disassociation	6.69	4-19	.7452
Anxiety	8.82	3-15	.7193
Coping Strategy Series (four sub-scales):			
Rational Problem Solving	15.94	5-20	.7456
Escapist	7.96	3-12	.5027
Psychological Treatment	1.08	0-4	.7461

## Criminal Experience

Four measures of criminal experience were selected for analysis. Two are focused on the nature of the conviction offense; another is sentence length; and the final measure is initial security level score.

**Violent Offense.** The current conviction offense was classified as either violent, property, drug, sex, or other. The violent offense measure was coded as a binary variable with zero for conviction offense other than for a violent offense and one for a current violent offense conviction. Slightly more than one-half (52 percent) of the long-term inmates are incarcerated for violent offenses.

**Sex Offense.** As above the sex offense measure was coded as a binary variable with zero for conviction offense other than for a sex offense and one for a current sex offense conviction. Slightly less than one-third (32 percent) of survey respondents are serving long prison terms for sex offenses.

**Sentence Length.** The actual sentence length is measured in years and was taken from the inmate's file. The mean number of years to be served by inmates participating in the congregate interview was 24.1 years. The distribution of sentence length is skewed high that is there are a number of respondents serving extremely long-terms (27 are serving more that 40 years).

**Initial Security Level.** The initial security level is the score from the initial security assessment and was taken from the inmate's file. The mean security level score by inmates participating in the congregate interview was 14—indicates medium security level. The distribution of the security level score is close to symmetrical and gaussian.

## Scores from the Disassociation/Hostility Series

The disassociation/hostility series is a 13 item series that asks about feelings that people sometimes have. Three scales were developed from this series of questions tapping: hostility, disassociation, and anxiety. Each of the scales was derived from responses to the following request. "Here is a list of feelings that people sometimes have. Please indicate how often during the past year you always, frequently, occasionally, rarely, or never felt this way." Factor scores are noted in parentheses after each item in the scale.

**Hostility.** The hostility scale is composed of four items in response the to the question, "In the past year how often have you...:

- Had urges to beat, injure, or harm someone (.634)
- Had urges to break or smash things (.782)
- Gotten into arguments (.723)
- Shouted or thrown things (.850)

An extremely high score (20 is the highest possible score) would indicate the respondent always or almost always had the specified urge or engaged in the behavior stated. An extremely low score (4 is the lowest possible score) indicates that the respondent never felt the urges or engaged in the



behaviors noted in the hostility scale. The mean score, 9.24, indicates that, on average, respondents experience the urges and engage in the behaviors occasionally. The hostility scale score has a Chronbach alpha score of .8252, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

**Disassociation.** The disassociation scale is composed of four item in response to the question, “In the past year how often have you...:

- Felt outside of your body (.697)
- Not felt like yourself (.620)
- Lost touch with reality (.687)
- Watch yourself from far away (.808)

An extremely high score (20 is the highest possible score) would indicate the respondent always or almost always had the disassociation feeling stated. An extremely low score (4 is the lowest possible score) indicates that the respondent never experienced the feeling noted in the disassociation scale. The mean score, 6.69, indicates that, on average, respondents experience the disassociation feelings rarely. The disassociation scale score has a Chronbach alpha score of .7452, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

**Anxiety.** The anxiety scale is composed of four item in response to the question, “In the past year how often have you...:

- Felt easily annoyed or irritated (.724)
- Felt fearful (.728)
- Felt tense or keyed up (.680)

An extremely high score (15 is the highest possible score) would indicate the respondent always or almost always had the specified feeling. An extremely low score (3 is the lowest possible score) indicates that the respondent never experiences the feeling that constitute the anxiety scale. The mean score, 8.82, indicates that, on average, respondents experience the feelings occasionally. The anxiety scale score has a Chronbach alpha score of .7193, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

### **The Coping Strategies Series**

The coping strategies series is an eleven item series that asks how the respondent reacts to difficult situations. Four scales were isolated from this series of questions but just two will be used in this analysis: rational problem solving and escapist. Each of the scales was derived from responses to the following request. “Here is a list of things people do to help them deal with difficult or bad situations that happen to them. For each statement, how often do you do things like this when a bad

thing happens to you? The answer categories are a lot, sometimes, almost never, or never. Factor scores are noted in parentheses after each item in the scale.

**Rational Problem Solving.** The rational problem solving scale is composed of five items in response to the question, “When a bad thing happens to you how often do you....:”

- Try to get more information about the problem or how to deal with problems like this (.596)
- Try to see the situation differently (.642)
- Think about possible ways to improve the situation (.830)
- Do something to relax tension (.729)
- Do things to try to improve the situation (.731)

An extremely high score (20 is the highest possible score) would indicate the respondent engaged in the coping behaviors noted “a lot.” An extremely low score (5 is the lowest possible score) indicates that the respondent never uses the coping strategies that constitute the rational problem solving scale. The mean score, 15.93, indicates that, on average, respondents sometimes use the rational problem solving coping strategies. The rational problem solving scale has a Chronbach alpha score of .7456, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

**Escapist.** The escapist scale is composed of three items in response to the question, “When a bad thing happens to you how often do you....:”

- Do things to take your mind off the situation—like going out, watching TV, driving around, or doing something entertaining (.725)
- Take it out emotionally on other people (.565)
- Try to make yourself feel better by drinking or taking drugs (.776)

An extremely high score (12 is the highest possible score) would indicate the respondent engaged in escapist coping behaviors noted “a lot.” An extremely low score (3 is the lowest possible score) indicates that the respondent never uses the coping strategies that constitute the escapist scale. The mean score, 7.96, indicates that, on average, respondents sometimes use the escapist coping strategies. The escapist scale has a Chronbach alpha score of .5027, which indicates a modest degree of internal consistency.

### The Psychological Treatment Scale

A single psychological treatment scale score was derived from a four items series of questions. The scale indicates whether the respondent had received psychological treatment for emotional problems not related to drug or alcohol abuse. The scale is composed of four items in response to the question, “Because of emotional or mental problem, have you ever....:”

- Taken a medication prescribed by a psychiatrist or other doctor (.802)
- Been admitted to a mental hospital, unit or treatment program (.776)
- Received counseling or therapy from a trained professional (.761)
- Received any other mental health services (.677)

Responses for the items are limited to yes (scored 1) or no (scored 0). An extremely high score (4 is the highest possible score) indicates the respondent has experienced each of the treatment noted above. An extremely low score (0 is the lowest possible score) indicates that the respondent has not had psychological treatment for emotional problems. The mean score, 1.08, indicates that, on average, respondents experience about one of the noted treatments. The psychological treatment scale has a Chronbach alpha score of .7461, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

### Bivariate Correlations

Table 5 presents the correlation coefficients between forms of abuse and “plausible consequences.” There are several items of note in the correlation matrix. First, the measures of association indicate that the relationships are weak or not statistically significant. The strongest apparent relationship,  $r=.385$ , is between physical abuse (family) and escapist and accounts for just 15 percent of the variation.

**Table 5. Correlation Coefficients between Types of Abuse and Indicators of Hostility, Disassociation, Coping Strategies, Sentence Length, and Security Level**

Empty cells indicate that the coefficient was not statistically significant.

Type of abuse	Hostility	Disassociation	Anxiety	Rational problem solving	Escapist	Psychological treatment history	Sentence length	Initial security level
Needs	.221	.245	.196		.275	.268		
Neglect	.237	.163			.147			
Physical abuse (family)	.367	.186	.268		.385	.324		
Physical harm (family)	.195			-.150	.172			
Physical abuse (any source)	.216	.137	.222		.300	.295		
Physical harm (any source)	.227	.142	.169			.226		
Child sexual experience	.338	.156	.270		.336	.327		.140

Second, the statistically significant associations are as would be predicted. That is, if we assume that child abuse is associated problem behaviors or feeling then the positive association indicates that as the abuse experience increases (either in style or chronicity) then the problem behaviors or feeling also increase. The only statistically significant negative relationship between variables is between physical harm (family) and rational problem solving coping strategy. This suggests that persons who had experienced physical harm in the family are less likely to cope using rational problem solving strategies.

Third, it is instructive to note that variation in the abuse scales was not related to variation in sentence length, or effectively to rational problem solving or initial security level. This suggests that child abuse histories are not related to these problems when the focus is on long-term inmates.

The level of measurement of conviction offense, either violent or sex, precludes Pearson Product-Moment coefficients so t-test were used to determine whether mean abuse scores were different for violent offenders and others and for sex offenders and others. Table 6 presents the mean abuse scores and t-tests that compares those convicted for the type of offense indicated to those who had been convicted for different offenses. In just one of the 14 comparisons was a statistically significant difference detected—as predicted, if we assume that abuse is related to problem behaviors, violent offenders had higher average physical harm scores than others. It is instructive to note that there were no differences in mean abuse scores when long-term inmates sex offenders were compared to other long-term inmates.

**Table 6. Mean Abuse Scores by Conviction Offense  
(Either Violent or Sex Offense)**

Type of abuse	Violent offense			Sex offense		
	Yes (means)	No (means)	t-value	Yes (means)	No (means)	t-value
Needs	11.56	11.25	-.38	12.15	11.08	-1.14
Neglect	.48	.45	-.25	.55	.43	-.88
Physical abuse (family)	23.62	23.79	.12	24.79	23.20	-1.02
Physical harm (family)	3.57	3.47	-.54	3.61	3.48	-.64
Physical abuse (any source)	1.82	1.73	-.59	1.84	1.75	-.56
Physical harm (any source)	.74	.42	-2.58 *	.48	.64	1.27
Child sexual experience	5.25	4.50	-1.44	4.20	5.23	1.86

Review of correlates suggests that to the extent that there is a relationship between types of abuse and “plausible consequences” the relationship is weak but consistent. That is, when a relationship was apparent it was consistent with the expectation that abuse is positively related to problem behaviors and feelings.

### Multivariate Models

The foregoing analysis suggests that abuse may be weakly associated with problem behaviors and feelings. The following analysis explores the possibility that some of types of abuse may be more important predictors of problem behavior and feeling than others. Table 7 presents the results of forward stepwise regression models. The only coefficients in the array are those that were statistically significant predictors. The table also presents statistically significant  $R^2$  values for each of the models. Logistic regression equations were estimated for the binary violence and sex current conviction offense respondents.

Several items of note are apparent in Table 7. First, we could not distinguish violent offenders or sex offenders from other offenders based on their child abuse histories. Neither could we predict

**Table 7. Regression Equations that Predict Conviction Offense, Sentence Length, Security Level, and Indicators of Hostility, Disassociation, and Coping Strategies**

Forward stepwise regression; only statistically significant predictors are presented.

Type of abuse	Violent offense (logistic)	Sex offense (logistic)	Sentence length	Initial security level	Hostility	Disassociation	Anxiety	Rational problem solving	Escapist	Psychological treatment history
Needs						.1300				
Neglect										
Physical abuse (family)					.0096		.0042		.0071	.0028
Physical harm (family)								-.3050		
Physical abuse (any source)										
Physical harm (any source)										
Child sexual experience				.2470	.2240		.1360		.1320	.0073
Constant				12.5490	5.7950	5.1150	7.0300	17.1500	5.5800	.0081
R <sup>2</sup>	NS	NS	NS	.032	.186	.059	.085	.020	.220	.128

sentence length from abuse histories. The models estimated to predict the likelihood of being a violent offender, a sex offender, or to predict sentence length were not statistically significant.

Second, those models that were statistically significant (7 of 10 estimated) explained a very small proportion of the variance. In just two of the models did the proportion of variance explained approach 20 percent (Hostility and Escapist). The remaining model account for less than 13 percent of variance.

Third, to the extent that there is an apparent relation between forms of abuse and problem behavior and feeling it appears that Physical Abuse (family) and Child Sexual Experience are the most important. Physical Abuse (family) and Child Sexual Experience were statistically significant predictors of Hostility, Anxiety, Escapist, and Psychological Treatment History.

The most important finding from the multivariate analysis is that child abuse histories do not account for problem behaviors and feeling. While it remains likely that child abuse is a contributing factor it is apparent that a great deal more than child abuse must be considered if we are to fully understand these problematic behaviors and feelings.