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Jessica Studer
Exploring the Experience of
Biological Children of Foster
Parents: Their Views on Family as
Adults

ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that family foster care is a large part of the current child welfare system, little is known about the experience of biological children of foster parents. This qualitative research study analyzed the stories of ten adults who grew up in foster homes as biological children of foster parents from a family systems perspective. Common themes and areas for future research were identified.

Participants identified and described diverse experiences in which both positive aspects as well as individual and family struggles . Participants described exposure to foster siblings behaviors and knowledge about their lives. Due to this exposure, participants describe, areas of stress as well as changes in perspective. In many cases this led to an increase in family closeness, feelings of gratitude and the development of positive personal attributes. Participants also identified an awareness of parental stress in the areas of finances, discipline, and relationships with foster children. Effects of foster children entering and exiting the home in regards to adjustment and closeness of relationships were also discussed. Findings indicated a need for further research and attention to the experiences of foster family members.

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN OF FOSTER
PARENTS: THEIR VIEWS ON FAMILY AS ADULTS**

A project based on independent investigation in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Social Work

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|
2014

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Foster Care has become a concrete structure in the foundation of the child welfare system in the United States. However, unlike other institutions, it relies upon a family system. A transition of a family system must occur as it joins with the child welfare system to become a foster home. This transition, like any change in a system, affects all its members, including the foster parents' biological children. However, despite the plethora of research that has been done related to foster care and foster children, there is very little literature that mentions foster parents' biological children.

For this study I review seven empirical studies that mention biological children of foster parents. Among the research on biological children of foster parents, there are no studies that examine the long-term effects on biological children. The current study focuses on biological children of foster parents and their sense of family as adults, through retrospective interviews. Since, foster care is so engrained in the child welfare system, it is important to assess the long-term effects of all family members in order to identify any areas of improvement. In addition, many foster parents worry about the effects of foster care on their biological children. This may be a reason for them to stop being foster parents. Therefore, additional research to identify where biological children may struggle and how they may benefit, as adults, could be helpful in identifying areas needed for extra support.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

History of Family Foster Care

The concept of children reared in settings other than with their family of origin has been present in many forms throughout the history of America. Children being placed outside of their homes traces back as far as Colonial times. The way in which children were viewed by the society often reflects the placement setting of the time. Although there have been many changes, one constant factor has been that the overwhelming majority of the population of children placed outside the home come from low economic status.

In colonial times children were viewed as miniature adults who needed to grow up as soon as possible. Children without homes during this time were placed as indentured workers by government officials who were designated as overseers of the poor. Indentured work was a common practice during this time and was not isolated to the placement of poor children by government officials. Some families sought placement on their own so that their children could learn how to be good workers. Tim Hasci (1995), explained the system of the time, “In the colonial era, the duties of masters under indenture were spelled out in practical terms: children were to be fed, clothed, housed, and taught skills” (p. 3). Placement at this time primarily served as economic relief rather than emotional or psychological care.

The rise of residential care in the form of orphan asylums occurred in the early nineteenth century largely in response to the cholera epidemic in 1832. The asylums were created by

religious and charitable organizations in response to poverty in rapidly growing urban centers. On rare occasions, asylums would use indenture work for older children as well as place very young children with families—serving as a rudimentary placement agency. Between 1830 and 1860, orphan asylums became the primary form of care for displaced children (Hasci, 1995).

In 1853 Charles Loring Brace, to whom the roots of today's foster care system are largely attributed, founded the Children's Aid Society (CAS). There is much controversy around Brace's intentions for creating the CAS. Clay Gish (1999) explored the issue from both an historian's perspective as well as the social control thesis argument. Historians admire Brace for establishing the perspective of public responsibility for social welfare and for taking a stance against incarceration of children in reformatories. Supporters of the social control thesis, however, define his efforts as perpetuating the breakup of poor families. Hasci (1995) described Brace's intentions as ". . . anti-urban, anti-immigrant, and anti-Catholic" (p. 5). The idea behind Brace's work was that children needed to be separated from the toxic urban environment—which included their parents. The operation of the CAS involved emigrating children from the urban slums to rural protestant homes by trains, which came to be known as "orphan trains." Children on the streets were sought out by the CAS as well as brought to the CAS by asylum staff and public officials.

Asylum administrators, largely Catholic agencies, had some criticisms of the CAS. The homes to which children were sent were not investigated and there was little to no follow up with how the children were doing in the homes. Also, they criticized the CAS for placing Catholic children in Protestant homes. As a result of the CAS, its' critics, and a new awareness of child abuse and neglect, by the 1870s agencies began to place children in private homes. By the 1880s and 1890s some agencies began to pay for the boarding of younger children placed in homes so

that they were not forced to work. In paying for boarding, there was more follow up with the childrens' placement in the home. With a rising awareness of child abuse and neglect came the question of the government's involvement in child welfare (Hasci, 1995).

In the 1920s use of the orphan train stopped and agencies in many parts of the country were licensing and loosely regulating home placements. In 1935, the Federal Aid to Dependent Children Act was passed as Title IV of the Social Security Act. This act was passed in order to help keep poor families together by providing aid. By 1950 there were more children in foster homes than in asylums. After that, the number of children in foster homes as compared to asylums increased exponentially, doubling in 1960, and tripling by 1968 (Hasci, 1995).

In 1961 federal aid was made available for children placed out of the home due to a court decision. This created a culture change from Brace's concept of separating the child from a toxic family to supporting families by providing recourses so they could stay together. This change in culture was also evidenced by the Adoption Assistance Child Welfare Act in 1980, which moved away from family breakup and toward family maintenance (Hasci, 1995).

The number of children in foster care greatly increased in the 1970s due to both the "rediscovery" of child sexual abuse and a drop in funds for family maintenance. Family maintenance funding was again cut in 1980 largely due to public hesitancy to support poor families. In 1990 the use of Kinship care became prominent, where children were often placed with capable extended family members (Hasci, 1995). The number of children in the foster system however, continues to be very large and according to Hasci (1995), "poorer, younger, and far more troubled than those in the past, and they are staying in care for longer periods of time" (p. 16).

According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Non-relative Foster Family Homes, are the most common placement settings for children outside of their homes (US Department of Health, 2010). Each year many children enter and exit the foster care system in the United States. As of September 30th, 2010, out of the total population of 59,557,447 children living in the United States, approximately 408,425 were in foster care. Evidenced by the number of children placed out of their homes, it is clear that family foster care has become a very large part of the child welfare system in the United States.

Research Studies

For researchers examining the child welfare system, foster children are often the focus; however very little research has focused on foster families themselves, and even fewer studies have looked at the experiences of biological children of foster parents. This review examines seven studies that included research of biological children of foster parents.

Robert Twigg (1994) conducted a qualitative study, through a private foster care agency in central Canada, in which eight biological children of foster parents (whom Twigg defined as “foster parents’ own children,” FPOC) from eight different families were interviewed. These families primarily fostered children with severe emotional problems. The children interviewed were all over the age of 15. Twigg does not specify the ages of all the participants or if they still resided in the home. Twigg however quotes three participants and specifies their ages as 15, 17 and 28 years old. Five females and three males were interviewed. Various themes of loss emerged from the interviews. All of the children felt they had lost something through the foster care experience. These themes included: loss of parents’ time and attention, loss of family closeness, and loss of place in family. This study was limited to one sector of the foster care

system at one agency in Central Canada. It also had a small number of participants. Therefore, this study represented a small, isolated part of the population and calls for continued research.

Poland and Groze (1993) also studied biological children of foster parents in southeast Iowa. Fifty-two foster parents and 51 biological children responded to questionnaires. The children ranged in age from 8 to 32 years. Foster parents ages ranged from 30 to 67 years. Poland and Groze recognized that foster care has an impact on the family's biological children, therefore designed a study to assess what is most helpful to prepare foster parents' biological children for the fostering process. Foster parents felt that it would have been most helpful for the children to have: "pre-training sessions for biological children . . . opportunity for biological children to talk to other biological children of foster homes, . . . [and] a requirement that social workers conduct sessions for the entire family prior to foster care" (p. 159). Parents reported an overall positive experience for their children; however, 47% of biological children reported they did not like the changes that fostering brought about. While this study emphasized the adjustment and impact on biological children, it had many limitations; the authors stated there might have been possible bias in sampling methodology. Poland and Groze recommend additional services for the preparation of biological children for the foster care experience including additional social worker involvement to help clarify expectations, and to include biological children in the decision making process.

Younes and Harp (2007) also interviewed foster parents and their biological children to explore the impact of fostering on biological children's psychological, educational and social wellbeing. They interviewed only children over eight years old. Ten foster families participated in the study, and 10 parents and 10 biological children were interviewed. The children ranged from 8 to 36 years, and parents were interviewed separately from their children. Qualitative data

was gathered and organized into themes reflecting the foster care process. Parents, overall, reported positive outcomes of fostering on their children and their families. Children, however, reported both positive outcomes such as “learning about people, becoming more independent, making friends, and appreciating their families” and negative outcomes such as, “lack of parental attention and financial strain on the family” (p. 31). Younes and Harp describe the fostering process as, “bittersweet and challenges the strengths of foster families and their biological children” (p.36). This study was helpful in better understanding the experience of foster care for biological children in the home; however, it was limited to a three county rural area in the Midwest and contained a small sample size. The participants were also not very diverse. All the families were white, middle class, two-parent families who lived in rural areas. Younes and Harp recommend further research to examine the extent of concern for biological children and to examine long term effects.

Kaplan (1988) conducted a study in which 15 biological children of foster parents and their mothers were interviewed. The children were ages 6-12 years old. This researcher was most interested in the perceptions, feelings and fantasies in latency-aged children in relation to the fostering experience as well as the assumptions and level of attunement from their mothers. For evaluation purposes, the researcher analyzed the children in two separate groups; nine children ages 6 to 8, and six children ages 9 to 12. The results showed that eight of the children, most of them being in the younger age group, expressed ideas of intentional abandonment of the foster children by the foster children’s biological parents. The study also showed that separation anxiety and superego conflicts were present for the foster parents’ biological children. Maternal attunement to separation anxiety and superego conflicts was found to be ‘imperfect in all cases.’ The study found that the younger children had more of a fear of abandonment while for the older

children, separation anxiety manifested as guilt. Also, the foster mothers' perceptions of the fostering experience seemed to differ from their children's perceptions. Kaplan suggested further research to test the hypotheses that separation anxiety and superego conflict are prevalent in biological children of foster parents. This was only a pilot study, with volunteer participants and a small sample size that was not diverse; one family was African American and one family was Hispanic but the rest were white American families.

Diepstra (2007) conducted a qualitative study examining the perceived impact of foster care on biological children of foster parents. The sample consisted of 21 biological children of foster parents from 11 foster families. Diepstra focused the study on families who had provided long-term foster care. All of these families had been providing foster care for four or more years. The sample for this study was taken from three foster care agencies in a county in Midwest Michigan. All of the foster families were two-parent families. The children interviewed ranged from age 7 to 21 years, with a mean age of 13.8. The parents and the children were interviewed separately in the families' homes. The data revealed that the biological children generally, "found the experience, although difficult, to have had a positive impact on their social and emotional development" (p.4). One potential weakness of the study is that the researcher disclosed her experience as a biological child of a foster parent and as a foster parent herself to her participants. This could have altered the children's responses, especially if a superego conflict was relevant in relation to feelings of guilt around the child's feelings. Due to the nature of this exploratory study, it was also a small sample in one area of the country and calls for additional research.

Gwynne (1984) completed research for a dissertation in which she investigated *self-regard, perceptions of mother, and family representations* of latency-age foster children as

compared with biological children of foster parents. The sample included 75 foster children and 33 biological children of foster parents in New York City. The children ranged from ages 6-12 years old. Her results showed foster children demonstrated significantly lower self-regard than biological children. She also found that the biological children perceived their mothers, as well as represented family relationships more favorably than the foster children. A correlation of perceptions of self and perceptions of how the foster mother views him/her were found in both groups of children. When self-perceptions were higher, perceptions of how the foster mother viewed him or her were higher as well. It was also found that children in both groups idealized the foster mother.

Ellis (1972) conducted a study of children whose biological parents were foster parents who ran group homes. Ellis explored the effects on biological children having to share their parents and their homes. Ten foster parents who worked for Metropolitan Toronto Children's Aid Society were interviewed. In addition, data were gathered from tape recordings from two meetings; one of 40 foster parents and caseworkers, and another of five teenage children of foster parents who had grown up with foster children in their homes. Ellis found that participants' own children seemed to be most affected if they were between the ages of 7 and 13 years, and the most affected child in the family seemed to be the oldest sibling, in most cases. At the time Ellis conducted this study, formalized group home foster care was relatively new in the area and this was one of the first studies that mentions foster parents' own children. Due to this, the study was exploratory in nature.

Summary

Only two of these studies were conducted within the past ten years (Diepstra, 2007; Younes & Harp, 2007); the other five studies all occurred more than fifteen years ago. The

majority of the studies that included biological children of foster parents were exploratory with small sample sizes, and those studies were completed several years apart from one another. Three of the studies were completed for thesis or dissertation requirements (Diepstra, 2007; Gwynne, 1984; Twigg, 1994). Five of the studies used interviews (Diepstra, 2007; Ellis, 1972; Kaplan, 1988; Twigg, 1994; Younes & Harp, 2007) one used standardized testing (Gwynne, 1984), and one used questionnaires (Poland & Groze, 1993). The study that utilized questionnaires had the largest sample size of 52 foster parents and 51 biological children of foster parents (Poland & Groze, 1993).

Even though the research is sparse and includes small studies scattered over time, there seem to be a few common themes. Of the studies that included both foster parents and their biological children, all of them found some discrepancy in how the parent perceived the child to view the foster care process and how the biological children actually viewed the process. In addition, overall the children mentioned both positive and negative aspects of having foster children in their home, even though studies varied regarding whether more positive or more negative aspects were found. Since all of the studies were qualitative in nature and contained fairly small sample sizes in select geographic locations, they all called for additional research in this area. Although two of the studies included biological children of foster parents who were over the age of 21, neither study took a retrospective perspective or discussed how their childhood experiences affected their lives as adults and their current families (Poland & Groze, 1993; Younes & Harp, 2007).

Systems Theory

In “The Foster Family in a Systems Theory Perspective,” Eastman (1979) described the dynamics involved in families who provide foster care. She explored the openness of the family

system that is necessary for it to allow foster children as well as caseworkers in and out of the home. There is a question of how much openness can exist for a family to keep its identity. Eastman explained, “When a foster family is too open it risks entropy through the loss of its identity” (p. 565.) Eastman also talked about a sense of loss that is felt by all family members for the relationships that can be begun and ended so quickly. Therefore, in homes where there are often temporary placements, feelings of loss can exist throughout the entire placement process. When describing flexibility and stability within the family system, Eastman stated, “Just as a foster child may have a hard time knowing to whom he belongs, the foster family may have a hard time knowing who belongs to it” (p. 568.) Although the modern family may be quite different from how families were viewed when this article was written, the basic idea of family structure still applies. Each family system has a degree of openness that allows it to function. It is still true that the level of openness required of most foster homes is much greater than in the average family system. The effects of such a continuously evolving family system are sure to have an affect on the individuals that belong to it.

Diepstra (2007) also applied family systems theory to the development of her research study. Diepstra asserted that, “Fostering can obscure family boundaries as foster children come and go, and members may not be clear about who is in the family and who is not” (p. 22). Diepstra explained that it is clear from a systems perspective that fostering creates a change within a family and affects all that are involved. When a member enters and/or exits the system, an adjustment of both roles and boundaries must take place. Children may not perceive or understand these changes in the way that adults in the family do.

Changes that occur in foster families affect level of openness of the system, family roles and family boundaries. The focus of this study is to get a better understanding of how changes in

foster family systems affect biological children of foster parents, most specifically in relation to their past and current sense of family as adults.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect on biological children's experience of family as a result of having lived with foster siblings when growing up. Research that includes biological children of foster parents is very limited. It is not known what the long-term, retrospective views of these children are, [now that they have become adults and have developed an historical perspective on their childhoods]. Especially since there is a shortage of foster homes, it is important to get the perspective of all those who have grown up in foster care. Goals of this research were to not only give voice to those who have been nearly forgotten in the process, but to also identify areas of strength and areas of growth within the foster care system.

Due to minimal current research of biological children of foster parents, this study was exploratory in nature. It is a qualitative study that included semi-structured interviews with adults who grew up as biological children of foster parents. Criteria for participation included: participants to be over the age of 21, had parents who did foster care for at least three years, and had at least one child-foster sibling who entered and exited the home.

This exploratory study was to gather information from the perspective of the biological child and to identify future areas for research. The study was conducted in central Massachusetts however, through use of snowball recruitment, participants from other states were interviewed as well. In total, 10 individuals were interviewed from three different states. The majority of

participants resided in New England. All interviews were done by phone and were recorded using a recording application on a smart phone.

This researcher used purposive and snowball sampling. A recruitment email was distributed among employees at a large mental health agency, and an announcement was also made in a clinical staff meeting. Once employees or friends and family of employees identified themselves as potential participants, I recruited additional participants through these participants. This sampling technique was used due to accessibility to the agency. Since the agency is composed of mental health workers, I suspected that the initial sample would not have been very representative of the population, and hoped to identify participants who did not work in the mental health field by virtue of snowballing from the initial participants.

One potential recruitment problem was whether participants would come forward if recruited through their work place, even though their participation was kept confidential. People may have feared that coworkers or the agency would find out their personal information or that they participated. This is why it was very important to maintain confidentiality in the study and to offer participants the option to be interviewed at work or somewhere else. It was also possible that employees could identify friends of family that may be eligible to participate. In the end, no employees of the agency participated, but initial recruiting occurred because employees identifying potential participants outside of the agency, and recruitment snowballed from there.

I planned to conduct in-person interviews with individuals who resided in Massachusetts. As time moved forward it was increasingly difficult to find participants who lived close enough and had the time to meet in person. Due to recruitment difficulties and the restrictions of time, distance and money, all of the interviews were completed via telephone and digitally recorded.

I recorded and transcribed interviews and then coded and analyzed data for common themes. I also collected demographic information such as: age, identified gender, race, estimated number of years their parent did foster care, estimated number of foster children that were in the home, number of parents that were in the home as well as the state where the family lived. The interviews were semi-structured and the interview guide was as follows:

- 1.) Tell me about your experience as biological child of a foster parent.
- 2.) How do you feel your experience has affected the way you view family today?
- 3.) How was your relationship with your family growing up and what is it like now?
- 4.) If you have started your own family, in what ways is it similar to yours growing up and in what ways is it different?
- 5.) What were your best experiences growing up in a foster home?
- 6.) What were some struggles growing up in a foster home?

I considered possible ethical concerns around this study. First of all, when discussing a participant's life, there is always the risk of exposing past experiences that might be difficult to talk about. I was sure to remind participants that it is their choice whether or not to answer a question at any time. I used my experience as a clinician in order to be sensitive to verbal cues and changes in affect. I was prepared to stop an interview if a participant had appeared to be distraught, but this never became an issue.

One potential for error I considered was my own potential bias would affect the interviews. I am a biological child of a foster parent and therefore may over-identify with participants or ask leading questions. It was important to use an interview guide and to stick with open-ended questions, and to be aware of my personal biases in order to focus on gathering the

most accurate data. I did not disclose my role as a biological child of a foster parent in order to minimize the chance that knowledge might alter their responses.

Since my study was conducted as a thesis project, and time and resources were limited; it included a small sample size. It is a qualitative study and was focused on gathering detailed information about participant's experience; its generalizability will be limited.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this study was to gather retrospective perceptions of how growing up as a biological child of a foster parent affects one's sense of family. Ten adults ranging from 21 years to 64 years old were interviewed. Eight females and two males participated. All participants identified as white or Caucasian. Seven of the participants lived in New England when they were children. The other three participants lived in Arizona, Oregon and Texas as children. All of the participants had two parents/caregivers in the home. There was a large range in the number of years their parents provided foster care (5 to 25 years) and a range in the total number of children fostered (3 to approximately 100) and of the number of children generally in the home at one time (1 to 7). Among the participants were three sibling groups of two. Two of these sibling groups were related to one another as cousins. The other four participants had no affiliation with one another.

Although there were some commonalities among the experiences of the participants, there appeared to be even more diversity. Since there was a small sample size but a wide range of contributing factors (e.g.; number of years parents provided foster care, number of children in the home at one time, total number of children fostered, level of care provided, and age of the children), there were few themes that were constant across all of the participants. However, many common themes that affected at least some of the participants were identified.

Exposure

One theme that emerged from the data was what children brought into the family system. There were stories of exposure to behaviors as well as content that they had not previously witnessed. There were different perspectives developed as a result of exposure to foster children's behaviors and past experiences.

Exposure to behaviors. The behaviors that participants described ranged from minor behaviors such as a teenager sneaking someone they had a crush on into the house to more traumatic experiences such as a foster child harming a family member. One sibling pair, who usually had female teenage foster sisters, described behaviors such as running away, sneaking people into the house and bringing drugs into the home:

Um, I think it was girls not following rules. I know on one occasion, this girl would, um, I know she tried to sneak boys into the house. I know a couple girls had hidden, like, cigarettes and, I'm sure, drugs in the house, alcohol, things like that my parents would find. Obviously that would always make my parents very upset, definitely not allowed so, certain things like that.

Another participant, whose parents provided foster care at a more intensive level, described some more extreme behaviors she was exposed to, such as older teenagers having sexual relationships with her sisters, violence in the home, and vandalism:

. . . and the other one the reason he was unadopted—he became, he was diagnosed as sociopath. He tried to kill all of us. He was only 15 or 16 but, yeah, and then he, uh, stole a car and did a lot of vandalism and stuff so . . . They said he never had feelings for any of us but I don't believe that was the case.

Three participants mentioned times when there was theft in the household. One participant described a constant worry about her personal belongings,

And then also probably the thievery. We have had lots and lots of instances where, you know, cell phones have been stolen and money has been stolen and jewelry has been stolen. Um, and I was just barely there two weeks ago visiting family and I left my ipad out on the counter and I came back to get it later and it wasn't there and I'm like, 'oh!

Did I move it or was it stolen?,’ and its just hard to have to ask that question. Which I had misplaced it and found it but its just wondering that makes searching a lot harder.

Exposure to content. All of the participants described ways in which they were exposed to knowledge about the foster children’s pasts such as different family values, or histories of abuse or neglect. Most participants described relating this knowledge of foster children’s past experiences to their current behaviors. One participant described her knowledge of the children’s past:

We had two little boys that—they came from physically abusive homes and, um, you know, you could drop a glass and they would go to pieces. And, uh, I’m not sure if drugs were involved in their folk’s background but uh you could tell just with loud noises how it affected them, you know, so they must have been raised in probably a very violent atmosphere. The little girl was horribly sexually abused and sold out to men when she was two, from about the time she was about two years old up until uh the system finally took her away. So I was aware of those things.

Perspective

Half of the participants described their exposure to foster children’s current behaviors and histories as being “eye-opening” or giving them a greater appreciation for their own families.

I think it gives me a really good appreciation for growing up in a good home. From what I did come to know later on, I learned about a lot of the girls’ backgrounds and I think that was a huge eye opener. Um, you know, I never understood why kids would want to run away and go back to the homes they grew up in, considering how bad they were. But um, yeah, I mean most of the experience was good. I think it gives me a really good outlook on, um, you know, what life is really like in most places.

Positive Attributes

In addition to feeling a greater appreciation for family, six participants also described positive attributes they had felt they gained from their experiences of growing up with foster siblings. These attributes included being more understanding, more open-minded, more empathetic, and more willing to help others.

I guess I think I am more understanding of people’s past and just like talking to someone and realizing that no matter who you are interacting with that you don’t know their story

and that like baggage or experiences that they are carrying with them. I don't know, I think it just made me a little bit more understanding.

Foster Parent

When the participants were asked how their experience has affected their current sense of family, most of them spoke about whether they would consider being foster parents or would open their home to others. None of the participants have been foster or adoptive parents.

Three participants said they believe they would be more likely to consider doing foster care but recognized the responsibility and due to life circumstances, did not foresee themselves being able to be foster parents.

I know there are children that need a lot of help and there's not enough adults, caring adults to do it doesn't appear to be to take care of all of these children that need extra help; um, you know its very sad. It's sad I'm not in a position in my life right now, because I would do it in a heartbeat. And so it does change your perspective when you get down at the nitty gritty level and you see what these kids can need and what you can do for them.

Two participants stated that they would not be foster parents themselves because of the difficulties their parents and their families faced growing up.

Yea, um. Uh as good as a thing that it is and that my parents did for those girls, and a lot of, a few of them we are still in contact with and they've... and its great to see the positive impact it had on them but, um, I saw a lot how much aggravation, uh, what a lot of the girls put my mom through and I just don't think that I would have that in me or... I do remember the times where I sort of got close with the girls and they would all of a sudden leave and—not that that had a big affect on me—but I remember that being upsetting and I don't know I just wouldn't want for me it would be too much for me to run a household and have like new girls or kids coming in and out.

Four participants would consider doing foster care with caution, and with adjustments to how their parents did foster care. Examples of these adjustments included: waiting until their own children were out of the home, fostering younger children, and having fewer children in the home at one time.

I think for me I would be much more strategic about it, you know, like I said I would choose an infant over a thirteen year-old and that would be because I can already tell you that a thirteen year-old will probably be a tremendous struggle, for me. So I think, um, I think there are things like that that I would do differently.

The youngest participant said that she would definitely consider doing foster care when she was older and would suspect that she would do things very similarly to her parents.

Parental Struggles

Eight of the participants mentioned struggles they were aware of that their parents had faced. This theme did not emerge under any specific question but was mentioned in relation to family adjustments and family rules. Five participants spoke about emotional difficulties their parents faced. Examples of these emotional difficulties included: children leaving the home, uncertainty of adoptions, children being shuffled around the system and difficult attachments with children. One participant spoke about this “emotional battle:”

I would also say, um, you build attachments and—I think I may have mentioned this before—but the nature of foster care is so difficult emotionally when it comes to opening up your heart and then that person is gone and then they’re back and then they’re gone and that’s really hard, so I think that’s a struggle and I know that was a struggle for my parents as well. It was an emotional battle for them, um, so . . .

Four participants mentioned stressors their parents faced in relation to discipline of foster children:

Well, yeah, I remember my parents had kind of a hard time with ummm, you know. It was definitely it was hard for them just with the parenting and the discipline. They were basically responsible for these kids but they’re also not really their parents so it’s a grey area in terms of how they can discipline them and what the rules are and laying down the rules and expecting them obey it.

Four participants also mentioned added financial stress on their parents.

I mean it was definitely a financial strain I think on them a little bit, um... You know my mom definitely treated the girls just as well as she treated me and my sister, you know; got them new school clothes and, um, get them anything they needed in terms of food, school supplies everything. You know I look back at it now and I think from a financial standpoint you know they did a lot that I don’t think every foster family does.

Best Experiences

There were three different themes that participants spoke about when they were asked what their best experiences were, including: excitement of sharing new experiences, support and friendship with their foster siblings and seeing long-term change or gratitude from their foster siblings.

Two participants described the excitement of having new children in the home. One participant described her best memories of sharing her life and home:

I remember just the excitement of having like a new, having someone new coming in and wanting to like drag them from room to room and show them like where the bathroom was and where you know, the closet was and you know the computer and the TV and this is where you live. I don't know, eager and excited and they were you know who knows, probably they were way less excited but also...we camped a lot. We would go camping for, like, three day weekends and, like, bring them on camping trips because often they had never done that or experienced that sort of thing so to share that with them was cool.

In five of the interviews, individuals described some of their best memories of support and friendship with foster siblings. One individual described the closeness she felt with her foster siblings:

Yeah, and support. I definitely remember manic panic hair dye was all the rage and we'd be putting streaks in each other's hair and dying each other's heads and bitching about people who had wronged us, which when you are in high school is a very big deal, and, you know, and having that support with each other. So it wasn't all factions there were moments where there were small schisms but I think largely it felt like we had each other's backs I think even though in that group there were certain relationships that were closer and certain ones that weren't. But I think in large part it was, I think, it was good you know and when I look back, god it will be my twenty year high school reunion next year, so you are looking at two decades ago but when I look back on it largely that's what I remember—laughing our asses off at the stupidest things and really just having fun with each other.

Five participants also spoke about foster siblings who contacted their families as adults and expressed gratitude. These participants spoke about the positive feelings of witnessing the

positive affects of foster care on their foster siblings. For example, one individual described a past foster sibling contacting her:

I mean a story I could share is . . . she found me on Facebook and she's like a year older than I am she's probably like 26 or 28. I mean she's a couple years older but she's married, um, you know she has a house, she has two children of her own and she sent me a message just saying, you know, if it wasn't for you and it wasn't for your parents and if it wasn't for your family, I may not have known what family is. And I may not have really learned to respect and appreciate myself or, you know, what a real family is, you know, and she said 'I grew up and I got a job and I met somebody and it's because of your family I have my own.' So there's some good that comes out of it and the success stories and, you know, the good things that come out of it are probably the best thing.

Relationships with Children Entering and Exiting

The majority of the participants spoke about the difficulties of children leaving the home, and four mentioned that they became more hesitant to become close with foster children once they grew accustomed to the cycle of children entering and exiting the home.

Several participants spoke about the difficulty of foster siblings leaving unexpectedly: I think one struggle was probably . . . one of the struggles was when a foster kid left we had no notice of it. It was; one day they were there and the next day they were gone. No one would tell anyone. They would just come and pick them up. That was a struggle because you didn't really know when they were leaving.

Other participants spoke about children, who would bounce in and out of the home, I would also say, um, you build attachments—and I think I may have mentioned this before—but the nature of foster care is so difficult emotionally when it comes to opening up your heart and then that person is gone and then they're back and then they're gone and that's really hard, so I think that's a struggle and I know that was a struggle for my parents as well. It was an emotional battle for them also.

Some participants shared that they learned not to get too close with foster siblings because it was difficult when they left,

There was never, initially it was kind of sad for them to go but then like I caught on pretty quick. I got kind of attached but it was at like arms length. You never knew how long they were going to last sort of thing.

Some participants shared that they learned especially to not get too close to children unless they were expected to stay in the home longer,

Um the short term it was harder because you would start to get close to them and they would just leave so you didn't get too close and sometimes you didn't want to get too close because you knew they were just going to leave, so that was kind of hard. Yea, like we tried to make them as comfortable as possible but you knew like they were going to be leaving soon so it was just I did not get as close to them as I did with some of the other kids.

Many participants explained how difficult it was when a child had stayed for a long period of time and then left the home,

Yeah, that was really tough; I mean it was sad to see them go because at that point I mean I knew them pretty well, I mean, like, they were just like my siblings, you know. I don't even know if I would have even told them, you know, how much it bothered me, you know, like it bothered me more than I probably let them know.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

Review of Literature and Findings

The research and literature about biological children of foster parents is very limited and outdated. Foster families are very diverse and there are many factors that impact a child's experience. Since the literature is sparse and focused on different aspects of foster care, there is still little known about the experience of biological children of foster parents. However, there are some areas in which themes from this study overlapped with previous research. Therefore, given that this study was focused on retrospective descriptions of experience and its relation to family, it was very different from previous research and some findings identified new areas for further research.

In this study, many participants spoke about experiencing new perspectives based on their exposure to the behaviors of foster siblings, as well as the knowledge they gleaned about their foster siblings' lives of their foster siblings prior to living in their homes. There were no findings mentioned in any of the reviewed studies about biological children's exposure to the experiences of foster children in the forms of knowledge about their histories or their current behaviors.

Participants in this study described growing up as biological children of foster parents as "eye-opening." This was directly linked to their descriptions of exposure to the lives of their foster siblings. These findings stray a bit from Twigg's (1994) study of eight children, over the

age of fifteen. Twigg found a theme related to loss in three areas: loss of parents' time and attention, loss of family closeness, and loss of place in the family. These themes did not emerge in the findings of this study.

Four participants did mention times when they questioned their parents' loyalty to them or felt as if they had less attention; however, participants did not talk about this as a loss. As adults, they now view those struggles as times of adjustment; when they didn't fully understand the complexity of foster care because of their age. Some participants even mentioned that they felt closer to their family because members of their biological family were the constants in a changing system. They reported their experience as "eye-opening" and described feeling a greater appreciation of their own family. From the difference in these findings, though, one cannot conclude that similar experiences of loss did not occur; but, in fact, maybe perspective changed. This study was retrospective and included adult participants who were more removed from their childhood experiences by time lapsed. For this reason, it is very valuable to gain both retrospective and present data of experience.

In a study of both biological children of foster parents and foster children, Gwynne (1984) found that biological children reported more positive reflections of family relationships. Even though this current research project did not include the perspectives of foster children, biological children did reflect feeling closer to their biological families through the fostering experience.

Diepstra (2007) found that participants viewed their experiences as biological children of foster parents to have had a positive impact on their social and emotional development. These findings are similar to those in this study, in that participants described their experience as "eye-opening" and reported support and close relationships with some of their foster siblings. In this

study, when asked about their best experiences growing up in a foster home, the majority of participants spoke about the fun times they shared with their foster siblings as well as having additional support and people to talk to. When comparing this study with Diepstra's, a question arises of whether exposure to diverse experiences and worldviews by way of having foster children in the home does in fact expand a child's social and emotional development.

As was found in this current study, Younes and Harp (2007) found that participants reported both positive and negative aspects of their experiences. Positive aspects reported of the experience were very similar to those found in this study such as making friends, appreciating their families and developing positive personal attributes like becoming more understanding and independent.

Just as in this study, Younes and Harp found that some participants reported noticeable financial strain on their families. However, Younes and Harp's results did not include participant awareness of parental stress or emotional strain as discovered in this study. Some of that may be due to differences in research questions as well as the comparative maturity of participants, and the retrospective nature of this study.

Perhaps since none of the previous studies were retrospective in nature (as this one was), there was no report of participants witnessing positive benefits or gratitude from foster siblings as adults, nor was there any discussion around the decision of becoming foster parents themselves. Both of these themes emerged from data in this study.

Poland and Groze (1993) conducted a study to assess the most effective ways to prepare biological children of foster parents for the fostering process. In this study, some participants mentioned being involved in conversations with their parents about beginning foster care, however most participants either had parents who did foster care since they were infants or did

not remember being part of the process. One participant remembered attending a pre-training session, as Poland and Groze recommended in their study, but did not remember it being particularly helpful. Poland and Groze reported that almost half of the children in the study explained that they did not like the changes that foster care brought about. In contrast, participants in my study reported more complex reflections on their experiences, describing both struggles and positive feelings. It may be that because participants in this study were adults, they were able to reflect upon their experiences with different perspective.

In this study, participants didn't directly state what they believed would have been helpful for them in adjusting to the experience; however, in statements about what they would do differently if they were to become foster parents, they answered indirectly by describing what they would believe to be helpful for other biological children of foster parents.

In Kaplan's (1998) research of fifteen biological children of foster parents between the ages of 6 and 12 and their mothers, the focus was on level of maternal attunement, separation anxiety and superego conflicts of latency aged children. None of these themes were reflected upon in this study. Participants did not share any notion of experiencing separation anxiety and, overall, reflected positive caregiver relationships from a retrospective view.

Ellis (1972) interviewed foster parents and found that children seemed to be more affected when they were between the ages of 7 and 13 years, and also found that the eldest child in the family seemed to be most affected. Due to the small sample size and diversity in participant families of this study, there were no consistent data correlating participant's ages or birth order when their parents did foster care and how fostering affected them.

The experiences of family foster care are expansive and diverse. Research that includes the experiences of biological children of foster parents focuses on many different aspects of the

experiences and range in age of participants, research questions, geographic location, and structure of the family. Due to the variation in isolated research studies, there is very little overlap. However, these studies have overall indicated that there are both positive aspects and struggles to growing up as a biological child of a foster parent.

Systems Theory

From a family systems perspective, it is clear that foster families are unique systems with constantly changing dynamics. Some unique aspects of foster family systems, as stated by Eastman (1979) include: levels of openness versus family identity, closeness of relationships, and feelings of loss, and stability versus flexibility. Many participants spoke about the adjustments made in the family's closeness in relation to having foster siblings enter and exit the home. Although, few participants mentioned a change in their roles in the family, many of them described a change in their familial relationships. This was often described as increased closeness to biological siblings, appreciation of family members who were a fixed part of the system, and difficulty in deciphering a safe level of closeness with foster siblings. Not only similar interests, but also age and expected time of stay in the home often determined the level of closeness.

Although the makeup of foster families is extremely diverse, one common factor necessary is a more open family system. Some participants spoke about their family's willingness to open their home in an endearing manner while other participants, because of difficult experiences, spoke about the dangers of a more open system. One participant in particular spoke about exposure to outside influences and stated that her experience has helped her realize the importance of a strong and stable family unit as opposed to a more open one.

Some participants spoke about not only foster siblings entering their homes but also social workers and other professionals.

Participants also described some of their foster siblings as being a part of the family while other foster siblings were more merely living in the home temporarily, like a guest. Different families seemed to have different unstated rules about who belonged in the family. Sometimes foster children were adopted and then became a part of the family, whereas other families seemed to fully incorporate children into the system more easily and informally. Some participants described strong family identities that, they believed, were unchanged by becoming a foster family, while other participants seemed to have less of a family identity and had difficulty describing family values. The range in responses reflects the diverse experience of foster families. Among the participants there was a range in the number of children in the house—both biological and foster children—the age of the children, the length foster children stayed in the home and the intensity level of care.

Limitations

Since this study was conducted within a short time frame with limited resources, there are several limitations. Due to accessibility; recruitment began with mental health professionals in New England. Since most of the participants were young professional, white women, the recruitment process may have reflected the demographics of the professionals. This study is also restricted by way of small sample size, and because of the necessity of phone interviews. Since interviews were conducted over the phone, data regarding non-verbal communication was not gathered. This study was also limited in that it is a thesis project; therefore the researcher had limited time and resources. Its generalizability is limited due to the exploratory nature of the study and small sample size.

In addition, I myself am a biological child of a foster parent and therefore may have brought some biases to the project. Although I took precautions to identify and minimize biases, such as preparing an interview guide with open-ended questions, consultation with an advisor, and not disclosing my experience to participants it is possible that this experience may have affected my interactions with participants. However, my experience may also be area source of strength by way of having better understanding of the foster care system and potential experiences of participants.

Implications for Social Work Practice

During the interview process, many participants were eager to participate in the study and interested in the results. Several participants shared that no one had previously expressed interest in hearing their stories about being biological children in foster homes. Some participants even had looked into the research previously and discovered its scarcity. It is apparent that there had been little support or space for individuals to speak about their experiences. Family foster care is such a large part of the child welfare system, and yet the experience of an entire group of children affected by it have been absent from the majority of the research. It also seems as though children may not often be given the chance to talk about their experiences. Growing up as a biological child in a foster home is unique experience, in which there is a lot to be discovered. Just as supports are provided for foster children, it may also be helpful to provide spaces such as groups and community events for biological children of foster parents to share their stories with one another.

Since foster families must have more open systems where roles and boundaries are likely to be changing, further support and psycho-education would be helpful to provide foster families with the best resources for handling transitions. Many foster parents may not know the best way

to address the experience of foster care with their own children. Although many participants reported rituals around foster children entering the home, most participants described confusion around the experience of foster children leaving the home. Foster parents themselves may struggle with the transition of a child leaving the home and be unsure of if or how to address this experience with their biological children. Also, most participants in this study described awareness of their parents' struggles. Therefore I suggest that further supports for foster parents is needed in caring for both their own biological children and foster children.

Since many social workers in the child welfare system experience large caseloads, their attention is usually focused on the most extreme or immediate issues. Therefore, loving foster parents are often left unsupported in handling potential challenges foster care may have on their own children, further making the experiences of these children invisible to the social work profession.

Recommendations for Future Research

Some identified future areas of research may be to assess how experiences differ depending on the number of foster children in the home and how long they stay in the home, or at what ages biological children might be more positively or negatively affected by having foster siblings. Additional input from biological children of foster parents about what services might have been most helpful to their families may improve the experience of foster care all around. Since foster families are so diverse, there are many factors to consider such as the level of care of the foster children need. Participants whose families provide intensive foster care vary greatly from those who provide other levels of care. Also foster families who incorporate children who are strangers to them have different experiences from those who provide foster care for children their families knew previously.

Some of the biggest struggles for biological children include experiencing foster siblings' difficult behaviors and content as well as foster siblings exiting the home after bonds have been created. Further knowledge is needed about best practices for supporting biological children when foster children enter and exit the home.

Overall, this study provides more suggested areas for research and highlights the diversity of foster families. It is shocking that such a huge part of the child welfare system has been largely overlooked. Additional supports and psycho-education for foster parents in addressing the needs of their foster children and biological children, as well as managing their own stress is recommended. It is suggested that further research and awareness of the experience of family foster care as seen by biological children be implemented. There is a call for an increased awareness from the Social Work profession of the experiences of families that comprise a large part of the current social welfare system

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Appendix A

Recruitment Letter

Hey CHL staff,

I need your help! I am a social work intern at youth and family services. I am a student at Smith College School for Social Work and am conducting a study for my degree requirements. I am looking for participants. Even if you do not meet the criteria to participate, it would be very helpful if you know someone who might be eligible or know of other professionals who have access to this population. **THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE CHL CLIENTS!**

Here is a short summary of my study:

I am planning to interview 12 people who are now adults who grew up with foster children in their home when they were kids. This study will focus on foster parent's biological children. There has been very little research done in this area. Since foster care is such a large part of the child welfare system, it is important to better understand the experience of the foster family. This is an opportunity for people who had this experience to share their stories. This research could also help to highlight strengths and areas of growth in the fostering experience.

Participants must be:

- Over the age of 18 years.
- Your own parent/parent's became a foster parent.
- Grew up with one or more foster children in your home.
- Had at least one foster child who came and left your home.

Being in this study will only take no more than hour of the person's time. Interviews will be recorded but kept private. This study is not a part of Community Healthlink and participation is confidential. Because I am a student with limited resources, no compensation is available. People will have the option to participate in a focus group instead, made up of other adults who had foster kids in their households growing up.

If you are interested in participating, please contact me. If you know someone who may be interested in participating, or is a professional who may know where to locate participants, please have them call or email me. Or, with their permission, I can contact them.

Thank you for your help!

Jessica Studer

XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXX-XXX-XXXXX

Appendix B

HSR Approval Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

December 18, 2013

Jessica Studer

Dear Jessica,

You did a very nice job on your revisions. Your project is now approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Please note the following requirements:

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form.

Maintaining Data: You must retain all data and other documents for at least three (3) years past completion of the research activity.

In addition, these requirements may also be applicable:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), please submit these changes to the Committee.

Renewal: You are required to apply for renewal of approval every year for as long as the study is active.

Completion: You are required to notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Committee when your study is completed (data collection finished). This requirement is met by completion of the thesis project during the Third Summer.

Congratulations and our best wishes on your interesting study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Michael Murphy, Research Advisor

Appendix C

HSR Amendment Approval Letter



School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063
T (413) 585-7950 F (413) 585-7994

February 3, 2014

Jessica Studer
2634 S Laredo Street
Aurora, CO 80013

Dear Jessica,

I have reviewed your amendments and they look fine. These amendments to your study are therefore approved. Thank you and best of luck with your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Kersten'.

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Michael Murphy, Research Advisor

Appendix D

Agency Approval for Recruitment

From: Grollman, Debra **Sent:** Tuesday, November 26, 2013 2:21 PM **To:** Studer, Jessica **Cc:** Hamann, Barbara **Subject:** RE: Recruitment Letter

This note is to indicate that I have given Jessica Studer permission to recruit CHL staff people for her Smith thesis.

Sincerely,
Debra E. Grollman

Debra E. Grollman, LICSW

Director of Children's Outpatient & Victim Services

Community Healthlink Youth & Family Services

275 Belmont St.

Worcester, MA 01604

 508-421-4527

 

 fax – xxx-xxx-xxxx

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From: Studer, Jessica **Sent:** Tuesday, November 12, 2013 2:24 PM **To:** Grollman, Debra **Subject:** Recruitment Letter

Hey Debra,

Attached is the letter I have put together for CHL staff. I have gotten it approved by my thesis advisor. I have not gotten it approved through HSR yet. I cannot distribute it or present to staff until I get HSR approval. I did however, want to get it to you to approve. Let me know if any changes need to be made.

Thank you for your assistance,

Jessica Studer

Appendix E

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study Smith College School for Social Work • Northampton, MA

.....

Title of Study: Exploring the Experience of Biological Children of Foster Parents: Their Views on Family as Adults

Investigator(s): Jessica Studer

Smith College School for Social Work

xxx@xxxx.xxx

Community Healthlink Youth and Family Services, Social Work Intern

Office Number: xxx-xxx-xxxx

.....

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of the experience of biological children of foster parents.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are an adult who grew up with a parent(s) who was a foster parent for at least three years while you were a child, and you live in Central Massachusetts.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is learn about the experience of being a biological child of a foster parent.
- This study is being conducted as a research requirement for my master's in social work degree.
- Ultimately, this research may be published or presented at professional conferences.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: you chose to be interviewed individually by the researcher for 45 minutes—hour. The interview will be either video or just audio recorded.

* If you do not feel comfortable being video recorded, you may participate in an individual interview that is only audio recorded.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study has little foreseeable risk but I will be asking you to discuss events from your childhood, which may bring painful memories. Feel free to decline to answer any question, or even end the interview early if the discussion causes you discomfort. I will provide you a list of follow-up supports in the area.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The benefits of participation are having an opportunity to talk about your experience and possibly gain insights into your childhood experience having foster sibling(s), and provide information that could be helpful for future research and better support future foster families.
- The benefits to social work/society are: to provide information for future research and to identify strengths and potential areas of growth for foster families.

Confidentiality

- Your information will be kept confidential. The researcher will be the only person who will know about your participation. The interview will take place either at the researcher's office or at a quiet local coffee shop or another public place of your choice that provides privacy. *In addition*, the records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. I will be the only one who will have access to the video or audio recording, with the exception of a potential transcriber, who will sign a confidentiality agreement. Recordings will be destroyed after the mandated three years. They will be permanently deleted from the recording device.
- All research materials including recordings, transcriptions, analyses and consent/assent documents will be stored in a secure location for three years according to federal regulations. In the event that materials are needed beyond this period, they will be kept secured until no longer needed, and then destroyed. All electronically stored data will be password protected during the storage period. I will not include any information in any report I may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments/gift

- You will not receive any financial payment for your participation.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* up to April 1, 2013 without affecting your relationship with the researchers of this study or Smith College. Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits (including access to services) to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely up to the point noted below. If you choose to withdraw, I will not use any of your information collected for this study. You must notify me of your decision to withdraw by email or phone by April 1, 2013. After that date, your information will be part of the thesis and final report.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Jessica Studer at xxx@xxx.xxx or by telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you would like a summary of the study results, one will be sent to you once the study is completed. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any problems as a result of your participation, you may contact the Chair of the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Committee at (413) 585-7974.

Consent

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep. You will also be given a list of referrals and access information if you experience emotional issues related to your participation in this study

.....

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

.....

[if using audio or video recording, use next section for signatures:]

1. I agree to be [audio or video] taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher(s): _____ Date: _____