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RECOGNITION OF LOSS: DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF AND
THE CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Julia Anna Soto

June 2013

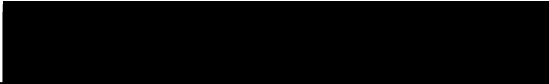
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Approved by:



Dr. Herb Shon, Faculty Supervisor
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6-5-13
Date



Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
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ABSTRACT

Between 1991 and 2007 the rate of minor children with incarcerated parents rose 80%. Children who are separated from a parent due to incarceration often experience grief as a result to loss. According to the literature, the grief that these children experience is often disenfranchised, unrecognized by society, and unsupported, a concept introduced by Doka, 1989. Using Doka's concept this study sought to explore the perceptions of child service providers as to the needs and services for these children, as it pertains to grief and loss. A qualitative study was conducted that surveyed service providers near the San Bernardino County area to see if they could identify the factors associated with this population. Univariate and bivariate analyses were performed to conclude that the needs of this population were not disenfranchised, but, understood and supported by practitioners. Implications for future research include identifying if the population is disenfranchised from their grief by caregivers, by exploring caregiver's understanding as to the needs of the population.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to my success in this project and in the completion of the Master of Social Work program. Thank you to God Almighty for the courage, strength and determination. To my husband Tony, my Bebes Isabel and Eva, my parents Jose and Sharon, and all my family, loved ones, friends, mentors, and professors who supported, encouraged and believed in me. Last but not least, THANK YOU Dr. Shon and Dr. McCaslin. Your support and help through this process has made the journey a smooth one.

To all of my loved ones who have ever experienced
the loss or separation
of a parent

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Children often experience grief as a result of loss or separation. There has been a slow, but steady rise in the number of children who experience loss due to maternal incarceration. These children can sometimes find themselves disenfranchised from their grief, a concept introduced by Doka, (1989), in which the grief experienced is not socially recognized or supported. Using Doka's concept of disenfranchised grief, this chapter will examine the phenomenology of incarceration as it pertains to the mother-child relationship, and the importance of practitioner awareness.

For the purpose of this study the following definitions will be used.

Grief: "Grief is an inevitable, never-ending process that results from a permanent or temporary disruption in a routine, a separation, or change in a relationship that may be beyond the person's control. This disruption change or separation causes pain and discomfort and impacts the person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Although loss is

a universal experience, the causes and manifestations of it are unique to each individual and may change over time" (Fiorini & Mullen, 2006, p. 10).

Disenfranchised Grief: "occurs when a society inhibits grief with 'grieving norms' that deny such emotions to persons deemed to have insufficient losses, insignificant relations or an insignificant capacity to grieve" (Doka, 1989, p.4).

Parental (maternal or paternal) incarceration: "Any kind of custodial confinement of a parent by the criminal justice system, except being held overnight in police cells, jail or prison" (Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012, p. 2).

Stigma: "the distinguishing, labeling, and association of negative attributes to differences, and the devaluation and discriminatory treatment of labeled individuals, all of which occur within the context of and serve to perpetuate differences in social, cultural, political, and economic power" (Phillips & Gates, 2011, p. 286).

Problem Statement

There were more than 65,000 incarcerated mothers in in the United States, in July of 2007. Maternal incarceration at that time, affected more than 147,000 youth, under the age of 18, these children, in total represent 2.3% of total U.S. population (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). In the time period before their mother's incarceration, children were more likely to live with their mother as a primary caregiver, in a single family household, rather than with their father (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008; Murray & Murray, 2009; Moreno, 2009).

When a child is separated from a parent the grief they may experience can create a multitude of negative biopsychosocial effects and system disruptions in children. These effects, if not recognized or supported, can lead to behavior problems, somatization, mood disorder, substance abuse, or eating disorders and result in displacements in their living, educational, social, and religious environments (Moreno, 2009; Posley, 2011; Murray & Murray, 2009; Hoffman, Byrd & Kightlinger, 2010; Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012; Gaston, 2008; Beckerman, 1998; Abram & Linhorst, 2007).

Social work practitioners need to be knowledgeable in regards to the disruptions that these children face while simultaneously experiencing the behavioral and emotional range that can be exhibited within grief. Examining such displays within a grief context calls for practitioners to reexamine the approach that they may take with this population in the future. A shift in conceptualization of the problem may lead to greater client recovery.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess provider awareness and perception of service needs, and of the grief and loss issues that children with incarcerated parents face. These issues include the behavioral and emotional state of the child, the attribution of behaviors and emotions to grief, types of referrals, support and services offered for these children, placement disruptions, and keeping maternal contact.

Considering the lack of research on this population, and the steady growth rate of maternal incarceration, this study will take an exploratory approach, in order to assess the perceptions of child service providers.

Providers, at the local, county and state levels will be surveyed, along with private and faith based providers. This study will seek to gain a holistic picture as to awareness, needs and services, as it relates to grief, of and for the population located in near the San Bernardino County region of Southern California.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

Meagher's idea, (1989), that loss of support comes from society's assumption that people who make poor life choices or have deviant life styles do not deserve support (p. 113-314), resonates with the social work value of dignity and worth of a person. Unfortunately the actions of criminal justice offenders, places a stigma on their kin relations

Assessing the needs of this underserved minority population and provider's understanding of this diversity issue is crucial in developing policy, trainings, services and programs. Through this study, providers may be able to reveal important aspects of the population that are unique to the San Bernardino County service area, that may guide future researchers and understanding

of the population and search for trends and changes over time.

This study will contribute to social work research at the generalist intervention process of assessment and planning. It can contribute to the policy issues for the health and social service agencies in this community

The research questions that this study will seek to answer are:

- Do practitioners feel that children of incarcerated mothers suffer from grief?
- Do practitioners feel that children of incarcerated mothers have adequate support systems and resources in place?
- Do practitioners feel that the needs of children with incarcerated mothers are any different from children who have been displaced from their primary caregiver, such as to a group home or foster placement?
- Do existing services for children of incarcerated parents primarily come from, county agencies and their contractors, or from community based providers

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There is limited literature regarding the subject of grief or loss felt by children of incarcerated parents. Using Doka's concept of disenfranchised grief (1989), a literature review was conducted to explore the occurrence of maternal incarceration and the impact it has on their children. Theories of grief, bereavement, separation, loss and attachment are examined, to find context in which childhood grief due to parental incarceration can best be examined.

Maternal Incarceration

The Department of Justice reports more than two million adults were incarcerated in 2007. Approximately 200,000 of those were female inmates (Moreno, 2009). It has been estimated that half of those women had minor children under the age of 18 (Glaze & Mered Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012; Bockneck, Sanderson & Britner, 2009).

Children of incarcerated mothers often come from low socioeconomic households. According to Hoffman, Byrd and

Kightlinger, 2010, household of incarcerated parents were often unstable and could include violence, poverty, abuse or neglect, mental illness and high levels of neighborhood violence. One California study showed that eight percent (8%) of mothers, reported experiencing homelessness within a year prior to her incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008)

Nearly half of the mothers that are incarcerated are considered a minority, and are aged 25-29 years old. Female inmates have reported having between one and four children, half are reported to be under age nine (Simmons, 200; Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). No one agency records the specific demographics or numbers of children with incarcerated parents. As a result the specifics of this population, how many and where they live, are unknown. Furthermore, there are few studies done on this population and as a result this population is not often recognized (Simmons, 200).

It is further important to note that the children described above are only a fraction of the total 1.7 million children who have one or more incarcerated parent (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). While studies report that children lived primarily with their mothers, Glaze &

Maruschak, 2008, report a significant amount, approximately 30%, lived with their father prior to incarceration. These children more often feel less disruption in their life due to mothers being their primary caretaker (Murray & Murray, 2009; Bockneck, Sanderson & Britner, 2009), but nevertheless still can experience grief due to loss over a father.

Caregiving

Most often, when a mother is imprisoned, her children will be relocated to live with maternal grandparents or other family member on the mother's side. Abram and Linharst report 63% of children whose mothers are in prison live with relatives, most often maternal grandparents (2007). There are multiple issues that these caregivers experience including the sudden disruption of their daily life, financial and emotional strain, and little or no resources (Murray & Murray, 2009; Moreno, 2009).

Children are often removed abruptly from their homes and lives when a mother is imprisoned. New caretakers too experience this abrupt displacement when children are relocated to their homes. The unexpected change can cause

financial hardship with limited availability of resources. Caregivers often find themselves overworked and struggling to provide stability (Murray & Murray, 2009).

Caregivers can further experience depression over their new roles and the strain caused by them. They also can become socially isolated under the new demands, but also as a result of the stigmatizing situation that has affected their life (Murray & Murray, 2009; Moreno, 2009). Studies agree that some may even feel resentment, anger and irritation towards the mothers' behavior and imprisonment, and the demands being placed on them (Bockneck, Sanderson & Britner, 2009; Beckerman, 1998).

Disenfranchised Through Stigma

The stigma, anger or hostile feelings that caregivers can experience may explain why they do not openly engage in conversation with children about their mothers situation, or address any concerns that a child may experience. Children are often given no or confusing explanations of their mother's whereabouts and details of her future. The explanations that they do receive are often confusing or deceptive and are not presented in a

way that children can understand (Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012; Murray & Murray, 2009; Bockneck, Sanderson & Britner, 2009; Beckerman, 1998).

By refusing to address the situation with the children, caregivers are reinforcing the stigma that exists for the child. They are further denying a safe place for the child to express the trauma and feelings that they have experienced over the loss of their physical and emotional environment.

By not acknowledging and discussing the situation with children, caregivers are disenfranchising children from their grieving process. Their emotional needs become stigmatized and unsupported. Children may further feel the need to keep their new situation a secret; as a result they will not independently seek help from others (Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012; Murray & Murray, 2009; Bockneck, Sanderson & Britner, 2009). Children are disenfranchised by the stigma cast down from their family and even further so by their peers.

Many children will experience avoidance, teasing, or even hostility by their peers, as a result of their mother's situation. This can lead to additional stress for children who are trying to cope with the amount of

disruptions that have occurred in their life. They can develop feelings of shame, embarrassment or anger, in addition to the grief and trauma they experience (Beckerman, 1998; Murray & Murray, 2009).

The stigma that families experience and perceive, can keep the reality of their situation a secret (Murray & Murray, 2012). In not revealing the source of the families current emotional and social states the family is disenfranchising themselves from their grief, and also from the support of others as well as the support of each other. The lack of communication, regarding the issue at hand, the lack of social or emotional support and the trauma of the loss can prolong the traumatic effects in a child, and also lead to problems of forming and maintaining attachments (Murray & Murray, 2009).

Effects on Children

Children who have parents that are involved with the criminal justice system, often have complex family dynamics (Posley, 2011). 8.5% of mothers, who lived with their children before they were incarcerated, reported being homeless, at some time in the year before their arrest. Additionally 50%-75% of those mothers also

suffered from a medically diagnosable medical, mental health or substance abuse problem (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Children who lived with their parents before their arrest were more likely to experience the mothers using heroin or crack cocaine (Murray & Murray, 2009).

These children may also experience the trauma of witnessing their mother's arrest. It has been estimated that one in five children are present at the time of their parent's arrest and more than half of these children are aged three to six years old (Murray & Murray, 2009; Simmons, 2000). This experience can add shock, fear and bewilderment, to the already compound situation of losing a parent, the stigma associated with it and the lack of social support (Murray & Murray, 2009; Bockneck & Britner, 2009).

The trauma of witnessing their mother's arrest, and the trauma of loss, like other types of trauma can have developmental setbacks for children. Children may display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including sleep disturbances and flashbacks (Beckerman, 1998; Moreno, 2009). Studies even suggest that developmental regression is possible in children who experience trauma (Moreno, 2009).

Children can suffer further psychological symptoms associated with grief. These can range from depression, sadness, anxiety and guilt to rage and anger (Moreno, 2009; Beckerman, 1998; Posley, 2011; Murray & Murray, 2009; Bockneck, Sanderson & Britner, 2009). Moreno, 2009, and Murray and Murray, 2009, agree, that the type of relationship that a child held with their mother prior to her incarceration, will determine the types of emotions that children are more likely to display. They conclude that children will display emotions of sadness when they had a positive relationship, and angry or aggressive emotions if they had a negative or poor relationship.

These emotional states, can add to the stigma that children experience, and cause them to become further disenfranchised from their grief. As a result they can experience social difficulties and exhibit antisocial behaviors (Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012). Some studies suggest that these antisocial behaviors and lack of social support causes children to engage in deviant or criminal activities as an outlet. It is reported that children of incarcerated parents have a higher rate of criminal activity. (Gaston, 2008; Bockneck, Sanderson &

Britner, 2009; Murray & Murray, 2009; Moreno, 2009; Abraham & Linhorst, 2007).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Many grief theories in use today, revolve around the concept that people are grieving over the death of a loved one. For children in this circumstance however, their grief is for a person who is still alive. They further can experience multifaceted or compound grief at the loss of their familiar surroundings, including their home, school and friends (Gaston, 2008).

Doka's, 1989, concept of disenfranchised grief differs from these models, and is able to conceptualize the problems that these children face. These problems include their grief not being social recognized or supported, a concept supported by the stigma that is placed on them. It also addresses the fact that their mother is not deceased and that they may still have contact with her. Further their caregiver's lack of support and sharing of information creates an unsupportive and restrictive home network.

These criteria meet Meaghers, 1989, criteria for the development of disenfranchised grief, which are: 1.

Loss that is social unspeakable. 2. Loss that is socially negated as if it never occurred; and 3. Absence of social support (p. 315).

Summary

Loss of a parent by any means is complicated and the results can be layers of grief. Social support help to facilitate grief work in children. Grief work allows children to accept their reality, both cognitively and emotionally. Doka's concept of Disenfranchised grief provides a context in which this form of grief can be examined.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter will examine the methodology that was used to conduct this study. This study aimed to explore provider awareness as to the grieving state of children of incarcerated parents, and their needs and available resources. The method used was a quantitative survey of practitioners and service providers located near the San Bernardino County of California.

Study Design

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of providers, as to the grieving state of children of incarcerated parents, and their needs and available resources. The method used to conduct this study was, an anonymous survey. Participants were recruited by, convenience sampling, and included providers located in the San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles, San Diego, Ventura and Orange Counties of Southern California. The rationale for this type of sampling was done to try and encompass as many different

types of providers within the area, including those that may be at small agencies or churches.

Surveys were provided by two means. The first method was to send notices via email and fliers that a survey, pertaining to children of incarcerated parents, was available as an internet-based survey located on a survey database. Fliers were given to multiple agencies and churches that serve children as well as adults. Emails were also circulated with a link for accessing the web-based survey.

Limitations for this type of survey are that providers must take time out of their personal schedule to access the survey and take it. The study design may also limit the number of providers to those with internet access. The anonymity that the web based survey allows will provide for more provider feedback as they will not feel obligated to advocate for an agency in which they work.

The second method used was to have paper surveys available, with return envelopes attached. Also placed in agencies where the fliers were delivered. The purpose of this method was to try to capture providers that may not have internet access.

These surveys will seek to measure the following questions:

- Do practitioners feel that children of incarcerated mothers suffer from grief?
- Do practitioners feel that children of incarcerated mothers have adequate support systems and resources in place?
- Do practitioners feel that the needs of children with incarcerated mothers are any different from children who have been displaced from their primary caregiver, such as to a group home or foster placement?
- Do existing services for children of incarcerated parents primarily come from, county agencies and their contractors, or from community based providers

Sampling

The data collected was from a web based survey and included service providers at the county (30.8%), state(5.8%), private (1.9%), non-profit (59.6%), and municipal agencies (1.9%). The services that were provided included formal case management, clinical services, faith based services, support groups,

educational services, financial assistance, medical care, housing and food services. The Sample included 6 males, females ranging in age from 21 years to over 60 years old. The ethnic makeup of the sampled population included a reported 16 Caucasian, 10 African American, and 12 Hispanic/Latino. The average education level of the sample was graduate level education or degree and included service providers who held the titles of, executive director, supervisor, program manager, and clinician/therapist.

The selection criteria for this sample excluded anyone who did not provide services for children with incarcerated parents, or their caregivers. This was done in an attempt to reduce data skew, with the views of those who did not work with the intended population. While their knowledge of the population is important, this study aimed to accurately identify the knowledge possessed by those who do work within the population.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data were collected by use of a created survey questionnaire (see appendix A). The data that were collected consisted of the demographic information,

including gender, ethnicity, professional title, primary population served, location of services provided, type of organization services are provided under, whether or not their agency provides faith based services, their awareness of resources for families of incarcerated parents and if they provide services to children with incarcerated parents or their caregivers. All of these variables are measured and analyzed at the nominal level. The remaining demographic information is measured at the ordinal level, and includes age, number of years as a practitioner, and level of education. These demographic questions comprise the independent variables.

The dependent variables were all measured at the ordinal level, on a seven-point likert-type scale, and are comprised of 25 questions. These questions assess the participant's knowledge of the population, awareness as to the grief state of child, beliefs as to the importance or appropriateness of child grief reactions, and the participant's belief as to the populations needs in comparison of other groups. The other groups for comparison are, children in foster care, and children without any involvement in the foster care system, and whose parents are not incarcerated.

The instrument used was created in a trial process to test for its validity and reliability. The identified weaknesses of the instrument are that it was not made off of an existing scale or measure of grief. The strength of the instrument is that it is knowledge based on previous literature.

Procedures

Data were collected and stored on a web based survey database; the database was downloaded for analysis, and analyzed using SPSS software. Participation was solicited via email-circulation within professional and personal servers, and fliers, posted in the lobbies of over two dozen agencies that provided services to both adults and children.

Paper surveys that were left in the lobby were mailed to a P.O. Box address and the envelopes in which they came were shredded to eliminate the origin of the mailing.

Protection of Human Subjects

As a measure of confidentiality this survey did not record personally identifiable information. The survey did however ask if the provider worked for a county or

state agency, a contract of either entity; or if they worked for a private or non-profit agency. It also asked if the agency provided faith based services. The survey further asked if the respondent was male or female and as an option their race/ethnicity.

Paper surveys also included an informed consent and a debriefing statement attached (see appendices b and c). The use of the informed consent and debriefing statement was to gain consent for participation, inform participants as to the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the survey, their ability to withdraw, prior to submitting their responses, and how to access the published results, after the study is complete.

Data Analysis

The sample size of this study is n=52. The data collected was analyzed in a quantitative manner, and included an examination of causal correlations, of the nominal and ordinal variables. Univariate and bivariate analysis were also drawn.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the methodology utilized in conducting this study, including an in depth analysis of the independent and dependent variables, sampling demographics and study design. The results of this analysis are discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This section reports the analyses of the data collected for this study. This study sought to assess provider awareness as to needs and available resources and the grief and loss issues of children of incarcerated parents. It also sought to determine what types of organizations provided the majority of services to this population. Quantitative data analysis was used and included, measures of central tendency, independent t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Presentation of the Findings

Univariate Analysis

Table 1 displays univariate statistics for gender, age, and ethnicity. The total sample size is 52. The majority of respondents were female (90.4% female versus 9.6% male). The highest age range of respondents (26.9%) was between 40-49 years old, followed by 30-39 year olds (23.1%), 21-29 year olds (21.2%) and 50-59 year olds (21.2%), the 60 and older respondents made up (7.7%)

Table 1

Respondent Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	5	9.6%
Female	47	90.4%
Age (in years)		
21-29	11	21.2%
30-39	12	23.1%
40-49	14	26.9%
50-59	11	21.2%
60+	4	7.7%
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	17	37.0%
African American/Black	12	26.1%
Hispanic/Latino	17	37.0%
Services to		
Yes	45	88.2%
No	6	11.8%
Work type		
Mental health	26	51.0%
Non-mental health	25	49.0%
Discipline		
MSW/LCSW	10	37.0%
Non-social work practitioner (LMFT, PSY, Counseling)	10	37.0%
Non-practitioner	7	25.9%
Type of organization		
County	16	34.0%
Non-profit	31	66.0%

Table 1

Respondent Demographics (con't).

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Faith based services offered		
Yes	9	17.3%
No	43	82.7%
Years of practice		
0-5 years	16	32.7%
6-10 years	15	30.6%
11-15 years	4	8.2%
16+ years	14	28.6%
Level of Education		
Up to 4 years	20	38.5%
Graduate education/degree	32	61.5%

of the sample. Both Caucasians (37.0%) and Hispanic/Latinos (37.0%) represented an equal number of reported responses while Slightly less than one-third (26.1) of the reported ethnicities identified as African American.

Table 1 also shows the number of respondents who reported working in the mental health field, what discipline they identify as, type of organization they worked with, and if their agency provided faith based services. Just under 90% of respondents (88.2%) answered yes to working with children of incarcerated parents.

Slightly more than half of all respondents (51.0%) work in the mental health field.

Of the reported disciplines, Social workers, MSW/LCSW comprise 37% of respondents which is equal to non-Social Work practitioners (LMFT, psychologists or counselors).

Non practitioners made up 25.9% of respondents.

A majority of respondents (66.0%) reported working in a non-profit agency and 34.0% reported working for a county agency. A majority of these agencies (82.7%) did not provide faith based services, compared to 17.3% that did.

Table 1 also shows the respondents amount of experience they had practicing in their field. About one-third of respondent had 0-5 years of experience (32.7%), followed by 6-10 years (30.6%), then people with 16 or more years of experience (28.6%); the least amount of respondents that reported 11-15 years of experience (8.2%). A majority of respondents reported have a graduate education or degree (61.5%), the remaining respondents reported having 4 years or less of education experience (38.5%).

Bivariate Analysis

In order to develop the variable for this study, this researcher first collapsed each of 17, seven-point Likert-type variables into dichotomous variables (correct vs. incorrect). Because the "I don't know" responses were not "correct," these were collapsed into the "incorrect" recoded answer option. These were then summed to generate this study's ratio dependent variable (see Table 2).

The variable scale sought to measure respondent's awareness of needs, and grief and loss issues of children of incarcerated parents. Table 2 shows that a majority of respondents were able to correctly identify 15 of the 17 concepts being measured. Only 34% of respondents correctly identified disturbances in eating patterns as an appropriate grief response and 45.7% of respondents stated that social avoidance was an appropriate response for a child to have in response to their parent being incarcerated.

The central tendency for respondent's awareness of needs, and the grief and loss issues of children of incarcerated parents is ($M = 12.18$, $SD = 1.63$).

Table 2

Frequencies of Correct-Incorrect Variables for Dependent Variable Scale

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Significant increase in number of children with incarcerated parents		
Incorrect	12	25.5%
Correct	35	74.5%
Children react differently to incarcerated mothers versus fathers	14	29.8%
Incorrect	33	70.2%
Correct		
More behavioral problems than children with non-incarcerated parent		
Incorrect	13	27.7%
Correct	34	72.3%
Grief is acceptable		
Incorrect	2	4.3%
Correct	44	95.7%
More academic problems than children with non-incarcerated parent		
Incorrect	9	19.6%
Correct	37	80.4%
Loss experienced		
Incorrect	0	0.0%
Correct	45	100.0%
Loss Similar to foster children		
Incorrect	7	15.6%
Correct	38	84.4%

Table 2

Frequencies of Correct-Incorrect Variables for Dependent Variable Scale(con't).

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Children with incarcerated mothers suffer grief	1	2.2%
Incorrect	44	97.8%
Correct		
Anger is appropriate		
Incorrect	0	0.0%
Correct	45	100.0%
Deviance compared to children with non-incarcerated mother	11	24.4%
Incorrect	34	75.6%
Correct		
Children should not visit mom		
Incorrect	6	13.0%
Correct	40	87.0%
Depression is appropriate		
Incorrect	1	2.2%
Correct	44	97.8%
Children should cut ties with incarcerated mother	0	0.0%
Incorrect	46	100.0%
Correct		
Important to visit mom		
Incorrect	6	13.0%
Correct	40	87.0%
Eating disturbance is acceptable	30	65.2%
Incorrect	16	34.8%
Correct		

Table 2

Frequencies of Correct-Incorrect Variables for Dependent Variable Scale(con't).

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Social avoidance is acceptable		
Incorrect	25	54.3%
Correct	21	45.7%
Sadness is acceptable		
Incorrect	5	11.1%
Correct	40	88.9%

Table 3 displays t-test results for this variable scale. Statistically significant differences were found among respondents who reported working with children of incarcerated parents ($M = 12.38$, $SD = 1.58$) over those who did not ($M = 10.50$, $SD = 1.29$), $t(41) = 2.29$, $p = .027$.

Significant differences were also found among respondents who reported being aware of resources for this population ($M = 12.81$, $SD = 1.04$) over those who did not ($M = 11.82$, $SD = 1.80$), $t(41.96) = 2.304$, $p = 0.026$. However the assumption of equal variance was violated, voiding the result.

Table 3

Analyses for Respondent's Awareness of Needs and the Grief and Loss Issues of Children of Incarcerated Parents by Gender, Work Type, Faith Based Services Provided, Services to and Awareness of Resources

Demographic	N	M	SD	t	p
Gender					
Male	4	12.25	1.70	-.08	.931
Female	40	12.17	1.64		
Work type					
Mental health	23	12.47	1.53	1.27	.211
Non-mental health	21	11.85	1.71		
Faith based services offered					
Yes	8	12.00	1.77	-.34	.732
No	36	12.22	1.62		
Services to					
Yes	39	12.38	1.58	2.29	.027*
No	4	10.50	1.29		
Awareness of resources					
Yes	16	12.81	1.04	2.30	.026*
no	28	11.82	1.80		

Note. *p < 0.05

Table 4 shows the ANOVA results of the variable scale by age, ethnicity, years of practice, level of education and discipline. There is a difference in respondent awareness of needs and the grief and loss

issues of children of incarcerated parents and ethnicity $F(2, 35) = 7.52, p = 0.002$. Individualized pairwise comparison showed there were differences between Caucasian ($M = 13.00, SD = 1.21$) and African American ($M = 10.7, SD = 1.94$) respondents, but not Hispanic/Latino ($M = 12.16, SD = 1.33$). Differences between African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos approached, but did not obtain significance.

Table 4

Analyses for Respondent's Awareness of Needs and the Grief and Loss Issues of Children of Incarcerated Parents by Age, Ethnicity, Years of Practice, Level of Education and Discipline

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Age				
Between groups	20.67	4	5.16	2.14
Within groups	93.87	39	2.40	
Ethnicity				
Between groups	32.57	2	16.28	7.52
Within groups	75.76	35	2.16	

Table 4

Analyses for Respondent's Awareness of Needs and the Grief and Loss Issues of Children of Incarcerated Parents by Age, Ethnicity, Years of Practice, Level of Education and Discipline (con't).

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Years of practice				
Between groups	19.26	3	6.42	2.83
Within groups	83.85	37	2.26	
Level of education				
Between groups	3.42	1	3.42	1.29
Within groups	111.11	42	2.64	
Discipline				
Between groups	4.27	2	2.13	.67
Within groups	63.55	20	3.17	

*p<.05

Summary

This section discussed the analyses of the data collected for this study. Quantitative data analyses were used to compute if statistically significant differences existed between provider awareness as to needs and available resources and the grief and loss issues of

children of incarcerated parents. This study also sought to determine what types of organizations provided the majority of services to this population. Quantitative data analyses used included, measures of central tendency, independent t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore provider awareness and perception of service needs, and of the grief and loss issues that children with incarcerated parents face. An exploratory study was conducted, using a quantitative survey of practitioners and service providers located near the San Bernardino County of California. This section will discuss the findings reported in the univariate and bivivariate data analyses, in the context of the research questions, including limitations and recommendations for social work practice, policy and research.

Discussion

Doka's concept of disenfranchised grief seemed to fit well with the literature, that pertained to children of incarcerated parents not receiving adequate support and recognition for their loss. Their loss was compounded by the stigma and socio-emotional changes that occurred as a result, and placed them in the category of being "at risk." This study found that not only do a majority of

providers recognize that these children are suffering from loss, but they were able to recognize a majority of factors associated with the phenomenology of incarceration as it pertained to the mother-child relationship. In this context, the concept of disenfranchised grief is not supported.

The factors that respondents were able to identify, include the fact that there was a significant increase in the amount of children with incarcerated parents and the idea that the incarceration of a mother has a greater impact on a child than the impact of a father's incarceration. Respondents also identified a number of emotional and behavioral effects including an increase in deviant behavior, academic problems and depression. These findings are consistent with previous reported literature as to the effects of parental incarceration.

Depression was identified as an appropriate feeling or state for a child to have in response to parental incarceration, however clinically diagnosable symptoms of a major depressive episode, eating disturbances and isolation or diminished interests in activities, were reported to be inappropriate.

It is also important to note that a majority of people reported that maintaining ties with an incarcerated mother is important, including visitation. While respondents were able to correctly identify some factors associated with this population, they also reported a lack of available resources for them, despite their needs being similar to those who have been removed from their primary caregiver e.g. foster children.

Services that are provided to this population come mainly from non-profit agencies that offer no faith based services and only slightly more than half of them being a mental health organization. This gap in services from the faith based, community and county agencies could represent a lack of knowledge or training at these levels as to the needs or existence of this population, this is further supported by the "don't know" responses that were recoded into incorrect answers.

With the exception of ethnicity, there were no significant differences in provider awareness as to the concepts discussed above: age, discipline, agency, years of experience etc. did not play a role in the amount of knowledge a provider had regarding the children that they worked with. This indicates that the providers who did

work with that population were well aware as to the needs of the population.

Limitations

Limitation of this study include a small sample size (n = 52), which can be attributed, in part, to the distribution method and availability of the survey as predominately web based. While a number of agencies had fliers and surveys hand delivered to their office respondent participation was low. Fliers and surveys were not made available in any other language than English and San Bernardino County and surrounding areas had a diverse population with English not always the primary language spoken.

Additionally the questions themselves did not come from empirically based measures of grief; rather they were pulled as the researchers noted themes among previous studies. The survey also did not make clear, on the survey, the definition of incarceration that was being used for the thesis project.

The survey design also did not utilize a proper Likert scale, due to the inclusion of "don't know" as a

category, limiting the analyses and adding potential for skewed results.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

There are numerous micro and macro practice opportunities for social workers, related to this population. Considering the lack of faith based, community and county agencies being aware of the needs of the growing population, and being underrepresented in sampling, future social work practice would do well in education and training service providers and practitioners about the needs of this population. Social worker need to empower communities to create resources for this population and help to put the needs of families of the incarcerated as a front line topic among mental health, criminal justice and youth related collaborations and programs.

Advocating for children with incarcerated parents, particularly those considered "at risk" having access to similar types of programs that foster children have would allow adolescents the opportunity to gain skills and resources necessary for independent and successful futures. Changes in policies regarding child visitation

in prisons and jails including availability of transportation and location of inmate housing would benefit this population.

Finally additional research in this area could measure outcomes of training efficiency and implementation of knowledge and interventions that address the behavioral, educational and emotional issues of this population from a grief and loss standpoint. A needs assessment of caregivers will also allow the idea of disenfranchised grief from their perspective to be fully explored.

Conclusions

This section discussed the findings of the quantitative data analyses as it pertained to the research questions. This study concludes that Doka's concept of disenfranchised grief does not apply to this study. This is due to the fact that service providers are aware of the grief and loss issues related to the incarceration of a mother, and that the loss experienced is similar to those removed from their primary caregiver, such as those in a group home or foster placement. Further this study identified that there are inadequate

resources for this population and the ones that do exist come from non-profit mental health agencies. Future research regarding this population could explore caregiver perceptions of disenfranchised grief as well create and measure training outcomes.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Questionnaire

A study examining the perceptions of providers in relation to children with incarcerated parents

Section 1 Demographics

1. Your Age _____ 2. Gender _____ 3. Ethnicity _____
4. How long have you been a practitioner _____
5. What is your title/function _____
6. What is your education level?
 - a. Did not complete high school
 - b. High school diploma or equivalent
 - c. Some College
 - Other: _____
 - d. 2 year degree or equivalent
 - e. 4 year degree or equivalent
 - f. Master or Doctoral degree
 - Degree earned: _____
7. What age group do you primarily serve?
 - a. children 0-6
 - b. children 7-17
 - c. young adult's 18-24
 - d. adults aged 25-50
 - e. older adults aged 51-99
8. In what area of practice do you primarily work?
 - a. mental health
 - b. education
 - c. medical
 - d. drug and alcohol
 - e. gerontology
 - f. faith based
 - g. social services
 - h. other: _____
9. What city are you located in _____
10. What type of organization do you work for?

County	State	Federal	Private	Non-Profit
Other: _____				
11. Does your agency provide faith based services?
YES NO
12. Do you provide services to children with incarcerated parents?
YES NO
13. Are you aware of any resources or services offered directly for children of incarcerated parents or their caregivers?
YES NO
If so please list :

Section 2

For the Following Section Please Rate How Strongly you Agree or Disagree with the Following Statements

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. There has been a significant increase in the number of children with incarcerated parents over the last decade.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. There are sufficient resources and services for children of incarcerated parents and their caregivers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Children react differently to their mother being incarcerated as opposed to their dad being incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Children with incarcerated mothers exhibit more behavior problems than children whose parents are not in jail or prison.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Children with incarcerated mothers exhibit more behavior problems than those in the foster care system (living in foster care or group home settings).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The needs of children and their caregivers do not differ from the needs of children in the foster care system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Grief is an appropriate emotion or state for children to have in response to the incarceration of their mother.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Children with incarcerated mothers exhibit more difficulties in academic performance than children without a parent in jail or prison.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Designed by Julia Soto

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. Children with incarcerated mothers exhibit more difficulties in academic performance than children who are in the foster care system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Children who are separated from their mothers due to incarceration experience a significant amount of loss.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Children with incarcerated mothers experience loss in a similar way as those within the foster care system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Children of incarcerated parents suffer the effects of grief.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Anger and displays of anger is an appropriate emotion or state for children to have in response to their mother's incarceration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Children of incarcerated mothers are more likely to become involved in deviant or criminal activity, than children whose parents are not incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Children should not visit their mother while she is incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Children of incarcerated mothers are more likely to become involved in deviant or criminal activity than children who are in the foster care system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Depression is an appropriate feeling or state for children to have in response to their mothers incarceration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Designed by Julia Soto

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Don't Know	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. Children of incarcerated mothers should learn to cut ties with their mother and move on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. It is important for children to visit their mother while she is incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Not eating or over eating is an acceptable way for children to react in response to their mother being incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Avoiding social situations and withdrawing from friends or family is an acceptable way for children to react in response to their mother being incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Sadness, crying and loneliness are acceptable ways for a child to react in response to their mother being incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Children should not be exhibiting signs of grief for more than 3 months after their mother is incarcerated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. What do you consider an effect of grief? Please list as many as you can.

25. What resources or services do you feel would benefit this population?

Comments or Feedback

Thank You for Your Participation

Designed by Julia Soto

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate recognition of loss in children of incarcerated parents. This study is being conducted by Julia Soto, under the supervision of Dr. Herb Shon, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: To assess provider perceptions as to the grief state, needs and resources available to children of incarcerated parents.

DESCRIPTION: If you take part in this study you will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire that asks your opinions about children of incarcerated parents.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary; you may discontinue participation at any time prior to submission, and you may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: This is an anonymous study. Please do not include your name or contact information anywhere on this questionnaire. The envelopes in which you submit your questionnaire in will be shredded to protect the original mailing location. The data collected from this questionnaire will only be seen by researchers, the results will be conveyed to others in group form only.

DURATION: Filling out a questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to taking part in the study and no personal benefits involved.

BENEFITS: Your opinion will help social workers and legislators better understand the needs of children with incarcerated parents.

CONTACT: If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you can contact Dr. Shon at (909)537-5532

RESULTS: The results will be made available after June 2013 at the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino.

By marking below, you agree that you have been fully informed about this questionnaire and are volunteering to take part

_____ Date: _____
Place a check mark here

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

**Study of Recognizing Loss in Children of Incarcerated Parents
Debriefing Statement**

Thank you for completing this study, conducted by Julia Soto, an MSW student at the California State University, San Bernardino. This study you have just completed was designed to assess provider recognition of loss in children with incarcerated parents. Your participation is appreciated. I ask that you please do not discuss the contents of the questionnaire with others. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me or **Dr. Herb Shon**, professor in the school of Social Work, at the California State University, San Bernardino, at **(909)537-5532**. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Shon at 909-537-5532, at the end of the Spring Quarter of 2013.

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