

5-2023

SERVICES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES FOSTER YOUTH VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: THE SOCIAL WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE

Maria Marquez

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd>



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Marquez, Maria, "SERVICES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES FOSTER YOUTH VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: THE SOCIAL WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE" (2023). *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. 1616.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1616>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

SERVICES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES FOSTER YOUTH
VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:
THE SOCIAL WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE

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
Maria Marquez
May 2023

SERVICES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES FOSTER YOUTH
VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:
THE SOCIAL WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE

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

by
Maria Marquez
May 2023
Approved by:

Dr. Teresa Morris, Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Yawen Li, Research Coordinator

© 2023 Maria Marquez

ABSTRACT

This study focused on child welfare workers and practitioners' perceptions of Native American foster youth sex trafficked victim clients' most pressing needs. The research also sought to understand the perspectives of social workers and practitioners on services for the victimized youth. The study was conducted in a large urban county in Southern California, with social workers and practitioners that work with American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) foster youth in child protective services, clinical settings, and a tribal entity. The study adopted a post-positivism paradigm. The data was collected through interviews of individual social workers and practitioners servicing AI/AN youth in the foster system with prior experience and knowledge of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) victimized foster youth. The results reflect the intertwining of culture and trauma among Native American CSEC foster youth victims. The study highlights the importance of ongoing psychoeducation and training among all service providers, Native communities, organizations, and the court system. Experiences and complete understanding of their unique cultures, history, and the social issue of CSEC victimization among Native youth impact their most pressing needs. The needs identified were sensitivity to culture, which entails paying attention to their past experiences, historical traumas, and the importance of regaining their traditions, and human rights. Mentorship that includes a peer mentor, family, or someone with similar experiences whom the victimized youth can identify. Engagement through building rapport by conversing with the victimized youth at

their level and meeting them where they are. Mental health and substance use services, to support co-occurring disorders in victimized youth which is prevalent among this population. Lastly, youth-focused and readiness, which is respecting the youth's willingness to express and accept help. Many times, having to be patient, flexible, and using the harm reduction model. The study also identifies the delivery methods practitioners identified as most successful with their Native American CSEC foster youth victims. Those service delivery methods included different services/linkage, like agencies that are well equipped and provide case management, and traditional methods. The importance of connection in CSEC, Native American services that are more holistic and spiritual forms of healing. Then collaboration, being vital among all service providers to successfully reach the victimized youth's identified goal. As a result of this study, practitioners, social workers, and stakeholders will better understand the needs that AI/NA foster youth sex trafficked victims may have on a micro-level. It can also help practitioners choose programs that meet their defined needs, resulting in empathy and a more substantial commitment to help them recover, promoting partnerships among organizations in delivering services beyond foster care, developing ongoing supportive services to victims of sex trafficking, and ultimately reducing revictimization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER ONE: ASSESSMENT	1
Introduction	1
Research Focus.....	1
Paradigm and Rationale for Chosen Paradigm.....	2
Literature Review	3
Sexual Exploitation of Children	4
Disparities and Prevalence Among Foster Youth and American Indian/Alaska Natives	4
Contributing Factors.....	6
Impacts on Foster American Indian/Alaska Native Youth	9
Current Interventions	10
Prevention Strategies.....	11
Conclusion	13
Theoretical Orientation.....	13
Potential Contribution of the Study to Micro and/or Macro Social Work Practice.....	14
Summary	15
CHAPTER TWO: ENGAGEMENT.....	16
Introduction	16
Study Site	16
Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers at Research Site	18

Self-Preparation.....	18
Diversity Issues.....	19
Ethical Issues.....	19
Political Issues	20
The Role of Technology.....	20
Summary	21
CHAPTER THREE: IMPLEMENTATION	22
Introduction	22
Study Participants.....	22
Selection of Participants	23
Data Gathering	24
Phases of Data Collection.....	24
Data Recording.....	25
Data Analysis.....	26
Summary	26
CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION.....	27
Introduction	27
Open Codes.....	27
Trauma.....	27
Transgenerational Trauma	28
Genocide.....	29
Social Justice	30
Need for Psychoeducation	31
Sensitivity to Culture	33

Mentorship	34
Engagement.....	36
Mental Health	37
Substance Use.....	38
Youth Focused and Readiness	38
Linkage to Different Services	39
Importance of Connection in Area.....	40
Collaboration.....	41
Axial Coding.....	42
Understanding.....	42
Experiences	43
Needed Services.....	44
Method of Service Delivery	45
Selective Coding.....	46
Implications of Findings for Micro and Macro Practice.....	48
Summary	48
CHAPTER FIVE: TERMINATION AND FOLLOW-UP	50
Introduction	50
Termination of Study.....	50
Communication of Findings to Study Site and Study Participants	50
Ongoing Relationship with Study Participants	51
Dissemination Plan	52
Summary	53
APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL	54

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT	56
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	59
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	61
APPENDIX E: IRB APPROVAL.....	63
REFERENCES.....	66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Themes Related to the Needs and Services for Native American CSEC Foster Youth Victims	47
---	----

CHAPTER ONE

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This first chapter begins with information and identification of the focus of the research study. This is followed by identifying the research paradigm that was used in this study and why the chosen paradigm best fits this study. Then the literature review is followed by the theoretical orientation developed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the potential micro and macro practice contributions of the study and a summary of the chapter.

Research Focus

Sex trafficking is a worldwide pandemic that poses a significant risk to foster youth. Prostitution, sex tourism, pornography, early marriage, performance in sexual venues, and online or electronic dissemination of children engaging in sexual practices are all examples of sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation (OJJDP, 2014). Sex trafficking is classified as any commercial sex act performed on an individual under the age of 18, regardless of whether there is any coercion involved (OJJDP, 2014). There was limited data on victims of sex trafficked youth. However, the Office of Victims of Crime reports services provided to alleged and proven victims of human trafficking. Clients of OVC's human trafficking sponsors were typically victims of sex trafficking (64%) and labor trafficking (26%), respectively, between July 2015 and June 2020. (23

percent). If taken into account, that sex and labor trafficking victims are listed as a separate group and make up 6% of the clients serviced, these figures are greater (OVC, 2021). Foster youth who are American Indians or Alaska Natives are among the most vulnerable (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011). When comparing their percentages in foster care and total child populations, AIAN children are overrepresented in foster care nationwide. The AI/AN account for a total of 3% child population and 2% of children in foster care (Him, 2022). Sexually exploited American Indian/Alaska Native youth have limited access to culturally relevant services to treat and heal their traumas. To provide the best treatment to exploited AI/AN foster youth, it is critical to assess their needs (Oxendine, 2019).

This research study focused on the services American Indian/Alaska Native foster youth sex trafficked victims need from social workers' and practitioners' perspectives. The study was conducted in a large urban county in Southern California. There were two main points of interest in this study. The study examined what child welfare workers and practitioners believed were their victimized clients' most pressing needs. The study also looked at the perspectives of social workers and practitioners on services that help the victim youth prepare to reintegrate into society as they prepare to emancipate.

Paradigm and Rationale for Chosen Paradigm

In this study, the chosen paradigm was post-positivism. A post-positivism paradigm focused on gathering data from a qualitative perspective. While post-positivism acknowledges the existence of an "objective reality", it contends that

the” immutable laws” and processes that govern it can never be fully understood. The role of the researcher was to control the influence on reality, remaining objective (Morris, 2014, Kindle Direct Publishing).

The data was gathered in the participant's natural environment, allowing the researcher to capture the participants' experiences in their own words. The collected data and literature review simultaneously collected allowed a complete understanding of the victim's needs by identifying and representing multiple potential experiences as they emerged naturally from the data. Workers and practitioners were able to utilize the most culturally inclusive service approach possible.

Literature Review

Sexual exploitation of children is an old and ever-growing societal problem. During colonization American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) females became the target of this type of abuse and exploitation (Cordero & Stoner, 2016). Nowadays, sexual exploitation has become a multimillion-dollar industry, making traffickers between \$100,000 to \$150,000 per child yearly (County of Los Angeles, 2020). Traffickers target vulnerable and marginalized populations such as foster youth. Additionally, the transgenerational trauma suffered by AI/AN women and children contributes to their vulnerability and factors into many living in poverty, domestic violence, depression, suicidal ideations, substance abuse, child abuse, generational prostitution, and child trafficking in Native families (Pierce & Koeppinger, 2011). This literature review examined the sexual

exploitation of children and reviewed disparities and prevalence among foster youth and AI/AN, contributing factors, impacts on the foster AI/AN youth, current interventions, and prevention strategies.

Sexual Exploitation of Children

Sexual exploitation of children, child sex trafficking, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) were used interchangeably in the literature to describe a child (anyone under the age of 18) induced to perform sexual acts by force, fraud, or coercion. The child-trafficked sex acts are usually exchanged for goods, food, shelter, money, or debt-bondage, given or received by any person (Cordero & Stoner, 2016; OJJDP, n.d., para.1). The victims do not necessarily have to be transported, be foreign nationals, or travel out of state to be considered victims (Barnert et al., 2017; Cordero & Stoner, 2016; Dalla & Kreimer, 2019; Greenbaum, 2018; OJJDP, n.d). Unfortunately, victims of sexual exploitation are difficult to identify because most of the time, the victims do not seek help due to fear, threats, a feeling of shame, the trafficker's control and power over the victim, or the victim not realizing they are being trafficked (Cordero& Stoner, 2016).

Disparities and Prevalence Among Foster Youth and American Indian/Alaska Natives

Little information is available on the prevalence of sexual exploitation of AI/AN foster youth due to the lack of victims coming forward during victimization. However, data on sexual exploitation, in general, is available. According to one

study, between 32 percent and 93 percent of sexually abused youth experienced mental, physical, or sexual abuse as children. Researchers have also found a connection between CSEC and having been sexually abused as a child (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016). In another study, Landers, et al. (2017) found that children who have adverse childhood experiences lack familial bonds and have neglected emotional needs. Therefore, the exploiters take advantage. A study completed by Basson, Rosenblatt, and Haley (2012) concluded that children who have experienced trauma tend to form deep ties with their exploiters, making it harder for them to detect their exploitation. Some children with abuse experiences, for example, may have unmet demands for familial bonds, which an exploiter could take advantage of by offering to meet those needs. Basson, Rosenblatt, and Haley (2012) revealed that 75% of sexually exploited children had previously experienced child abuse or neglect, and more than half had suffered sexual abuse before becoming victims of exploitation (Landers, et al., 2017).

Although accurate data on child victims were not readily available, there was data on rates of physical and sexual assault among Native women. In the year 2000, AI/AN women were sexually assaulted and raped at a rate of 7.7 per 1,000 women versus 1.1 for White, 1.5 for African American, and 0.6 for Hispanic women (Pierce & Koeppinger, 2011). Furthermore, a qualitative study across 22 communities in that same year showed that 90% of children involved in the sex trade were Native (Pierce & Koeppinger, 2011).

Contributing Factors

American Indian youth are easily targeted and lured in by traffickers who use threats and manipulative tactics such as promising security to orphans, runaways, and individuals exposed to child abuse, neglect, extreme poverty, substance abuse, and cultural disconnect (Cordero & Stoner, 2016). Cordero & Stoner (2016) describe Native Americans, with their multiple vulnerabilities, as coming together in a "perfect storm" for sex traffickers.

American Indian youth are made more vulnerable by increased rates of involvement with the child welfare system. Oxendine (2019) reports that the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) shows that 15.44% of the total Native American population were placed in foster care compared to the 5.9% total population of non-Native American children. In addition, the Children's Bureau Child Maltreatment 2019 report indicates that the foster care entry rate for American Indians or Alaska Natives in 2019 was 14.8 per 1,000 children, compared to 13.8 for African Americans, 8.1 Hispanics, and 7.8 per 1,000 children for Whites (Kelly, Street, and Building, 2019).

The AI/AN have also disproportionately represented among sex trafficked victims partly because of their transgenerational trauma, disconnection from culture and land, and being subject to rape, war, and genocide (Cordero and Stoner, 2016). Factors contributing to their vulnerability included the intergenerational cycle of adverse experiences, trauma, and adoption of health risk behaviors (Warn et al., 2017). Furthermore, traffickers target AI/AN as their

victims due to their physical marketability related to different ethnicities (Cordero and Stoner, 2016). AI/AN are also easily advertised online as Natives, Hawaiians, Asians, and Hispanics. (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011).

Generational trauma is a major cause of AI/AN sex trafficking. The trauma is increasingly passed on from parent to child, contributing to violence, poverty, depression, suicide, substance abuse, and child abuse (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011). Traffickers seek and target marginalized populations such as AI/AN and foster youth who may be in a desperate search of independence and survival due to their historic family dysfunction and vulnerabilities (Barnert et al., 2017; Estes & Weiner, 2001; McIntyre, 2014; Cordero & Stoner, 2016). Many of them also have poor judgment due to substance use, mental illness, or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011). Many become entrapped by the yearning to be cared for, such as homeless youth, foster care runaways, and displaced youth.

Thus, it is crucial to factor in society contributing to sex trafficking, particularly elements of society such as capitalism, government spending, and gender oppression. Such factors are taken from possible resources that could become available to these marginalized populations (Barnert et al., 2017). As AI/AN youth lose their culture, they become consumed by western customs, quickly losing their values and increasingly normalizing sex (Fanigan-Carr et al., 2018). Currently, pop culture has increasingly promoted prostitution, exotic dancing, "glorification of pimps," in rap videos, and women being sexual objects

(Finigan-Carr et al.,2018). Women are viewed as commodities while faced with exploitation at a systemic and individual level (Rozas et al., 2018). Amid the significant modernization of culture, sexual exploitation, and trafficking have become disguised (Finigan-Carr et al., 2018). Furthermore, adolescents who are naturally seeking independence may also be a contributing factor as traffickers portray the sex industry as becoming financially independent and a path to empowerment (Pierce & Koeplinger, 2011). With such popular trends, peer pressure, vulnerabilities, and transgenerational trauma, the AI/AN are at greater risk of being victimized (Barnert et al., 2017; Johnson, 2012; OJJP, 2014).

Unwillingness to disclose is another factor prevalent in the social issue of sex trafficking (Barnert et al., 2017; Estes & Weiner, 2001; McIntyre, 2014; QJDDP, 2014). Victims of sex trafficking frequently fail to report their abuse even when they engage with medical professionals during their period of exploitation, as reported by survivors of sex trafficking. They often fail to disclose due to feeling shame, fear of their trafficker, fear of law enforcement, or not realizing that they are being victimized (Barnert et al., 2017; Hounmenou & O'Grady, 2019; Johnson, 2012). Despite attempts to end the victims' criminalization through Safe Harbor Laws, many victims continue to be prosecuted and treated as criminals, which adds to the victims' fear of self-disclosure (Cordero & Stoner, 2016). There continue to be gaps in legal protection supporting the victims of sex trafficking.

Impacts on Foster American Indian/Alaska Native Youth

Research has shown that sex trafficked has gravely affected victims' development. Erik Erikson's developmental stages in childhood (industry vs. inferiority) and adolescence (identity vs. role confusion) can be negatively impacted due to their traumatization (Oxendine, 2019; Zastrow, 2019, p.321). The youth may never thrive to reach industry and identity but remain in the inferiority and role confusion stages. Examples of reaching industry through childhood to puberty are learning to complete tasks well, feeling competent, and feeling pride in what they do. In adolescence, reaching the identity stage is feeling a sense of fulfillment in activities that have a purpose and provide direction in their lives, promoting emotional stability (Oxendine, 2019).

Being in foster care has many adverse effects on children and youth, such as reactive attachment disorder when a child has been in multiple placements. Entering foster care at an early age can result in the child having many behavioral problems, having multiple foster home placements, and being diagnosed with complicated mental health and developmental issues (Oxendine, 2019). Having AI/AN background, the youth also brings transgenerational trauma, which may lead to poverty, depression, suicide ideations or attempts, and disinhibited social engagement (Johnson, 2012; Oxendine, 2019). When foster youth and AI/AN problems are associated with sex trafficking victimization, the results may be tragic. Young people who are witnessing unrestrained social interaction are overly friendly and physical with strangers. They are at serious

risk of being commercially sexually abused because they have no understanding of the dangers of leaving without hesitation with a stranger.

Along with the psychological and physical trauma experienced by sexually trafficked victims, victims are also at risk for sexually transmitted diseases, fractures, social isolation, psychological trauma, drug use, pregnancy, tuberculosis, scabies, malnutrition, exhaustion, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress (Greenbaum, 2018; Zastrow, 2019). AI/AN victims are further marginalized, ripped from their customs, institutional racism, limited resources, and continued traumatization (Johnson, 2012). Their traumatization keeps them hopeless, shameful, and powerless (Greenbaum, 2018). It also keeps them bound to their traffickers and makes them more susceptible to doing whatever their exploiters tell them to do (Ijadi-Maghsodi et al., 2016).

Current Interventions

The literature showed that current effective interventions are limited for all trafficked victims and more so limited for AI/AN sexually trafficked youth. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), established in 2000, took an approach on the 3 P's: prevention, protection, and prosecution of traffickers. However, it is unclear how essential services and funds authorized under the TVPA may be accessible to U.S.-born child victims as TVPA primarily provides support and protection to internationally trafficked victims (Johnson, 2012; Hounmenou & O'Grady, 2019). In addition, in 2010 the Office for Victims of Crime provided funding to organizations to help youth victims of sex trafficking. These

organizations offer shelter specifically for youth in New York (GEMS and Safe Horizon Streetwork), San Francisco (SAGE), and Chicago (Salvation Army/Anne's House).

Many existing youth organizations supporting this population only allowed the victims to stay up to 30 days. This limits the degree of rapport and trust-building between minor victims and shelter staff. (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011). Furthermore, since 2011, there have been no appropriations to pertinent domestic CSEC victims' programs, such as residential CSEC victims' programs. There is currently a lack of alignment between lawmakers who write the policies, such as TVPA, and administrators who implement them (Hounmenout & O'Grady, 2019). There is an evident gap in the literature on interventions available for trafficked/CSEC youth. However, the gap in culturally appropriate services for trafficked AI/AN victims is more evident.

Prevention Strategies

Strategic preventative measures must be implemented to eliminate CSEC's epidemic (Finigan-Carr et al., 2018). When working with such a unique marginalized culture as the AI/AN victims, holistic approaches must be further researched and implemented. A holistic approach must be addressed from macro to micro/individual levels. It must first be addressed as a systemic issue due to inequalities, discrimination, gender-based violence, poverty, and not just the individual and their vulnerabilities (Duger, 2020; Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011).

In dealing with AI/AN sexual victimization, the literature pointed out that funding for culturally specific services is critical, creating tribal coalitions, targeting training across the map providing culturally sensitive services, and repairing the mistrust of the centuries of discrimination towards AI/AN should be a priority. AI/AN victims mistrust law enforcement and service providers, which are essential to combat sexual trafficking (Johnson, 2012). Much can be done to start the reversal of the exploitation and vulnerabilities of AI/AN youth. Building rapport with the victims, demonstrating respect, maintaining confidentiality, and understanding the effect of transgenerational trauma and revictimization is vital (Cordero & Stoner, 2016).

In the limited studies about sex trafficking youth victims, the victims report physical assaults, being psychologically impacted, and dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder because of their victimization (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2016). They implied that long-term trauma residential healing programs would better suit successful recovery. Such programs should have immediate response resources available, including transportation, shelter, food, and clothing—followed by legal assistance resources, identification of tribal resources, and tribal coalitions. However, currently, there are no programs with the unique safety, cultural and healing components needed to address the victimization among sex-trafficked American Indians (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011). Hence, significant research among AI/AN CSEC victims is very much needed (Cordero & Stoner, 2016; Johnson, 2012).

Conclusion

Given the impacts of sexual exploitation of AI/AN and the transgenerational nature of the issue, empirical research continues to be crucial to address this societal problem. The AI/AN have lived through great oppression and have been through extensive transgenerational trauma, having been displaced and ripped apart from their physical identity and spirituality since colonialism (Oxendine, 2019). Since colonial times, AI/AN women have been subject to abuse, rape, kidnapping, and trafficking (Cordero & Stoner, 2016). To date, there continues to be a disparity in AI/AN sex trafficking. AI/AN children are disproportionately represented within the foster care system, another major factor of this targeted population by traffickers (Hounmmenou & O'Grady, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to conduct further research to provide adequate services for AI/AN foster youth who have been victimized. This study focused on understanding and promoting supportive services for AI/AN foster youth who have been victims of sex trafficking, which will address a significant gap in the literature.

Theoretical Orientation

This research study used the general systems theory as an orientation. The general systems theory views all the systems as interconnected, and the whole picture is greater than all its parts: the systems, the transaction between individuals, and their social environment (Meshelemiah & Lynch, 2019). General

systems theory allowed for an inductive interpretation of AI/AN sex-trafficked foster youth victims using a holistic lens that viewed each complex system as a collection of smaller systems. It focused on understanding the transactions/relations between individuals and their larger systems, such as peers, family, culture, and community. The researcher was also able to analyze the individual experiences of each social worker participant as well as what the data reflected in a larger picture using the general systems perspective.

Potential Contribution of the Study to Micro and/or Macro Social Work Practice

The information gathered throughout this study has the potential to contribute to social work practice on a micro and macro level. At a micro level, it would allow practitioners, social workers, and stakeholders to increase their understanding of AI/NA sex-trafficked victims' needs. It would assist the professionals in choosing services that meet the identified needs and in seeing CSEC clients as victims of a broken system, resulting in empathy and a greater desire to assist them in their recovery. In this study, the general systems theory will support practitioners in an understanding of how they can build on their transactions and interventions with the victim youth.

At the macro level, this study can better educate and prepare social workers, practitioners, and organizations in selecting services for AI/NA sex-trafficked victims. Furthermore, this study may promote partnerships among organizations in delivering services beyond foster care, developing ongoing supportive services to victims of sex trafficking, and ultimately reducing

revictimization. Partnerships may be established to provide victims and their families with community preventive and aftercare services. The organizations can be seen as a place of healing and assistance for victims by meeting their needs.

Summary

The chapter described the study's focus on services American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) foster youth sex trafficked victims need from a social workers' and practitioners' perspective. Then the chosen paradigm, post-positivist, was described. This was followed by a literature review that indicated a need for more information on CSEC youth in general and AI/AN CSEC youth. Next, the general systems theory used in the orientation of this study was described. Lastly, this chapter explained potential contributions to social work practice.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of the research study site. It is followed by the strategies used to engage and gain permission to conduct this research and how participants were contacted about the study. This is followed by a description of the researcher's self-preparation on how she initiated and carried out the study. Then, diversity, ethical, and political issues in the study are introduced. Finally, the chapter ends with the role of technology used in the engagement process of this study.

Study Site

The study site for this research was a specialized unit that serves American Indians (AI) and Alaska Natives (AN) within a large urban county in Southern California. In the county agency, social workers and practitioners investigate referrals, conduct case management, and provide intervention services to abused and neglected children and their families. The researcher also sought participation from two other practitioners outside the county agency. One participant was a previous social worker in the specialized unit identified but moved to a new entity within the County as a clinician, specifically to the Native American population. The other participant works with a Tribal entity in Southern California. All participants were experienced in case management and providing

intervention services to CSEC Native American foster youth population. In conducting daily business as practitioners and service providers, the workers and practitioners identified for this study also encountered sex-trafficked youth victims. The workers and practitioners encountered sex trafficked victims while the youth was being victimized or having survived the trafficking.

The workers and practitioners provided intervention services by linking clients to appropriate services within their client communities. The workers and practitioners also abided by Court orders and helped their youth clients overcome their challenges while remaining culturally sensitive and appropriate. The County where these practitioners and workers conducted their job is one of the most diverse areas in the country. Therefore, the workers and practitioners were of diverse cultures and ethnicities. The workers and practitioners have had extensive training and preparation to work with diverse populations as they have completed BSW or MSW programs, fieldwork training, and ongoing training.

Specialized units in the large urban County are smaller units than regional units. They have selected individuals with more extensive experience and practice in the different stages of a case and with utmost sensitivity to the importance of individuality, heritage, and cultural differences. Specialized units, such as the one servicing the AI/AN population, service clients under the age of 21, with an open case within the County that have AI or AN heritage and are eligible to be or are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. Their primary purpose has been and continues to be to keep the Native child placed with blood

or tribal family to avoid and stop the breakage of Native families. In addition, they have and continue to maintain culture and tradition in new generations by collaborating with the Tribal Nations.

Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers at Research Site

The researcher engaged the two units' supervisors and the social workers within the study site and the two other participants outside the County agency working in the clinical and tribal role within Southern California. The researcher presented the project to the supervisors, social workers, and practitioners by summarizing the proposed study. The researcher emphasized that the data collected would demonstrate the importance of the clients' services and the services that better support the specialized population they serve.

The supervisors, social workers, and practitioners were informed of how the research project would maintain confidentiality. The research would not disclose or identify clients' or participants' identities. The research focus was from a worker and practitioner's perspective. The research was based on the workers' and practitioners' expertise, experiences, and literature on services that benefit the AI/AN sex-trafficked population.

Self-Preparation

The researcher prepared for data collection by conducting an extensive literature review. The researcher also conducted mock interviews. Before interviewing the participants, the researcher practiced with family and friends to

prepare for the interviews. The researcher also reflected on their own biases and values in the reflective journal. Finally, the researcher prepared a consent form to review with the interviewees before the interviews. The confidentiality form ensured that all participants were aware that the information they were sharing was completely confidential and that they could opt-out at any time.

Diversity Issues

A diversity issue identified was that the study sample needed to be bigger with more diversity. The workers and practitioners were from different ethnicities and backgrounds. However, none of the participants were of Native heritage, like the population they serve. The researcher leveraged the interviewees' experiences and duration of service to the unique Native population, as well as their substantial training and education, to remind them of the significance of cultural sensitivity. Nevertheless, the sample included participants of different age groups, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Ethical Issues

The participants' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality was an ethical issue identified in the study. Morris (2013, n.p.) states that post-positivist research requires intensive involvement by the researcher and participants. The researcher had to conduct interviews in this study, so the participants did not remain anonymous to the researcher. Nonetheless, the researcher provided informed consent to each participant. The informed consent described how the

study would be carried out, information about the researcher, and the participants' name would remain anonymous and separate from the study's data. Pseudonyms (Participant number) would be used for the participants, and they could sign or decline participation in the study.

Political Issues

Political issues in this study included that the participants and agency they work for may be negatively impacted and viewed if the study identifies a lack of services to the population they serve. To address or prevent any political issues, the researcher kept the study site and participants anonymous and referred to the study as an agency within the large urban County in Southern California. Therefore, neither the study site nor the participants would be directly identified if the study findings negatively reflect the participants or agency.

The Role of Technology

Technology was used in the research study. The researcher used a secured password-protected laptop to email, contact, and engage participants and schedule virtual interviews through zoom. The virtual meetings with the participants were recorded upon the participant providing permission to be recorded. If the participants were reluctant to be recorded or unwilling to meet, they were informed that they could state their preference or stop the interview at any time.

Summary

The study was conducted with the social workers from a specialized unit servicing AI/AN youth in a large County in Southern California and practitioners working with a tribal entity and another in a clinical entity in Southern California. The researcher engaged the unit's supervisors, social workers, and practitioners individually to gain approval for the study. The self-preparation included a continued literature review and the researcher's continued acclimation to the study site and participants. Diversity issues included differences in cultural background between the interviewees and their clients. Ethical issues included the participants' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Political issues involved the identification of the agency where the practitioners are employed. The chapter closes with the role of technology used in the engagement part of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Chapter three covers the main components of the implementation stage in the study. It starts by discussing the study participants and the selection process. Then it reviews the data-gathering methods. Following is a discussion regarding the data collection phases, data recording, and data analysis. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion about the study termination and dissemination of findings.

Study Participants

The study participants consisted of social workers, supervisors, and practitioners serving Native American foster youth. This study did not need to sample as all workers in the population of interest were included. Nine men and women were in the study sample from different ethnic backgrounds. All the participants were English-speaking and grew up in Southern California. The sample ranged between the age of 28 to 50 years old.

This study gathered nine participants from a large urban area in Southern California. All the participants are practitioners who have worked with Native American foster youth and are familiar with CSEC. Five of the participants were females, and four of them were male. They all have worked as children's social

workers and currently work with foster youth. One of the participants is now a therapist who provides individual therapy specifically to the Native American population. Another of the participants currently works for a Tribe and their foster youth. All participants have five to 22 years of experience with child welfare and foster youth and have experienced service delivery to a victimized CSEC Native American foster youth.

Selection of Participants

This study was conducted from the post positivist perspective and the selection of participants was based on purposive sampling. Through purposive sampling we looked at participants that gave the most complete data about the focus of the study and having the characteristic need in the sample (Morris, 2014, Kindle Direct Publishing). These participants were selected through criterion sampling of practitioners with experiences with CSEC and Native American foster youth. Specifically, they were CPS social workers currently or prior to the study. Participants were selected strictly from a large urban area in Southern California who have worked with Native foster youth and are familiar with CSEC. Out of the nine participants, seven were current CPS social workers, one of them is now a therapist providing individual therapy to Native American population, and the other one is a tribal social worker serving Native foster youth. This produced detailed findings that enhanced understanding of the most pressing needs of Native Foster youth CSEC victims.

Data Gathering

Data gathering was through qualitative methods. Data for the study was gathered through interviews. Questions were developed and set before conducting individual interviews. The questions were developed based on the knowledge gained from literature reviews and the research advisor's consultations. The questions included descriptive, structural, and contrast questions to gather information from the interviewees' experiences with the population they serve. During the individual interviews, additional questions and throw-away questions were also included to assist in a change in focus and let the interview flow while checking on the consistency of responses (Morris, 2014, Kindle Direct Publishing). They were questioned about their knowledge of ICWA, CSEC, and the services their program provide to the CSEC Native youth. The interviewees were also asked about the most and least successful services, the barriers and needs of the CSEC Native youth and how the Court system is involved in the lives and services provided to the target youth (See Appendix D).

Phases of Data Collection

There was one phase of data collection. The phase involved individual interviews. The researcher individually interviewed the social workers, supervisors, and practitioners working with Native American youths using a set of prepared questions. The researcher met with the prospective participants, reviewed the study details, and secured informed consent. The researcher then conducted the interview. Starting with descriptive questions about their role in the

child welfare system and their understanding of ICWA and CSEC. Then it progressed to structured questions expanding on the topic of CSEC and ICWA and the services provided to the target population and verification questions to expand on their experiences with servicing Native American CSEC foster youth. Then the interview included contrast questions about the participants' perception of Native American CSEC foster youth victim barriers and most pressing needs. Furthermore, how the juvenile court system supports Native American CSEC foster youth victims and leaving it open to any other relevant information or experience they wanted to share with the researcher. The participants were thanked for their time and participation when completing the individual interviews. Next, the participants were asked if there were any concerns or questions. Then the participants were informed to expect a notification upon completion of the study findings. Then the researcher repeated the phase throughout the study.

Data Recording

In this study, the participants were asked for their consent to audio record during the interview. Upon the participants providing consent before their interview, the participant was recorded via zoom. None of the participants were unwilling to provide consent for zoom or audio recording. Upon completion of the interview, the interviewer's thoughts, perceptions, and visual observations regarding the interviews were documented in the research journal.

Data Analysis

The study used a bottom-up approach to analyze the qualitative data gathered, beginning with open coding. Open coding started with deriving information from the data gathered (Morris, 2014, Kindle Direct Publishing) focusing on phrases or repetitive information described during the interviews. The data gathered was broken down into classifications or categories, a process described by Dr. Morris (2014) as axial coding. Later, the researcher tested the relationships between the categories identified engaging in selective coding to obtain a theoretical or comprehensive statement. The process ended with the conditional matrix, putting the comprehensive statement in context with current knowledge of interventions and human experiences (Morris, 2014, Kindle Direct Publishing).

Summary

This chapter aimed to clarify who the study participants were and why they were selected. Also, details on the study's data gathering process, phases of data collection, data recording, and data analysis were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION

Introduction

Chapter four covers the findings of this qualitative study based on the data collected from participants' interviews. This section introduces the open codes that emerged from the transcribed interviews, which allowed the researcher to analyze the data and develop open codes. Next, the researcher analyzed the open codes, and common themes emerged through axial coding, which is presented in this chapter. Then through further analysis of the data and emerging axial codes, the researcher presents the formation of selective coding. Based on the findings, the micro and macro practice implications are also discussed in this chapter.

Open Codes

The open codes revealed the following codes throughout the study: trauma, transgenerational trauma, genocide, social justice, need for psychoeducation, sensitivity to culture, mental health, substance use, mentorship, engagement, the importance of connections in the area, linkage to different services, youth-focused, and collaboration.

Trauma

During this study's data analysis, several open codes emerged. One prevalent code in the data was Trauma, which refers to the neglect, abuse, and

emotional trauma the foster youth and sex trafficked victims have experienced, by evidence of being victimized by their family and traffickers. The level of trauma this population has experienced is a significant factor in their life and healing. Participant 3 pointed out, "Sometimes it's very difficult for a child who's been sexually abused to be ready to accept and deal with the trauma that they have to address. All these extenuating emotions that children face when addressing neglect, loss, and grief."

Participant 9 stated, "(The youth) Probably has some deep-rooted trauma issues that let her or him or them to where they are," referring to being exploited. Participant 3 stated, "It's hard because when we're dealing with all these types of behaviors, all these types of needs, it's making sure or trying to support the child in addressing any underlining needs. That hasn't been fulfilled."

Transgenerational Trauma

All foster youth experience trauma; however, the victimized Native American youth experience one more layer: transgenerational trauma. Transgenerational trauma is a significant historical trauma experienced by Native Americans and Alaska Natives through their non-exposure to Native parenting practices. Their parents didn't have those relationships with their ancestors. They were led to many of the higher levels of trauma when placed in boarding schools. Participant 5 adds, "Children were subjected to all kinds of physical, sexual, neglect, and emotional abuse. All leading to transgenerational trauma." "It could have affected their parents and their grandparents, and this could be a,

unfortunately, vicious cycle of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) where Native women have been traumatized and exploited for generations,” said Participant 1. Participant 2 said,

Yes, we can have all these amazing services one day, right, and we can have all these implementations one day, but if we don't have a better understanding of the intergenerational trauma that is prevalent within these communities, we will never really heal.

“They’re presented in a way that makes sense to them. It takes into account the historical trauma and everything they've been exposed to over decades or centuries,” said Participant 5.

Genocide

Genocide of Native American/Alaska Natives in colonial times, in which entire Native communities, families, and way of life were forcefully terminated. Participant 6 stated,

ICWA of 1978 was enacted because of Native children being compromised and being taken away from their homes and putting them in boarding schools. Just changing their culture. Transforming who they are into mainstream America. They were taking away their culture and cultural identity.

Participant 5 mentions how Native Americans “Couldn't simulate into society, but at the same time, they were cut off from their culture. Participant 4 adds,

We try to make sure that we are following ICWA laws by going over what the tribe is requesting because of the history of the culture in regard to children being removed from their homes. They have been denied using their language.

“And so, there's just been a lot of cultural genocide within those communities, so it was to stop,” said Participant 1.

Social Justice

Social justice was another code that emerged from the data interpretation. Participants communicated the social justice obligation for the Native American/Alaska Native population. Social justice is social change and equal opportunity, promoting sensitivity to and knowledge about the oppression of the vulnerable population of Native Americans and Alaska Natives. Participant 1 stated, “It was established to protect native families' rights, especially when being involved in the child welfare system, to ensure that we were respecting their culture and traditions.” Participant 5 adds,

If tribes lose their youth, the tribes will cease to exist quickly. ICWA gives tribes the right to intervene. It sets placement preferences for their Native children. It ensures tribal representatives a seat at the table. The whole active efforts component is supposed to ensure that Native children and families have access to culturally relevant services.

Need for Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation on the history, prevalence, risk factors, and common behaviors and attitudes of victimized Native American foster youth is necessary among practitioners, service providers, the court system, and upper management. There needs to be light on the issue. “We need to be more proactive rather than reactive. I think we have everything in place for something more like education to the foster youth we come across,” Participant 9.

Participant 6 stated, “Maybe having better-trained staff because these children obviously have no connection to anyone, maybe training them better to identify children that are vulnerable, just identifying the common traits. Participant 8 also mentioned,

I mean systemically, how far back do we want to go? I think there needs to be so much education for parents, for folks at the Casino, on how to keep families intact and connected. It totally grossed me out. When this presenter was talking about how native girls are, especially at risk, because they're particularly exotic and can pass for a variety of different races.

Participant 6 added, “Runaways are the most vulnerable foster youth, whether native or not, but particularly the native children that are displaced, too. If, if they're out from another state, you know, they're vulnerable.” Participant 6 also mentioned that different tribal representatives in various states said there are a lot of young Native girls that have been disappearing. Participant 6 also

stated, "There is a big movement to investigate the disappearances and the trafficking of Native children."

Participant 7 adds,

And even though there are native specific services, those services are not well trained in CSEC or had any training what is still needed in the community, and how we can still uplift the Native community, by addressing these very difficult conversations. It's very commercialized, like very media perspective of what it is, rather than actually talking to experts and actually getting the training they need so that they can understand the trauma and form training they need to service. When you work with children who are exploited, you will also have to understand that world, right? So that world comes with its own slang, and it's very specific. Media-wise, you deal with the common quotes of, like, there's a 'pimp,' which we refer to as exploiter. Then you have the 'bottom bitch', professionally referred to that person as the recruiter, the person who keeps the victimized youth in check, which is typically another minor or a very influential adult that is able to manipulate children. They also be (sic) called the 'running gate.' So typically, that's the street but altogether encompasses the life.

Participant 7 also stated, "...Since it is a very urban city, overpopulated, high poverty, high entertainment, games, just everything. Just a hotbed for this population. People come in and out making money or exchanging children for

sexual favors for various reasons.” Participant 6, like Participant 7, worked in a specialized unit that entailed raids and situations that included sex trafficking.

Participant 6 stated,

I got to experience some of the ugliness of certain situations like you know that we did like sporting events. You know they're big, sexual child, sexual trafficking opportunities because a lot of men congregate. You know our view of congregation in those hotels, and so it's big, believe it or not.

Those are things that I didn't know that, Ah, human trafficking is big during sporting events.

Sensitivity to Culture

Sensitivity to culture is vital to Native American/Alaska Natives. ICWA standards mandate practitioners and service providers to be culturally sensitive and support Native Americans by enriching their traditional forms of living and views. Therefore, being culturally informed and healing through cultural practices is crucial for Native Americans. Participant 8 stated, “Try to keep things as culturally congruent.”

Participant 7 mentioned, “Sometimes I wish we can do that, reconnecting and just help navigate that with the youth and the family. So that they do have a bigger family and more support.” Participant 8 recognizes, “We don't offer any type of specialized services to native communities, and I think that's true for CSEC as well. I just heard everybody lumped under CSEC. I haven't heard of

specific CSEC services with respect to Native children.” Participant 6 responded to the question of what has worked better for Native CSEC foster victims, stating,

Most definitely, giving children a sense of pride in their tribe and a bit of a sense of belonging. You know, a lot of children don't know much about their culture and being able to teach them that or go to maybe a talking circle.

Mentorship

Mentorship is a great way to support victimized foster youth and gain their trust, rapport, and respect. Peer mentorship is a form of demonstrating and empowering the victimized Native American youth and inspiring change. One of the questions in the study was what appeared to be most successful for CSEC Native foster youth victims. Participant 7 talked about how victimized youth need to be:

Engaged to want to talk about what they experienced and also get them willing to want to connect to services because there's a huge rapport part of that job. When you work with this population, you need multiple collaterals. You need people who used to be in the life...They need advocates to help them come to court, you know when they get subpoenaed to go against their trafficker. The advocate that's not tied to court. And that's why our local nonprofits are essential: they're not tied to court. You need a mentor. You need someone who's gonna be there for that child's ups and downs day and night.

Participant 5 also referred to this population as “Needing mentors and role models, people that have experienced that and successfully escaped that lifestyle or that type of situation.” Participant 5 adds,

Having mentors and people that empathize with them. That doesn't just mean well, but I have the lived experience to speak to, and the most valuable thing, I think, would be someone that is both Native and has a lot of experience.

Participant 8 also referred to additional mentors, per her experience with a victimized youth stating,

I think it was the family showing up for her consistently, knowing that somebody kept showing up unfailingly. I think that was. I think that was her saving grace. Her auntie would show up and pick her right up off the street. Her auntie would confront drug dealers, and you know, whatever it took. Family members that came to her rescue ended up pulling her off the street to get her to a safe place.

Participant 7 also stated,

To be honest, the family is the most essential point because if you can get the child to be like, okay, it's safe for me to go back home. My family won't judge me. My family will still accept me. My family will still help me through this service and get them back to homeostasis. Stable enough that we're not in crisis mode.

Participant 6 also added,

The biggest barrier is a connection to a responsible adult that won't exploit them and won't use them. I think that's a barrier. It's not having that connection, you know, to a family, or even a non-related extended family member.

Engagement

Engagement is truly understanding, empathizing, and strongly connecting with the victimized Native American foster youth. The youth must feel supported and have trust to be able to communicate and respond to the practitioner openly. Participant 7 reported sometimes these youths think, "Well, you're trying to cultivate me to be what you want me to be versus understanding who I am and how I got here." Participant 7 emphasized that it is not how to engage a victimized foster youth. Participant 7 suggests engagement: "Getting down to the youth and sit down on their level and having a one-on-one conversation." Participant 9 stated, "Commitment, I will say the commitment, not just from the victim, but also from the providers, and in the environment where the children are." Engagement with the youth is important at any level. Participant 8 referred to victimized youth client being fully engaged by her aunt and family. She stated, "The family showing up for her on a consistent basis." Participant 7 also pointed out the importance of engaging with the youth creatively to reduce harm:

They don't have to see them every month, they need to be like, ... hey, here's the Instagram, talk to me. How are you doing? Okay, Let's go to a McDonald's. I can get you food today. I can get you some some hospital

help. Do you need your medical attention? ... I don't have to put you in a place in time. There is no like enforcement of getting you out. Just give them the time.

Mental Health

One of the most pressing needs among the victimized foster Native American youth is mental health services due to their trauma. Participant 2 stated, "To really understand and really help the CSEC children, we have to understand their mental health difficulties. We have to understand their high rates of depression and PTSD and this association with suicidal ideation." Participant 8 shared having a client who was a minor mother being trafficked. She referred to the Native American trafficked victim as:

Suffering from and having an extensive history of sexual abuse, being gang raped and having mental health and dissociative issues. She was the dual diagnosis, periodically homeless, then diagnoses changed to bipolar with schizoaffective overlay. She had a lot of psychiatric issues, had been 5150 (placed on psychiatric hold). Getting her into treatment, and then finding her when she would run from treatment, taking her to be 5150, picking her up, trying to secure that she's safe in intensive dual diagnosis mental health treatment with substance use treatment, and we never quite made it to individual counseling, because that would have been next in line. It's just those top 2 just overshadowed her. They were

either trying to help her get sober or trying to help her stabilize her mental health.

Substance Use

Substance use is another predominant issue that victimized Native American foster youth face. In many cases is part of the youth self-medicating, as previously described by Participant 8, concerning her victimized youth client. “A lot of these youth, unfortunately, that have been trafficked and exploited are using some type of substance, so they do need some intensive substance abuse services so that they can be clean,” said Participant 1. During the interview, participant 5 shared about one of the CSEC foster youth victim clients, stating, “Before this went down and she was kept, she smoked marijuana, somewhat, but now that she's at her home, she sneaks whatever she gets her hands on. So, she took a lot of different types of drugs.” Participant 9 also added, “A lot of them are also dual diagnosis, you know. You might want to think about also drug abuse and inpatient substance abuse treatment.”

Youth Focused and Readiness

The practitioners and service providers must consider the stages of change and meet the victimized youth where they are. It is like in-time learning. A form of engaging, building trust, and getting them to change, offering them help when they are in a state of mind to contemplate change, even if it is a little at a time. Participant 7 referred to it as:

The importance of these service providers and mentors is not just the basic hours there, it's for past the business hours like up with them at night. We are up and with them when they relax and go back to the life, and they come back and forth. ... They're not a mental health provider like they're literally there to advocate and support that youth through the ups and downs that they experience. I always associate CSEC with, like, all this and domestic violence for kids because, you know, they have that circle of violence. You have to be very, very flexible. ... Little by little, you know, like you, you may not be able to take them off the streets completely, but if you can reduce how many times, they're going out there little by little. Eventually, they'll be off the streets.

Linkage to Different Services

Having access to linking victimized Native American foster youth to different services through a central organization is a more effective form of providing the necessary services to the youth. Participant 4 stated,

What I would say in regards to my experience with them just understanding that there are additional services. There are additional needs that they have, and trying to keep them safe and trying to connect them with positive people who may be able to guide them into how they can protect themselves.

Participant 9 referred to the importance of providing mental health services and added, "In case management, identification of family services, not just targeting

the children, but also targeting the family.” Participant 6 talked about the agencies his organization uses to link victimized youth to different services. He mentioned, “The culturally appropriate agencies have licensed therapists, they have talking circles for males and females, and there are mentorship programs.

Importance of Connection in Area

Referring to the commercial sexually exploited child (CSEC) victim to the expert service providers is key to providing the best services. Connection to the expert CSEC service providers can enhance the willingness and ability to get the youth to a safe place and off the streets.” Participant 7 stated those specific units that are very well skilled and trained ... specialized services ... as well as commit to making sure that these kids have clothes make sure they have shoes, you know. Sometimes we get kids coming in, and they're naked, or they're wounded, or we need transportation and a whole team. Participant 9 stated,

I think my organization being a very progressist organization, we have developed two programs, two specialized units to deal with this one that actually specializes in CSEC and one that specializes with American Indian families. If the case matches the criteria, then they go to a specialized services unit because of the fact that they also have more purpose services.

Participant 8 also states,

I know that there is a specific CSEC component to child protective services that work with children that are either being or is suspected that

they're being targeted for trafficking, or that have survived being trafficked. That includes law enforcement and social workers specifically trained to deal with victims of trafficking.

“They also have a ‘dream court,’ which is separate from the other foster youth courtrooms. The dream court is specific for CSEC youth in foster care,” stated Participant 7. Participant 5 referred to the CSEC courtroom as “It is a more connected and expert in the area. You have a hearing officer and attorneys that have more subject matter knowledge of the issues and the resources, and so forth.”

Collaboration

The open code of collaboration was prominent among what the participants believed is the best form of delivering services to the CSEC Native American foster youth. Collaborating among the different types of service providers and focusing on the relational issues among the Native children, exploited, and victimized foster youth. Participant 9 stated,

When it comes to CSEC youth, the best option will always be for us to refer out. To refer to those social workers who are specialized and can actually provide the services while we handle the ICWA component as a secondary (case manager) assignment. ... I think the multi-disciplinary team approach will be the best.

The collaboration among CPS, Tribal representative, CSEC victim’s youth organization, and sheriff department made efforts to locate the youth,” described

Participant 8, and shared her experience with her client stating, “This client was residing on the streets, everybody worked collaboratively to try and find her and get her services, and she was found.” “We also have a runaway unit that helps us significantly,” shared Participant 7. Participant 5 reported that in their experience, collaboration was done through “Regular multi-disciplinary meetings where it's myself, the CSW, and the CSEC advocate. The CSEC unit also has representatives and attorneys involved, and so it's to just kind of update on where we stand.”

Axial Coding

Four axial codes emerged from the open codes. These are understanding, experiences, needed services, and methods of service delivery.

Understanding

The first axial code, understanding, refers to the importance of having insight, knowledge, and empathy for the Native American CSEC-victimized foster youth. The axial code under this theme is the need for psychoeducation.

Providing psychoeducation on their combined experiences, barriers, and needs is a grave need. Psychoeducation is needed among the Native American people, youth, foster youth, CPS administration, the court system, policymakers, and the large array of service providers. Study participants shared that true healing requires immersing oneself fully into the issue, understanding it, and being immersed. The experiences and trauma this population has lived through must constitute compassion, empathy and compel them to aid their healing

process. There is also a crucial need to identify common traits among traffickers and trafficked victims.

A participant suggested that the court system, attorneys, and judges should be educated on the needs through a trauma-informed lens. It was also suggested additional training by experts and survivors, including psychoeducation on intersectionality, e.g., LGBTQ and two-spirit CSEC Native American foster youth. Providing psychoeducation at all levels can produce organizational change, which starts from higher up in the chain of command. Ultimately changing the culture to be more inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Experiences

Experiences is another axial code identified in this study. The open codes under this axial coding are trauma, transgenerational trauma, genocide, and social justice. Psychoeducation on these topics conveys a full account of their and their ancestors' experiences, further reflecting the intertwining of their culture and trauma. When their culture and trauma are considered, there is an extraordinary understanding of the need for this population to reconnect with their culture, healing, and need empowerment to end the cycle of victimization.

Participant 5 also brought up experiences led by the Indian Adoption Project (1958-1967), which allowed child welfare agencies to go on to Native land and take children for reasons unrelated to abuse or neglect. If they lived in poverty, it was a means to think that Native children would be better off being raised in Caucasian homes. Genocide and transgenerational trauma lead to

suffering, abuse, and unhealed trauma, and its effects are passed on through generations. Therefore, bringing insight into the importance of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, which was established to protect native families' rights, primarily when being involved in the child welfare system to ensure their culture, traditions, and human rights are respected. It is also a form of understanding the need to collaborate with sovereign nations within the United States and respect each tribe's unique customs and traditions.

Needed Services

Needed services is an axial code emerging from six open codes. The six open codes are sensitivity to culture, mentorship, engagement, mental health, substance use services, and youth-focused and readiness.

As explained in the previously identified axial code, experiences and culture is essential to Native Americans based on their past experiences, transgenerational traumas, and their fight to gain their traditions, customs, culture, and human rights. Therefore, under ICWA mandates, culturally sensitive services should be offered and provided to all Native foster youth if they prefer it.

The study participants also recognized the importance of providing culturally sensitive services to Native American foster youth and linkage to their tribes, people, and healing ways. The study indicated that mentorship is part of the most pressing needs among CSEC foster youth victims. The study participants identified the importance of mentorship for this population, whether it was a peer mentor, family, or someone with similar experiences whom the CSEC

Native foster youth victim can identify with. As part of the mentorship provided to the youth, other significant services identified as a prevalent need for this population include mental health and substance use. Study participants refer to much CSEC-victimized youth as dual diagnoses and services needed to treat their co-occurring disorders.

However, to gain the youth's willingness to express and accept help, the practitioners must engage the youth. The participants referred to engagement as conversing with the youth at their level and respecting their readiness for change. It was also suggested by several study participants that there is an embedded fear of government resources and government intervention by Native Americans, foster youth, and CSEC victims as a result of their experiences. Therefore, building rapport with this population requires patience, time, flexibility, and meeting the youth where they are and when they are ready. In most cases, rapport, willingness, cooperation, and change are more achievable using the harm reduction model.

Method of Service Delivery

Delivery of services is a paramount axial code that emerged in this study due to the population's vulnerability. This axial code includes the open codes of different services/linkage, the importance of connection in the area, and collaboration.

Linkages to the various service delivery models are crucial and should be carefully planned. It is imperative that the victimized youth feels comfortable and

engaged by the service providers to enhance their willingness to participate. The multiple issues and vulnerabilities that the victimized Native American youth have encountered must be considered and linked to the appropriate services.

Therefore, connection in the area is essential when considering proper linkage and service delivery. Agencies, specialized units, and specialized service providers with expertise in the area are equipped to understand the unique needs that Native American youth have and ICWA standards. They are also proficient in CSEC victims' experiences, needs, and treatment models that best support the victimized youth.

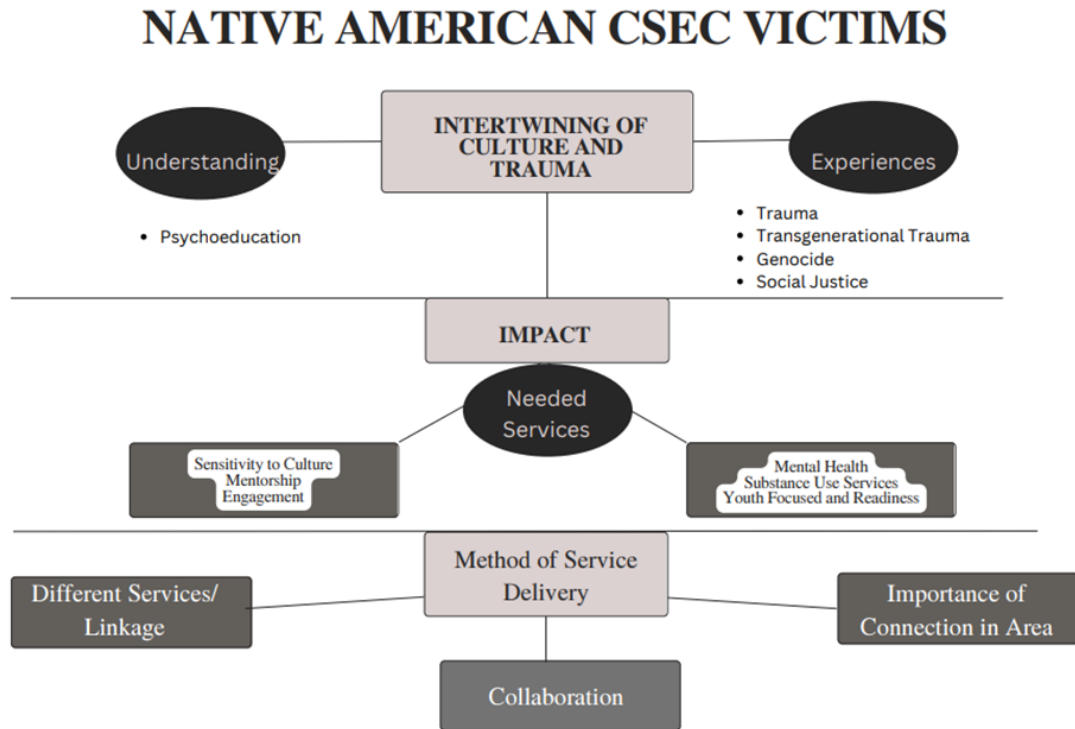
Lastly, collaboration among the experts in the area, case managers, service providers, court, and mentors is paramount when servicing Native American CSEC-victimized foster youth. A holistic approach to service delivery to this population has shown to be more successful. Multi-disciplinary teaming was described as an essential form of collaboration to engage the victimized youth better, be prepared and equipped with the necessary tools, be available, and support them when ready.

Selective Coding

Figure 1 identifies themes that emerged from the interviews in the study. These are the intertwining of culture and trauma, the needed services, and the methods of service delivery.

Figure 1

Themes Related to the Needs and Services for Native American CSEC Foster Youth Victims



Note. A theme identified was the intertwining of culture and trauma. The experiences and understanding of this population are essential to understand how they are impacted and what their most pressing needs and best services are identified by the practitioners and social workers who participated in this study. Lastly, identifying the best delivery methods is crucial to fully engage, advocate, and provide support that promotes safety and healing.

Implications of Findings for Micro and Macro Practice

This study provides implications for micro practitioners by identifying the Native American/Alaska Native CSEC foster youth victims' most pressing needs and the best form of treatment and method of delivery of services. Micro practitioners and social workers can be more culturally responsive, provide services that best fit their client's needs, and ensure that their client is also linked to a multidisciplinary team, experts in the area to provide mentorship, and ready to collaborate in the best interest of the client.

At a macro level, it is important to consider the history and the impact of the trauma caused to the Native American population and how their trauma has passed on through generations without proper healing. Creating educational and training opportunities for practitioners, service providers, and agencies can broaden the services available to this population based on their pressing needs and further deliver the services in a more efficient and effective way.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the findings of this qualitative study based on the data collected from participants' interviews. Open codes that emerged from the transcribed interviews were introduced in this section which allowed the researcher to analyze the data and develop the open codes. Axial codes further emerged from the analysis of the open codes, which the researcher assessed, and then formation of selective codes was presented. Lastly, the micro and

macro practice implications are also discussed in this chapter based on the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

TERMINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Introduction

Chapter five describes how the researcher terminated the study. It further presents how the researcher informed the participants of the study findings. This chapter discusses how a continual relationship with the research site and participants will be maintained and the advantages of maintaining a relationship. Also covered in this chapter is the dissemination plan.

Termination of Study

The study was terminated after the researcher informed the practitioners and social worker participants that it was anticipated to be finished and available after May 2023. Termination was completed with each participant when the researcher concluded their interview. The researcher let the participants know during the debriefing statement that the study would be finished and made available after May 2023.

Communication of Findings to Study Site and Study Participants

Communication of the study findings with the participants and, consequently, with the study site were made through the publication of the project at the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino. The researcher sent an email to the participants thanking them for their time and

participation and requesting to provide a short presentation of the study findings by being placed in one of their meeting agendas. In the meeting, the researcher provided the participants with the ScholarWorks link (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>), where the study can be accessed online. At the same time, the researcher informed the participants of the date the study became available. In the event, the participants were not able to access the published study, the researcher informed them she would continue to make herself available to provide them with a copy. It is beneficial for the research participants to review and recognize their contributions to micro and macro social work practice when the study is publicly available. Additionally, this study communicates the Native American/Alaska Native CSEC foster youth victims' most pressing needs and the best treatment and delivery methods. This study also indicates the importance of considering the impact of the trauma caused to the Native American population throughout history. Therefore, psychoeducation and ongoing education opportunities for all practitioners can expand appropriate, efficient, and effective services to the Native American CSEC victims.

Ongoing Relationship with Study Participants

A relationship will be maintained with the study participants and site because the researcher works with seven out of nine participants. The researcher continues working with the seven participants who work in the same organization and will remain available for the other two participants in case they have any questions regarding the study and the study findings anytime in the

future. In addition, the researcher will remain available to all the participants via email, telephone call, or in person for any questions and comments and assist in accessing the study published through the university's ScholarWorks website (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>). An ongoing relationship between the study participants and the researcher will promote future communication and discussion about the study findings, determine if they were significant, and support their practice. It would also support the building on a professional relationship and possible future collaboration. Furthermore, this study can bring more attention to the issue among organization administrators and policymakers about the pressing needs the Native American CSEC foster youth victims have and the services they need. Thus, the practitioners initiating organizational change to be more inclusive and supportive of the Native American victimized population.

Dissemination Plan

The study was published on the ScholarWorks (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>) website in May 2023. The researcher reminded the study participants of this date and how to access the published study via email. If they cannot access the study, this researcher will make herself available to the participants via email, telephonically, or in person at the researcher and participants' work site. In the event the participants are not able to access the study, the researcher will assist them in accessing the study online or will obtain and provide them with a copy of the study. The researcher

reminded the study participants that they were welcome to review the study findings and contact the researcher with any questions they had. The researcher will also apply to attending and presenting the study's findings at a conference, particularly among Native American service providers at a later date.

Summary

The final chapter of this study explained how the researcher terminated the study. It also presented how the researcher communicated the research findings to the participants. Furthermore, this chapter explained how a continual relationship with the research participants would be maintained and the advantages of maintaining a relationship. Lastly, this chapter discussed the dissemination plan.

APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Line: What do your clients need?

Subhead: You can contribute to their services with your expertise

Body Copy:

Hi,
Our team has been working on a new research study and we need your help.

The goal of this new study is to find what child welfare workers and practitioners believe their CSEC victimized clients' most pressing needs are. Furthermore, to also identify services that help the victim youth prepare to reintegrate into society and prepare to emancipate.

Sex trafficking is a worldwide pandemic that poses a significant risk to foster youth. Sex trafficking is classified as any commercial sex act performed on an individual under the age of 18, regardless of any coercion involved. Foster youth who are American Indian or Alaska native are among the most vulnerable. Sexually exploited American Indian/Alaska Native youth have limited access to culturally relevant services to treat and heal their traumas. To provide the best treatment to exploited AI/AN foster youth, it is critical to assess their needs.

Would you like to help? To see if you are eligible, please read the requirements below.

Why You Should Participate:

- You can share your experience and expertise working with this population.
- You can make a difference in a youth's life.
- You will be helping to advance service needs research.

Who Can Participate?

- Current children social workers or practitioners working with foster youth.
- Current children social workers or practitioners working with CSEC population.
- Current children social workers or practitioners working with the American Indian/Alaska Native population.
- Those able to participate in a brief interview
- If you fit these requirements and are interested in helping, please respond to this email.

Please let me know if you have any questions we could answer. Thank you for helping to improve our foster youth's life and services.

Best,

Maria Marquez
CSUSB MSW Student

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: Social Workers' Perspective on American Indian/Alaska Native CSEC Foster Youth's Needs and Services towards Reintegration and Emancipation

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate what child welfare workers and practitioners believe their victimized clients' most pressing needs are. Furthermore, to also identify services that help the victim youth prepare to reintegrate into society and prepare to emancipate. Maria Marquez is conducting this study under the supervision of Teresa Morris, Ph.D., M.S.W., B.Sc., California State University, San Bernardino. This study is fully voluntary, and if you decide not to participate, you can do so at any moment. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: Sex trafficking is a worldwide epidemic that puts foster children at risk. Any commercial sex act committed on a person under the age of 18 is classified as sex trafficking, regardless of any coercion involved. Foster children that are American Indian or Alaska native are particularly susceptible. Sexually exploited American Indian/Alaska Native youth have inadequate access to culturally appropriate options for treatment and recovery. It is vital to assess the needs of exploited AI/AN foster youth to provide the best treatment possible. This research will focus on the services that American Indian/Alaska Native foster youth sex trafficked victims require from social workers' and practitioners' perspectives.

DESCRIPTION:

The researcher will do an exhaustive literature review before the research interviews to prepare for data collection. Depending on the participant's comfort level and preference, the researcher will meet with them in person or via Zoom. The researcher will interview the participants individually. A series of questions concerning the participant's experience as a social worker or practitioner will be asked by the researcher. The participant will be questioned on their knowledge about CSEC victims and the American Indian population, as well as their experience working with the study's target demographic. The participants names will be kept private and distinct from the study's data. Participants will be given pseudonyms and will have the choice to sign or decline participation in the study. Clients will not be identified or disclosed as part of the study. The research focuses on the perspectives of workers and practitioners. The study will be based on the worker's knowledge, experience, and literature on services for the AI/AN sex-trafficked population.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is entirely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to answer any questions you do not want to. You have complete freedom to skip or refuse to answer any questions, as well as to withdraw from participation at any moment.

ANONYMOUS: I understand that my identity will be kept anonymous in any report based on the findings of this study. This will be accomplished by altering my name and concealing any aspects of my interview that could disclose my identity or the identities of others I discuss.

DURATION: Participation involves being interviewed by a researcher from California State University, San Bernardino. The interview may be in-person or via video chat (what best suits your availability and comfort level during the Covid-19 Pandemic). The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. During the interview, the researcher will also take written notes.

RISKS: Participation may be via video chat to limit the risks of Covid-19 if the participant prefers. The participant will remain anonymous, and therefore all information gathered during the interview will not have any description that may expose the participant(s). The interviews will be held with social workers and practitioners, not any identified CSEC victims. Therefore, there are no foreseeable risks for participation in the research.

BENEFITS: This research will assist practitioners in better understanding how to improve their transactions and interventions with victimized children. This study can better educate social workers, practitioners, and organizations in selecting services for AI/NA sex trafficked victims. Furthermore, this research may encourage organizations to form collaborations to provide services beyond foster care, provide continuous support services for sex trafficking victims, and eventually reduce re-victimization. Partnerships could be developed to provide prevention and aftercare assistance to victims and their families in local communities. The organizations can be seen as a place of healing and service for victims through meeting their needs.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this research, please don't hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (626)488-6773 or maria.marquez4749@coyote.csusb.edu

If you have any questions about your rights or treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Teresa Morris, Ph.D., M.S.W., [B.Sc.](mailto:TMorris@csusb.edu) at California State University San Bernardino College of Social & Behavioral Sciences (909) 537-5561 or TMorris@csusb.edu

RESULTS: Participants in the study may access the executive summary of findings through the researcher or the university scholar works website <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu> The research study will also be distributed at the School of Social Work Research Symposium at the end of the 2023 academic year.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:

Please initial box

I have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

**Social Workers' Perspective on American Indian/Alaska Native CSEC
Foster Youth's Needs and Services towards Reintegration and
Emancipation**

Debriefing Statement

This study you have just completed was designed to investigate what child welfare workers and practitioners believe their victimized clients' most pressing needs are. Furthermore, to also identify services that help the victim youth prepare to reintegrate into society and prepare to emancipate. The questions and context of the interviews will provide additional information as to what the most beneficial services to the CSEC American Indian foster youth victims from a social worker's perspectives are. We are especially interested in the expertise of social workers and practitioners working with the foster youth.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the question with other participants. If you have any questions about this research, please don't hesitate to contact Maria Marquez or Teresa Morris, Ph.D., MSW, B.Sc. at (909) 537-5561 at the end of the Spring Semester of 2023.

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pseudonym:

Job title/ Role in child welfare

1. Can you describe your role in the child welfare system?
2. What is your understanding of the Indian Child Welfare Act? If possible, please list your specific experience working in the ICWA field.
3. What is your understanding of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) or Sex Trafficking of foster youth?
4. What services does your program/role provide to CSEC American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) foster youth? Does your program provide any other specialty services to native youth that have been victims of CSEC?
5. What service for transitional age AI/AN CSEC victims appears to be most successful? Least successful?
6. What are the top service providers that your program works with?
7. What are the top 3 services that these youth request the most?
8. Do you know the percentage of CSEC native youth victims turning 18 enter the extended foster care program?
9. What are CSEC victim's foster youth's biggest barriers to reintegrating and obtaining independence?

Court questions:

1. How does CSEC Courtroom differ from others?
2. How is ICWA implemented in this Courtroom?
3. From your experience are tribes involved in the CSEC Courtroom?

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL

IRB-FY2022-178 - Initial: IRB Admin./Exempt Review Determination Letter

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>
To: 007424749@coyote.csusb.edu, tmorris@csusb.edu

Mon, Mar 7, 2022 at 3:19 PM



CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administrative/Exempt Review Determination
Status: Determined Exempt
IRB-FY2022-178

Teresa Morris Maria Marquez
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
[San Bernardino, California 92407](#)

Dear Teresa Morris Maria Marquez:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "SERVICES FOR AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES FOSTER YOUTH VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: THE SOCIAL WORKER'S PERSPECTIVE" has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risks and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants.

This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional campus approvals which may be required including access to CSUSB campus facilities and affiliate campuses. Investigators should consider the changing COVID-19 circumstances based on current CDC, California Department of Public Health, and campus guidance and submit appropriate protocol modifications to the IRB as needed. CSUSB campus and affiliate health screenings should be completed for all campus human research related activities. Human research activities conducted at off-campus sites should follow CDC, California Department of Public Health, and local guidance. See CSUSB's [COVID-19 Prevention Plan](#) for more information regarding campus requirements.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action. The Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is due for renewal. Ensure you file your protocol renewal and continuing review form through the Cayuse IRB system to keep your protocol current and active unless you have completed your study.

- **Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.**
- **Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.**
- **Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.**

- **Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.**

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2022-178 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

Nicole Dabbs, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

ND/MG

REFERENCES

- Barnert, E., Iqbal, Z., Bruce, J., Anoshiravani, A., Kolhatkar, G., & Greenbaum, J. (2017). Commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children and adolescents: A narrative review. *Academic Pediatrics, 17*(8), 825–829.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2017.07.009>
- Cordero K., & Stoner, K. (2016). Sex Trafficking in Indian Country: Victim/Survivor resource book. *Tribal Law and Policy Institute*.
https://c58ba47a-41d4-49ae-92d0-139a928e96b1.filesusr.com/ugd/428556_cba214982d6c4d33874a0a8c74eb43e4.pdf
- County of Los Angeles. (2020, January 9). *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: CSEC 101* [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_szuZ1Z-UdQ
- Dalla, R. L., Erwin, S., & Kreimer, L. M. (2019). Children of Mumbai's brothels: Investigating developmental prospects, primary relationships, and service provision. *Family Relations, 68*(1), 104–118.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12347>
- Estes, R. J., & Weiner, N. A. (2001). *The commercial sexual exploitation of children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico: Final report (of the US national study)*. University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work.
https://abolitionistmom.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Complete_CSEC_0estes-weiner.pdf

- Finigan-Carr, N. M., Johnson, M. H., Pullmann, M. D., Stewart, C. J., & Fromknecht, A. E. (2019). A traumagenic social ecological framework for understanding and intervening with sex trafficked children and youth. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 36(1), 49–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-018-0588-7>
- Greenbaum, J. (2018). Child sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. *Advances in Pediatrics*, 65(1), 55–70.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yapd.2018.04.003>
- Hounmenou, C., & O'Grady, C. (2019). A review and critique of the US responses to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 98, 188–198.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.01.005>
- Him D.A. (2022). American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children are overrepresented in foster care in states with the largest proportions of AIAN children. *ChildTrends*.<https://childtrends.org/blog/american-indian-and-alaska-native-aian-children-are-overrepresented-in-foster-care-in-states-with-the-largest-proportions-of-aian-children>
- Ijadi-Maghsoodi, R., Cook, M., Barnert, E. S., Gaboian, S., & Bath, E. (2016). Understanding and responding to the needs of commercially sexually exploited youth. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 25(1), 107–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2015.08.007>

- Johnson, A. L. (2012). A perfect storm: The US anti-trafficking regime's failure to stop the sex trafficking of American Indian women and girls. *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, 43(2), 617.
- Koepplinger, S., & Pierce, A., (2011). *New language, old problem: Sex trafficking of American Indian women and children*. Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN.
http://www.ncdsv.org/images/VAWnet_NewLanguageOldProblemSexTraffickingAmIndianWomenChildren_10-2011.pdf
- Landers, M., McGrath, K., Johnson, M. H., Armstrong, M. I., & Dollard, N. (2017). Baseline characteristics of dependent youth who have been commercially sexually exploited: Findings from a specialized treatment program. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 26(6), 692–709.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2017.1323814>
- Meshelemiah, J. C. A., & Lynch, R.E. (2019). *The cause and consequence of human trafficking: Human rights violations*. The Ohio State University Pressbook.
<https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/humantrafficking/chapter/chapter-3-theories-and-human-trafficking/>.
- McIntyre, B. L. (2014). More than just rescue: Thinking beyond exploitation to creating assessment strategies for child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. *International Social Work*, 57(1), 39–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872813505629>

Morris, T. (2014). *Practice informed research for social workers*. Kindle Direct Publishing .

The Office for Victims of Crime. (2021). An ongoing commitment to victims of human trafficking. Office for Victims of Crime.

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/human-trafficking/overview>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2014) *Commercial sexual exploitation of children sex trafficking literature*

review.<https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/litreviews/CSECSexTrafficking.pdf>

Oxendine, G. (2019). *Addressing the cultural and spiritual needs of Native American youth in foster care through wilderness therapy*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/2303837486/abstract/34C261D0159F4CCCPQ/1>

Rozas, L. W., Ostrander, J., & Feely, M. (2018). Inequalities in US child protection: The case of sex trafficked youth. *Social Sciences*, 7(8), 135.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7080135>

Thomason, T. C. (1991). Counseling Native Americans: An introduction for non-Native American counselors. *Journal of Counseling and Development: JCD*, 69(4), 321-327.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/219101908/abstract/57CBF767ACCB4EB9PQ/14>

US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, & Children's Bureau. (2019, August 22.). *The AFCARS Report* (Report No. 26). US Department of Health and Human Services.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcarsreport27.pdf>

US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2021). *Child Maltreatment 2019*. Available from

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>

Warne, D., Dulacki, K., Spurlack, M., Meath, T., Davis, M. M., Wright, B., & McConnell, K. J. (2017). Adverse childhood experiences (ACE) among American Indians in South Dakota and associations with mental health conditions, alcohol use, and smoking. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 28(4), 1559–1577.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.2017.0133>