

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

2000

Determining how stressors effect the onset of substance abuse in runaways

Christopher Parrish Rosselli

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



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#), and the [Substance Abuse and Addiction Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rosselli, Christopher Parrish, "Determining how stressors effect the onset of substance abuse in runaways" (2000). *Theses Digitization Project*. 1678.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/1678>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

DETERMINING HOW STRESSORS EFFECT THE ONSET
OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN RUNAWAYS

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
Christopher Parrish Rosselli

June 2000

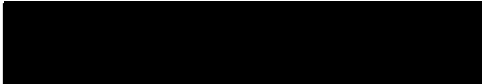
DETERMINING HOW STRESSORS EFFECT THE ONSET
OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN RUNAWAYS

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

by
Christopher Parrish Rosselli


June 2000

Approved by:


Stephen L. Petty M.S.W., L.C.S.W.,
Project Advisor Social Work

6.15.00

Date


Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Chair of
Research Sequence, Social Work

ABSTRACT

In America, it is estimated that between 500,000 and two million children run away each year. A majority of these runaways become involved with illegal substance abuse. This study questions whether children experience substance abuse prior to their running away or if their substance abuse is an attempt to cope with the new stressors created by street life. Data collection will include having 50 volunteers complete a questionnaire, with consideration of race and gender. The findings suggested that no relationship exist between runaways engaging in drug use and the amount of stress experienced at home or during the runaway.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would have been impossible to complete without the assistance, understanding and interest of several individuals. I would like to thank Steve Petty for his ideas, assistance and interest in helping me see this project through to the end. I would also like to recognize the laughs and support that my fellow students have lent me in times of need, they know who they are. Without the support and reinforcement of my parents I may have never made it to college, much less this far. To Sue Geiger, thank you for sparking an interest that ultimately became a passion. Thank you Noel and Shianne, you both have unconditionally offered inspiration, patience and love that helped keep me motivated through this long process. Finally, I must acknowledge Jackie. The contributions that you have made to my life have given me the strength, passion and motivation to continue on despite whatever obstacles may have been experienced. Thank you all, for I honestly believe that this project is as much a product of yours as it is mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	3
Implications For Social Work	11
METHODS	
Data Collection And Instruments	14
Procedures	15
RESULTS	17
DISCUSSION	19
APPENDIX A: Informed Consent	22
Questionnaire	24
Debriefing Statement	32
APPENDIX B: Questionnaire Results	33
REFERENCES	38

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Drug use as a function of panic level during runaway.....	33
Table 2. Drug use as a function of fear level during runaway.....	34
Table 3. Drug use during runaway as a function of drug use prior to runaway.....	35
Table 4. Fear level during runaway as a function of fear prior to runaway.....	36
Table 5. Panic level during runaway as a function of panic prior to runaway.....	37

INTRODUCTION

It has often been quoted that the children of our society are our nation's greatest assets. However, during any given day it is estimated that between 500,000 and two million (Schaffner, 1998; Hull, 1994; & Powers, 1990) of these children are living on the streets of America. They left home with the belief that their quality of life would improve by attempting to forge a life for themselves on the streets. However, once they reach the streets the majority of them will face a variety of stressors, some of which, they may have never experienced or developed the ability to cope with while living at home. These stressors may include, but are not limited to, learning how to provide sustenance for themselves and having to protect themselves from victimization (Crespi & Sabatelli, 1993). In order to cope with this new and often harsh environment, many runaways turn to the use of illegal substances (Baron & Hartnagel, 1998).

There has been a great deal of study regarding the fact that many homeless youths engage in chronic substance abuse (Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993; Greene & Ringwalt, 1997). Some reports indicate that as much as 71% of street youths report using three or more illegal substances (Greene & Ringwalt, 1997). However, very little attention has been focused on why chronic drug use actually began.

Large (1999) stated that children's ability to cope with stress might improve if they were provided with the

benefit of a safe home and/or school environment. Again this is another benefit of which most runaways are deprived, placing them at an even higher risk of engaging in substance abuse. If it is determined that chronic substance abuse begins primarily after running away, steps could be taken to develop and implement drug prevention programs, opposed to only intervention, in runaway shelters. These programs would be created with the intent of keeping runaways from turning to drugs as a coping mechanism once they begin to experience the stressors of living in a homeless environment. In the absence of a safe home environment the shelter would provide a temporary substitute. In addition, another benefit of prevention programs, which would help runaways to remain free from drugs, is to enhance the eventual goal of voluntary reunification.

This paper will address whether runaways used substance abuse as a prevalent coping mechanism prior to running away. Or if substance abuse was a result of having to cope with new and overwhelming stressors in an environment, where drug use is considered part of the culture and is easily accessible (Baron & Hartnagel, 1998). It was expected that drug use would increase for runaways in direct conjunction with increases in their levels of stress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature has shown that many children run away from home in an attempt to escape from a dysfunctional family environment (Coco & Courtney, 1998; Hull, 1994; & Deni, 1990). However, if, once on the streets, the child also adds substance abuse to the equation of the dysfunctional family, the chance of reunification becomes even more difficult. The substance abuse only adds to the dysfunction of the family and the child regardless of whether reunification is achieved.

Hull (1994) and Schaffner (1998) suggested that the decision to runaway is often not spontaneous and is in fact thought out and prepared for process. In preparation for their new life they may pack extra clothes, food, cash, weapons etc; and whatever other items they deem necessary for their new life (Hull, 1994). Many runaways who were interviewed displayed personal items they had brought, such as pictures of family members and loved ones (Hull, 1994). However, the provisions that are brought are often depleted quickly by personal use or by loss to other homeless youths or persons that are ready to victimize a novice (Powers, 1990). Once out of resources, the youth must either discover a way to survive, return home, or perish. If the choice is to remain on the streets the youth may begin to experience stress as a result of learning how to survive in a new environment.

Another cause of possible stress could be simply derived from changes in old routine. Once a runaway has departed from their residence they may not have the opportunity to follow their old routines or may choose not to because of fear of being caught and returned to their residence (Palenske and Launer, 1999). In attempts to avoid being caught a runaway may choose to not attend their old school and without parental consent it would prove difficult to enroll at another school. As a result, Rogers and Segal (1994) suggested that if a runaway chooses to remain on the streets it becomes difficult for many runaways to obtain a high school diploma. Once deprived of a basic education these prolonged runaways often do not possess the basic qualifications to get a job that could sustain their needs.

As a result of educational deficiencies runaways often do not possess the ability to earn a wage by legal means and often must resort to illegal means to obtain money and food. Engaging in illegal activities may help to facilitate a rise in the individual's physiological and emotional arousal, which Large (1999) suggests may manifest itself as a physical illness. The addition of illness to an already stressful situation may only help to further increase the runaway's stress level. Unger and Kipke et. al. (1998) further suggested that as a result of this continuing spectrum of increasing stress, runaways often begin using drugs in order to cope with stressful situations.

In order to obtain additional money to afford drugs runaways must again engage in some form of illegal activity. We can see how a circular pattern can begin to emerge. Thus, creating a downward spiral that may be difficult for a child to reverse without external assistance.

Research has shown that an adult moving into a new environment may experience an overwhelming amount of stress. Taking this into consideration, we can begin to contemplate how overwhelming it must be for an adolescent runaway. Upon entering a new and possibly dangerous environment, they may possess little reference of how to survive. This environment of constant stress, in which the child is simply not equipped to emotionally or cognitively cope, could cause a runaway to use drugs (Powers, 1990; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990; Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993; Baron & Hartnagel, 1998).

Stress can be created by a number of factors and runaways are obviously not the only individuals that are in danger of feeling the effects of stress. However, due to their possible lack of coping skills, they may be more prone to engage in a quick-fix coping mechanism. Drugs may provide temporarily coping (Unger, Kipke et. al., 1998).

Runaways that become involved with illegal substances not only have to cope with the problems that drug dependency brings. They must also learn to cope with the effects of their dependency in a dangerous environment with which they may not be familiar. If a runaway's drug addiction becomes chronic, they must then engage in some action in order to

receive enough money to continue to feed their addiction. This often includes engaging in activities such as prostitution, theft, or the selling of drugs (Powers, 1990; & Whitbeck & Hartnagel, 1990). These activities place them at a higher risk of becoming infected with devastating diseases such as AIDS (Rotheram-Borus & Koopman, 1991). They may be victimized by more experienced individuals. Research has shown that runaways who become involved with street violence often feel an increase in their sense of stress. The following example is illustrative of the risks that runaways face:

"At twelve years of age, this young woman ran away from her family, hundreds of miles away to Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Alternately hitching rides from truckers, she arrived at her destination, lucky to be alive. Between trips she was raped and abandoned several times. Things did not get better, as she found herself hungry and homeless in California. After days of barely surviving, she became caught up in the streets, making her living as a prostitute. Shortly thereafter, she moved to Las Vegas, where she was up for sale, into a white slavery ring" (Lewis, 1999).

In the past, American societal views towards children who ran away from home was that they were deviants that were uncontrollable and wanted to leave their homes (Coco & Courtney, 1998; Schaffner, 1998; Rohr, 1996; Schweitzer & Hier, 1994; & Powers, 1993). In fact Schweitzer and Heir

(1994) add that the literature supports a strong relation between "homelessness and behavioral and emotional disorders". The second edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (1968) diagnosed a child that ran away as an individual that was "immature and timid and [felt] rejected at home, inadequate, and friendless. They often [stole] furtively". This particular diagnosis gives the impression that the runaway youths made the choice to runaway. As a result they bear complete blame and responsibility, placing little responsibility upon the living environment that their home offered. Another body of literature addresses the teens living environment as a catalyst for runaway behavior. Coco and Courtney (1998) suggest that running away is a teen's "dramatic" way of dealing with conflictual problems that arise within the family.

In contradiction, Schaffner (1998) claims that children only run away from their homes as a last resort. That it is not the impulsive behavior of a deviant child, but instead the reaction of a child that feels they have no other choice. Powers, Eckenrode and Jalditsch (1990) offers additional support to the theory that runaways are not deviants by explaining that many children leave due to the severe abusive environments they experienced at home. Crespi and Sabatelli (1993) offer the explanation that running away is a child's attempt to break away from the dysfunctional

family system at home and evolve into a healthy individual in a new environment.

Regardless of the internal thought processes behind running away, many researchers agree that antecedents to running away often include abusive situations at home. Several studies (Schaffner, 1998; Kipke & Palmer, 1997; Powers & Jaklitsch, 1993; Deni, 1990; & Whitbeck & Simons, 1990) report that children run away from their homes in an effort to put distance between themselves and a currently dysfunctional or dangerous environment at home. Not as a result of their inability to conform to societal rules.

One of the possible reasons that runaways are viewed by society at large as being deviant may be due to the fact that many runaways engage in illegal activities in order to survive. These activities include prostitution, pan handling, theft, selling drugs and substance abuse (Deni, 1990; & Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). However, it has been questioned whether these activities are a result of deviant behavior or if they are simply techniques used to survive while living on the streets. Baron and Hartnagel (1998) suggest that runaways only turn to criminal activities as a result of their homeless experience. In a different environment, they would not exhibit similar deviant behaviors.

Drug use by runaways has been well-documented (Whitbeck & Simons, 1990; Deni, 1990; Powers, 1990; Greene & Ringwalt, 1997). These studies, however, failed to focus on whether

chronic abuse contributed to the running away or abuse became chronic after running away. Deni (1990) suggests that children engage in substance abuse prior to running away. He claims that substance abuse is one warning sign, in culmination with other behaviors, that a child is experiencing a great deal of conflict and is contemplating running away. He further explains that in some cases the parents are not able to cope with the substance abuse and the child is "thrown away" into the streets, becoming one of the population of homeless youths. Dishion, Capaldi and Yoerger (1999) also add support to the position that substance use may be present prior to running away. Their findings stated that children that begin using drugs prior to the age of 15 are more likely to engage in deviant behaviors, such as running away. Yates, MacKenzie, Pennbridge and Cohen (1988) also found that substance use contributed to running away behavior and created further difficulties for the child once they began living on the streets.

However, other studies give the impression that runaways begin using drugs once on the streets for a variety of reasons. Findings by Powers and Powers (1990) and Jaklitsch (1993) suggested that after running away from home, youths were at a high risk of becoming involved with destructive behaviors such as substance abuse. Additionally, physical and mental health problems may contribute to further drug use. Baron and Hartnagel (1998) suggested that

drug use was essential if a runaway was going to attempt to fit in with their street environment. In addition the runaway may place a great a value on peer acceptance. Holstrom (1991) suggested that runaways often have few friends prior to running away, creating a tremendous need to "fit in" with their new peer group, ultimately satisfying an internal need for companionship. This offers the impression that youths may begin using drugs once on the streets simply to fit in with their new peer group. It is also important to note that findings have shown that many runaways tend to come from a home environment where drug use is prevalent (Kipke & Palmer, 1997). Social Learning Theory (Crosson-Tower, 1999) indicates that youth are more susceptible to substance abuse once they are living on the streets.

Reports indicate that drug use is less prevalent in runaways that have returned home or youths that are living in shelters (Greene & Ringwalt, 1997). Therefore, it can be logically concluded that drug use must cease for some runaways once they are removed from their street environment. This removal from the streets could create a decline in stress, which would decrease the need for the effects of the drug to help them to cope with day to day living. This lends support to the hypothesis that drug abuse occurs as a result of street life rather than as a precursor. It is also important to note that the studies being referred to, in this paper, only include runaways that are not receiving aid from shelters.

In order to distinguish the boundaries for my research, I utilized a combination of critical theory and post-positivist paradigm. Time and monetary constraints made it very difficult to attempt to control for all the possible confounding variables that could possibly affect my findings.

Implications to Social Work

This research looked at whether or not runaways are beginning to abuse illegal substances, as a result of new stressors that they experience in their new environment. This information can allow Social Workers to be more productive in structuring their time with potential runaway clients. The findings of this study will also help Social workers to determine the amount of time necessary to integrate drug prevention into dealings with runaway teens. Preventive interventions would be sought as opposed to interventions after the problem exists.

Several factors need to be considered when developing services for runaways. There is not a wide consensus regarding the demographics of the runaway population. This may be a result of the relatively small areas from which researchers derive their sample sizes. Some studies (Cohen, MacKenzie, & Yates, 1991) have found that young white females account for the majority of runaways while other studies have reported that the diversity among this population tended to reflect the area surveyed (Kipke & Palmer, 1997). Determining the basic demographics of the

runaway population helps to determine where a shelter would be most effectively constructed.

A service agency needs to consider the various sub-cultures within the main runaway population. Other factors that are important to note are the distinction between runaways and "throw away" youths. A runaway is defined as a child that has been away from home without permission for a specific time period. A "throw away" youth is an individual that has been forced to leave their residence and have had it made clear that they are not to return (Schweitzer & Hier, 1994). It is important to know what children comprise the population where assistance is offered, as well as, the events that may have led to the child currently living on the streets. This would help shelters and social workers to determine the type of services that may be needed.

Distinguishing, which population a child belongs to would also allow a worker to consider whether the child expressed power by leaving (runaways) or whether they had the decision made for them (throw-aways) which, may create a feeling of powerlessness within them. Crosson-Tower (1999) explained that victims of child abuse often lack a sense of power. These children may even view themselves as deserving of the abuse. In essence, these beliefs and unconscious feelings may result in them being targeted more often for victimization.

METHOD

This study attempted to determine if substance use among runaways' occurred or increased as a result of trying to cope with the new and overwhelming stressors of street life. This researcher utilized an ex post facto survey design. As a result, it was difficult to control for all possible variables and required the researcher utilized a post-positivist design. The findings derived from this study are going to be utilized as a foundation to begin collecting information that eventually may be used to support the argument that an additional runaway shelter is a necessity in Riverside County. In addition, this study attempted to create the foundation for additional studies regarding the level of need for drug prevention programs and drug intervention programs offered in runaway shelters.

Data Collection and Instrument

Due to the lack of research in this specific area this researcher was unable to locate an appropriate survey. However, with the assistance of my advisor, a survey was created that addressed the focus of this research more appropriately (see Appendix A). The survey was comprised of 46 survey questions and two essay questions that were optional. A limitation of using the self-constructed survey was that this researcher was not able to claim a level validity or reliability for the questions being asked of the volunteers. Reliability could be found for this measure if it were offered to many groups from the same population,

however, due to time constraints, this researcher was not able to determine reliability. The majority of the survey's questions dealt with the individuals' quality of life prior to and during the runaway experience, drug use prior to and during their runaway, as well as, the level of stress, which the individuals' felt prior to and during the runaway experience. Other questions were added which aided in determining the quality of the individuals' home environment prior to running away and helped to determine various levels of stress.

Procedures

My sample was comprised of 19 volunteers, staff and patrons, solicited at the Salvation Army homeless shelter in San Bernardino. Permission to solicit the Salvation Army patrons was approved by the commanding officer of the local corps. The surveys were offered before, during and after the evening meal. This researcher was the main collector of the data, which aided in assuring the confidentiality of the volunteers. This researcher read the informed consent along with each volunteer and asked them to check the consent box if they understood and agreed to complete the survey (Appendix 2). Completed surveys were placed into a packet in random order to further assure the confidentiality of the volunteers.

Only persons 18 years of age or older were solicited in order to avoid the process of obtaining the parental consent that would have been necessary in order to survey current

juvenile runaways. As a result of the age limitations an ex post facto survey design was utilized.

The demographic instrument was successful in achieving an acceptable representation of races and gender.

The survey utilized a qualitative approach. This was accomplished by placing volunteers into groups. Groups were divided accordingly to those who have used substances prior to running away and those who have not used prior to running away. A qualitative approach was also used to determine level of stress prior to and during the run away experience. The findings were determined by applying a chi-square analysis.

After completing the survey the volunteer was offered a copy of the informed consent, a debriefing statement (Appendix 3) and a day bus pass for Omni Trans (see Appendix A). Additionally, in order to offer assistance in the event that any of the questions on the survey created a sense of concern for the volunteer, the debriefing statement offered phone numbers to Riverside and San Bernardino crises hotlines.

RESULTS

Nineteen subjects participated in this study. The age of the participants ranged between 19 years and 48 years of age, with a mean age of 33.25. Out of the nineteen participants, 5 were male, 8 were female and 6 participants did not identify their gender. The participants identified their ethnicity as 32% Caucasian, 32% African Americans, 16% Hispanic, 16% Native Americans and 5% listed other.

A chi-squared formula determined that no significance existed between runaways who used and did not use drugs during the runaway and high and low levels of panic reported during the runaway, $X(1, n=17) = .084, p > .05$. No relationship exists between runaways that used drugs and did not use drugs during the running away and the level of panic experienced during the runaway (table 1).

A chi-squared formula determined that no significance existed between runaways who used and did not use drugs during the runaway and runaways that experienced high and low levels of fear during the runaway, $X(1, n=18) = .076, p > .05$. No relationship exists between runaways who used and did not use drugs during the runaway and the level of fear experienced during the runaway (table 2).

A chi-squared formula determined that no significance existed between runaways who used and did not use drugs prior to running away and runaways who used and did not use drugs during the runaway, $X(1, n=19) = 1.269, p > .05$. No relationship exist between runaways who used and did not use

drugs prior to running away and runaways who used and did not use drugs during the runaway (table 3).

A chi-squared formula was used to determine significance between runaways who felt high and low levels of fear prior to running away and runaways who felt a high and low level of fear during the run $\chi^2 (1, n=18) = 5.103$, $p < .05$. Due to the small sample size, significance could not be reported, however, a trend towards significance was established, which suggest a high probability of attaining significance with a larger sample (table 4).

A chi-squared formula was used to determine significance between runaways who felt high and low levels of panic prior to the runaway and runaways who felt high and low levels of panic during the runaway $\chi^2 (1, n=16) = 6.112$, $p < .01$. Due to the small sample size, significance could not be reported, however a trend towards significance was established, which suggest a high probability of attaining significance with a larger sample (table 5).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were unable to support the hypothesis that drug use increased in conjunction with an increase in the stress levels of runaways. The results appeared to display that runaways were consistent with their coping strategies, as far as drug use is concerned. Runaways whom used drugs prior to running away continued to use drugs during their runaway. Whereas, runaways whom employed alternative coping mechanisms to drugs were consistent, in continuing to not employ drugs to cope with stress during the runaway.

These results offer support for Unger and Kipke's (1998) findings, which suggested that runaways whom used drugs prior to running away as a coping strategy, continued to utilize drugs as a coping mechanism during the runaway. This lends itself to speculation that, due to the extreme adaptations that runaways often must make, they will maintain any familiarity that they can. As a result they may remain constant when incorporating coping strategies, using strategies that are comfortable and familiar. If drugs were not prevalent in the runaways past coping system, they may not chose this coping style regardless of their new environment. These findings suggest that coping mechanisms of runaways need to be researched.

The results also appear to offer support to Deni's (1990) findings, which suggested that drug use is an action that youth engaged in prior to running away. This finding

may be a possible indicator of a potential to runaway. Several of the responses on the essay questions stated that runaways did use drugs prior to their runaway in order to cope with unsatisfactory and stressful living conditions. This suggests that drug use may begin as a coping strategy for stressful situations in the home environment and simply continue in order to cope with stressors experienced during the runaway experience.

The lack of significance that this study produced helped to establish several factors that will need to be considered in future research with this population. In order to conduct a more thorough investigation it would be necessary to incorporate a larger and more diverse sample population when collecting data. The small sample population used for this study was inadequate to determine significance.

However, the small sample also helped to illustrate that it may prove difficult to locate participants from this population willing to partake in an ex post facto study. As a result, further research would mostly likely benefit from interviewing and/or surveying juveniles, whom are current runaways. Conducting research on individuals that had runaway in the past has its limitations.

In addition, if a homeless population was utilized again, the research may benefit from the use of an interview process opposed to offering surveys. Many of the questions on the survey were left blank with no apparent reason, which

may indicate that the survey was difficult for some participants to understand and therefore complete all questions.

If this study were to be replicated it would be interesting to incorporate a control group of individuals that experienced similar stressors as the runaway population, but chose to remain at their residence. This might help to further determine if a difference in coping skills exist between the two populations. Perhaps the reason so many runaway engage in drug use is because it was an effective coping mechanism prior to running away.

APPENDIX A:

Informed Consent

I would like to begin by thanking you for choosing to partake in this study. This study is being conducted by Chris Rosselli, masters of social work student. This study will attempt to determine if drug use results after the runaway experience in order to cope with a new and stressful environment. This study has been approved by the Institution Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The university requires that you give your consent before participating in this study.

In this study you will answer 45 questions and two short summaries that are optional. The questions will address your life before the first time you ran away and the quality of your life while living on the streets. The survey that you will be asked to complete will not have your name on it, to insure complete anonymity of responses. Please note that you are not required to fill out the survey and can refuse to take or complete it at any time you wish to. Completion of the survey has taken our test respondents no more than 30 minutes but it may take you more or less time than that.

Please be assured that findings will be reported in group form only. No information will be used which may identify you. At the conclusion of the study, you may, upon request, receive a copy of the findings.

Questions related to your life prior to running away and during your time on the streets may cause you emotional discomfort. The attached debriefing statement, at the end of the survey, has the name and number of two agencies you may contact to help discuss and resolve any emotional discomfort created by this survey.

If you have any questions about this study or if you would like a report of the findings, you may contact the California State University of San Bernardino at (909) 880-5501. If you have any questions about the research

participants' rights or injuries, please contact the institutional Review Board at (909)-880-5027.

By checking the box provided below and dating this form, you are acknowledging that you have been informed and understand the nature of the study and freely consent to participate. You further acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age.

I agree to participate in this study _____ (check if you agree)

QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics

Age-

Gender-

- Ethnicity- a) Caucasian ____
 b) African American ____
 c) Hispanic ____
 d) Asian ____
 e) Native American ____
 f) Pacific Islander ____
 e) Other _____

Highest grade completed:

- a) 1st - 6th ____
b) 7th - 9th ____
c) 10th - 12th ____
d) AA degree ____
e) BS/BA degree ____
f) Post graduate degree ____

Marital Status:

- a) Single ____
b) Married ____
c) divorced/ separated ____
d) spouse deceased ____

Number of brother and sisters: Brothers ____ Sisters ____

Survey

1. How old where you the first time you ran away? ____
2. Did you run away more than once? Please list approximate
age next to each time.

3. What was your age when you returned home (if at all)?

4. Who was living in your home when you ran away (check all that apply):

- A. Mother ___
- B. Father ___
- C. Brother(s) ___
- D. sister(s) ___
- E. grandparent(s) ___
- F. Aunt(s) ___
- G. Uncle(s) ___
- H. Family friend(s) ___

6. Where your parents living together or separated/divorced?

7. If divorced, did either of your parents remarry prior to your running away?

Yes ___ Circle which one(s): Mother

Father

No ___

8. At the time you ran away where were you and your family living (check the one that most closely applies):

- A. suburb ___
- B. city ___
- C. inner city ___
- D. rural ___

9. What was your family's income when you ran away:

- A. 0 - 15,000
- B. 15,000 - 30,000
- C. 30,000 - 50,000
- D. 50,000 - 75,000
- E. 75,000 - 100,000
- F. 100,000 and up

10. What best describes your family prior to runaway (check all that apply):

- A. stressful ___

- B. chaotic ___
- C. pleasant ___
- D. caring ___
- E. supportive ___

11. On average, how often did you argue with parents:

- A. 1 - 2 times a week
- B. 2 - 4 times a week
- C. 4 - 6 times a week
- D. every day
- E. once every two weeks
- F. once every month
- G. very seldom

12. On average, how often did you argue with siblings:

- A. 1 - 2 times a week ___
- B. 2 - 4 times a week ___
- C. 4 - 6 times a week ___
- D. once every two weeks ___
- E. once every month ___
- F. very seldom ___

13. How important were the following to you prior to running away (Please rate the following between 1-10, 1 being not very and 10 being very important)

- A. Holidays 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- B. Bathing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- C. Eating 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- D. Material items (radio, clothes, records, etc...) 1 2
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- E. Drugs 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- F. Alcohol 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. To the best of your knowledge, did you know of any family members that had ran away prior to your running away (circle all that apply):

- A. brother(s)
- B. sister(s)
- C. mother

- D. father
- E. uncle(s)
- F. aunt(s)
- G. none
- H. don't know

15. Did your parents use drugs prior to you running away
(check all that apply): Please rate the following between
1 -10. 1=very little 10=all the time

- A. father _____ if so how much 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10
- B. mother _____ if so how much 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10

16. Did any deaths occur in your family prior to your running
away?

- A. family member (specify relation) _____
- B. friend _____

17. Did you enjoy going to school prior to running away?

- 1=not at all 10=more than anything
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18. Was school:

- 1=not at all 10=very much
Stressful for you 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Easy for you 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

20. Were you arrested or on probation prior to running away?

- Yes _____
- No _____

21. How many friends did you have prior to running away?

- None _____
- Few _____
- Many _____

22. Did you have difficulty making friends prior to running
away?

- Yes _____

No _____

23. Where did you meet and/or hang out with friends prior to running away (ex: parks, house, school, etc...)?

24. Before running away did your friends think drug use was OK?

1 = they did not think it was OK 10 = they thought it was OK

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

27. Did you feel that you were:

1=not at all 10=very much

Outgoing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Kept to self 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

28. Where did you go to when you ran away?

Friends _____ Park _____ Family member _____

Please list other places _____

29. Did you take any items with you when you ran away?

30. Did you use drugs prior to running away?

Yes _____

No _____

31. If so, what kind?

Pot _____

cocaine _____

meth _____

heroin _____

other _____

32. If so, how often?

Daily _____

Weekly _____

Monthly _____

Other _____

32. Did you use drugs while you lived on the streets?

Yes _____

No _____

33.If so, what kinds?

Pot_____

cocaine_____

meth_____

heroin_____

other_____

34.If so, how often?

Daily _____

Weekly _____

Monthly _____

Other _____

34.How did you get food while on the streets?

Pan handling _____ Working _____ Stealing _____

Other _____

35.Did you feel that you had enough to eat when living on the streets?

1=hardly had anything to eat 10=ate whenever I wanted

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10

36.How did you get money while living on the streets? (check all that apply)

Working _____ Stealing _____ pan handling _____

Please list other _____

37.Where did you sleep while living on the streets? (check all that apply)

Friends _____ Abandoned building _____ park _____

Shelter _____

Please list other _____

38.What did you do for entertainment while living on the streets?

39. Where you able to wash when you wanted to while living on the streets?

1=never 10=whenever I wanted

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10

40. Did you get sick while living on the streets?

Yes _____

No _____

41. If so, how often?

1=never 10=every day

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10

42. Did you experience intense panic prior to running away?

1=never 10=every day

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10

43. Did you experience intense panic while you were living on the streets?

1=never 10=every day

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 10

44. Did you experience intense fear prior to running away?

1=never 10=every day

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

45. Did you experience intense fear while living on the streets?

1=never 10=every day

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Summary Question:

In your own words, can you explain why you ran away?

Can you please write a brief description which explains how drugs helped or didn't help you while you were living on the streets **(optional)**.

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Chris Rosselli, Masters student of social work, conducted this research study in order to discover if runaways begin using drugs in order to cope with new and overwhelming stressors. The researcher, Chris Rosselli, created the survey used for this study. The Institutional Review Board at CSUSB approved the study.

If any of the questions asked on this survey or any aspect of this research caused you any emotional stress, you can contact your local family service agency.

Riverside Mental Health - (909) 684 - 6051

San Bernardino Mental Health - (800) 962 - 4397

A brief summary of the findings and the conclusions of this study will be available after July 1, 2000 and can be obtained by calling California State University of San Bernardino at (909) 880-5501. Thank you for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX B:
QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Table 1

Drug use as a function of panic level during runaway

Drug use	<u>Panic level</u>	
	High	Low
Yes	5	5
No	4	3

Table 2

Drug use as a function of fear level during runaway

Drug use	<u>Fear level</u>	
	High	Low
Yes	7	4
No	4	3

Table 3

Drug use during runaway as a function of drug use prior to runaway

Runaway drug use	<u>Prior drug use</u>	
	Yes	No
Yes	7	4
No	3	5

Table 4

Fear during runaway as a function of fear prior to runaway

<u>level</u>	<u>Prior fear</u>	
	High	Low
<u>Runaway fear level</u>		
High	9	2
Low	2	5

Table 5

Panic during runaway as a function of panic prior to runaway

<u>level</u>	<u>Prior panic</u>	
	High	Low
Runaway panic level		

High	8	1
Low	2	5

REFERENCES

- Baron, S. & Hartnagel, T. (1998). Street youth and criminal violence. Journal of Research and Crime and Delinquency, 35(2), 166-189.
- Coco, E. L. & Courtney, L. J. (1998). A family systems approach for preventing adolescent runaway behavior. Adolescence, 33(130), 485-497.
- Crespi, T. D. & Sabatelli, R. M. (1993). Adolescent runaway and family strife: A conflict-induced Differentiation framework. Adolescence, 28(112), 867-879.
- Crosson, Tower, C. (1999). Understanding child abuse and neglect (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Deni, J. R. (1990). Children and running away. School Psychology Review, 19(2), 253-255.
- Dishion T. J., Capaldi, D. M. & Yoerger, K. (1999). Middle childhood antecedents to progressions in male adolescent substance use: An ecological analysis of risk and protection. Journal of Adolescent Research, 14(2), 175-206.
- Greene, J. M. & Ringwalt, C. L. (1997). Substance use among runaways and homeless youth in three national samples. American Journal of Public Health, 87(2), 229-236.
- Holstrom, D. (1991). On the trail of a wayward daughter. Christian Science Monitor, 91(159), 13.
- Hull, J. D. (1994). Running Scared. Time, 144(21), 92-100.
- Kipke, M. D. & Palmer, R. F. (1997). Homeless youths' description of their parents' child rearing practices. Youth and Society, 28(4), 415-432.
- Large, R. (1999). Easing the strain of students' stress. NEA Today, 18(1), 39-43.
- Lewis, S. (1999). Stockbridge street girl. Pimall.com/nais/n.run.child.html.
- Palenske, J. E. & Launer, H. M. (1999). The process of running away: A redefinition. Adolescence, 22, 347-362.

- Powers, J. L. (1990). Survivors of abuse tell their stories. Human Ecology Forum, 18(2), 8-12.
- Powers, J. L. & Jaklitsch, B. (1993). Reaching the hard to reach. Education and urban Society, 25(4), 394-410.
- Rogers, K. T. & Segal, E. A. (1994). The relationship between academic factors and running away among adolescents. Social Work education, 16(1), 46-55.
- Rohr, M. E. (1996). Identifying adolescent runaways: The predictive utility of the personality inventory for children. Adolescence, 31(123), 605-624.
- Rotheram-Borus, M. J. & Koopman, C. (1991). AIDS risk among runaways. Family Planning Perspectives, 23(3), 101-106.
- Schaffner, L. (1998). Searching for connection: A new look at teenaged runaways. Adolescence, 33(131), 619-628.
- Schweitzer, R. D. & Heir, S. J. (1994). Parental bonding, family systems, and environmental predictors of adolescent homelessness. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 2(1), 39-46.
- Terrell, N. E. (1997). Street life aggravated and sexual assaults among homeless and runaway adolescents. Youth and Society, 28(3), 267-291.
- Whitbeck, L. B. & Simons, R. L. (1990). Life on the streets. Youth and Society, 22(1), 108-126.
- Unger, J. B., Kipke, M. D., Simon, T. R., Johnson, C. J., Montgomery, S. B. & Iverson, E. (1998). Stress, coping and social support among homeless youth. Journal of Adolescent Research 13(2), 134-158.