Outcome study of former foster care youth

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OUTCOME STUDY OF FORMER FOSTER CARE YOUTH

by

Donald Gutterman
Bachelor of Arts
California State University, Northridge
1997

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT

Outcome Study of Former Foster Care Youth

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This is an outcome of study of former foster care youth who aged out of the child welfare system. These youth have been out of the foster care system for anywhere from six months to five years. This study consists of twenty respondents, ten male and ten female, taken from a larger study of 100 former foster care youth. The main areas addressed in this study include investigation into the youth’s foster care experience, their level of preparation to transition to life on their own, and their post foster care adjustment. Outcomes indicative of poor adjustment in the community were found in nearly all areas. Females overall were found to fare better than males in most areas. The findings support the fact that foster care youth are not prepared for emancipation at the age of eighteen and more assistance is needed to help these youth in the transition to adulthood. Specifically, raising the age of emancipation to twenty-one and extending Medicaid coverage to former foster care youth are recommended.
Additionally, much more is needed to help these youth with their “emotional baggage” which they have developed as a result of the experiences they encountered before and during their stay in foster care.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most severe problems facing Southern Nevada is a child welfare system that is ill-prepared to care for the growing number of children who require out-of-home placement. Currently, there are over fourteen hundred children in foster care and approximately one hundred turn eighteen-years-old and exit the foster care system each year. In Nevada, state law requires teens to leave care at the age of eighteen or nineteen if they do not have a high school diploma or GED (Nevada Revised Statutes 432B.030).

On the national level, there is also a severe problem with the foster care system. Each year approximately twenty thousand youths exit the system with the expectation that they will be able to live self-sufficiently. After exiting the system, many of these youths face serious problems, including homelessness, lack of employment stability, incarceration, and early pregnancy (General Accounting Office, 1999).

Adolescents in foster care, especially those who have been in care for a number of years, face numerous challenges in preparing to become self-sufficient adults once they leave the foster care system. The transition from the foster care system to self-sufficiency can be difficult. Research has shown that many former foster care youths have serious educational deficiencies and rely on public assistance. For example, Cook (1991) at Westat, interviewed former foster care youth 2.5 to 4 years after they left care and found that 46 percent had not finished high school. Additionally, almost 40 percent were found to be a cost to the community through their dependence on public assistance programs. Similarly, the University of Wisconsin study (1998) conducted by Mark Courtney examined youths who had been out of care from 12 to 18 months, and found that
37 percent had not finished high school and 32 percent were receiving public assistance. In addition, former foster care youths often find themselves lacking adequate housing. Cook (1991) reported that 25 percent of the youths were homeless at least one night while Courtney (1998) found that, after leaving care, 14 percent of the males and 10 percent of the females had been homeless at least once.

Additional difficulties may further impede youths’ ability to become self-sufficient. Cook (1991) found that 51 percent of the former foster care youth were unemployed and 42 percent had given birth or fathered a child. Courtney (1998) found that 39 percent of the youths were unemployed, and 27 percent of the males and 10 percent of the females had been incarcerated at least once.

As a result of new federal legislation, in the fall of 2000 the State Division of the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) received additional funds in order to conduct research and develop programming designed to address the transition of foster care youth into independent living in Southern Nevada. This research and program development is also intended to assist youths who have been pushed out of foster care within the last five years. The DCFS has requested specific research on Independent Living in order to define areas of allocation for their new funding. This study is intended to supplement the research literature by interviewing 20 youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

Research Questions

1) How do former foster care youth feel about their overall foster care experience?

2) What kind of services did former foster care youth receive to prepare them to live on their own (including Independent Living services, concrete services and assistance at the time of their exit from foster care)?
3) How do former foster care youth fare in the areas of living arrangements, education, employment, health, substance abuse, support systems, legal issues, and personal adjustment?

4) Are there any areas in which the former foster care youth had positive outcomes?

5) Are there any gender or ethnic differences in the foster care experience for former foster care youth?

6) Do former foster care youth who were in multiple placements report less satisfaction than former foster care youth that were in fewer placements?

Study Limitations

There are three limitations to this study. First, in this study a small sample was used, therefore, it cannot be considered generalizable to the entire foster care population. Second, the 20 participants were chosen out of convenience rather than at random, resulting in a limitation to the findings. Third, self-reporting by the participants was used, and this method is susceptible to response bias.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended to discuss various elements of the lives of former foster care youth. It will provide important information that should provide insight as to why these youth are experiencing poor outcomes in most of the important areas of their lives. It will also make recommendations that may assist in improving the lives of youth who are in the foster care system today and better prepare them to transition to life in the community in the future.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list and explanation of some of the terms which are used frequently
throughout this study. They are provided so that the reader may review the study in as expedient manner as possible.

Independent Living- a program designed to help youth who are preparing to exit the foster care system and transition to life on their own in the community.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program- enacted by the U.S. congress in 1999. This program is the most recent attempt to assist foster children attempting to make successful transitions from foster care into adulthood. The funds available to Nevada total $500,000.00. The monies are to be used strictly for the purpose of easing transitions. The programs currently being developed are primarily aimed at skill building.

Emancipation- this is an action conferred upon youth who were in the foster care system of their state or county but have left that system and are now expected to take responsibility for their personal well-being.

Out-of-home-care- for the purpose of this study, it is any youth who has been removed from the care of their parents by a court due to abuse and/or neglect.

DCFS- The Department of Child and Family Services, which is the state’s child welfare agency that serves children and families who are involved in child abuse and neglect cases that have been transferred from the county Child Protection Agency.

Homelessness- this designation applies to respondents who have experienced having no place to live for at least one night.

Structure of the Paper

In Chapter 1 the study is introduced and the research questions will be posed. Also, the study limitations, significance of the study and the terms in the paper will be defined.

In Chapter 2 there is an introduction to the literature, a discussion of outcome studies of former foster care youth, a summary of recent studies on Independent Living, a
discussion of the effectiveness of Independent Living Programs, the future of Independent Living Programs, Federal Legislature, and finally, Nevada policy and State Statute.

In Chapter 3 the conceptual framework for the thesis is explained.

In Chapter 4 the methodology, including how information was gathered and who participated in the study is explained.

In Chapter 5, there is an extensive discussion of the findings.

In Chapter 6 there is a discussion of the results, answers to the research questions, case study examples, and general observations.

In Chapter 7 there is implications for social workers, recommendations, and conclusions.

There are 13 tables located in the appendices that further illustrate the findings of this study.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Children are entering the foster care system at an alarming rate. There were an estimated 429,000 children in out-of-home care at the end of 1991 which is a 64 percent increase since 1982 (Tatara, 1990), and now it is estimated that there are over 500,000 youth in foster care which is a 68 percent increase since 1982 (Stoner, 1999). Each year approximately 20,000 youths exit the foster care system with the expectation of being able to live self-sufficiently. After exiting the system, many of these youths face serious problems, including homelessness, lack of employment stability, incarceration, and early pregnancy (GAO, 1999).

In Clark County, there are approximately 100 adolescents who age out of foster care at age 18 annually. State law requires teens to leave care at the age of 18, or 19 if they do not have a high school diploma or GED (NRS 432B.030).

Adolescents in foster care, especially those who have been in care for a number of years, face numerous challenges in preparing to become self-sufficient adults upon leaving the foster care system. The transition from the foster care system to self-sufficiency can be difficult. Transitional periods are characterized by uncertainties that individuals encounter in new and unfamiliar developmental challenges. Leaving adolescence and moving into early adulthood readily qualifies as a critical transition (Mech, 1994). Relationships with parents, family, peers, schools, faith-based and community institutions are being redefined, modified, or terminated. Matters associated with independent living, such as career path, personal relationships, responsibilities of decision-making, and the
acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for adult living must be confronted (Mech, 1994).

Typically, adolescents in care experience numerous, often severe, discontinuities while growing up. Most graduates of the placement system need help in making the transition from a dependency status to self-directed community living. At a minimum, transitional assistance includes help in getting and maintaining employment, finding a place to live, gaining access to health/dental care, and budgeting and managing money.

This literature review will look at many of the completed studies which focused on the outcomes of foster care children that exited the system. This literature will also look at studies of the Independent Living Programs (ILP) that have been designed to meet the needs of youth who are preparing to transition out of the foster care system and into a life of self-sufficiency. While, this research provides an incomplete picture of the current foster care system, it is however a valuable tool supplying insight into the continuing struggles of our current foster care system.

The outcome studies discussed include Festinger’s (1983) study of 277 youth from New York; Jones and Moses’ (1984) West Virginia study of 328 youth; Barth’s (1990) study of 55 youth in California; Cook’s (1991) Westat study of 1644 youth and a follow up of 810 youth nationwide; Courtney and Barth’s (1996) study of 2653 youth in California; and Courtney’s (1995 and 1998) two studies of 141 youth and a follow up of 113 youth in Wisconsin. The ILP studies that will be discussed are Westat’s (1994) nationwide study; Scannapieco, Schagrin, and Scannapieco’s (1995) study of the effectiveness of an ILP in Baltimore County, Maryland; Mcmillen, Rideout, Fisher, and Tucker’s (1997) ILP by the Missouri Division of Family Services; and the GAO’s report of ILP’s in Contra Costa, California; Baltimore City and County, Maryland; New York City, New York; and the San Antonio Region, Texas. The first half of the literature review will focus on outcome studies of the youth and the second portion will be focus on the evaluation of program effects on the youth. It is important to clarify the difference
between outcome studies of youth exiting or who have exited foster care and the outcome of an Independent Living Program. The outcome studies of youth who exited or who are exiting the foster care system look at how the youth themselves fare in several areas as a result of life experiences in foster care. Whereas an outcome study of Independent Living Programs looks at how the services have affected the lives of the youth.

Outcome Studies of Former Foster Care Youth

The discussion of these studies will first look at the foster experiences of former foster care youth. Then it will examine the preparedness of the youth for life on their own after foster care, which will include any Independent Living services they received or any concrete assistance they were provided at the time of their exit from foster care. Finally, this literature review will examine eight measures of post placement functioning: (1) living arrangements, (2) education, (3) employment, (4) health, (5) substance abuse, (6) support networks, (7) legal issues, and (8) personal adjustment.

Foster Care Experience

In Barth’s (1990) study, 65 percent of the respondents indicated that they saw their birth parents or relatives. These contacts averaged about 10 times per year. About one quarter (27%) ever talked about the possibility of adoption with their social worker. Of those who did not ever talk about adoption, 13 percent said they wished that adoption had been discussed with them. Most youth (63%) indicated that their social worker or foster parent should have made leaving foster care easier for them. These include strong concerns that the social worker had no part in emancipation planning or the departure itself. A full 56 percent of youth reported running away when they were in foster or group care, and the average number of runaway episodes for youth was five times (42% only ran away once). Overall, the sample rated their foster care experience between neutral and “somewhat good.” Most (69%) stated that their lives would have been much worse had
they stayed out of the foster care system. However, 68 percent still indicated the foster care system could be improved.

In Wave 1 of Courtney’s (1995) study, 90 percent felt their placement was necessary and 87 percent believed there were no services which could have averted their need for placement. They generally described their relationships with their out of home providers as favorable, with 75 percent stating that they felt “somewhat close” or “close” to the adults caring for them. A high 87 percent agreed with the statement, “foster parents have been a help to me.” The majority of the youth presented a positive picture of their attitude and experience with the child welfare system and 75 percent agreed with the statement that they were “lucky” to be placed in out-of-home care.

**Preparedness for Life After Foster Care**

It is important to discuss the various skills training that the former foster care youth received to prepare them for life after foster care. By skills training, most studies report that the training was either formal or informal (Cook, 1991; Courtney 1995, 1998). In Cook’s (1991) study, skills were found to be delivered in five core areas including money, consumer, credit, employment, and education. Unfortunately, there was no individual skills training that was found to clearly affect an outcome positively. However, many skills which are taught have no outcome measure, therefore, leaving it difficult to prove that the skill actually helped the youth. Still, other skills do have testable outcomes. This same study, found that services received are most effective in influencing the outcomes of interest when delivered within a predefined set of skill areas.

In Barth’s (1990) study, it was found that most youth had no exposure to independent living skills content neither during foster care nor since. Only 35 percent indicated getting some tutoring during high school. Twenty two percent indicated that they did not know how to use public transportation when they left the foster care system. A low percentage of youth in this study were found to be given help in finding a place to live (27%), general
assistance with money and or how to budget (36%), help in locating and/or getting together again with birth parents or relatives (43%), and help in finding a job (56%).

In Courtney’s (1995,1998) study, about one third of the youths reported a perceived lack of preparedness in several skills areas. In the areas of job training and interviewing skills, help finding employment, obtaining housing, obtaining personal health records, obtaining health insurance, and learning how to access public assistance, it was found that only 11 to 18 percent of the youth received assistance. Additionally, since discharged from foster care, high percentages of youth reported problems in the areas of having sufficient money, finding employment, obtaining housing, obtaining medical care, making friends, transportation, and relations with family.

**Living Arrangements**

The transition to independence and living on one’s own is most likely more difficult for youth exiting foster care than for the general population of youths entering adulthood. In Barth’s (1990) sample 37 percent of former foster care youth reported difficulty in finding their first place to live and 30 percent reported instances where they had no housing or had to move every week or so.

In Cook’s (1991) Westat sample, about one in four reported being without a place to sleep for at least one night. The extended family was the most frequent living arrangement at the time of discharge. An estimated 54 percent went to live with extended family members upon discharge. An additional 10 percent remained with their foster parents. The remaining youth either lived by themselves and/or with a child, with a significant other, or with unrelated individuals. By 2.5 to 4 years after discharge, nearly 33 percent of the youth were still living with their extended family and five percent more had sought out this living arrangement. In addition, almost one third of these former foster care youth have lived in five or more different places. The high number of different places these youth have lived represents the lack of stability in their lives. The majority of people 18 to
24 years of age in the general population (52.3%) live with their parents or in a dormitory situation (Westat, 1991).

In the Wisconsin (1995, 1998) study, approximately 40 percent of the sample had to leave their foster or group care placement because they were discharged from the child welfare system, another third were able to stay for some period of time after discharge in their last foster home, while the remainder either left on their own volition prior to being discharged or for other reasons. The number of reported homelessness was 14 percent for the males and 10 percent of the females for at least one night since discharge. Although about 37 percent of the respondents had lived in the same place since discharge from the foster care system, 22 percent had lived in four or more different places over that period. At Wave 2, which was 12 to 18 months after the former foster care youth exited the system, 37 percent of the respondents were residing in their own room, in an apartment, or house, another 31 percent were living in the home of a relative, and the remaining third lived with a friend, a spouse or partner, in an institution, or another living situation.

The Festinger (1983) study and Jones and Moses (1984) study did not contain information on homelessness, but Festinger (1983) reported that nearly 70 percent of the sample shared living arrangements with friends, siblings, spouses, in-laws, partners, or biological or foster families. Jones and Moses (1984) reported that at least 65 percent of their respondents were living in the households of others such as friends, roommates, or biological or foster parents.

**Education**

Indicators of school performance are usually included in follow up studies. Conventional wisdom suggests that foster care youths are likely to experience educational deficits (Mech, 1994). Festinger's (1983) sample did well with regard to years of school completed nearly 65 percent completed high school, 40 percent of whom were high school graduates only. An additional 25 percent reported college enrollment.
In Barth’s (1990) sample, in which the mean age at the point of follow up was 21 years, only 45 percent reported high school completion. In the Jones and Moses (1984) study, 63 percent completed grade 12 (or met a high school equivalency requirement). Approximately 60 percent expressed interest in obtaining additional schooling or training.

In Cook’s (1991) study in which the median age at follow up was 21, 54 percent of the sample completed high school which is comparative to youth below the poverty level (53%), whereas the general population has a high school completion rate of 78 percent (Westat, 1991). In Courtney’s Wisconsin studies (1995, 1998), the studies were divided into two waves. With regards to education, finishing high school or continuing with education proved to be less common than suggested by youths’ expectations while in care. At Wave one, 90 percent of the youths were still attending high school and of those 90 percent; 79 percent expressed a desire to enter college and 71 percent expected they would attain that goal. In contrast to their goals while still in care, by 12 to 18 months past discharge 37 percent of the young adults had not yet completed high school, 55 percent had completed high school and another 9 percent had entered college.

**Employment**

Another important factor to look at is work experience. In Festinger’s (1983) group, more than 90 percent held jobs at some point during or after their foster care experience. At the point of follow up, 70 percent of the males and 55 percent of the females were employed.

Barth (1990) found that nearly three in four respondents were employed, usually full-time. Annual income was approximately $10,000 for those reporting full-time. Approximately one in three indicate limitations in education and in job skills were obstacles to better jobs (Mech, 1994). In Jones and Moses (1984) study, 40 percent reported having a job. People having a high school diploma were more likely to be employed then those without one.
In Cook's (1991) study, 49 percent of the respondents were employed. Fifty six percent of the males compared to forty three percent of the females were employed at the time of the interview. Caucasians were more likely to be employed than African Americans and Hispanics (52%, 42%, and 40%, respectively). The unemployed youths reported the biggest problems in finding employment were lack of transportation (21%), lack of opportunities (16%), inadequate education (15%), and lack of experience (15%). Maintaining a job was found to be more difficult to these youth than finding one, only 38 percent of the youth had maintained employment for one year while 10 percent of the youth had never held a job since discharge. No difference was found between the “never employed” rates of males and females. However, Hispanic youth were far more likely than Caucasian or African American youth to have never held a job (33%, 16%, and 6%, respectively). The opposite was also true with respect to length of time maintaining a job. Males were more likely than females to maintain a job for at least one year (40% male and 31% female), however no differences were found in the percent of Hispanic, Caucasian, and African American youth who were able to maintain a job for at least one year. The median salary of the youth in the Cook (1991) study at the time of the interview was $5.00 per hour and approximately 48 percent of the youth had held a job full-time since exiting the foster care system with a median weekly salary of $205.00. The median salary for the general population of youth between 16 and 24 was $261.00 in October of 1988.

In Courtney's study (1998), 81 percent of the respondents held at least one job at some point between discharge and the Wave 2 interview. However, they were not as successful at maintaining employment. Approximately the same percentage were employed at Wave 2 (61%) when they were on their own, than were at Wave 1 (57%) when they were supported by the child welfare system. They were more likely to be employed at Wave 2 if they were Caucasian than if they were African American. The average weekly wage for those with jobs ranged from $54.00 to $613.00. Employed Caucasian youth on average were earning $202.00 per week, while African American
youth earned $182.00. There were no gender differences in the likelihood of being employed at the time of Wave 2 interview. Employed males earned on average $220.00 per week while females earned $178.00.

Health

Former foster youth are vulnerable to serious health care problems. In Barth’s (1990) study, more than four out of ten (44%) had a “serious health illness or accident” since leaving foster care with 24 percent of the sample requiring hospitalization. Most (62 percent) of the youth had health or medical coverage at the time of the interview. Of all of the youth, only 2 percent paid for coverage themselves with 15 percent using Medi-Cal and 33 percent getting it from their own or their spouses work; 40 percent reported sometimes or often having problems or worries about medical bills. Overall, 53 percent rate their health as very good or excellent. A high 38 percent have a current untreated medical problem and 13 percent reported hospitalization for an emotional problem since foster care.

In Cook’s (1991) study, 85 percent of the youth interviewed self-reported good to excellent health. The remaining 15 percent felt their health was poor. Females were more likely than males to report poor health (19% to 11%). In the ability to obtain health care, 65 percent of the youth said they had and 30 percent said that they were unable to do so. The remaining 5 percent stated they had not yet needed health care. The main reasons given for those who were unable to obtain health care were lack of finances and health insurance. In Courtney’s study (1995, 1998), obtaining affordable medical care when needed was a significant issue for close to half the respondents after discharge. Additionally, 44 percent indicated that they had problems acquiring needed medical care most or all of the time. When asked what prevented them from acquiring medical care, 51 percent said they had no insurance coverage and 38 percent stated that the medical care was too expensive. Only 5 percent said that they did not know where to go. Another 5
percent stated that the hours were inconvenient. Over one quarter (28%) of the youth could not get needed dental care and a total of 90 percent attributed this to not having insurance coverage or the dental care being too expensive.

**Substance Abuse**

In Barth’s (1990) study, when in foster care, 19 percent of the youth reported drinking once a week or more. This is quite comparable to a random sample of high school students in the general population (Erickson, et al., 1987). This statistic has decreased to 17 percent since they left care. More than half (56%) of the sample indicated using street drugs during their time in foster care. This compares unfavorable with the general population of high school students, who indicated using street drugs significantly less (Erickson et al., 1987). During their last month in care, half of those who used street drugs used them once (25%) per week or more. About the same percentage (56%) used since aging out. With regards to substance use in the past month, 20 percent of the total sample reported use. Of all the youth who used drugs during their time in foster care, 25 percent use drugs more now than they did while in foster care. In Cook’s (1991), there was found to be no significant difference between the general population and the respondent’s drug use in the past 30 days. The number of foster care youth who reported ever using illegal drugs was 50 percent. This is nearly the same (51%) as high school seniors who reported using illegal drugs in 1989. Surprisingly, discharged foster youths’ consumption of alcohol was considerably less than that of the general population (42% and 62% respectively). However, due to the self-reporting of this survey there may be some under reporting.

**Support Networks**

In Festinger’s (1983) sample, less than 50 percent of those who left care from foster homes reported keeping in contact with their biological families. A high percentage of those leaving a foster home arrangement, however, kept in frequent contact with their last foster family (87%). Moreover, those in Festinger’s (1983) study sample were
characterized as satisfied with their friendships and with the number of their friends. The Jones and Moses (1984) study found that females were reported to have stronger informal support systems than males. Caucasian respondents were rated lower in social supports than non-Caucasians respondents. With whom a respondent lived was significantly associated with the relative strength of his or her support network. Respondents who lived with their spouse or partner obtained the highest support system ratings. Those who lived with siblings only received the lowest rating on a support scale. Overall, in the West Virginia community, 30 percent reported belonging to a community, social, or religious organization.

In Barth’s (1990) study, most youth (89%) reported some contact with their foster or group home parents since leaving care with an average yearly contact of five times per year, but a modal contact of just once. Most (83%) indicated that they planned to continue contact; 15 percent indicated having no “psychological parent” or person to turn to for advice. A significant 26 percent of youth considered their foster/group home as their psychological parent, with an almost equal number indicating their birth parent (17%) and the highest percentage (42%) indicated “other” (mother-in-laws were often identified). When problems occur in their lives, 89 percent of youth report that they have someone to talk to, 80 percent stated that they would know how to find a counselor or social worker if they needed one and 71 percent are aware of a crisis hotline in their area. A moderate number (40%) indicated keeping in touch with social workers, therapists, or tutors they met in foster care.

In Cook’s (1991) study, 60 percent of the youth reported having a strong concrete network of support and 57 percent of the youth reported a strong emotional support network. The people included in these networks were spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, friend, and family members. With respect to youth identifying people in their lives who provided strong close relationships, 14 percent of the youth indicated having no such individual. The majority of the youth had people in their lives that they felt provided
emotional and concrete support. However, there were those that exhibited the most extreme of isolation. For example, one woman was asked to identify the two people that had made a difference in her life, the woman cited her foster mother who had died and the interviewer because she came to visit her. Youth overwhelmingly identified friends as the most important people in their lives. However, one quarter identified their foster or birth parents. At the time of the interview, 42 percent of the youth in the study had either given birth or fathered a child; 60 percent of the females had given birth and 24 percent of the males had fathered a child. With regard to marriage, 29 percent of the youth had been married and 18 percent had been married at the time of the interview. An additional 10 percent of the youth indicated they were living as married.

In Courtney’s (1995, 1998), it appears that on the average the young adults perceive that they receive a great deal of support from significant others, friends, and their former foster families. In contrast, the respondents report receiving somewhat less support from family. Although the young adults’ perception of social support from biological families was low compared to other sources of support, families continue to play a role in the lives of many of these youth. Approximately one third of the respondents lived with their relatives after discharge and family members were the most common resource for financial assistance. Although not a majority, but a high percentage of respondents reported that their families were supportive; 40 percent reported that their families tried to help them, 46 percent indicated that their families provided emotional support to them, and 49 percent agreed that they could talk with their families about problems. Foster parents also remain an important factor in the respondents’ lives after discharge; 40 percent of the youths reported that they spoke with their previous foster parents at least once a week 12 to 18 months after discharge, 20 percent of the youth agreed that their foster families continued to help them make decisions after discharge and provide emotional support.
Legal Issues

In Barth’s (1990) study, youth indicated considerable involvement in illegal activity and after foster care systems. More than one third (36%) were arrested while in foster care and 24 percent of former foster care youth had criminal activity since foster care. Among the whole sample, 31 percent had been arrested, 26 percent spent time in jail or prison, and 33 percent had done something illegal to get money. In Cook’s (1991) study, 25 percent of the youth reported having had problems with the law since discharge. Of those, over one half (51%) reported that the problem involved drugs or alcohol. Approximately 1,700 youth had been arrested and formal charges had been filed against 79 percent. At the time of the interview, 4 percent of the youth were incarcerated. These numbers are compared to the general population of youth 18-24. In 1988, there were a reported 117 arrests per 1,000 persons. Since this data does not include those persons that were arrested more than once, the data suggests that there is no significant difference between the arrest rate in the foster care population and the arrest rate for the general population.

Personal Adjustment

In Jones and Moses (1984) sample, 43 percent of the females reported having a child as compared to 13 percent of the males. In Barth’s (1990) study, the statistics were quite concerning. All (100%) of the respondents reported elevated scores on a depression scale or reported problems with depression or had been in a mental health hospital. On the successful side, 56 percent had attended more school or training since completing high school and 79 percent had a driver’s license or reported success using mass transportation to work. In Cook’s (1991) study, youth were asked about their general satisfaction with life. Approximately 40 percent indicated they were very happy. In addition, they were asked to identify the most difficult problems they have experienced since discharge. Their
responses were grouped into eight categories. The most prevalent problem was money (29%), and specific concerns ranged from not being able to budget to not having enough.

In Courtney's (1995, 1998) study, the respondents were much less likely to receive mental health services once they exited foster care. There was a significant difference in the utilization of any kind of counseling or mental health services between Wave 1 and 2 (47% to 21%). The mental health scale score used in this survey showed that the sample members in this study experience more psychological distress than their peers in the general population. In this study, overall, 37 percent of the youth interviewed at Wave 2 experienced one or more unwanted outcome (seriously victimized, sexually assaulted, incarcerated, or homeless) in the 12 to 18 months since they exited the foster care system. The risk varied considerably by gender, with 43 percent of males and 32 percent of females experiencing one of these outcomes.

Summary of Recent Studies on Independent Living

In Festinger's (1983), the goals of the study were two fold. (1) To provide a detailed picture of certain aspects of the lives of a group of young adults who had been discharged from out-of-home care upon or after reaching the age of majority; and (2) To obtain their views on the out-of-home care experience and what might be done to improve it. Potential subjects were people who had been discharged from out-of-home care in the New York Metropolitan area in 1975, who had been in care continuously for at least the preceding five years and who were at least 18-21 years old at the time of discharge. Of a potential sample of over 600, 277 (46%) people participated in the study; 186 were interviewed in person; 55 were interviewed by telephone, and 36 completed questionnaires. The data were collected between May 1979 and April 1980. Forty two percent of the respondents were female and fifty eight percent male; fifty percent were African American, twenty eight percent were Caucasian, nineteen percent Latino, and one percent Asian.
In Jones and Moses (1984) study, they explored the adjustment into the community and adult functioning of 328 persons formerly in care in West Virginia. All of the respondents had received out-of-home care for at least one year after October 1, 1977, and all had been discharged prior to January 1, 1984, and were at least 19-years old as of that date. Of a total of 629 possible respondents, 328 were involved in the research; 89 percent of these had personal interviews, 7 percent were interviewed by phone, and 4 percent completed questionnaires. They were between the ages of 19 and 28, with a mean age of 20 years. The goals were the same as the Festinger (1983) study.

In Barth’s (1990) study, he identified 55 young adults who had previously exited care between one and ten years. These youth were at least 16 years old at the time of emancipation. The recruitment procedures used multiple techniques to track the respondents. Flyers that advertised the study (and the $25.00 payment for being interviewed) were posted in public health clinics, AFDC waiting rooms, employment offices, and hospitals. Flyers were sent to all the foster parents in two counties by the Department of social service. Letters were sent to 18 group care providers, 33 social workers who are principally responsible for children in long-term foster care, the California Conservation Corporation, and Parole Officers of the California Youth Authority. A cadre of interviewers also used their professional and personal contacts to attempt to recruit willing youth. All together 85 names of former foster care youth who had left care at least one year prior but no more than 10 years ago were obtained by the project. Almost 25 percent could not be reached. The survey analyzed several areas including employment, continued contact with foster care parents, education, life skills preparation, health and health care, services offered and received, substance use and abuse, criminal activity, transition to independent living, and overall adjustment. The study made suggestions for social workers, and suggestions for other foster care youth.

This study tells us there is a great need for life skills training. It does not adequately address how to organize services to better meet the future and current needs of former
foster youth. Many youth reported that more services were needed before exiting, especially independent living skills which include content about money management, future educational opportunity consideration, and transition to independent housing. Youth often commented on the need for transitional housing programs that would allow them to develop independent living skills while receiving financial support. The demand to cope with the strain of establishing and maintaining a viable residential situation while learning to manage money was considered harsh. Youth often reported on the need for resources to help them with the adjustment to independent living (Barth, 1990).

The first phase of Cook’s (1991) Westat study was a process of evaluation in eight randomly selected states that included 47 counties. A sample of 1,644 youths were selected and chosen to represent the nation at large, a population of 34,600 youth. All youth were discharged from care between January 1987 and July 1988 and were 16 years or older when they emancipated. This study was able to follow up on half of the sample group. In Phase II, the youth were followed up on 2.5 to 4 years after discharge. Interviews were conducted with 810 youth between November 1990 and March 1991.

The locating Phase began by using information that was available about the youth prior to discharge, including, where possible, full name, social security number, names and addresses of relatives and friends. In most cases the information was very incomplete and by the time the locating began, 2-4 years old. Of the 1,644 youth eligible for the study, there was locating information on 1,303 youth. Initial locating efforts included contacting public and private agencies for further information, calling directory assistance, following up on strong contact leads, and contacting the Motor Vehicle Administration in each participating state. In Phase II of the study, there was more in depth tracing by telephone, and in the field. The field tracing included talking with neighbors, landlords, rental offices, building maintenance workers, local service businesses, and post offices. Westat’s 800 number was also liberally distributed with a promise of an incentive payment.
In this first phase, background information was gathered and the process of how independent living services were being implemented was analyzed. The second phase, involved tracking the youth in order to interview them. This was found to be a very difficult process requiring time, money, and information.

The study also looked at the impact of specific Independent Living services on youth compared to those that did not receive any services. From a list of 23 different Independent Living services, only 16 percent did not receive any of them. Unfortunately, there was no difference in outcomes comparing the youth who received services with those who did not. Cook (1991) then proceeded to look at specific skill areas as predictors of positive outcomes. The three skills trainings that had the most effect were money management, credit skills, and consumer skills. The youth who had skills training in these areas had better outcomes in access to health services, sense of well being, and overall self-sufficiency (Westat, 1991).

Courtney and Barth (1993) conducted a study of final discharge outcomes for an exit cohort of 2,653 foster youths in California who were at least 18 months in care before their final discharge. The data used for this analysis were drawn from University of California, Berkeley, Children’s Service Archive. This database is derived from administrative data used by the California Department of Social Services to track children in foster care. The sample group met three criteria: (1) experienced a final discharge from foster care between July 1, 1991 and December 31, 1992; (2) were at least 17 years of age at the time of exit; and (3) had spent at least 18 months in foster care before their final discharge (Courtney & Barth, 1996).

This study examined final discharge outcomes for the largest foster care population of any state, and the foster care caseload was found to exhibit many of the same trends seen in other states. However, child welfare populations and practices vary considerably by state in ways which might contribute to findings different from those reported in this
study. One of the most striking findings of this study is the fact that 16.8 percent of youths would eventually be placed with family at final discharge. Given the high number that returned to care, the author raises the question of whether they should have ever been removed in the first place. The fact that a large proportion of youths who have been removed from the care of their families due to abuse or neglect return back to their families after exiting the foster care system calls for a broad perspective in designing programs to prepare foster care youths for independent living and for conducting research in this area. This study suggests that multiple moves in and out of foster care systems are associated with an increased likelihood of an unsuccessful outcome at exit from care (Courtney & Barth, 1996). In general, an increase in the length of time in care before discharge is associated with an increase in the odds of emancipation over unsuccessful discharge. Conversely, it appears the longer the youth remain in care the less likely they are to return to their families upon discharge. This illustrates the importance that caseworkers should place on preparing foster care youths for independent living (Courtney & Barth, 1996).

Another study that Barth and Courtney conducted was in 1993. This study sample consisted of all foster care youths over 17 years of age at exit who left the California foster care system between July 1989 and December 1989. The original sample size was 3,926. However, much of the analysis is restricted to a smaller group of 2,983 who had been involved with the foster care system for at least 18 months prior to discharge. Most were in care due to parental neglect and one third were physically or sexually abused by their parents.

Of all the youth leaving care, about half exit into planned independent living, one-quarter returned home or were adopted, and the remainder experienced "unsuccessful" outcomes such as runaways, refusal of continuing services, incarceration, cost to the community, etc. The implications of this study are that programs intended to facilitate favorable transitions of youth out of foster care should place more emphasis on familial
support networks. Barth and Courtney (1993) suggest that efforts to locate and involve the nuclear family and extended kin in discharge planning should be made whenever possible. Special attention should be directed toward youth with a chaotic foster care history and/or a history of congregate care placement in order to improve their historically relatively poor discharge outcomes (Courtney & Barth, 1993).

The Courtney (1995, 1998) study was conducted through the University of Wisconsin, which was of youth aging out of home care. The study was meant to be conducted in three waves. The first wave of interviews was conducted between February and May 1995 before the youth exited care. The second wave was expected to be conducted after the youth have been out of care six months and the final wave was expected to be conducted 18 months after initial discharge. However, the second wave was never conducted and the study was reduced to two waves, one before the youth exited the system and the second eighteen months after exiting.

The youth selected for the study had been in out of home care at least 18 months, were seventeen or 18 years old at the time of the sample selection and were not developmentally disabled. Data was gained from the Wisconsin Human Service Reporting System. In this study, 157 individuals were chosen to participate in the study and 141 were found and interviewed for a response rate of 90 percent. Most of the youth reported that they had been maltreated prior to placement, the largest proportion of who were neglected. Regarding incidents prior to placement, 66 percent of the youth reported being neglected, 57 percent experienced physical abuse, and 31 percent reported that they had been sexually abused. The second wave of the study was conducted in 1996 and 1997; 12-18 months after the youths were discharged from the child welfare system. At wave 2, 113 youth were interviewed, 80 percent of those interviewed at wave 1. Respondents were asked to describe how prepared they were for independent living. About one third of the youths reported a perceived lack of preparedness in several skill areas, such as getting a job, managing money, health information, obtaining housing, obtaining
transportation, knowledge of resources, parenting, and living on their own. The youth were also asked questions in wave 1 about training they had received prior to discharge and over 80 percent reported no concrete training in several life skills areas. In addition, 32 percent reported having financial difficulties most or all of the time, 18 percent reported having difficulties finding employment most or all of the time, 9 percent reported having problems obtaining housing most or all of the time, 44 percent reported having difficulties obtaining medical care most or all of the time, 6 percent reported having difficulties making friends most or all of the time, 14 percent reported having transportation difficulties most or all of the time, and 25 percent reported having family problems most or all of the time.

Wave 2 of the Courtney (1998) study also examined many other areas of these youths’ lives, including living arrangements, finances and employment, medical and dental care, mental health issues, their social support system, which included the perceived social support scale, and indicators of failed transition to self-sufficiency. Overall, the findings as previously discussed were not positive.

There is little doubt that a significant proportion of foster care youth have a difficult time making the transition to self-sufficiency, at least in Wisconsin.

The experiences of the young adults in the present study suggest that the child welfare system might be able to improve the passage to independent living by building on family strengths while minimizing negative family impact, providing more concrete assistance in locating housing and employment, providing a better transitional safety net for those with the fewest life skills, and ensuring that former foster youth have access to medical care during their move to self-sufficiency (Courtney, 1998).

Effectiveness of Independent Living Programs

All states provide independent living services to youths about to leave the foster care system. However, little is known about the level of services provided and if these services
match the needs of these youth. (GAO, 1999). Given the significant challenges these youth face in transition to adulthood it is unfortunate the small role that Health and Human Services (HHS) has taken in an attempt to identify if the state’s ILP is providing services that increase youths’ chances of becoming self-sufficient once they leave the foster care system (GAO, 1999). There have been few studies conducted on the local or national level. Only one national study has been conducted since 1985 when the ILP was established. This study, conducted by Cook (1994) at Westat; Scannapieco, Schagrin, and Scannapieco’s (1995) study of the effectiveness of an ILP in Baltimore County, Maryland; Mcmillen, Rideout, Fisher, and Tucker’s study (1997) offered by the Missouri division of Family services; and the GAO’s report of Contra Costa, California; Baltimore City and County, Maryland; New York, New York; and the San Antonio Region, Texas will all be discussed.

Cook’s (1994) Westat study found that services provided by the ILP have the potential to improve outcomes for youths. This study found that skills training in particular areas led to better outcomes, although no one skill area had a consistent effect across all outcomes assessed. More comprehensive effects were achieved when youths were taught a combination of skills. Youths who received training in managing money, obtaining a credit card, and buying a car, as well as help in how to find a job and gain access to appropriate educational opportunities, were more likely to keep a job for at least a year.

Scannapieco, Schagrin, and Scannapieco (1995) conducted a study of the effectiveness of an ILP in Baltimore County, Maryland. The findings suggested that Independent Living Programs may have positive impact on the ability of youth to be self-sufficient at the time of discharge from foster care programs. The study was limited in that it was unable to show the relationship between the specific ILP variables and outcomes, it is clear that the program overall was effective. The youth who participated in their ILP were
more likely to complete high school, have employment history and employment at discharge, and were more likely to be self-supporting at the closing of the case.

Determining what works and what does not work is important not only to the youth receiving services, but to the funders as well. With current congressional and state budget constraints, funding for ILP’s may be streamlined. Identifying the most essential components of ILP’s may become a necessary component of every state (McMillen, Rideout, Fisher, & Tucker, 1997). In Mcmillen, Rideout, Fisher, and Tucker’s study (1997) they set out to explore what former youth now living in the community think of the independent living services they received while in care. In focus groups, former Foster youth were asked to describe the services that were most helpful in teaching them how to live independently and to identify who was most helpful in their transition to independent living (McMillen et all, 1997). The respondents were young adults who had participated in independent living skills classes offered by the Missouri Division of Family services (DFS), while living in out-of-home-care, had left out-of-home-care, and had been released from DFS’s custody. Twenty-five young adults participated in this study.

Nine specific findings emerged from the focus groups. These findings related to the helpful aspects of independent living programming, sources of help in the transition out of care, and views of the in-care experience. These nine findings are: 1) Financial skills training and stipends for independent living; 2) Meeting others like them which Reduced stigma and isolation by meeting others in similar situations; 3) Skills classes and other activities such as the seminars, camps, conferences, and reunions; 4) Instruction in financial management, including how to budget, use a checkbook, comparison shop, use unit pricing, save money, and building and using credit. Although the youth found this area to be helpful, overall they felt that more classes were needed in the financial management area; 5) Training in apartment hunting, birth control, cooking, changing tires, building relationships, and finding community resources; 6) Independent Living Stipends; 7) The youths’ IL specialist; 8) The foster parents, which in general, were found to be of
the most assistance; and 9) All youth agreed that the transition out of care was very difficult (McMillen et al, 1997).

The GAO looked at several sites where the ILP is in place, although they specifically discuss the four, the study also addresses the nation as a whole. This will help to provide a better picture of the ILP nationwide. The GAO looked at three main areas which are broken down as follows; Employment and Education, Learning Daily Living Skills, and Housing and other Transitional Support Services.

Employment and Educational Assistance

According to the GAO (1999) 40 states nationwide provided employment services to youth preparing for adulthood. All four of the areas reported by the GAO (1999) were found to of provided assistance to youth with education and employment, yet they did not provide service that fully matched foster care youths to appropriate employment pathways. This was mainly due to limitations of available resources in vocation, apprenticeship, culinary arts and technology related fields. Of the four sites, only Texas provides tuition waivers for all state supported vocational, technical, and post secondary schools. All four sites reported that their states are having difficulties matching the ILP with potential employers, yet progress is being made. For example, in Maryland there was a partnership established between the ILP and the United Parcel Service (UPS), the Living Classroom Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which is trying to teach these youth invaluable transferable, workplace skills.

Daily Living Skills

The GAO’s (1999) annual state report found that 46 states were providing training for youths in daily living skills such as money management, health and safety, nutrition, housekeeping, parenting, sexual responsibility, and interpersonal and other social skills. The four sites that were studied were among the 46 states providing the training.
Although the ILP is moving in a positive direction, for example 22 states have developed youth advisory boards that work to improve the policies and services effecting foster youth, there are still many factors that inhibit or prevent vital learning activities such as safety regulations for group homes, lack of youth participation, and lack of funds.

Housing and Other Transitional Support Services

The GAO’s survey showed that more than 80 percent of states provided transitional practice living arrangements to some youth while they were still in care to allow them an opportunity to experience independent living for a period of time. About 37 percent of the United States offered housing to some youths after they left the system. Additional transitional support services provided by the states include counseling, programs for youth with special needs and disabilities, and after care programs for youth who are no longer in care. Several states noted that many youths have mental health issues that need to be addressed. They reported that these issues act as barriers for the youth to succeed in independent living programs. A low 31 percent of states indicated in their annual reports that they offer some type of counseling service such as individual, group, or peer counseling. Additionally, seven states offered specialized programs for developmentally disabled youths and four states offered services for those with emotional or behavioral problems.

Unfortunately, there are some real gaps in the foster care system with regards to transitional living arrangements. The GAO’s (1999) study showed that 38 states served 6,320 current foster youths and 12 states served 1,787 former foster youths. Officials in the four visited areas confirmed the limitations of transitional housing in these areas, as they were unable to provide for youths both in and out of the system. For example, in Texas, a transitional provider indicated that the program only has space for six youths, leaving an additional 80-100 youths with no place to live upon exit who could all benefit from this program. Additional programs reported that there is extensive screening and
only the most promising teenagers gain acceptance into these programs leaving the others on the streets.

A 1994 Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report and a 1995 Harvard University study both recommended that HHS take a stronger role in managing ILP’s. The OIG report noted that the lack of accurate national information on Independent living efforts weakens basic accountability and hinders efforts to improve programs and to determine effective practice. Currently, HHS has few strategies in place to review the progress of states ILP’s. The HHS relies solely on state’s annual reports and summary statistics from these reports. This presents two problems. First, states’ approaches to program reporting and the quality of their program reports vary greatly producing ambiguous reports that do not have the same meaning in other programs. There is an overall lack of cohesiveness across the nation. The second problem is that, currently, states are required to report certain information to the HHS 90 days after program completion, however, many states fail to do this because they feel 90 days is not enough time to judge youths’ independence.

The Future of Independent Living Programs

The HHS officials reported that they were aware of the deficiencies in the annual ILP reports and that the agency needs to improve on the monitoring of the program. As a response, the HHS issued a contract in September 1998 to conduct an analysis of 10 years of annual state ILP reports so that it can begin to fill in the data gaps. This analysis, according to project staff, represents HHS’s first attempt since the ILP began to summarize what states are doing with their ILP funds. Project objectives include looking for model programs, as well as what measures HHS can take to improve state reporting and evaluation.
Federal Legislature

In 1977, the youth in New York State sued for the state’s failure to provide them the skills necessary to live independently. Six youth were the plaintiffs who filed a class action lawsuit through New York’s Coalition for the Homeless. One of the plaintiffs on his eighteenth birthday was given cab fare, directions to a men’s shelter and a discharge from his most recent group home. At that time, this was the way the youth who were exiting the system were being treated. These youth were forced to fend for themselves, homeless, broke, and hungry. They were forced to panhandle and beg for their own survival. Across the country this had become the norm. However, when these youth won their case, it became a celebrated victory that led to a ruling by the State Supreme Court justice requiring stricter supervision guidelines of the young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who leave foster care (Kellam, 1999). This Court decision led to nationwide alarm and seemed to wake up the public about the problems with youth emancipation at 18.

In 1984 and 1985 there was an increasingly growing concern for foster care teenagers that were getting prepared for emancipation from the foster care system. Members of Congress heard through such Subcommittees as the Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation 1985, Subcommittee on Social Security and Income Maintenance Program 1985, Citizens Committee for Children of New York 1984, and New York State Council on Children and Families 1984, about the low self esteem and poor school performance of foster care teenagers. They were told about the documented New York City studies that former foster children were fast becoming a significant proportion of the overall homeless population. Shaffer and Caton (1984), for example found that half of the young people who came to the shelters of New York City had previously lived in foster care settings. In addition, in a New York City study, it was found that one third of the youths leaving foster care ended up on AFDC or the city’s Home Relief Program within 18 months (Pettiford, 1981).
At the close of 1984, teens accounted for 46 percent of the estimated 275,000 children in foster care. There had also been recognition of the growing vulnerability of this population. Congressional awareness of the unmet needs of teens in foster care and the need for increased investment in their behalf resulted in the enactment of a federal independent living initiative for teens in foster care as part of Public Law 99-272, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (Allen, Bonner, and Greenan).

Their purpose was to appropriate Title IV-E funds for use with programs to help youth make the transition from foster care to independent living (Cook, Flieshman, & Grimes, 1993). The monies available through this fund can be used for a range of services, such as daily living skills, tutoring for high school diplomas, or outreach programs. Youth over 16 years of age in out-of-home-care, including those who are not eligible for federal Title IV-E are eligible for the Independent Living Program for six months following discharge from care (Scannapieco, Schagrin, & Scannapieco, 1995).

Currently the ILP is the primary program designed to help foster care youths become self-sufficient. This program authorizes federal funding for states to establish and implement services to assist youths aged 16 and over in making the transition from foster care to independent living. Originally authorized in 1985 by P.L. 99-272 for a limited period, the program was reauthorized indefinitely as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, which also increased federal funding to the current level of $70 million per year. A portion of the federal funds, $45 million, is distributed to states as an entitlement based on each state’s proportion of all youths receiving federal foster care maintenance payments in fiscal year 1984. States are also eligible to receive a proportional share of the remaining $25 million in federal funds to match the funds they provide (GAO, 1999).

In December of 1999, the John H. Chafee Independent Program was signed by President Clinton and passed by Congress. The Act received final confirmation and became effective in March of 2000. It is clear there were significant improvements to the
previous Independent Living Program. The ILP will now receive double the funding than it had previously. The funding will be increased from $70 million to $140 million, which will obviously allow improvements in the services the program provides. The program will now give states the option of extending Medicaid to youths 18 to 21 of age who have left foster care. This will mean the disadvantaged youth will not be plagued by concerns over finding medical coverage. The program will also increase the asset/savings limit for the federal foster care program from $1,000 to $10,000. The program will clarify the importance of concurrent activity in finding adoptive families for these children. It will require HHS, in consultation with federal, state, and local officials, advocates, youth service providers, and researchers to develop outcome measures to assess state performance. It also increases funding to be used for training adoptive and foster parents, workers in group homes, and case managers to help them address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living. Finally, it will authorize additional funds for adoption incentive payments to states that increased the number of children adopted from foster care (The Foster Care Independent Act of 1999 H.R.3443).

Nevada Policy and State Statute

On Thursday, June 15, 2000 the Legislative Commission’s Subcommittee on the Study of the Integration of State and Local Child Welfare Systems in Nevada (Assembly Concurrent Resolution Number 53) had a hearing to address the bifurcated child welfare system in Clark and Washoe Counties and report back to the Legislature. Because of personal testimony by foster care youth, the legislative committee decided to include specific recommendations concerning youth that age out of the system. The recommendations are:

1) To urge by Resolution Nevada’s Department of Human Resources to review the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the feasibility of amending the State
Medicaid plan to create a new Medicaid Eligibility Group for children who have “aged out” of foster care.

2) To draft legislation to expand the definition of a child under NRS 432.010 (“less than 18 years of age, or if in school, until graduation from high school”) to permit a youth to stay in foster care until the age of 21 years under certain circumstances.

Nevada’s Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) has developed policy contained in the Substitute Care manual that describes in detail what the state is expected to provide to the youth who are in care and are preparing for emancipation. The philosophy of the Independent Living Initiative is that all adolescents who are in custody of DCFS and are over the age of sixteen should be prepared for adult independent living and provided with the opportunity to acquire independent living skills while they are in foster care. This plan specifies the objectives, goals, and requirements of the foster care youth and what services the state plans to provide. Some of the services that are described in this manual (Division of Child and Family Services Substitute Care Manual) include: Educational/Vocational referrals; Independent Living Life skills classes; Independent Living Initiative Plan grant funds that are available; assisting with the attainment of a Driver’s license; the Independent Living Subsidy Program, which is used to help the youth live on his or her own; assistance with the budgeting of a checking and savings account; the completion of a thorough transitional case plan and Independent Living assessment; Mentoring; and after care services.

Some of these programs require a more detailed description of the services than they provide. The transitional case plan is a plan that every foster care youth completes with the Independent Living Specialist. The youth meets with the Independent Living Specialist for the first time at the age of fifteen and a half, and then every six months until the youth ages out of the foster care system. This transitional living plan is intended to prepare the youth in all areas of his life including but not limited to living arrangements, education, employment and career, health, transportation, daily living skills, finances, and
goals for the future. Each time there is a meeting, an independent living assessment is completed which allows for the transitional case plan to be remanded.

The Independent Living Subsidy program was developed to help youth that are doing well in care live on their own, but with assistance. A youth must be attending school and have part time employment. He or she must also have no legal trouble. The intent of this program is to have the state pay the foster care rate to the youth to help them support themselves. The youth is available for this program at age sixteen or seventeen-years, however, this program has not been utilized in over five years.

Mentoring is another program that has been used by DCFS, however, this is a program that has not had much success. There are few mentors that are currently in the program. This program is not seeking recruits. The only way to learn of the Mentoring program is by word of mouth. However, The University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension Trainer works with the Mentor Coalition, which sometimes refers mentors. Additionally, there is extensive training given to those who volunteer for this program. Training is through the University of Reno, Cooperative Extension. It is a five to seven session class employing a training manual from a program designed by the University of Oklahoma.

The After Care services that are currently available to youth that exit the system are two fold: 1) Federal dollars are currently available when an emergency arises. Ken Meyer, Independent Living Specialist, is now able to access funds to help out youth in an emergency, should they be homeless, or in need of other emergency assistance. The process for accessing this money involves contacting Ken Meyer and applying for the funds informally. He then simply makes certain the money is going toward a true necessity; and 2) A new program, Work Source, has been started at all of the community colleges in Southern Nevada. The purpose of this program is to provide skills training to all youth who enter it. The program also is in the process of readying itself to provide other concrete aid such as clothing, bus tokens, and housing.
Erik Erikson proposed an epigenetic model of human development. He claimed that development of man is based upon "a ground plan out of which parts arise during specific times of ascendancy until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole" (Erikson, 1950, p.53). Thus, Erikson fashioned his model of psychological development after the growth of the infant in the utero. The psychological development of man, he believed, takes place in a certain prescribed sequence from one stage to the next (Robbins, 1998, p. 197).

Erikson described eight sequential stages of development (Basic Trust versus Mistrust, Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, Initiative versus Guilt, Identity versus Role confusion, Intimacy versus Isolation, Generativity versus Stagnation, and Integrity versus Despair) and noted that it was not possible to move forward to the next stage without completion of the previous stage. Erikson claimed that these stages are characterized as critical time periods in the development of an individual.

This theoretical model is very conducive to understanding the difficulties that youth have within the foster care system. It is well documented that there are many problems and crises that foster care youth go through during their experience in the foster care system (Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991; Courtney, 1993). Unfortunately, the problems most often begin even before their foster care experience. They often have histories of poor supervision, deprivation of necessities, impoverished conditions, and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. What is the likelihood that during these early crucial periods of development they had nurturing parents able to focus on the needs of a child? Upon entering the system, many times these youth were already developmentally behind their
peers and were in need of more services than are provided in the foster care system. By
the time the youth reach late adolescence and early adulthood, there have acquired severe
behavioral dysfunctions. Now, with the evolution of developmental theories, Human
Development theory further recognizes this critical time period in the life of youth who are
transitioning into adulthood.

Human Development theory (Mech, 1994) suggests the existence of a series of
important transitional periods in the life cycle. A transitional period is defined as a
"boundary zone between two more or less defined or structured periods of life" (Egan and
Cowan, 1980). It is clear that the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood
constitutes a critical period. Using chronological age as an indicator, the age span from 17
to 22 is considered the transitional period that immediately precedes early adulthood
(Mech, 1994). Thus, for youth preparing to emancipate from the foster care system, this
can be a difficult time in their lives. The foster care system must be sensitive to this
information and be willing to show some flexibility when dealing with this vulnerable
group.

Transitional periods are characterized by uncertainties that individuals face in learning
to adjust to new and unfamiliar developmental challenges. Leaving adolescence and
moving into early adulthood clearly qualifies as a critical transition. Relationships with
parents, family, peers, schools, church, and community institutions are being redefined,
modified, or terminated. Important personal decisions such as career choices, intimate
relationships, self-sufficiency, and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and education all
become the hallmark of this transitional period. At some point, all youth in out-of-home
care must leave the jurisdiction of the child welfare system and enter the world of adult
living. So far, much of the literature has described poor outcomes of these youth who
emancipate out of the system at eighteen years old. Currently, the child welfare system is
struggling to meet the needs of this large population of young adults who emancipate out
of the foster care system (Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991; Courtney, 1993).
In order for the current ILP’s to adequately meet the needs of these youth, they need to focus on several issues facing foster care youth. It is important for the programs to deal with the emotional and mental conditions of these youth, they should be aware of the severe “emotional baggage” that these youth carry. If these youth do not come to terms with their issues, they will be unable to develop into responsible, productive adults. In order for ILP’s to better understand some of the emotional issues facing these youth, Levine (1990) describes the concept of remourning.

All foster children struggle with the need to make sense of placement in the least hurtful way possible. The loss of home and family is a deeply wounding experience, and it must be explained and fully mourned before the foster child can begin to plan for the future. If the youth is unable to understand, accept, and make peace with the past, the youth is at serious risk of having a future filled with continual problems (Levine, 1990, p.53).

For the first time in many of the lives of the youth that are exiting foster care, they are able to begin to think abstractly. They are perhaps beginning to recognize that their parents could have acted differently. The pain created by this realization may bring about the need to mourn again. Some manage this remourning adaptively. Others find it overwhelming and in an effort to deal with the pain they often act out against themselves, others, or both (Levine, 1990, p.54). Many foster care youth are trapped in this cycle of destructive behavior in which they find themselves unable to move forward, while the present only produces harmful effects on their lives and on the lives of those around them. This often prevents bonding with parental figures, leaving them in a world where they feel their strongest support is their peers (Cook, 1991). Unfortunately, these youth are also engaging in the same self-destructive behaviors. Most foster care youth view their support systems as strong, yet have few bonds to many of the adult caretakers that have been in their lives. In Cook (1991) only one fourth of the youth interviewed identified
their foster parents as their strongest support, and in Mark Courtney’s (1995) Wisconsin study, a low 20 percent identified their foster parents as a source of substantial support.

Youth in this age range typically find it difficult and uncomfortable to talk about their feelings, especially with paid professionals. They seem to, in general, view being in counseling as a weakness. Usually, they only feel comfortable talking to peers and often find themselves with little concrete support. This tendency by adolescence to withhold personal information and their general lack of desire to receive counseling, is further complicated in that the youth growing up in foster care often come from abusive households. It is obvious that many difficulties will arise when attempts are made to reach and to help the youth in this category. Even once engaged, there is much work to do in overcoming the existing heavy emotional issues. Levine suggests that the youth needs to go through the remourning stages, which are similar to the grief process model: denial, strong feeling, and acceptance.

Denial, the pain created by realizing for the first time that placement might mean being unloved, is immense and cannot be immediately tolerated. Regression frequently accompanies pain. The regression that results from a foster child’s recognition of parental limitations most frequently leads to a rebound denial. During this time, biological parents are often idealized (Levine, 1990, p. 61). Despite the remourning adolescent’s attempts to deny the situation, the foster care child cannot help but notice their biological parent’s absence. As these youth try to explain the situation in which they find themselves, it often becomes easier for them to transfer their confused feelings to their foster parents.

The adolescent often targets the foster parent or primary caregiver with acting out behavior. It is important to realize the adolescent’s changing thoughts are not sufficiently developed to permit an understanding that the felt rage is displaced anger created by past parental wounds, the uncertainty of shifting beliefs and the breakdown of denial surrounding the biological parents’ limitations. Ironically, the fact that foster parents take on the nurturing role of the foster child can often add salt to the wound. This nurturance
sometimes makes a foster child realize the inadequacies of his biological parents and this can lead to even more rejection of the loving, nurturant behavior of the foster parents.

The second stage of remourning is the stage of strong feelings. This occurs when the youth begins to have increased cognition of the circumstances. Since placement into out of home care is interpreted as severe punishment, the youth internalizes this situation as being his or her fault. This leads to severe acting out, in which the youth believes that there is something wrong with him or herself. Typical at risk behavior includes substance abuse, crime, etc. This behavior is a self fulfilling prophecy, the youth internalizes that they are bad and then they play out the role they believe represents them. This acting out behavior is an attempt to push the foster parent away, if the youth can get the foster parent to reject him or her, then their belief that all parents are bad will remain and they do not have to come to the painful reality of their parents' inadequacies.

The third stage in remourning is acceptance. Adolescence can make peace with their status when they can admit that their parents hurt them. Resolution means accepting things as they are. The youth is able to look at the past without pain or resentment, however, achieving this is not easy. There is often moving about within the three stages until finally resolution occurs (Levine, 1990, p.61).
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design which was used in this study was cross sectional survey research. Dillman's "Total Design Method (TDM)" was applied to gather the data. TDM is the identification of each aspect of the survey process that may affect response quantity or quality and shaping them in a way that will encourage good response. These efforts are guided by a view about why people do and do not respond to interviews and questionnaires, and a concern that the weakest link in surveying is often the researchers inability to mount and carry through a precisely ordered and time implementation process so necessary for maximizing response (Dillman, 1978, p.2).

Respondents and Procedures

Respondents included 20 former foster care youth (10 male and 10 female) that were chosen from a larger study of former foster care youth that had a sample size of 243 respondents. The larger study was conducted by Dr. Thom Reilly at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and myself. The methodology that was used to conduct this research is a non-probability availability sample selected from a list of former foster care youth that was provided by DCFS in order to track these youth. The list was provided through a computer generated database that was supposed to provide accurate information about former foster care youth who have exited the foster care system. However, several youth surfaced that did not appear on the original list. After verifying their former status in foster care, they were included in the overall sample. The reason that an availability
sample was used is due to the difficulty in finding these youth. Additional criteria for inclusion in the study required that the youth aged out of the system by the age of eighteen and have been on their own for at least six months and a maximum of four and a half years. The chosen twenty, were the interviews that I conducted myself, either in person or in a phone interview. Of the twenty interviews, nine of the female respondents were interviewed over the phone and seven of the males, leaving four interviews that were conducted in person (three males and one female). The respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form that explained that all responses would be confidential. It also stated that there would be no identification of the respondents to the responses. All information provided by respondents to this study was grouped for analysis, and the results reflected those of the group as a whole. Participation in this study was voluntary and the respondents were given $30.00 immediately after completion of the in person interviews and were mailed a check for $30.00 within the next ten days after completion of the phone interviews. Both in person and on the phone interviews took approximately 45-60 minutes to complete.

In order to track the youth, several means were used. Letters were sent to all group homes, foster homes, and last addresses that were given by DCFS. The Department of Motor Vehicles also produced a list of last known addresses and this list was given to the Department of Prisons. One letter was sent asking for any information that would lead to the location of any of the youth and an additional letter was sent inviting the youth directly to participate in the study. All youth care providers in Las Vegas were contacted and asked for help in locating any of the youth on the list or that met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Additionally, every time an interview was conducted, the youth were asked to identify any other known former foster care youth. Second mailings with follow up phone calls were made. All avenues for locating youth were pursued several times. The time period in which interviews were conducted was between September and December of 2000. Additionally, the phone book was used to attempt to track the youth. The survey

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instrument (see Appendix I) was pre-tested with five former foster care youth who were recommended by Ken Meyer, Independent Living Specialist, and Dr. Thom Reilly.

Demographic Factors

Standard demographic information (age, race/ethnicity, gender, income, and marital status,) was obtained.

Living Arrangements

The respondents were asked where they are presently living, how satisfied they are with their current living arrangements, and if they are not, what are some of the reasons for their dissatisfaction? They were also asked in how many places they have lived since exiting foster care. If they have lived in more than two places, they were asked why they moved around so much. Finally, the respondents were asked if there ever was a time in which they didn’t have a place to live since exiting foster care. All of these questions were adapted from the survey given by Hailu Abatena, Ph.D. in a follow-up survey report of the youth released from foster care in Nevada in 1996.

Education

The respondents were asked to name the highest level of education they attained before being discharged from foster care, since being discharged from foster care, and how much education they would be satisfied with. These three questions were adapted from the Cook’s (1991) study. They were also asked if they were currently attending school, and if so, what kind of school (high school, junior college, college, etc). They were also asked to state their educational plan for their future. These two questions were taken directly from the 1996 Abatena study. Finally, they were asked if they were attending a trade or vocational school, if they were ever in special education classes, and if
so, what kind of special education it was. These three questions were taken from Cook's (1991) study.

Employment

The respondents were asked if they had a steady job or employment (regular employment for over a year) before exiting foster care. This question was adapted from Abatena (1996). The respondents were also asked if they have the same job as the one they had when they were in the foster care system, if they have had regular employment since leaving foster care, if they have ever been terminated, and if so, how many times. These questions were taken directly from Cook's (1991) study. The respondents were asked if they are currently employed, how long have they had the job, how well it is going, whether they generally find it difficult to find a job, and if so, why. This group of questions was adapted from Abatena (1996). The respondents were asked how many different jobs they have had including their current job, if employed. This question was adapted from the (1991) Cook study.

Health

The respondents were asked if they have ever had any serious illness since leaving foster care, if so, they were asked the nature of the illness, whether they received treatment for it, and to rate their general health condition now. This group of questions was taken from Abatena (1996). They were also asked to rate the condition of their health compared to people their own age, whether they were covered by any health insurance at the time of their discharge from foster care, and who usually pays for their medical care now. These questions were taken from Cook's (1991) study.
Substance Abuse

The substance abuse questions were taken from Cook’s (1990) study. The respondents were asked how many times within the last 30 days they had a drink, whether they have ever ingested or inhaled marijuana, and if so on how many days in the last 30 days had they used this drug. They were also asked if they had used any other recreational drugs (methamphetamine, cocaine, inhalants, psilocybin, LSD, PCP, prescription drugs, ecstasy, special K), and if so, how often did they use the drug(s) the year before they exited foster care and how often they used the drug(s) in the last 30 days. Finally, the respondents were asked if they ever sold drugs to support themselves and if they ever overdosed on drugs.

Support Systems

From a list of people, the respondents were asked to identify those with whom they are currently in contact. This question was not taken from any source. They were next asked how closely they felt to each of these people. This question was adapted from Courtney’s (1998) Wisconsin study. Respondents were then asked whether they are currently friends with any of the people they came to know while they were in foster care. They were also asked if they belong to any organizations (sports teams, civic groups, religious or spiritual groups). If so, they were asked to provide the names of these organizations. These questions were also taken from Courtney’s (1998) study.

Next, the respondents were asked whether violence has been a part in any of their dating relationships since leaving foster care. They were asked whether or not they have any children, and if so, whether they harbor any regrets about becoming parents at so young an age. This group of question was taken from Cook’s (1990) study.

Female respondents were asked whether or not they have ever been pregnant, and males were asked whether or not they have ever caused a pregnancy. If either group responded in the affirmative, they were also asked the results of the pregnancy. They
were asked whether they have ever had sexual intercourse in exchange for money, goods, and/or services, whether they have ever had a sexually transmitted disease, and, if so, which one. Finally, they were asked to state their sexual orientation. This large group of questions was taken from Courtney's (1998) study.

Foster Care Experience

The respondents were asked what length of time they spent in foster care, the total number of placements they had, what person was most supportive of them while they were in foster care, how satisfied they were with their foster care experience in general, and if they had ever been adopted. This group of questions was taken from Cook's (1991) study. The respondents were also asked whether if, during the time they spent in foster care, any person ever tried to kiss, touch them in inappropriate places, or have sexual intercourse with them, whether they succeeded or not. If so, they were asked whether the person was five or more years older than them. Finally, the respondents were asked whether their caretakers ever hit them with an object or fist, kicked them, or slapped them real hard. This group of questions was taken from Courtney's (1998) study.

Legal Issues

The respondents were asked if, since exiting foster care, they had ever experienced any trouble with the law. If so, they were asked to name the offense, and whether they have ever had formal charges filed against them ("formal" was explained to mean charges which included either arrest followed by a court appearance or being served with legal papers charging them with an offense). This group of questions was taken directly from the (1996) Abatena study. Additionally, the question of whether or not the former foster care youth had ever spent time in jail was used. It was taken directly from Cook's (1991) study.
Personal Adjustment

Using a Likert scale of seven responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly disagree,” the respondents were asked to respond to the statement “I am satisfied with my life.” This question was taken from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener. John., Journal of Personality Assessment, 49, pp. 71-75). The respondents were then asked to rate their overall satisfaction with life using a Likert scale from one to seven, one being the most satisfied and seven being the most dissatisfied. This scale was taken from the UCLA scale. Finally, the respondents were asked if they had ever attempted suicide and if so, how long ago. This question was also taken from the UCLA scale.

Preparedness for Independent Living

The youth were asked if they received independent living services in the following areas: money management/consumer awareness, food management, personal appearance and hygiene, housekeeping, housing, transportation, educational planning, job seeking skills, job maintenance skills, emergency and safety skills, knowledge of community resources, interpersonal skills, legal skills, decision making/problem solving skills, and parenting skills. These questions were adapted from the Cook (1991) study.

Each youth was also asked if, shortly before exiting foster care, anyone provided any instruction, services, or information in the areas of job placement and/or job interview skills, a monthly check, the youth’s needs, the youth’s health records, health care insurance, the name of a contact person should there be problems, and/or money for an apartment. This question was also adapted from the Cook (1991) study.

Finally, the youth were asked whether, upon discharge, they have any of the following: a drivers license, at least $250.00, pots and pans to set up a household, a place to live, and/or knowledge of what occupation they wanted to pursue. This question was taken directly from Cook’s (1991) study.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Demographics

Ten males and ten females were chosen as the sample. The demographic characteristics can be found in Table 1. in APPENDIX II. There were eight Caucasians, six African Americans, two Hispanics, two Native American/Caucasians, one Samoan/Caucasian, and one African American/Hispanic/Caucasian. There were three eighteen-year-olds, three nineteen-year-olds, three twenty-year-olds, nine twenty-one-year-olds, one twenty-two-year-old, and one twenty-three-year-old. Of the 10 females, one is married, one is separated, and two have live-in relationships. The other six are single or do not live with their significant other. Of the 10 males, one is married and one is divorced, the rest are single. When the respondents were asked what their total income reported for 1999 was, six respondents (three female and three male) earned less than $5,000; nine respondents (five female and four male) earned $5,000-$10,000; two respondents (both female) earned $10,000-$15,000; one respondent (male) earned $15,000-$20,000; one respondent (male) earned $20,000-$30,000; and one respondent (male) earned $30,000-$40,000.

Foster Care Experience Summary

Table 2. in APPENDIX II contains a summary of the five areas of the former foster care youth views on their experience while in foster care which include how many were adopted, were in foster care for more than eight years, experienced seven or more
placements, were satisfied or very satisfied with their foster care experience in general, and were physically abused. There are additional findings also listed below.

- 20 percent reported being adopted at least once during their time in foster care (three male and one female).
- 60 percent reported being in the foster care system for eight or more years (seven females and five males).
- 65 percent reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience in general (seven females and six females).
- 55 percent reported being in seven or more placements during their time in foster care (five males and six females).
- 40 percent of the female respondents reported that their most supportive person was their previous foster parent.
- 40 percent of the female respondents reported that it was their caseworker or ILP Specialist who was the most supportive.
- 30 percent of the males reported that the most supportive person to them was their group home staff.
- 20 percent of the males reported that the most supportive person to them was their sibling.
- 15 percent reported that they were sexually abused while in the foster care system (two females and one male).
- 5 percent reported that the caretaker attempted to touch him in inappropriate places but failed (one male).
- 50 percent reported that their caretaker physically abused them while they were in foster care (six males and four females).
Preparedness for Independent Living Summary

Table 3. in APPENDIX II provides a summary of the services that the respondents were given to prepare them for life after foster care. Areas include; money management/consumer awareness, food management, personal appearance and hygiene, housekeeping, housing, transportation, educational planning, job seeking skills, job maintenance skills, emergency and safety skills, knowledge of community resources, interpersonal skills, legal skills, decision making/problem solving skills, and parenting skills. Seventy-five percent or more of the respondents reported receiving training in all areas. The respondent was then asked whether, shortly before exiting care, anyone provided any concrete services or assistance relating to job placement and/or job interview skills, a monthly check, a meeting to discuss the youth's needs, the youth's health records, provision for health care insurance, the name of a contact person should there be problems, money for an apartment (see table 4. in APPENDIX II). In addition, they were asked whether upon discharge from foster care, did they have any of the following: a drivers license, at least $250.00, pots and pans to set up household furnishing, a place to live, and/or knowledge as to which occupation they wanted to pursue. The response rates were from 15 percent to 55 percent with an average of 35 percent in each area (see Table 5. in APPENDIX II).

Living Arrangement Summary

Table 6. in APPENDIX II contains a summary for living arrangements, employment, health, and substance abuse.

- 45 percent reported being homeless at least once since exiting foster care (six male and three female).
- 45 percent reported living in more than four places since leaving care.
- 55 percent reported either being satisfied or very satisfied with their living arrangement (six female, five male).
None of the sample reported owning or renting a home. All were either staying in someone else's home or renting an apartment. Of the reasons given for being dissatisfied with their living arrangements, living in a bad environment or an unsafe area was the most common response.

**Education Summary**

- 45 percent received a high school diploma.
- 65 percent eventually received their high school diploma (six male and seven female).
- 10 percent earned their GED after their exit from foster care.
- Almost 50 percent of the sample reported being in special education in their early education.

The most common reasons given for placement in special education was for emotional and behavioral issues.

- 15 percent reported being in college.
- 15 percent reported being in technical or vocational school.

Of the seven males not in school, four of them reported a desire to further their education to include a four year degree or Master's level education. Of the seven females not in school, all of them reported a desire to either attend vocational school, receive a two-year degree, receive a four-year degree, or earn a Master's level education.

**Employment Summary**

- 80 percent reported having regular employment (at least 20 hours per week) before exiting foster care.
- Since leaving foster care, 75 percent of the females and 50 percent of the males maintained regular employment.
- 50 percent reported having at least five or more jobs in their lifetime.
- 65 percent reported being terminated from employment at least once.
- 10 percent of the females reported being employed for more than seven months.
- 30 percent of the males, two of which have had the same employment since exiting foster care reported being employed for more than seven months.
- 60 percent reported that it was not difficult to secure employment (seven females and five males).

The most common reason given for finding it difficult to secure employment was lack of education.
- 40 percent reported their employment was going well or very well (four males and four females).

Health Summary
- 15 percent reported having serious health problems since leaving foster care (two females and one male). However, only one reported being treated for health problem while the other two reported either being misdiagnosed or not having any insurance to cover the expense of treatment.
- 85 percent reported either being in good, very good or excellent general health (nine males and eight females).
- 40 percent reported being covered by health care at the time of their discharge from foster care (three males and five females).
- 45 percent reported being currently covered by health care (three males and six females).
- 35 percent reported they received no medical assistance stating it is not affordable.
- 15 percent reported being on Medicaid or medical assistance paid for by the state.
Substance Abuse Summary
- 80 percent of the males reported drinking alcohol in the last 30 days (two reported drinking 8-10 times per month and the six reported drinking one to four times in the last month).
- 10 percent of the females reported drinking more than once in the last thirty days.
- 70 percent reported trying marijuana in their lifetime (eight males and four females).
- 25 percent reported using marijuana four or more times in the last thirty days (four males and one female).
- 35 percent reported trying more serious recreational drugs before or after exiting care, but none reported regular use (five males and two females).
- 25 percent reported dealing drugs at some point to support themselves (three males and two females).
- 5 percent reported ever overdosing from their drug use (one male).

Support Networks Summary
Table 7. in APPENDIX II provides a summary of the outcome findings in the area of support networks.
- 45 percent reported that they have children (five males and four females).
- 78 percent of those with children reported they had children too young and given the choice they would not have had children at the age at which they did.
- 15 percent are pregnant and plan to conceive.
- 10 percent have been pregnant or caused a pregnancy, planned to conceive, but miscarried.
- 80 percent reported that siblings were the most common identified person with whom respondents have kept in contact (seven males and nine females).
- 25 percent are currently in contact with their birth mothers (two males and three females).
- 30 percent are currently in contact with their birth fathers (one male and five females).
- 55 percent reported being in contact with other relatives outside their immediate family.
- 40 percent reported being in current contact with their previous foster family (three males and five females).
- 50 percent of the female respondents reported being in current contact with their previous caseworker.
- 40 percent of the female respondents reported being in current contact with other youth in previous group or foster homes.
- 40 percent of the female respondents reported being in current contact with their previous group home staff.
- 10 percent of the male respondents reported staying in contact with their previous caseworker.
- 20 percent of the male respondents reported staying in contact with their previous group home or staff administration.
- 20 percent of the male respondents reported staying in contact with other youth from previous group or foster care homes.
- 30 percent of the females reported staying in contact with their mentors.
- Zero males reported staying in contact with their mentors.
- 5 percent of the entire sample reported staying in contact with their Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) worker.
- 55 percent reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their previous foster parents.
- 25 percent reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their birth parents (two males and three males).
- 55 percent reported being somewhat or very close to their siblings (six males and five females).
- 50 percent reported feeling close to other relatives (six females and four males).
- 45 percent reported feeling close to an adult in a previous group or foster home (four males and five females).
- 30 percent reported feeling very close or somewhat close to other kids in previous group or foster homes (two males and four females).
- 50 percent reported that some of the friendships they currently enjoy were made while in foster care (seven females and three females).
- None of the males reported being very close or somewhat close to their mentor.
- 40 percent of the females reported being very close or somewhat close to their mentor.
- 40 percent reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their previous group or foster care home staff (four males and four females).
- 35 percent reported feeling very close to their previous caseworker (three males and four females).
- 20 percent reported being in some kind of organization (three males and one female).
- 45 percent admitted to experiencing violence in their relationships at some point in their lives (five females and three males).
- 30 percent reported that they have had a sexually transmitted disease in their lifetime (four females and two males).

The most common sexually transmitted disease reported was Chlamydia (five out of six of the sexually transmitted diseases listed).
- 100 percent reported being heterosexual.
- 25 percent reported attempting suicide in their lifetime (two males and three females). One of the males reported that his attempt was two years ago; all of the females reported their attempts were six or more years ago.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Throughout this paper, all the research has pointed to the fact that many foster care youth expected to live on their own once they exit the child welfare system are experiencing difficulties. In nearly every area addressed by this study the former foster care youth fared poorly. As previously mentioned, the study sample was small and therefore cannot be generalized. However, this information should be considered helpful and valuable. Each of the six research questions will be examined and discussed in detail below. The discussion is broken down into three areas: 1) The Foster Care Experience, which is addressed in research question one; 2) Preparation for life after foster care and services to prepare the youth to live on their own, which is addressed in research question two; and 3) Post foster care adjustment, which is addressed in research questions three through six.

1) How do former foster care youth feel about their overall foster care experience?

Twenty percent of the respondents reported being adopted, this appears to be a high number and shows the necessity for addressing failed adoptions. Additionally, 60 percent of the respondents were in foster care for more than eight years with 55 percent experiencing seven or more placements during their time in foster care. Again, the data suggests a negative outcome when respondents indicate many years and multiple placements while in the foster care system. Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience in general, and this is consistent with some recent studies on overall satisfaction with foster care (Courtney, 1995). This conflicts, however, with other literature such as the Barth (1990)
study, in which, the sample rated their foster care experience between “neutral” and 56 “somewhat good” overall. Four of the ten females reported they found the most supportive person was their previous foster parent. Another four of the female respondents reported that it was their caseworker or ILP specialist who was most supportive. This finding is consistent with other research (Courtney, 1995), however, there were conflicting results with the male respondents. Fifteen percent of the twenty respondents reported that they were sexually abused while in the foster care system and one more reported that his caretaker attempted to touch him in inappropriate places but failed. Finally, fifty percent of the respondents reported that a caretaker physically abused them while they were in foster care. These findings are of concern and while they cannot be generalized to the entire foster care population, they may suggest a need to conduct more stringent screening of caretakers. In addition, quality assurance programs should be implemented for all foster and group homes.

2) What kind of services did the former foster care youth receive to prepare them to live on their own (including Independent Living services, concrete services and assistance at the time of their exit from foster care)?

When addressing the preparedness of the respondents for Independent Living, it was found that a high percentage (75%) received training in each of the areas, which is consistent with other research (Cook, 1991). However, they fared much worse in the areas of concrete assistance. As a group, they averaged 35 percent in each of the areas with as low as 20 percent in such areas as drivers license possession and 15 percent in such areas as having pots and pans to set up a household, receiving money for housing, and being given their health records. The area in which they did best was having a place to live at the time of exit (75%), however, the fact remains that 25 percent of these respondents did not have a place to live at the time of their exit from foster care. Independent Living Services must incorporate concrete assistance and detailed and realistic transitional plans for youth exiting foster care.
3) How do former foster care youth fare in the areas of living arrangements, education, employment, health, substance abuse, support systems, legal issues, personal adjustment?

Living Arrangements

Forty-five percent of the respondents reported being homeless at least once since exiting the foster care system and 45 percent also reported living in more than four places since their exit. These findings are similar to other studies on the outcome of former foster youth being homeless at some point since their exit from the foster care system and being in multiple living situations (Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991; Courtney, 1998). Additionally, it was extremely difficult to find these youth due to their poor living arrangements. It was very common to locate youth and call them back at the number which they provided only to learn the phone number was either disconnected or that they had moved again. It appears essential that youth should be given the opportunity to find living arrangements in the community before leaving state’s care.

Education

With regard to the number of respondents who completed high school before exiting foster care, only nine of the twenty in the sample received a high school diploma. This is consistent with other studies showing poor outcomes of youth who finish high school before their exit from foster care (Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991; Courtney, 1998; Jones and Moses, 1984). However, a surprising 13 out of 20 eventually received their high school diploma with two more respondents having earned their GED after their exit from foster care. An expected outcome of the respondents was that almost 50 percent of the sample reported being in special education in their early education and the most common reasons given for placement in special education was for emotional and behavioral issues. These findings represent the deficiencies these youth are experiencing in their early education,
which then make their way into their futures still, the data reflect positive outcome in that they are overcoming their deficiencies and earning high school diplomas and/or their GED.

Unfortunately, though most of the youth did receive their high school diploma or equivalent, only three respondents reported being enrolled in college, and three reported attending technical or vocational school. Of the seven males not in school, four of them reported a desire to further their education to include a four year degree or Master’s level education. Of the seven females not in school, all of them reported a desire to either go to a vocational school, receive a two-year degree, receive a four-year degree, or earn a Master’s level education. While these results cannot be generalized to the whole foster care population, they still have value which needs to be acknowledged. These youth have great educational deficiencies and while often able to overcome and graduate high school, few are furthering their education beyond that level. They show a desire, and it appears not enough is being done to give these youth an opportunity to further their educational growth.

Employment

The outcome on the employment situation of the respondents was that 80 percent of the respondents reported having regular employment (at least 20 hours per week) before exiting foster care. This finding is consistent with some of the recent studies on the employment for this population (Barth, 1990; Festinger, 1983). However, since leaving foster care over 40 percent have not maintained regular employment. This finding is also consistent with some of the research regarding employment after the youth exit the system (Cook, 1991). Only four of the twenty respondents (one female and three males) reported having the same job for more then seven months. This finding depicts the lack of stability in the lives of these youth and is also consistent with some research that reports these youth inability to maintain employment (Cook, 1991). It is interesting to note that 60 percent of the respondents reported it is easy to secure employment (seven females and five males). However, 40 percent still reported difficulties in this area, with lack of
education the most common reason given for finding it difficult to secure employment. This is consistent with the educational difficulties and lack of higher education as reported in the previous section.

Health

Only three of the twenty respondents reported having serious health problems since leaving foster care (two females and one male). This finding was much lower than what the Barth (1990) study reported (44%). However, only one of them reported being treated for their health problem. The other two reported either being misdiagnosed or as not having any insurance to cover the expense of treatment. Although only one of the three reported not being treated for their health problem, that is still significant. It illustrates the fact that 15 percent of the respondents had a serious health problem since leaving care and only 33 percent of those received medical attention.

Seventeen out of twenty respondents reported either being in good, very good or excellent health in general or for their age (nine males and eight females). This finding is consistent with other literature reporting the generally good health of former foster care youth (Cook, 1991; Courtney, 1998). However, it is important to take into consideration the young age of the respondents and the fact that this is a self-reported question. Only 40 percent of the respondents reported being covered by health care at the time of their discharge from foster care. This is alarming and illustrates the fact that these youth may have serious difficulties should a health problem arise. Finally, the respondents as a whole reported that the main reason for their lack of health care was no health insurance and poor financial situations. This is also consistent with some of the recent studies (Courtney, 1998).
Substance Abuse

Of the twenty respondents, eight out of ten males reported drinking alcohol in the last 30 days (two reported drinking 8-10 times per month and the other six reported drinking one to four times in the last month) and only one of ten females reported drinking more than once in the last 30 days. This number is much higher than that of the Barth (1990) study which found only 19 percent of the respondents indicated alcohol consumption since leaving care. Seventy percent of the respondents reported having tried marijuana at some point in their life (eight males and four females) and four out of ten males and one out of ten females reported using marijuana four or more times in the last 30 days. The data points to an alarmingly high number (25%) of chronic marijuana users.

Out of the 20 respondents, five (25%) reported dealing drugs to support themselves at some point in their lives. The amount of drug dealing reported in this study is very disconcerting; there may be a connection between the poor educational and employment outcomes of the respondents which led to the drug use.

Support Systems

As a whole, the most often identified support that the sample has kept contact with are siblings (seven males and nine females). Only five (two males, three females) of the twenty respondents are currently in contact with their birth mothers and six (one male, five females) out of twenty with their birth fathers. This statistic is significantly less than that of the Festinger (1983) study which found 51 percent of former foster youth were in contact with their biological parents. However, 55 percent of the sample reported being in contact with other relatives outside their immediate family and 40 percent (three males and five females) reported to be in current contact with their previous foster family. The number of respondents that reported being in contact with their previous foster parents is low in comparison to some studies which report the number to be as high as 87 percent (Festinger, 1983). Of the female respondents, 50 percent of them reported being in
contact with their previous caseworker, and 40 percent of them reported being in current contact with other youth in previous group or foster homes and the staff in those group or foster homes. This is a similar finding to that of Jones and Moses (1984).

Over 50 percent of the respondents (11 of 20) reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their previous foster parents. This is consistent with much of the other literature which shows the important role the foster parents play in the lives of these youth (Barth, 1990; Courtney, 1998; Festinger, 1983). A minority of the respondents (5 of 20) indicated feeling very close or somewhat close to their birth parents. This is consistent with the literature as well, and illustrates the fact that these youth may not be putting their past behind them and are quite possibly holding on to the "emotional baggage" of their childhood. However, eleven respondents reported being somewhat or very close to their siblings. This is a positive outcome and a strength that should be noted. Of the twenty respondents, four males and six females reported feeling close to other relatives and nine (four males and five females) out of twenty reported feeling close to an adult in a previous group or foster home. Six out of the twenty respondents (two males and four females) reported feeling very close or somewhat close to other youth in previous group or foster homes. Seven of the twenty respondents (three males and four females) reported feeling very close to their previous caseworker. All of these numbers illustrate that these youth are able to bond with someone, however, they may not be associated with other positive outcomes.

Four of the twenty respondents reported being in some kind of organization (three males and one female). However, the organizations which one of the males reported being a part of was Alcoholics and Cocaine Anonymous. This finding is slightly lower than the 30 percent that Jones and Moses (1984) found. Forty-five percent (five females and four males) of the respondents admitted to experiencing violence in their relationships at some point in their lives. This is a significantly high number that may underscore the emotional
immaturity and emotional baggage that is having negative effects on their intimate relationships.

Of the twenty respondents, 45 percent reported that they have children, 15 percent are pregnant and plan to conceive, and 10 percent have been or caused a pregnancy, planned to conceive, but miscarried. This extremely high number of pregnancies is very alarming and also consistent with the recent studies of high pregnancies among former foster care youth (Cook, 1991; Jones & Moses, 1984).

Legal Issues

Fifty-five percent of the respondents reported that they have spent time in jail and nine out of the twenty respondents reported having legal trouble other than traffic violations since exiting the foster care system. These results are much higher than the findings of other outcome studies with regards to legal problems (Barth, 1990: Cook, 1991). Of the nine respondents that reported they have had legal trouble since exiting the foster care system, a total thirteen different offenses were cited: three domestic violence charges; five drug or alcohol related charges; a petty theft charge; driving in a stolen car; obstructing an officer; disturbing the peace; and destruction of property. The high number of drug or alcohol related offenses are related to other recent studies (Cook, 1991). These findings appear to be very disheartening and indicate poor outcomes in the area of legal issues.

Personal Adjustment

Of the twenty respondents, 25 percent reported being from somewhat to very dissatisfied with their life as a whole. This is a smaller number of youth than reported being dissatisfied with their lives in other studies such as Barth (1990), in which all (100 percent) of the respondents reported either elevated scores on a depression scale, reported problems with depression, or had been in a mental health hospital. However, 25 percent of the respondents reported attempting suicide in their lifetime. One of the males reported
that his attempt was two years ago, and all of the females reported their attempts were six or more years ago.

4) Are there any areas in which the former foster care youth had positive outcomes?

There were several positive outcomes found in this study. Table 9. in APPENDIX II summarizes the findings. Eleven of the twenty respondents reported either being satisfied or very satisfied with their living arrangement. A total of twelve of the twenty respondents reported that it is easy to secure employment. Seventeen out of twenty respondents reported either being in good, very good, or excellent health in general or for their age. Overall, the respondents viewed their foster placements as positive and many keep in contact with their foster parents and or view them as a strong part of their support system. This is a finding that is consistent with many recent studies (Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991, Courtney, 1998).

Sixty-five percent of the respondents reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience in the foster care system in general, which is consistent with the recent Courtney (1998) study. Another positive outcome is that 75 percent of the respondents reported being generally satisfied with their lives.

Despite 50 percent of the respondents reporting they attended special education classes, 75 percent of the respondents eventually received their high school diploma or GED. Finally, there is the resiliency factor which needs to be accounted for in this study. Although, no scale was used to measure resiliency, these youth have overcome serious hardship and obstacles, and many have learned to persevere in life.

5) Are there any gender or ethnic differences in the foster care experience for former foster care youth?

In each of the areas examined there was no difference in age or race, however, there were differences noted in the outcomes when comparing gender. Table 10. in APPENDIX II summarizes the gender outcome differences. The females fared better in most of the areas including their current living arrangements, education, employment.
status, substance abuse, support systems and children, and legal issues. The males fared better in the areas of income, general health condition, number of organization involvement, and the number of respondents who have received a STD (the higher the number the more negatively viewed).

With regard to income in the year 1999, males overall earned more than females. Of the male respondents, three of them earned less than $5,000, four of them earned $5000-$10,000, and three earned between $15,000-$40,000. However, of the female respondents, three earned less than $5,000; five earned $5,000-$10,000; and the highest income earned by the females (two of them) was $10,000-$15,000. The next area in which the males fared better than the females is general health condition, and recent studies support this finding (Cook, 1991). Only one male, compared to two females, reported having serious health problems. Since leaving foster care, nine males compared to eight females, reported either being in good, very good or excellent health in general or for their age. Three males, compared to only one female, reported being in some kind of an organization. Only two males, compared to four females, reported that they have had a sexually transmitted disease.

In the rest of the outcomes studied, the females fared better. Table 11. and 12. in APPENDIX II summarize the findings. With regard to living arrangements, education, and employment, three females, compared to six males, reported being homeless at least once since exiting foster care and six females, compared to five males reported either being satisfied or very satisfied with their living arrangement. The finding that males are more likely to be homeless is similar to that of Courtney’s (1998) study.

Contrary to recent studies (Festinger, 1983; Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991) in which males were found to have a higher employment rate, six out of eight females (the other two females were not counted because one was in the Army and the other quit to give birth), compared to five out of ten males, reported regular employment since leaving foster care and seven females, compared to only five males reported that it was easy to secure
employment. Seven females, compared to six males, eventually received their high school diploma.

Looking at substance abuse, only one of the ten females, compared to eight out of ten of the males, reported drinking alcohol in the last 30 days (two reported drinking 8-10 times per month while six reported drinking one to four times in the last month). Eight of the ten males, compared to four of the females, reported trying marijuana, and four out of ten males and one out of ten females reported using marijuana four or more times in the last 30 days. Finally, five males, compared to two females, reported trying more serious recreational drugs before or after exiting care.

When looking at support systems, five males, compared to four females, have children. This finding is also contrary to other recent studies in which females were found to have a substantially higher pregnancy rate compared to the males causing pregnancy (Cook, 1991; Festinger, 1983).

Seven males, compared to nine females, reported keeping in contact with their siblings and three females, compared to two males, are in contact with their birth mothers. One male, compared to five females, is in contact with his birth father. Three males, compared to five females, are reported to be in current contact with their previous foster family. Four of the females, compared to only one of the males, reported being in current contact with their previous caseworker. Finally, three of the females reported staying in contact with their mentors compared to zero males. Seven out of the ten females, compared to only four out of ten males, reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their previous foster parents. Only two males, compared to three females, reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their birth parents. Four males, compared to six females, reported feeling close to other relatives and four males, compared to five females, reported feeling close to an adult in a previous group or foster home. Only two males, compared to four females, reported feeling very close or somewhat close to other youth in previous group or foster homes and a high seven females, compared to a low three males, reported that
some of the friends they currently have are ones they made while in foster care. None of the males and four of the females reported being very close or somewhat close to their mentor and three males, compared to four females, reported feeling very close to their previous caseworker. Finally, five of the females, compared to four of the males, admitted to experiencing violence in their relationships at some point.

When looking at legal issues, it was found that a high seven males, compared to only four females, reported they spent time in jail at some point and six males, compared to three females, reported having trouble with the law other than traffic violations since they left the foster care system.

6) Do former foster care youths who were in multiple placements report less satisfaction than former foster care youth that were in fewer placements?

When comparing the number of placements with how satisfied the respondents were overall with their foster care experience in general, the results appear to be consistent with what one might expect. Table 13. in APPENDIX II summarizes the findings. The respondents were found to report more satisfaction with their care in general, when they were in fewer placements. Of the twenty respondents, 15 percent of them reported being very satisfied with their care in general, with the average number of placements for this group being 5.3; 55 percent reported that they were in general, satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their foster care experience with the average number of placements being 6.5; and finally, 35 percent of the respondents indicated they were either not satisfied or definitely not satisfied with their foster care experience in general with an average number of placements being 15.1. These findings clearly suggest that there may be a causal relationship between multiple placements and satisfaction with their general experience in the foster care system.

The following case studies are now provided to better illustrate the common situations of the youth who participated in this study. These are actual cases, but the names have been changed.
Case Studies

Michael is a twenty-one-year-old Caucasian male. He entered the foster care system when he was two-years-old because his parents abandoned him. He was in the system for sixteen years and in approximately 20 placements. He was adopted once but the adoption was terminated when he was accused of sexually molesting the daughter of his adoptive parents. Michael denies this allegation. Michael has been physically abused and there have been times when his caretakers were impaired (such as being mentally ill or physically impaired) to the extent that they were unable to care for Michael or pay attention to his needs. Michael has been in trouble with the law throughout his life and since he left foster care, he has been arrested for petty theft. Michael currently lives with his girlfriend in an apartment. He has lived there for just two weeks and it is not possible to say how long he will reside there, because in the three years since he exited foster care, he has lived in over 20 different places and he has a history of not getting along with the others with whom he lives. Since he left the system, there were times where he has been homeless and forced to stay on the streets. He has no family and no support system to fall back on. Michael has never completed high school and was in special education in school for being emotionally disturbed. He has not had steady employment since leaving foster care and is currently unemployed. He finds it difficult to get a job because he has no transportation and no driver’s license. Additionally, Michael is a chronic marijuana user and has been using daily since he was in foster care. Michael also has three children, all of whom live with their mother. He is unable to pay child support since he earned under $5,000 last year.

Lisa is a twenty-year-old Caucasian/Native American female. She entered the foster care system when she was eight-years-old because of parental abuse. She has been in fifty-two placements in the past eight years. During her time in the foster care system, her caretakers, who were physically impaired to the extent they were unable to care for her, ignored her physical illnesses and medical needs, failed to protect her from being harmed and physically abused her. She was also gang raped by four men much older than she.
Lisa currently lives with her boyfriend in an apartment building, but has only lived there one month and is dissatisfied with her living arrangements, because the building is in an unsafe neighborhood. Since she left the foster care system, she has lived in 12 places, and at times, was homeless because she had no money for rent. One time she was physically beaten by her child’s father and forced to go to a homeless shelter. Lisa’s highest educational accomplishment was completing junior high school; she is presently studying for her GED. Growing up, she was in special education for reading remediation but blames this on her mother for failing to enroll her in school at the right age, thus, putting her behind right away. Before leaving foster care, Lisa never had regular employment, but now works 40 hours per week making $7.00 per hour. However, she hates her job because it is in telemarketing. She finds it difficult to secure employment because of her lack of education. She is in fair health but has had back problems since she exited the foster care system and was not able to receive treatment for them because she had no money and no medical insurance to pay for treatment. Lisa has two children (the first one she had at age 15). Only one lives with her, the other one was taken out of the country by the by the child’s father. She has been in her current relationship for the past five years, but she feels only somewhat close to him. She has no family and no real support. She cannot afford to pay her bills and has nowhere to turn for help.

Lakisha is a twenty-one-year-old African American female. She entered the foster care system when she was ten-years-old when her mother was sent to prison. She was fortunate enough to have a foster mom who provided a happy, stable, home life for her, as this was her only placement. Lakisha completed high school and went on to complete her vocational training as a certified medical assistant. Additionally, she plans to go to a four-year college to earn her bachelors degree. She lives alone in an apartment and has for eight months. She is satisfied with her current living arrangement and has never been homeless. She has always been employed and in her current job is doing well. She finds it easy to secure employment and has never had a problem finding a job. She is in excellent
health and has health insurance. She has never had a problem with the law or substance abuse. She takes a positive view of herself and feels generally satisfied with her accomplishments. She feels it is important to help others and has a strong desire to make this world a better place in which to live. She takes good care of her body, saves her money, and never gives up when things get rough. She considers herself to be active in church and feels comfortable taking care of herself.

General Observations

In tracking these youth in order to interview them for this research project, a variety of problems emerge within the group. First and foremost was the problem of locating them. Once they exit the system, many of the youth all but disappear, never to be heard of again. A large number of youth reported a poor foster care experience and consistently reported that they were provided poor care by their caretakers in both group homes and/or foster care homes. Since most of the youth interviewed had some ties to the foster care system, there may good be a good possibility that they were more well adjusted than the population of youth who could not be found.

The youth that were located were still communicating by informal means within their own network of people. It was very common to find one youth who kept in contact with another and so forth. The formal communication between community organizations was poor. This point emphasizes these youths’ inability to bond with providers and elders in the field and/or lack of after care services. There was also poor tracking from DCFS. Surprisingly, DCFS only keeps their records for three years and then disposes of the entire files. Any Records kept on youth proved to have limited usefulness in tracking the youth once they have exited the system.

The developmental capacities and emotional maturity of the respondents seem to be much lower than the average person between 18-23 years of age. Even in the minimal interaction that the interviewer had there were continual problems getting these youth to
be present for interviews, remembering dates and times and even arranging transportation to and from the interview. Without the motivating factor of compensation for participation, it seems likely there would have been a smaller sample gathered.

Many of the youth expressed tremendous dissatisfaction with the foster care system, describing negative experiences, lack of supportive services and inadequate living arrangements. Most of the youth reported being dropped out of the system with nowhere to go and no support. One youth noted that another youth in her group home exited and went directly to the Salvation Army, which provides shelter to the homeless.

A large number of youth seemed to be constantly in crisis. Many had no place to live, had been just released from jail, and/or described being the victims of crimes. Another factor that seemed to be consistent with the amount of difficulties these youth faced was the reported substance use. It was found that a substance abusing adolescent usually presents a clinical picture of pervasive underdevelopment (Laskowitz, 1965, p.68). It is important to note that many of the youth were not only ill-prepared developmentally to live on their own by the age of 18, but they were emotionally disturbed or learning disabled even before entering care. Therefore, this necessitates, requiring extra services while in care so they may catch up before exiting the system. Without this measure, youth further develop problems within the system and at the time of emancipation are left with little chance for success. This was evident in the majority of the youth interviewed.

A consistent theme that emerged and the one in which seems to be the problem of most concern is the youths’ inability to form lasting relationships. One youth reported having no one in his life he can depend on, receive support from, or with whom he can confide. Most of the youth reported fairly close relationships with their friends but described negative relationships with many of the adults in their lives. Rarely did any youth report a close relationship with their biological parent, or foster parents, or group home provider. The inability to form these relationships with adults further emphasizes the lack of developmental growth occurring within this population.
When looking at some of the outcomes for these youth, it is evident from a developmental standpoint that they are behind the general public. Most of the research looks at five major areas that define status in society: living arrangements, employment, education, health, and support systems (Barth, 1990; Cook, 1991; Courtney 1996, 1998). Although several other areas were also examined, the aforementioned illustrate the level of performance these youth operate. In each of these five areas, plus the other areas that were discussed in this paper (substance abuse, foster experience, legal issues, and personal adjustment), it was found that foster care youth had significantly poorer outcomes than youth in the general public. This supports the notion many of these youth are developmentally unable to accept full responsibility at the age in which they are required to emancipate out of the foster care system.

The findings in this study continually demonstrate the inability of these former foster care youth to thrive in adulthood after emancipation. Nearly one third of these youth entered into the foster care system severely emotionally disturbed and were unable to obtain the services needed. Additionally, even the youth who had not entered the system with these problems, frequently report maltreatment and poor experiences in the system. This can have a life long effect on their ability to succeed as adults. It was learned that several youth refused to participate in the study because their experiences were so negative they felt it not worth the emotional heartache and rage which participation might bring up.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for Social Workers

Although the need is clear and evident for prevention services, most resources are still being geared toward reunification and adoption. Workers need to understand when reunification or adoption is not attained there should not follow an assumption that these youth are ready to exit the system at age 18. Many of these youth are going to be emotionally slower and developmentally immature. More involvement from the community in the problems of the foster care system needs to occur. Workers must increase their awareness of the insufficiencies inherent in the system when providing after care for emancipated youth.

Creativity and innovativeness are needed in dealing with this complicated problem. There are agencies that have the ability to obtain the funding which would allow for the necessary changes, but it seems that time needed to pursue community outreach is at a premium. Ken Meyer, Independent Living Specialist in Southern Nevada, stated that currently, the pendulum is swinging in a positive direction and he feels support from the community for the first time, but there is still much to be done for real change in the system to occur.

Social workers play a pivotal role in this process. They must become stronger advocates for this population. They need to expend time and energy in locating the available resources that will help in the youths’ transition to independence. They must work to get community involvement, including businesses, civic groups, and faith based institutions. More effective intervention strategies must be developed in order to help
these youth foresee some of the issues that may occur once they are on their own. Social workers must advocate for skills training in areas such as money management, consumer awareness, employment, education, social interaction, and problem solving. These same workers must make certain these skills are being taught in order to better prepare the youth for independence. Social workers must play a role in setting up a safety net for these youth should they fall. Finally, social workers must get involved in the legislative process and advocate for increased services and opportunities for this population. After all, social workers are the most knowledgeable representatives of the foster care system and the challenges it faces. They need to politically advocate and lobby for changes to be made in the system.

Recommendations

In order for the foster care system to improve the outcomes for youth exiting the system, the following recommendations are advanced.

Policy Issues

1) The ILP’s services need to become more useful in these youths’ transition to adulthood; Transitional living plans, improved discharge planning, and after care plans should be reviewed and made available for all youth and utilized more effectively. These plans need to be set up at the age of fifteen and a half and reviewed and revised by the caseworker, Independent Living Specialist, and youth care provider on an ongoing basis. Although these plans are supposedly in effect, there needs to be some sort of monitoring to ensure they were completed.

2) There also needs to be improved record keeping. Currently DCFS only keeps the records of foster care youth for three years after they leave the system. Records over three years are destroyed: These records are an important part of the youth’s past and also helps in tracking youth after their exit from foster care.
3) The youth should be given a package of important documents. Although some of the youth indicated receiving this, all of the youth should be given their records along with resources to help them should they need assistance.

4) A mentor program should be implemented. Youth exiting foster care would most certainly benefit from the support of an adult. It would be helpful to utilize a mentor program while they are still in state’s care with the intention of the mentor to be involved with the youth after discharge.

5) There needs to be more aid in the way of housing and financial assistance. Many of the living arrangements outcomes were unacceptable. These findings may suggest the fact that these youth are making poor choices in their living arrangements and poor choices in roommates. Many youth moved frequently around from place to place and some reported being homeless, and not having anyone to turn to when things go wrong.

6) There is a need for opportunities in which these youth gain the ability to integrate into the community and move out on their own (while having their progress monitored). Opportunities are needed for youth to locate housing in the community while under the state’s care and supervision. In addition, emergency funds for housing are needed for former foster care youth.

7) There is a need for specific programming to deal with their educational deficiencies. Although most of these youth finish high school at some point, few go on to college and it was found that 50 percent of the sample were in special education at some point in their lives. Some of these programs should be set up through the foster care agencies designed to give youth the extra help they need.

8) There is a need for employment and job training. Many youth reported having difficulties finding stable employment. This population needs assistance in the areas of job training, job placement, and job maintenance.
9) Medicaid coverage should be extended to former foster care youth up to age 21. Most of the youth reported grave difficulties paying for any health problems and since many reported lack of employment opportunities, it is unlikely most have health insurance. Additionally, federal funding under the John H. Chaffee Independent Program will allow federal reimbursement (approximately 50% of the costs).

10) Youth should be allowed to stay in foster care voluntarily until age 21 if they are engaged in some type of schooling or training. It is important for the foster care system to be able to provide and allow youth the opportunity to live on their own while receiving support and assistance, such as room and board, health insurance, etc. Unfortunately, when living arrangements or employment situations don’t work out, youth are forced to sometimes make unsafe and often dangerous decisions, e.g. illegal activity or sleeping on the streets. It was found in this study, as well as in others, that many youth at the time of exit are unprepared to live on their own and need additional assistance.

11) Parenting classes for youth that have children and pregnancy prevention programming for the other youth is needed. This is imperative, due to the fact that these youth have such a high pregnancy rate.

12) Specific programming including but not limited to support groups and counseling services to address the emotional issues that may contribute to difficulties in transitioning into adulthood are needed. Due to the emotional problems many of the youth have, specific services should be developed to help the youth prevent victimization, violence in relationship, poor peer selections, and other problems. In the conceptual framework, Erikson’s human developmental theory was used to explain these vulnerable youths developmental difficulties and additional assistance should be provided to help them conquer make peace with their past.
13) Specific advocacy programs should be developed and utilized so that foster care youth have a voice in policies that affect them. These programs should include former and current foster care youth.

14) Case management services for former foster care youth should be made available. These youth need some place they can go to discuss and receive assistance with their problems.

Practice Issues

1) Increased sensitivity by caseworkers is needed. Child welfare workers need to understand that many of these youth have been raised by the state or county so their caseworker or caregiver within the system is the only “family” that they have.

2) The emotional dependence that these youth have needs to be aggressively addressed. Since much “emotional baggage” is being carried around by these youth, social workers and counselors need special training on the unique issues for this population.

3) Social workers need to make these youth a part of the decision making process. Others have been making decisions for these youth all their lives; it is up to the social worker to open up the lines of communication and include them in any decision-making process. Social workers need to deal with these youth in a cooperative, nurturing, and compassionate manner. Social workers need to give these youth more freedom to make their own decisions. Youth should be given the opportunity to start making more difficult decisions earlier. When a mistake is made (as will occur), the youth would still be under the care of the state and can be given assistance in addressing any poor decisions and consequences. The caseworker should be able to monitor the progress of the youth and give the youth more and more freedom based upon the successful attainment of goals. The more
the youth proves to be responsible, the more trust, freedom, and independence the youth should be allowed.

4) **Mandatory special training for any caseworker, youth care provider, or professional in the field that works with this population.** This is a significantly disadvantaged group and special training needs to be developed to specifically deal with the unique issues of this population, i.e. the inability to bond with others, loss of family, and/or lack of emotional development.

**Conclusion**

It is well documented that there are numerous problems with the current foster care system. The United States, as a whole, appears to be working on making improvements to the struggling system. With federal and state governments both working toward making needed improvements, as evidenced by passage of acts such as the John Chaffee Independent Living Act, there may be some light at the end of the tunnel. Additionally, there is more and more research being conducted to investigate the effectiveness of ILP’s, and it is hoped will provide some suggestions for improving these programs. ILP’s need to use the information gathered from the studies on the few successful programs that have been studied. Still, with scant research thus far of proven program effectiveness, much more research needs to be completed if greater change in a weak system is to be achieved.
Dear Young Adult:

Dr. Thom Reilly and Donald Gutterman from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) are collaborating on an important study of young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. The information gathered here will help facilitate understanding of the unique issues and challenges faced by former foster care youth. It is also intended to help identify the kinds of pre- and post- services that are most helpful to foster care youth and to identify needed program and policy reforms.

As part of this study, you are invited to participate in a structured interview. The interviewer will be asking you a series of questions about yourself; your current living arrangements; employment, financial and medical issues; relationships and coping efforts; involvement with birth family and foster parents; the types of training and services you received as you were exiting the system; how you felt about your foster care experience; and any recommendations you may have for improving the foster care system.

Your responses to these questions will remain confidential. You will not be individually identified with your responses in any way to DCFS. All information provided by respondents to this study will be grouped for analysis, and the results will reflect those of the group as a whole.

A slight risk to this study is that some of the questions may make you uncomfortable due to their personal nature. If any question makes you feel distressed, you do not have to answer that question. You may withdraw from participation at any time.

Participation in this study is voluntary and should take approximately 60-90 minutes. You will receive $30.00 immediately upon completion of the interview.

The anticipated benefits of this research is to assist in developing more effective programs and intervention for youth that are preparing to exit the foster care system as well as provide ongoing services to the youth that have previously exited the system. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact either:
If you have any questions regarding the rights of research subjects, you may contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Box 451046, Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1046; (phone) 895-1357.

I have read the consent form and consent to participate. I understand that I am free to ask questions or consult other people about the study or the consent form. I understand that I am free to withdraw for the study at any time for any reason and without prejudice of any sort as a consequence of withdrawing. I understand that the investigator may terminate my participation at his or her discretion. I have been given a copy of this consent document.

Name or initial ________________________ Date ________________________

Thank you for your time completing this interview.
Thank you again for participating in our study. I would like to remind you that all your responses are confidential. Please keep in mind that you are not obligated to answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

I am going to start off asking you some questions about your living arrangements. (Interviewers only read the choices when asked to do so, otherwise, let the interviewee respond and you mark the appropriate answer. Additionally, when told to read the list for suggestions, it is not necessary to read the whole list only enough so that the interviewer understands how to best answer the question)

A) LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

1. With whom are you currently living?
   (Circle all that apply)

   Alone
   With parents/step-parents
   With sibling(s)
   With relatives
   With former foster parents
   With spouse/partner/a boy/girl friend
   With friends
   Incarcerated
   Institutionalized
   Other (specify) ________

2. Where are you presently living?

   Single family home
   Apartment building
   Mobile home
   Rooming (boarding) house
   Motel
   Hotel
   Homeless
   Placement provided by Adult Supportive Living
   Other (specify) ________
3. How long have you lived there?

   Years ______
   Months ______

4. How satisfied are you with your current living arrangements?
   (Interviewer give chart #1 to the interviewee)

   I am very dissatisfied
   I am dissatisfied
   I am sometimes dissatisfied/sometimes satisfied
   I am satisfied (Go to Q. 6)
   I am very much satisfied (Go to Q. 6)

5. If you are not satisfied with your current living arrangement, what are some of the reasons?  (Circle all that apply)

   a) I do not get along well with the people I live with
   b) The house is in an unsafe neighborhood
   c) The rent is too high
   d) It is out of place or too far from the places where I work or spend most of my time
   e) Lack of transportation
   f) Other (specify) _________

6. Including where you live now, how many different places have you lived in since you left foster care?

   a) One (Go to Q. 8)
   b) Two (Go to Q. 8)
   c) Three
   d) Four
   e) Other (specify) _________

7. If you lived in more then two places, what are the reasons why you moved around?  (Circle all that apply)

   a) To seek employment
   b) To be united with family members
   c) To live with relatives
   d) To live with friends
   e) To attend a new school
   f) I was asked to leave or kicked out
   g) Other (specify) _________
8. Since you left foster care, has there been any time when you didn’t have a place to live?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Section B)

9. If yes, what was the reason(s)?
   (Circle all that apply)
   a) I didn’t have money to pay rent
   b) I didn’t have family to go to
   c) I didn’t have friends who I could live with
   d) The social workers did not help me find a place to live
   e) Other (specify) __________

10. What did you do or where did you go to find a place to live?
    (Circle all that apply)
    a) I stayed on the street
    b) I stayed at a homeless shelter
    c) I stayed with families that took me in temporarily
    d) Other (specify) __________

Now, I am going to ask you questions about your education.

B) EDUCATION

1. What is the highest level of education that you attained before being discharged from the foster care system?
   a) Elementary school
   b) Junior high school
   c) Some high school
   d) GED
   e) Completed high school
   f) Some college
   g) Completed college
   h) Other (specify) __________

2. What is the highest level of education that you have attained so far?
   a) Elementary school
   b) Junior high school
   c) Some high school
d) GED  

e) Completed high school  

f) Some college  

g) College  

h) Other (specify) ______

3. How much education would you be satisfied with?

a) Less than high school graduation  

b) High school graduation  

c) GED  

d) College, less than two years  

e) College, two year degree  

f) College, four year degree  

g) College Master's degree  

h) College, Ph.D.  

i) Other (specify) ______

4. Are you currently attending school? (i.e., High School, Community College, College)

a) Yes  

b) No (Go to Q. 7)

5. What grade are you attending?

a) Grade 9-12 (High School)  

b) College  

c) Trade/Vocational school  

d) Not attending school  

e) Other (specify) ______

6. If you are attending school how are your grades?  
(Read the list for suggestions)

a) Mostly A's  

b) Mostly B's  

c) Mostly C's  

d) Mostly D's  

e) Mostly F's  

(Go to Q. 8)
7. If you are not attending school, why not?  
(Circle all that apply)
   a) Graduated from high school
   b) Dropped out of school for academic reasons (failed)
   c) Suspended from school for disciplinary reasons
   d) Dismissed from school for disciplinary reasons
   e) Dropped out of school to accept employment
   f) Other (specify) _________

8. What is your educational plan for your future? 
   a) Finish high school and go to college
   b) Finish high school and get a job
   c) Quit high school and get a job
   d) Quit going to school and enroll in vocational training
   e) Quit going to school and get a job
   f) Other (specify) _________

9. Are you currently attending Vocational/Trade School? (i.e., carpentry, electrical, computer programming, massage, beauty)
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 11)

10. How many years of Vocational/Trade School have you attended?
    a) One
    b) Two
    c) Three
    d) Four
    e) Other (specify) _________

11. Were you ever in Special Education?
    a) Yes
    b) No (Go to Section C)
12. In what kind of special education were you placed?  
(Read the entire list)

a) Emotionally disturbed  
b) Learning disturbed  
c) Medically handicapped  
d) Mentally handicapped  
e) Physically disabled  
f) Reading remediation  
g) Other (specify) ___________  
Unknown

Next, I am going to ask you some questions about your employment history.

C) EMPLOYMENT

1. Did you have a steady job or employment (regular employment for over a year) before leaving foster care?

a) Yes  
b) No (Go to Q. 5)

2. If yes, how many hours per week did you work on the average?

a) Less than 20 hours  
b) 20-29 hours  
c) 30-39 hours  
d) 40 hours  
e) More than 40 hours  
f) Other (specify) _______

3. Do you still have the same job as the one you had when you left foster care?

a) Yes (Go to Q. 5)  
b) No

4. What are the reasons you have changed jobs?  
(Circle all that apply)

a) Quit to accept other employment  
b) Quit, other reason  
c) Fired  
d) Laid off
5. Since leaving foster care have you had regular employment? (at least 20 hours per week)
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 7)

6. If yes, how many hours per week do you work on the average?
   a) Less than 20 hours
   b) 20-29 hours
   c) 30-39 hours
   d) 40 hours
   e) More than 40 hours
   f) Other (specify) _______

7. How many different jobs, including the current position if you are employed, have you ever had?
   a) Zero
   b) One
   c) Two
   d) Three
   e) Four
   f) Five
   g) Six or more

8. Have you ever been terminated from employment?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 10)

9. How many times?
   a) One
   b) Two
   c) Three
   d) Four
   e) Five
   f) Six or more
10. How much do you earn at your current or most recent job?
   a) per hour $ ________
   b) per month $ ________

11. What is the most you have earned at a job since leaving foster care?
   a) per hour $ ________
   b) per month $ ________

12. Are you currently employed?
   a) Yes (Go to Q. 14)
   b) No

13. If you are not currently employed, why not?
   (Circle all that apply)
   a) I am a full time student
   b) I do not know where to look for one
   c) I do not have skills for the jobs that are available
   d) I have not found a job that I like
   e) I can’t find a job that pays enough to cover my expenses
   f) No one will hire me
   g) Other (specify) ____________________________________

   (Go to Q. 17)

14. How long have you had this job?
   a) 1-2 months
   b) 3-4 months
   c) 5-6 months
   d) 7 or more months

15. How did you find the job?
   (Read the list for suggestions)
   a) Through the newspaper
   b) Through an employment agency
   c) Through my Social Worker
   d) Through a family member
   e) Through friends
   f) Other (specify) ________

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16. How well is the job going for you?  
   (Interviewer give chart #2 to the interviewee)  
   a) Very well (Go to Q. 17)  
   b) Well (Go to Q. 17)  
   c) Fair  
   d) Not well  
   e) Definitely not well  

17. If it is not going well what are the reasons or what kind of problems are you having?  
   (Read the list for suggestions)  
   a) The job is too hard and demanding  
   b) I do not have the relevant skills for the job  
   c) The work schedule is not suitable for me  
   d) I cannot meet the expectations of my employer  
   e) I cannot get along with others at work  
   f) Others (specify) ________  

18. In general, do you find it difficult to get a job?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No (Go to Q. 19)  

19. If yes, what do you think are the reason(s) why it is difficult?  
   (Read the list for suggestions)  
   a) Lack of job skills  
   b) Lack of experience  
   c) Lack of education  
   d) Lack of proper training  
   e) Lack of transportation  
   f) Lack of drivers license  
   g) I cannot/didn’t find a job that I liked  
   h) I do/don’t know how to find a job  
   i) Other (specify) ________  

19a. Have you ever served in the military?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No (If no and you are currently unemployed Go to Q. 20)  
      (If no and you are currently employed Go to Section D)
19b. What branch of service?
   (Read the list for suggestions)
   a) Army
   b) Navy
   c) Air Force
   d) Marines
   e) Coast Guard
   f) National Guard
   g) High school ROTC

19c. What is your current status?
   (Read the entire list)
   a) Active duty (Go to Q. 20)
   b) Reserve
   c) Discharged

19d. What type of discharge did you have?
   a) Honorable
   b) Dishonorable
   c) Medical
   d) Administrative

20. If you are not currently working, how do you support yourself?
   (Circle all that apply)
   a) My parents
   b) Spouse/Partner, boy/girlfriend
   c) Brother(s)/Sister(s)
   d) Relatives
   e) Friends
   f) Foster parents
   g) Income from public assistance
   h) Other (specify) ____________________

Next, I am going to ask you some questions about your health.

D) HEALTH

1. How long has it been since you had a medical checkup?
a) Less than one month  
b) One month-less than 6 months  
c) 6 months-less than one year  
d) One year-less than 5 years  
e) Five or more years  
f) Never  
g) Don’t know/don’t remember  

2. Have you had any serious health problems since you left the foster care system?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No (Go to Q. 7)  

3. What was the specific nature of the problem? 

3. What was the specific nature of the problem? 

4. Did you receive treatment for it?  
   a) Yes  
   b) No (go to Q. 6)  

5. If yes, who covered the expense?  
   (Read the list for suggestions)  
   a) I did  
   b) My parents  
   c) Relatives  
   d) Foster parents  
   e) A public assistance program, like medicaid  
   f) Private non-profit organization did  
   g) My employer did  
   h) My insurance did  
   i) Other (specify) _________________________  
   (Go to Q. 7)  

6. If no, why did you not receive treatment for the health problem?  
   a) I did not have the money to pay  
   b) I did not have anyone to help me  
   c) I did not have health insurance  

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d) I reported to my social worker but he/she did not help me

e) Other (specify)

7. How would you rate your general health condition now?
   (Interviewer give chart #3 to the interviewee)

   a) Excellent
   b) Very good
   c) Good
   d) Fair
   e) Poor

8. Compared to other people your age, would you say your present health is:
   (Interviewer give chart #4 to the interviewee)

   a) Excellent
   b) Very good
   c) Good
   d) Fair
   e) Poor

9. How long has it been since you received a dental check-up?

   a) 6 months ago or less
   b) 6 months- year
   c) 1-2 years
   d) 2-5 years
   e) More than 5 years
   f) Never
   g) Don’t know/don’t remember

10. Since you were discharged from foster care, have you always been able to get medical care, or were there times when you were unable to get medical care?

    a) Yes, always able (Go to Q. 12)
    b) No, sometimes unable
    c) Didn’t need medical care (Go to Q. 12)

11. What prevented you from getting medical care?
    (Circle all that apply and read the list for suggestions)

    a) You didn’t know where to go
b) It cost too much

c) You did not have transportation

d) The hours were not convenient

e) You would lose pay at work

f) You had no medical insurance

12. Upon discharge from foster care were you covered by any health insurance, such as:
(Read the entire list)

a) Medicaid

b) Other medical assistance paid for by the state or county

c) Private health insurance

d) Other (specify) ____________

13. Where do you usually go for medical care?
(Read the entire list)

a) A private doctor

b) A clinic

c) An emergency room

d) Other (specify) ________

e) Nowhere

14. Who usually pays for medical care?
(Read the entire list)

a) Medicaid or medical assistance

b) Private health insurance

c) You, yourself

d) Your parents, or relatives

e) Other (specify) ____________

At this time, I am going to ask you some questions about any substance use history. I remind you that your responses are confidential. Please remain as honest as possible.

E) SUBSTANCE USE

(Please use this coding guide whenever necessary in this section; D = a day, W = a week, M = a month, Y = a Year, N = not that year, DK = don't know frequency)
1. Have you ever consumed alcohol?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 6)

2. Thinking back to the year before you were discharged from foster care, how often did you have a drink?
   a) ____ of times per ____

3. How many days within the past month did you have a drink? ____ (If 0 go to Q. 6)

4. As a result of your drinking in the last month did you ever: (circle the appropriate box)
   a) Experience blackouts Yes No
   b) Get into fights with others Yes No
   c) Get into fights with people who wanted you to drink less Yes No
   d) Get ticketed for drunken driving Yes No
   e) Get arrested for disorderly conduct Yes No
   f) Miss work or school Yes No

5. Have you ever ingested or inhaled marijuana?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 9)

6. Thinking back to the year before you were discharged from foster care, how often did you use this drug?
   a) ____ of times per ____

7. How many days within the past month did you use this drug? ____

8. Have you ever ingested or inhaled any other recreational drug, such as methamphetamine, inhalants, mushrooms, LSD, PCP, prescription drugs, excstacy, and/or “special K”?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 12)
9. Thinking back to the year before you were discharged from foster care, how often did you use this drug(s)?
   a) ____ of times per ____

10. How many days within the past month did you use this drug? _____
   b) ____ of times per ____

11. Have you ever injected any IV drugs, such as heroin or methamphetamine?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 15)

12. Thinking back to the year before you were discharged from foster care, how often did you use this drug(s)?
   a) ____ of times per ____

13. How many days within the past month did you use this drug(s)? _____

14. Have you used any drug(s) in the past 30 days?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 17)

15. As a result of your drug use in the last 30 days did you:
   a) Get into fights with others       Yes  No
   b) Get into fights with people who wanted you to stop using drugs
   c) Get arrested for disorderly conduct
   d) Miss work or school

16. Have you ever supported yourself by dealing drugs?
   a) Yes
   b) No

17. Have you ever overdosed on drugs?
   a) Yes
   b) No
Now, I will be asking you some questions about your support system and networks.

F) SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS

F.I) CURRENT CONTACTS

Are you currently in contact with any of the following people: (Circle the correct responses)

- a) Previous foster parents
- b) Birth mother
- c) Birth father
- d) Siblings
- e) Grandparents
- f) Other relatives
- g) Previous caseworker
- h) Other kids in previous group or foster care home
- i) Mentor
- j) Group home staff/administration
- k) Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

F. II) NETWORK SCALE

How do you feel about these people? (Very close, somewhat close, not very close, not at all close, not applicable)

(Interviewer give chart #5 to the interviewee) (circle the correct response)

| a) Previous foster parent(s) | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| b) Birth parents | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| c) Siblings | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| d) Relatives | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| e) Adult in former group home | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| f) Adult in current group home | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| g) Other kid(s) in previous group or foster homes | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| h) Mentor | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| i) Group home staff | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| j) CASA | Yes | No | Not applicable |
| k) Previous caseworker | Yes | No | Not applicable |
### F. III) PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT SCALE

Indicate which response best represents how you perceive your social support system:
(Strongly agree, Agree, Agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree, Not applicable)

(Interviewer give chart #6 to interviewee)
(Circle the correct response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) There is a special person who is around when I am in need</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) My family really tries to help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) I get the emotional help and support I need from my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) My friends really try to help me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) I can count on my friends when things go wrong</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) I can talk about my problems with my family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) My family is willing to help me make decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) I can talk about my problems with my friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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At this time, I will be asking you questions specifically about the friends you may have and any organizations that you may currently belong to.

F. IV) FRIENDS/ORGANIZATION

1. Do any of your current friends include people you knew when you were in foster care?
   a) Yes
   b) No

2. How many organizations (i.e. sports teams, civic groups, religious or spiritual groups) do you belong to?
   a) 0 (Go to Section F.V)
   b) 1
   c) 2
   d) 3
   e) 4
   f) 5 or more

3. What are the names of them?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Now, we will move on to questions about your intimate relationships and dating habits.

F. V) DATING/RELATIONSHIPS

1. Do you date or go out:
   (Read the list for suggestions)
   a) Several times per week
   b) Weekly
   c) Several times per month
   d) Monthly
   e) Less than monthly
   f) Never

2. Would you prefer to date or go out:
   (Read the entire list)
   a) More frequently
   b) Less frequently
   c) About the same
3. Are you presently in a committed relationship?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 5)

4. Would you say your relationship to this person is:
   (Read the entire list)
   a) Very close
   b) Somewhat close
   c) Not very close

5. Has there ever been violence in any of your dating relationship(s) since you left foster care?
   a) Yes
   b) No

6. What is the longest time period you were in a relationship? ________

Now, I am going to move on and ask you questions about any children you might have or had.

F. VI) CHILDREN

1. Do you have any children?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 9)

2. How many?
   a) One
   b) Two
   c) Three
   d) Four
   e) Five or more

3. If you could do it over, would you again have a child(s) at the age you had (one/them) or not?
   a) Yes, would have at the same age
   b) No, would not have at the same age
   c) Maybe/Not sure
4. Do they live with you?
   a) Yes
   b) No

5. Do you pay or have you ever paid child support?
   a) Yes
   b) No

6. Who does your child(s) live with? ________

7. Is the child now or has the child(s) ever been in foster care?
   a) Yes
   b) No

8. Have you ever placed the child for adoption?
   a) Yes
   b) No

9. How many times have you been or caused someone to be pregnant? ________
   If never then Go to section F.VII

10. How old were you the first time? ______

11. How did the pregnancies end? ________
    (Circle all that apply and read the entire list)
    a) Conceived
    b) Aborted
    c) Miscarried

At this time, I am going to ask you questions about your sexual activities.

F. VII) SEXUAL ACTIVITY

1. Are you currently engaged in a sexual relationship?
   a) Yes
   b) No
2. Have you ever had sexual intercourse? (anal or vaginal intercourse)
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 11)

3. At what age did you begin having sexual intercourse? _____

4. Approximately how many males have you had sexual intercourse within the past six months? _____
   (If female go to Q. 6)

5. Approximately how many females have you had sexual intercourse with in the past six months? _____

6. Approximately how many partners have you had sexual intercourse with in your lifetime? _____

7. Have you ever had sexual intercourse in exchange for money, goods, and/or services?
   a) Yes
   b) No

8. How often do you use condoms?
   (Interviewer give chart #7 to interviewee)
   a) Never
   b) Rarely
   c) Half the time
   d) Most of the time
   e) Always

9. Have you ever had a sexually transmitted disease?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 11)

10. If yes, what were they? _________________________________________________

11. Are you HIV positive?
    a) Yes
    b) No
12. Do use birth control?
   
a) Yes  
b) No (Go to Q. 14)

13. How often do you use birth control?  
   (Interviewer give chart #8 to interviewee)
   
a) Never  
b) Rarely  
c) Half the time  
d) Most of the time  
e) Always

14. What is your sexual orientation?
   
a) Homosexual  
b) Heterosexual  
c) Bisexual  
d) Not sure

F. VIII) SEXUAL COMPULSIVITY SCALE

Please answer the following statements by indicating how true they are for you.  
(Not at all like me, A little like me, like me, very much like me)

(Interviewer give chart #9 to interviewee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>NLM</th>
<th>LLM</th>
<th>LM</th>
<th>VLM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My sexual appetite has gotten in the way of my relationships.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My sexual thoughts and behaviors are causing problems in my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My desires to have sex have disrupted my daily life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I sometimes fail to meet my commitments and responsibilities because of my sexual behaviors.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I sometimes get so horny I could lose control.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I find myself thinking about sex while at work/school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my sexual thoughts and feelings are stronger than I am.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have to struggle to control my sexual thoughts and behavior.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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9. I think about sex more than I would like to.  

10. It has been difficult for me to find sex partners who desire having sex as much as I want to.

Now, I am going to move on to asking you questions about your foster care experience. You are doing great, keep it up. Please understand that any of the things you disclose will be confidential and your previous caretakers will not be informed of any of the things you tell me about the things that have been done to you. Take your time during this section. I understand that some of these questions may be difficult and you always have the choice to not answer or take a break.

G) FOSTER CARE EXPERIENCE

1. How old were you when you first left your home to enter into the foster care system? _____

2. How long were you in foster care? (If you are not sure, estimate) _____

3. How long have you been out of the foster care system? _____

4. Total number of placements: (If you are not sure, estimate)
   a) One
   b) Two
   c) Three
   d) Four
   e) Five or more
   f) If more then 5 estimate _____
   g) Unknown

5. What were the reason(s) you entered the foster care system? _____________________
   ________________________________

6. Have you ever been adopted?
   a) Yes
   b) No
7. Did you ever have a serious illness or injury or physical disability, but your caretaker ignored it or failed to obtain necessary medical treatment for it?
   a) Yes
   b) No

8. Did any of your caretakers ever fail to protect you from being physically harmed by someone else?
   a) Yes
   b) No

9. Was any of your caretakers ever physically impaired (i.e. under the influence of alcohol or drugs) or mentally ill to the extent that they were unable to care for you or pay attention to you because of his/her illness?
   a) Yes
   b) No

10. Did any of your caretakers ever hit you with an object or his/her fist, or kick or slap you real hard?
    a) Yes
    b) No

11. During your time in foster care did anybody ever try to kiss or touch you in inappropriate places?
    a) Yes
    b) No (Go to Q. 15)

12. Did they succeed?
    a) Yes
    b) No

13. Who were they? __________

14. Were they more than five years older than you?
    a) Yes
    b) No
15. After being discharged from foster care did anybody ever try to kiss or touch you in inappropriate places?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 19)

16. Did they succeed?
   a) Yes
   b) No

17. Who were they? __________

18. Were they more than five years older than you?
   a) Yes
   b) No

19. During your time in foster care did any of your caretakers try to have sexual intercourse with you?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 23)

20. Did they succeed?
   a) Yes
   b) No

21. Who were they? __________

22. Were they more than five years older then you?
   a) Yes
   b) No

23. After being discharged from foster has anyone tried to have sexual intercourse with you against your will?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 25)
24. Did they succeed?
   a) Yes
   b) No

25. Who were they? ___________

26. Were they more than five years older then you?
   a) Yes
   b) No

27. Why did you leave foster care?
   (Read the list for suggestions)
   a) Reached the age to leave
   b) Got married
   c) Runaway
   d) Returned home
   e) Other (specify) __________________________

28. During your last year in foster care, approximately how often did you have visitation with parental figures such as a natural parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or cousin? (Never, 1-5 times, 6-10 times, More than 10 times, Unknown)
   (Interviewer, specify M or P for maternal or paternal relatives when appropriate and read the entire list)
   (Interviewer give chart #10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternal or Paternal</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-5 times</th>
<th>6-10 times</th>
<th>10 times</th>
<th>More than Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Grandmother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Grandfather</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Aunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
29. During your last year in foster care, how often did you have visitation with your caseworker? (Interviewer suggest weekly, monthly, bimonthly, yearly, etc)
   a) Never
   b) 1-5 times
   c) 6-10 times
   d) More than 10 times
   e) Unknown

30. If there was no visitation between you and your parental figures during your last year of foster care, how often did you receive other forms of contacts from them? (Never, 1-5 times, 6-10 times, More than 10 times, Unknown)

   (Interviewer, specify M or P for maternal or paternal relatives when appropriate and read the entire list)

   (Interviewer give chart #11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maternal or Paternal</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1-5 times</th>
<th>6-10 times</th>
<th>More than 10 times</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Grandmother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Grandfather</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Aunt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Uncle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Cousin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, I would like to ask you about any training you may have received to help you to be ready to live on your own. This type of training could have come from a number of different people. By “training” we mean both formal and informal instruction.

(Interviewer give chart #12 to interviewee)

31. Did you receive training in any of these areas before exiting foster care? (please indicate the degree of helpfulness if the service was given. Not at all helpful, Somewhat helpful, Helpful, Very helpful)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NH</th>
<th>SH</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>VH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Money management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Food management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Personal appearance and hygiene</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Housekeeping</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Housing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Transportation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Educational planning</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Job seeking skills</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Job maintenance skills</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Emergency and safety skills</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Knowledge of community resources</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
m) Legal skills  

n) Decision making/problem solving  

o) Parenting skills  

p) Other (specify) ________________  

32. Shortly before exiting foster care did anyone provide any of the following services?  

a) Get you a job or job interview  

b) Provide you with a monthly check  

c) Have a meeting with you to see if you needed any help  

d) Give you your health records  

e) Provide health care insurance  

f) Give you the name of person to call if you have problems  

g) Give you money for housing  

h) Other (specify)__________  

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about things you may have been given in order to help you live on your own, or to get a job once you left foster care.  

33. Upon discharge did you:  

a) Have a drivers license  

b) Have at least $250.00  

c) Have pots and pans to set up household furnishing  

d) Have a place to live  

e) Know what occupation you wanted to pursue  

f) Have a portfolio with important papers  

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34. After you were discharged from foster care did anyone:
   
   a) Find you a place to live
      Yes   No
   b) Pay your rent
      Yes   No
   c) Pay your medical expense
      Yes   No
   d) Hold support group meetings
      Yes   No
   e) Have individual meetings
      Yes   No
   f) Give you a monthly check
      Yes   No
   g) Pay for any schooling
      Yes   No
   h) Refer you to other services for help
      Yes   No
   i) Did you receive any other help from the
      Yes   No
   j) Foster care agency (specify) 

35. Do you currently have: (circle the appropriate response)
   
   a) a valid drivers license
      Yes   No
   b) a credit card(s)
      Yes   No
   c) Car insurance
      Yes   No
   d) a checking account
      Yes   No
   e) a savings account
      Yes   No

36. When looking back over the years you lived in foster care, how satisfied were you 
with the following parts of your care in general? (Definitely not satisfied, Not 
satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Satisfied, Very satisfied)

   (Interviewer give chart #13 to interviewee)

   | DNS | NS | SS | S | VS |
---|-----|----|----|---|----|
  a) The quality of care you received? | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4 | 5  |
  b) The caseworkers that you had     | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4 | 5  |
c) The educational and training opportunities you were provided  
   1  2  3  4  5

d) The friends you made in foster care  
   1  2  3  4  5

e) The opportunities you had for contact with your natural parents  
   1  2  3  4  5

f) The foster parents you had  
   1  2  3  4  5

g) Services provided to prepare you for being on your own  
   1  2  3  4  5

h) Your experience in general  
   1  2  3  4  5

37. Who was the most supportive person to you while you were in foster care?  
   ____________________________________________________________

38. In what way were they so helpful?  
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

39. Are there any additional comments or remarks that you would like to make or add?  
   ____________________________________________________________

Great so far, now I am going to move on to some questions about any legal problems you may have had. Remember, your responses are confidential.

H) LEGAL ISSUES

1. Have you had any trouble with the law since you left foster care?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Section I)

2. If yes, what was the offense that you were charged with?  
   (Read the entire list)
   a) Traffic violation
   b) Petty theft (shoplifting)
c) Unlawful Entry
d) Hold up
e) Auto theft
f) Pushing and/or using illegal substance(s)
g) Shooting/Stabbing
h) Other (specify) _____________________

3. What was your penalty or punishment?
(Read the entire list)

a) I was given a reprimand and released
b) I paid a fine
c) I was put on probation
d) I was convicted and jailed
e) Other (specify) ________________

4. Do you have any other charges? (please list) ________________________________

5. Have you ever had formal charges filed? (By formal charges we mean anytime you
were arrested and went to court or been served with legal papers charging you with an
offense)

a) Yes
b) No

6. Have you spent any time in jail?

a) Yes
b) No

At this time I am going to ask you some questions about your personal adjustment since
exiting foster care.

I) PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT

II) SELF-ESTEEM

Below is a series of statements that describe how you might feel about yourself. For
each statement, please indicate your level of agreement by telling me the number that
corresponds with the response that best matches how you view yourself. (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

(Interviewer give chart #14 to interviewee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take a positive view of myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At times I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I certainly feel useless at times.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. II) DEPRESSION

How much of the time, during the last month, have you...

(Interviewer give chart #15 to interviewee)

I will now be asking you questions on how satisfied you feel with your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>A little of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>A good bit of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. been a very nervous person?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. felt calm and peaceful?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. felt down- hearted and blue?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. been a happy person</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I.III) SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item with the appropriate number. Please be open and honest in your responding.

(Strongly disagree, Disagree, Slightly disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Slightly agree, Agree, Strongly agree)

(Interviewer give chart #16 to interviewee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>STD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SLA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The conditions of my life are excellent.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am satisfied with my life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will now be asking you some questions about your overall outlook on life.

I.IV) LIFE OUTLOOK

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

(Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Slightly agree, Agree, Strongly agree) (Interviewer give chart #17 to interviewee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>STD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SLA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In an uncertain time, I usually expect the best.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If something can go wrong for me, it will.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I always look on the bright side of things.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I'm always optimistic about my future.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Things never work out the way I want them to.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. I'm a believer in the idea that “every cloud has a silver lining”.  
8. I rarely count on good things happening to me.

We have talked about various parts of your life. Now I would like to know about your life as a whole. How satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?

9. Which number comes closest to how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your life as a whole?

(Interviewer give chart #18 to interviewee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completely Satisfied</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Have you ever attempted to commit suicide?

   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to section J)

11. If yes, how long ago? _______________

I will now be asking you some questions regarding positive values and thriving indicators that you may have developed.

J) POSITIVE VALUES AND THRIVING INDICATORS

How important is each of the following to you in your life? (Not important, Somewhat important, Not sure, Quite important, Extremely important)

(Interviewer give chart #19 to interviewee)

a) Helping other people

   b) Helping to make the world a better place in which to live

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) Giving time or money to make life better for other people  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

d) Helping to reduce hunger and poverty in the world  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

e) Helping to make sure that all people in the world are treated fairly  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

f) Speaking up for equality (everyone should have the same rights and opportunities)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

g) Doing what you believe is right even if your friends make fun of me  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

h) Standing up for what you believe, even when it's unpopular to do so  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

i) Telling the truth even when it's not easy  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

j) Accepting responsibility for your actions when you make a mistake or get in trouble  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

k) Doing your best even when you have to do a job you do not like  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

l) It is against your values to drink alcohol while you are a teenager  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

m) It is against your values to have sex while you are a teenager  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. During an average week, how many hours do you spend helping friends or neighbors?

a) 0
b) 1
c) 2
d) 3-5
e) 6-10
f) 11 or more

3. How important to you is it to get to know people who are of a different race than you? (Interviewer give chart #20 to the interviewee)
a) Not important  
b) Somewhat important  
c) Not sure  
d) Quite important  
e) Very important

4. Thinking about the people who know you well. How well do you think they would rate you on each of these: (Not at all like me, A little like me, Somewhat like me, Quite like me, Very much like me)

(Interviewer give chart #21 to the interviewee)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NLM</th>
<th>ALM</th>
<th>SLM</th>
<th>QLM</th>
<th>VLM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Taking good care of my body  
(such as eating foods that are good for you, exercising regularly, and eating three good meals a day).  
1 2 3 4 5

b) Saving my money for something special rather than spending it all right away.  
1 2 3 4 5

c) Giving up when things get hard for me.  
1 2 3 4 5

5. During the last twelve months how many times have you been a leader in a group or organization?

a) Never  
b) Once  
c) Twice  
d) 3-4 times  
e) 5 or more times

6. How much do you agree or disagree with doing exciting things even when they are dangerous.

(Interviewer give chart #22 to the interviewee)
a) Strongly agree
b) Agree
c) Not sure
d) Disagree
e) Strongly disagree

Just a few more basic demographic questions

K) DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Age: _______

2. Gender:
   a) Male
   b) Female

3. Race:
   a) Caucasian
   b) African American
   c) Hispanic
   d) Asian
   e) Native American
   f) Other (specify) ______________

4. Have you ever been married?
   a) Yes
   b) No (Go to Q. 7)

5. Marital status:
   a) Married
   b) Live in relationship
   c) Widowed
   d) Divorced
   e) Separated

6. How many times have you been married?
a) Once  
b) Two times  
c) Three or more

7. Regarding religious or spiritual practice, do you consider yourself?  
(Read the entire list)
   a) Not active  
b) Active  
c) Very active

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your finances and money management.

8. What was your total income before taxes for 1999?
   a) No income  
b) Less than $5,000 
c) $5,000-$10,000  
d) $10,000-$15,000  
e) $15,000-$20,000 
f) $20,000-$30,000  
g) $30,000-$40,000  
h) $40,000  
i) Refuse to disclose  
j) Unknown

9. What is the source of this income? (Circle all that apply and read the list for suggestions)
   a) Employment  
b) Family  
c) Friends  
d) Public assistance (Social Security, SSI, AFDC, TANF, etc,)  
e) Other (specify ____________________________)

10. Is your income enough to cover your living expenses?
    a) Yes  
b) No

11. At the end of the month after paying all your living expenses, do you feel that you have:  
    (Interviewer give chart #23 to the interviewer)
a) More than enough money left  
b) A little more than enough money left  
c) Just about enough money left  
d) Less than enough money left  
e) Not close to enough money left  

12. Do you find that you have trouble paying your bills:  
(Interviewer give chart #24 to the interviewer)  

a) Very often  
b) Sometimes  
c) Not very often  
d) Never  

13. Do you receive additional income from:  
(Circle all that apply)  

a) My parents  
b) Able to support yourself  
c) Family member(s)  
d) Friend(s)  
e) Foster parent(s)  
f) Supplement from public social service programs  
g) Other (specify)_____________________________  

14. Compared to other people your age, would you describe your financial situation as:  
(Read the entire list)  

a) Better  
b) About the same  
c) Worse  

15. A lot of people find themselves borrowing money and going into debt to buy things that they need and want. How often do you borrow money?  

a) Weekly  
b) Monthly  
c) Every once in awhile  
d) Never
L) INTERVIEW COMMENTS
(Do not read this section fill this in on your own)

The overall quality of this interview was?

a) Unreliable
b) Questionable
c) Generally reliable

Please check the main reasons for the unreliable or questionable quality of the interview

The interviewee:

[ ] Did not understand or speak English well
[ ] Was evasive or suspicious
[ ] Was bored and uninterested
[ ] Was upset or distressed by the topic
[ ] Had a poor memory
[ ] Was immature
[ ] Did not seem to understand
[ ] Did not want to be more specific
[ ] Appeared drunk or intoxicated
[ ] Became fatigued
[ ] Other (specify) ________
APPENDIX II

TABLES OF RESEARCH FINDINGS
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Distribution of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Martial Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in Relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single or No Live-in Relationship</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income for 1999</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $5,000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 - $15,000</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 +</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Foster Care Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foster Care Experience</th>
<th># out of 20 Respondents</th>
<th>% out of 20 Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has been adopted</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was in foster care for more than 8 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was satisfied or very satisfied with their foster care experience in general</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced 7 or more placements</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was physically abused while in foster care</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3. Independent Living Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th># out of 20</th>
<th>% out of 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money management/Consumer awareness</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Management</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal appearance/ Hygiene</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational planning</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job seeking skills</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job maintenance skills</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency and safety skills</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community resources</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal skills</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making/Problem solving skills</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Type of Assistance Provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th># out of 20</th>
<th>% out of 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get them a job or a job interview</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide them a monthly check</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a meeting to see if help is needed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide them their health records</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide health insurance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give them the name of someone to call if help is needed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide money for housing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Upon discharge did they have the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have a valid drivers license</th>
<th>Distribution of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># out of 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a valid drivers license</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least $250.00</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pots and pans to set up household furnishings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place to live</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what occupation they wanted to pursue</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portfolio with their important papers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. **Outcome of Living Arrangements, Education, Employment, Health, and Substance Abuse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Arrangements</th>
<th>Homeless since exiting foster care</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>45</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lived in more than 4 places since leaving foster care</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Completed high school before exiting foster care</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completed high school after exiting foster care</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was in special education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currently enrolled in college</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currently enrolled in technical/vocational school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>Had regular employment before exiting foster care</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has had regular employment since exiting foster care</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has had the same job for more than seven months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feels that it is easy to secure employment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Has had a serious health problem since exiting foster care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feels that he/she is in good, very good or excellent health for their age or in general</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was covered by health care at the time of exit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substance Abuse</strong></td>
<td>Consumed alcohol in the last 30 days</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tried marijuana</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used marijuana 4 or more times in the last 30 days</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has dealt drugs to support themselves at some point</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. **Outcomes for Support System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support System</th>
<th># out of 20 Respondents</th>
<th>% out of 20 Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has kept in contact with siblings</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has kept in contact with birth mother</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has kept in contact with birth father</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has kept in contact with their relatives</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has kept in contact with previous foster parents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close to or somewhat close to previous foster parents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close to or somewhat close to birth parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close to or somewhat close to other relatives</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close to or somewhat close to an adult in a previous group or foster home</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close to or somewhat close to other kids in previous group or foster homes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close to previous caseworkers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has experienced violence in their relationships</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are pregnant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have caused or been pregnant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 8. **Outcomes for Legal Issues and Personal Adjustment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># out of 20 Respondents</th>
<th>% out of 20 Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever been in jail</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has had trouble with the law since exiting foster care*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Adjustment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with their life as a whole</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has attempted suicide</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excluding traffic violations*
Table 9. **Positive Outcomes of Former Foster Care Youth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># out of 20 Respondents</th>
<th>% out of 20 Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are satisfied or very satisfied with their current living arrangements</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find it easy to secure employment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported that their health is either good, very good, or excellent for their age and in general</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience in foster care in general</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received high school diploma or GED</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally satisfied with their life</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. **Gender Outcome Differences Where Males Fare Better Than Females**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income for 1999</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>% out of 10 Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>% out of 10 Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earned less than $5,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned $5,000 - $10,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned $10,000 - $15,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned $15,000 +</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious health problems since exiting foster care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported being in good, very good or excellent health in general or for their age</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved with an organization or group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported having had a sexually transmitted disease</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11. Gender Outcome Differences in Living Arrangements, Education, Employment, and Substance Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Arrangements</th>
<th># out of 10</th>
<th>% out of 10</th>
<th># out of 10</th>
<th>% out of 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been homeless</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied or very satisfied with living arrangements</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently employed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds it easy to secure employment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received high school diploma</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumed alcohol in the last 30 days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried marijuana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used marijuana 4 or more times in the last 30 days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has tried more serious recreational drugs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12. Gender Outcome Differences in the Areas of Support Systems and Legal Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support System</th>
<th># out of 10</th>
<th>% out of 10</th>
<th># out of 10</th>
<th>% out of 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have kept in contact with their siblings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have kept in contact with their birth mother</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have kept in contact with their birth father</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have kept in contact with their previous foster parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have kept in contact with their previous caseworker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have kept in contact with their previous mentor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their previous foster parents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their birth parents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling very close or somewhat close to their other relatives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling very close or somewhat close to an adult in a former group or foster home</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling very close or somewhat close to other kids in previous group or foster homes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still friends with the friends made in foster care</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close or very close to a mentor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported feeling close or very close to a previous caseworker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced violence in their intimate relationships</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent time in jail</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has had trouble with the law* since exiting foster care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes traffic violations*
Table 13. Comparing Multiple Placements to Satisfaction with Foster Care Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Number of Placements</th>
<th>How Satisfied With Their Experience in General in Foster Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Satisfied or somewhat satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>Not satisfied or definitely not satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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