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FORMER FOSTER YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON STRENGTHS AND NEEDED SERVICES OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

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FORMER FOSTER YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON STRENGTHS AND
NEEDED SERVICES OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

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

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

by
Cynthia Huizar
Judy Andrea Lawrence

June 2018

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Approved by:

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Dr. Janet Chang, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

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ABSTRACT

This study examined former foster youth's perceptions of the skills and services they received while they were in the foster care system. More specifically the efficacy of these services, and what services and skills they believed would have been helpful to assist them in their transition into independent living. A qualitative design was used, and semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with ten former foster youth who aged out of foster care at age eighteen through twenty-one. Two males and eight females from diverse backgrounds participated in this study. Participants were recruited through availability and snowball sampling at community agencies, college campuses, and the community.

This study found that participants experienced a difficult time transitioning from foster care to independent living, felt unprepared after leaving foster care, needing additional services, and expressed wanting to have received more in depth financial management skills. This study recommends providing additional independent living skills, social support, and participation in the Independent Living Program as part of foster youth's case plan when preparing to transition out of foster care into independent living.

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Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

DEDICATION

Thanks to the most high, my lord and savior who died on the cross to take away my sins. It is because of you, why I was able to do all this. You made your presence known at every step of my journey even when I could not see you. There were times throughout this where I only saw one set of foot prints in the sand and I felt alone and afraid, but you whispered and said to me “when you saw only one set of foot prints, those were the times I carried you”.

To my husband, Edmund Uy: Thank you for sticking it through with me on this journey. Thanks for being a supportive husband and holding down the family financially all these years. Thank you for understanding when you ask me what I want for Mother’s Day or my birthday day and I reply “SLEEP” you follow through with it. I appreciate you sincerely. They do not make them like you anymore. I love you so much and would marry you all over again.

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drowning in school work. Jenae I will be working soon, I will buy you all the sapphires you need for Animal Jams. Jebron, you taught me patience and how to love unconditionally and I love you so much.

Cynthia thank you for taking on this project with me. I could not have asked for a better partner for this research. You are an amazing human being and you are going to be an amazing social worker. I will cherish our stories and laughs we had together. Stay blessed.

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Judy Lawrence

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

Child maltreatment is a grave problem in the United States. The rate of victims per 1,000 children under the age of 18 in the United States is 9.4, similarly the rate for California is 7.9 per 1,000 children (USDHHS, 2017). In the year 2015, 4.0 million referrals of suspected child maltreatment were made to Child Protective Services, involving 7.2 million children (USDHHS, 2017). Eighteen percent (18%) of these referrals were substantiated, resulting in 683,000 victims, 1,670 of which were victims of a fatality. Victims most often suffered from neglect, accounting for 75.3% of cases. Physical, sexual, or other form of maltreatment accounting for 24.7% of cases (USDHHS, 2017).

Subsequently, in the United States, 427,910 children were placed in foster care, accounting for (45%) of placement settings in 2015 (USDHHS, 2016). For most children in foster care (75%), case plan goals include reunification with their parent or principal caretaker (USDHHS, 2016). However, for 7% (30,734) of adolescents in foster care, case plan goals involve emancipation or long-term foster care (USDHHS, 2016). In California, 1,754 adolescents aged 18-21 emancipated between July 2016- June 2017 (Webster et al., 2017). Furthermore, over 20,000 adolescents from age 18-21 “age out” of foster care each year in the United States (Naccarato & DeLorenzo, 2008). Until the California Fostering Connections ACT (AB 12) was passed in 2010, adolescents were aging out of

foster care at age 18 (California Youth Connection, n.d). AB 12 provided the option to youth turning 18 to optionally extended foster care benefits until the age of 21 (California Youth Connection, n.d).

Additionally, The Independent Living Program (ILP) was federally implemented in 1986 to improve foster care outcomes for young adults aging out of foster care (Fowler, Marcal, Zhang, Day, & Landsverk, 2017). The Independent Living Program was designed to provide basic living skills in preparation for adulthood for foster youth aged 16 to 21 (Naccarato & DeLorenzo, 2008). Services include “daily living skills, money management, decision making, building self-esteem, financial assistance with college or vocational schools, educational resources, housing (transitional housing), employment, and California’s Plan for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancy for Youth and Non-minor dependents” (CDSS, n.d). Despite this, a national study found that only half of foster youth receive ILP services and there is minimal evidence of the effectiveness of the program in improving outcomes for foster youth aging out of foster care (Fowler et al., 2017).

Foster youth who age out of foster care are faced with many challenges and often lack support from family, which can make the transition to independent living more difficult (Naccarato & DeLorenzo, 2008). Emerging adults often depend on their parents to provide them with housing, financial, and emotional support. Foster youth do not have this safety net, most only have the support from the child welfare system they grew up with. However, youth who age out of

foster care lose all the financial, educational, and social supports they relied on for most of their time in care (Fowler et al., 2017). This may result in poor outcomes in the domains of mental health, substance abuse, and underemployment compared to their peers (Fowler et al., 2017). Furthermore, they can fall victims to homelessness, illegal drug use, sex trafficking, poverty, no access to medical coverage, and constant unemployment (Graham, Schellinger, & Vaughn, 2015). Graham et al. (2015) found that if these young adults are not given actual independent living skills, it will be very difficult for them to grow and be positive contributing members in society.

Furthermore, experiences of former foster youth have not been studied enough, demonstrating the lack of information on former foster youth's own perspective. This study built on previous research to determine what program characteristics were helpful for youth transitioning out of foster care; along with determining what services foster youth believed were lacking that could have helped them have better outcomes. This study filled in the gaps in the literature by providing personal insight from foster youth who have aged out of foster care.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to examine former foster youth perceptions on the skills and services that were provided to them while in foster care. In addition, this study examined the efficacy of the services in helping them move from foster care to home stability, educational accessibility, employment opportunities, and lifelong supportive relationships. As previously mentioned,

youth in foster care who turn twenty-one years old are at the maximum age in which they could receive services and no longer qualify for the services they relied on through their time in foster care. Now, the youth are on their own and solely responsible to provide for themselves. At this time, they are expected to live independently without help from the system they came to rely on for most of their lives.

Numerous research studies demonstrate that outcomes for youth transitioning out of the foster care system are poor. Deficiencies were found in education, employment, housing, social support, and health care abundantly within this group of youths, and all of which are key indicators for self-sufficiency (Collins, 2001; Lemon, Hines, & Merdinger, 2005). Social supports are essential for young adults to be able to form meaningful relationships with caring adults who can give them the appropriate guidance and support (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006). The outcomes at present, indicate there will be some roadblocks in the future for foster youth. If new policies and procedures are not put in place, youth aging out of the foster care system will continue to face numerous negative challenges, such as higher risk of homelessness, joblessness, and higher risk of being a part of the criminal system (Youth Law Center, 2016).

This study was aimed at building on previous research and taking a different perspective. This study used a qualitative research design to explore former foster youth perceptions and experiences in the foster care system.

Availability sampling and snowball sampling were used to recruit study participants. Study participants were recruited at community agencies, college campuses, and the community. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were administered to a sample size of ten former foster youth who aged out of foster care. Two graduate level master in social work students conducted the interviews and asked probing questions, if deemed necessary. The semi-structured interview measurement was created that consisted of questions regarding experiences in foster care, independent living skills, perceived challenges/barriers, and outcomes. After interviews were conducted with study participants, interviews were transcribed, coded, and themes were identified. This research design was appropriate due to the limited budget and period of data collection.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

The need to study this topic began from these researchers' witnessing how aging out of foster care without the proper independent living skills can impact these youths, like struggling to obtain a job and obtain proper housing. Poor outcomes for former foster youth, signal to the importance of additional research in this area. Understanding what former foster youth themselves believe was beneficial for them, along with what services could have better prepared them as they transitioned into independent living, can be essential to how service practitioners provide services to foster youth whose case plan include emancipation or long-term foster care. This study provides valuable qualitative

data that can impact the services offered in a child welfare setting. Social workers who work with youth can better understand their needs and provide them with more effective interventions that can better prepare them to transition into independent living.

Additionally, legislators, policy advocates, foster families, social workers, administrators, attorneys, and courts can use the findings from this study as a resource for actions to take to improve outcomes for foster youth aging out of the foster care system. Also, it can be a tool to support and enhance efforts to advocate for changes and improvements in how legislatures, agencies, and courts work with foster youth. The findings from this research provides a platform for ongoing innovations and a roadmap for concrete practices that can improve the path to adulthood for the many foster youth who every year venture out on their own.

Research has indicated that youth aging out of the foster care system are less prepared to face adulthood than their peers (Fowler et al., 2017). Youth who age out of foster care may not have gained the needed skills to complete their education, live independently, or be prepared for a job. Without these skills, youth leaving foster care can experience negative outcomes such as higher rates of homelessness, no college education, and are likely to be incarcerated (Barth, 1990; Courtney & Dworsky, 2005; Gomez, Ryan, Norton, Jones, & Galan-Cisneros, 2015; Fowler et al., 2017; Krinsky & Liebmann, 2011; Naccarato & DeLorenzo, 2008; Scannapieco, Smith, & Blakeney-Strong 2016). Based on

these themes, the proposed research question was: What skills do foster youth need to successfully transition from foster care to independence?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter consists of a review of the literature significant to this study. Describing “aging out” of the foster care system, experiences of foster youth, foster youth outcomes, and services needed exiting foster care found through previous research. This chapter will also comprise of theories that conceptualize this study.

Experiences in the Foster Care

Goodkind, Schelbe, and Shook, (2011) defined “aging out” as youth not having a goal of reunifying with their birth family prior to leaving the foster care system before they turn eighteen. Geenen and Powers (2007) describe “aging out” as when youth in foster care are discharged from a county system and are no longer able to receive foster care assistance at the age of twenty-one. Getz (2012) defined aging out as when foster youth turn eighteen, and suddenly goes from being part of “the system” to being on his or her own. The aging out period for youth in the foster care system is from age eighteen up to age twenty-one, with youth having the option of leaving the system any time after age eighteen (Scannapieco, Connell-Carrick, & Painter, 2007). The term emancipation in the child welfare system refers to youth’s eligibility for foster care services to be

terminated based on their age and not by their preparedness to leave the system or their developmental aptitude or maturity (Betz, 2010).

Lavin and Gantwerk (2013) completed a qualitative study to examine experiences former foster youth had in foster care that they described as liberating. The research was aimed to explain to practitioners, policy makers, and other stakeholders of the specific qualities that brought forth self-sufficiency and positive outcomes to former foster youth. Four former foster youth participated in the study and were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The participants from this study aged out of the foster care system and successfully earned a high school diploma and a master's degrees. However, the participants stated it was a struggle for them and indicated that providing school stability for children in the foster care system needed to be addressed. Lavin and Gantwerk (2013) described how changing schools disrupts the educational process and can create academic challenges overall. It can sever crucial bonds created with adults and peers and cuts children off from their social groups and their community. One factor that was looked at during the study and was deemed positive for a smooth transition out of the program was access to programs. These programs included money management, emotional support, educational support, and life readiness. There were several limitations to this study. The limitations were the small sample size, selection process, participant demographics, and lack of other stakeholders' perspectives.

Thompson (2016) conducted a qualitative study where he interviewed nine former foster youth. Out of the nine participants, only two spoke of the positive impact foster care had on them. One common theme found was that the participants felt as though foster care was just a shelter for them, they did not view it as home (Thompson, 2016). Also, participants reported feeling placement instability and emotionally alone. On the positive side, they felt safer in foster care than in their own home (Thompson, 2016).

Foster Youth Outcomes

Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, and Nesmith (2001) conducted a longitudinal study in Wisconsin of former foster youth twelve to eighteen months after they were discharged from care. The study found that 18% had been arrested at least once. Specifically, 27% of males and 10% of females in this study experienced at least one episode of incarceration. In a later study, Courtney and Dworsky (2005) found even more alarming results: 28% of the youth in the sample reported that they had contact with law enforcement, and 33% of those were for violent crimes; 12% of the total sample reported being convicted of a crime; and nearly 20% reported being incarcerated since their first interview. Males in this study had a higher percentage of being involved with the criminal system than females in terms of arrest, conviction, and incarceration (Courtney & Dworsky, 2005).

Krinsky and Liebmann (2011) conducted a qualitative study on former foster youth and found the participants in the study were not properly prepared

for living on their own. Only a small number of youth leaving care had legal documents and were able to drive a vehicle (Krinsky & Liebmann, 2011). Less than a half of these youth had any form of cash, and less than a quarter of them had the essential skills to help them establish a place of their own (Krinsky & Liebmann, 2011). They also observed that when these young adults were getting ready to leave the foster care system; they only had a bag full of their personal items with no real connection to anyone important to them to guide them or to provide support.

Gomez et al. (2015) used semi-structured interviews and focus groups with former foster youth. The study found that youth who aged out of foster care reported perceptions of learned helplessness; a sense of powerlessness. Study participants were former foster youth (n=134) who had aged out of foster care. Participants were recruited from agencies who offered services to emerging adults who were homeless. The study consisted of participatory action research methods (PAR) where homeless emerging adults were hired and trained as researchers who aided in data collection (Gomez et al., 2015). They found that 59% of youth who aged out of foster care made statements that indicated learned helplessness. A limitation of this study was using the participatory action research (PAR) which could have impacted the results of the study.

Scannapieco et al. (2016) collected records from the Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC) and Children's Protective Services databases in a large suburban area in Texas. Scannapieco et al. (2016) examined the characteristics

of the youth that had better outcomes when it came to education, mental and physical health, employment, and criminal. They also examined what program characteristics were correlated with positive outcomes. The Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC) provided the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) services in Texas to youth who have aged out of foster care (Scannapieco et al., 2016). The participants of this study included nonrandom selection of former foster youth who had received PAL services. They found that the older a youth was when they had the last contact with TRAC, the higher the employability scores. However, with higher number of placements the employability score decreased. Regarding program characteristics, they determined that time working with the youth on money management skills, time spent on transportation issues, and client/mentor interaction increased employability scores. Limitations to this study was the use of secondary data and validity was unable to be determined.

Shah et al. (2016) conducted a study to determine protective and risk factors for homeless youth in the year after aging out of foster care. Shah et al. (2016) used a state-level database and studied 1,202 emerging adults in Washington State who had exited foster care in a two-year period from July 2010 and June 2012. The participants in this study included young adults who were aged seventeen through twenty-one, during their last placement before aging out of foster care. Shah et al. (2016) used a stepwise regression analysis to determine his results and found that youth were more likely to be homeless within one year of exiting foster care if they were African American, parents,

experienced multiple placements, experienced disrupted adoptions, involvement in the juvenile system, or recently experienced housing instability. Shah et al. (2016) stressed the importance of being aware of the risk factors for homelessness with this youth to be able to provide them with prevention resources. Limitations noted were efficacy of reporting data in the database used.

Fowler et al. (2017) conducted a large-scale study to determine whether aging out of foster care contributes to the risk of becoming homeless. Fowler et al. (2017) analyzed a preexisting data sample from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II (NSCAW II), that sampled children who had a closed case of suspected child abuse or neglect between February 2008 and April 2009. Fowler et al. (2017) focused on adolescents at least eighteen years of age at the eighteen or thirty-six-month follow-up. Fowler et al. (2017) found that youth who aged out of foster care displayed similar rates of experiences of homelessness as to youth who were never placed in foster care. However, Fowler et al. (2017) determined that youth who were older were more prone to experience housing instability. In addition, they found that youth who identified as Hispanic were more likely to be homeless and unstably housed, compared to other youth (Fowler et al., 2017). This study was the first using national data to determine housing outcomes for youth who aged out of foster care. This study did not consider foster care programs and policies that might have impacted the results of this study.

Services Needed Exiting Foster Care

Scannapieco et al. (2007) used focus groups that included participation of foster youth who aged out of the foster care system along with social workers who worked with this population. The themes that were prevalent and brought about from the data collected were: development of a focus group program that was geared towards youth exiting out of care, the need for social workers, community leaders, mentors, and counselors to establish a better communication system, and join forces with each, and create more hands-on training (Scannapieco et al., 2007). The study also observed that one major component that was missing from the life of a youth aging out of the foster care system was being able to connect with a positive adult influence in their lives that they could consider their support system (Scannapieco et al., 2007). Instead of having young adults transition out of care all on their own, it was noted that there should be some type of kinship put in place for them (Scannapieco et al., 2007).

Naccarato and DeLorenzo (2008) summarized nineteen studies on former foster youth and their experience living independently and provided evidence-based implications. They researched academic and electronic databases for articles written between 1990 to 2006. They searched key words and used four criteria to determine which articles would be included. The study used four domains indicating readiness for independent living which included: housing, educational attainment, placement, and employment. After review of all nineteen studies Naccarato and DeLorenzo (2008) determined that independent living was

measured differently in most studies. They determined that research findings would not be generalizable and will not be helpful in improving Independent Living Programs if the quality of research does not improve. Limitations of this study was that it did not provide new research but relied solely on reviewing other studies.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization.

Eric Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development (1968) is quite relevant to the understanding of human development. This theory focuses on the humans' journey through life from childhood into adulthood by acquiring certain developmental skills. This theory is also used quite often to determine the risk factors that come along with child abuse. According to Erickson (1968) there are eight stages of psychosocial development which includes trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity, and ego integrity (Erikson, 1968). During each of these stages people are exposed to challenges or obstacles that can affect their level of development either negatively or positively (Erikson, 1968). When these challenges or obstacles are experienced the chance of maturity is either high or low depending on the effect it has on that person (Erikson, 1968). When children are raised in an understanding environment that allows them to inquire about things, make mistakes and learn from them, and uncover new ideas, they will leave the identity versus confusion stage with high self-esteem and confidence. On the contrary, children who are not raised in this type of positive environment will not be confident enough to go

out and make life changing decisions on their own. Youth in foster care have a tremendously hard time moving from one stage to the next. This can account for why foster youth who are not prepared to exit foster care experience a difficult transition and find themselves homeless, incarcerated, and unemployed.

Bronfenbrenner and Kiesler's (1977) ecological systems theory of child development explains how the environments a child is exposed to throughout his or her life journey influence the developmental outcome of that child.

Bronfenbrenner and Kiesler (1977) argue that there are five levels of environmental influence that affects development. The microsystem is the child's daily and personal environment. This could be the home, school, church, or peer groups. The way the child interacts within this setting will affect that child's development (Bronfenbrenner & Kiesler, 1977). The mesosystem is the connection between these environments. If the child's family is involved with the child's peers, the development of the child will be a positive one (Bronfenbrenner & Kiesler, 1977). Conversely, if the family does not try to get acquainted with the child's peers and speak badly about them, the child's development is affected negatively (Bronfenbrenner & Kiesler, 1977). The ecosystem is the link between the settings the child may participate in and those that he/she does not participate in, yet a situation may arise that would impact the things that take place in the person's microsystem (Bronfenbrenner & Kiesler, 1977). The macrosystem is the child's culture, values, and beliefs which aid in their development. The chronosystem demonstrates change and consistency in the

child's environment (Bronfenbrenner & Kiesler, 1977). This theory is pertinent to this research because it describes how youth who age out of the system can be influenced by what they experience in their environment. The child's original culture, values, beliefs, genetic makeup, and personality is an important factor that should be understood and upheld, to positively impact foster youth outcomes. To understand outcomes of former foster youth in a larger capacity, it is important to understand Bronfenbrenner's and Kiesler's ecology theory system because all these different systems influence each other and control these outcomes (Gypen, Vanderfaeillie, Maeyer, Belenger, & Holen, 2017).

Summary

As discussed in the literature, outcomes for former foster youth are poor due to the lack of support and independent living skills available to them during their time in foster care. Literature discussed in this section also outlined a need for research that highlights foster youth perspectives on what they believe is needed in the foster care system to provide foster youth the proper support to transition into adulthood.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods that were used to study the perceptions of former foster youth on skills and services they received before exiting the foster care system. This section also includes a detailed description of the study design that was used, sampling, data collection and instrument, procedures, protection of human subjects, and data analysis method used.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to identify skills and needed resources that former foster youth deemed important to successfully transition out of foster care and into adulthood. A qualitative face-to-face and telephone interview design was used in this research study using a semi-structured interview guide. Through the semi-structured interview approach, information was gathered from the participants about their perceptions of needed skills and services they received while they were in the foster care system, the efficacy of these services, and what services and skills they believed would have been helpful to assist them in their transition into adulthood.

The rationale for choosing a qualitative research design was partially based on time, cost, and confidentiality. This method was cost-effective and only

needed a small number of participants while receiving in-depth and detailed information. The interviews provided a wealth of vital ideas and concepts that could possibly help improve the independent living skills program. This study design provided a platform for participants to provide as much information as they chose. Furthermore, this design allowed the researcher to observe verbal and non-verbal behaviors of the participants.

Although a qualitative design offers many strengths, there are a few methodological limitations that can apply. First, the study mainly focuses on the experience of a few participants. Second, a qualitative study design depends heavily on self-reporting which allow participants to divulge information they remember that is based on their feelings and opinions. Third, when using a small sample size one of the issues that may arise is generalizability (Rahman, 2016). Consequently, the findings in this research study using the perception of ten former foster youth on needed skills and services cannot be used to represent all former foster youth's perceptions of needed skills and services.

Sampling

Study participants consisted of ten former foster youth who aged out of the foster care system. Sampling criteria required that participants were part of the child welfare system, placed in foster care, and aged out of foster care between age eighteen to thirty-seven years old. Participants were a minimum of eighteen years old and a maximum age of thirty-seven years old. Participants varied in gender, culture, and ethnicity. Participants were recruited through availability

sampling at community agencies, college campuses, and the community.

Snowball sampling was also used by asking recruited participants if they knew other former foster youth that would like to participate in the study.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data for the study was collected with the use of face-to-face and phone interviews. An interview instrument was created to help the researchers better comprehend and grasp the participants' perception of the needed skills and services they received or believe they should have received. The instrument was also created to give the youth a platform to detail their own experiences while they were in foster care and to provide some idea as to what programs they believed should be incorporated in the system to allow for a smoother and more successful transition into independency. The instrument consisted of fourteen open-ended questions that were collected with interviews as well as fifteen demographic questions that were collected in a paper survey.

The demographic section included questions related to gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, level of education, and length of stay in foster care. Some of the questions and topics that were addressed in this research study were placement history, length of time in the foster care system, number of schools attended, recipient of extended foster care, participation in and effectiveness of the independent living program. Demographic information enabled the researchers to collect data about the characteristics of the sample population. Open-ended questions included skills learned, participants'

relationship with social workers while in care, the process of transitioning out of service into independency, how prepared the participants felt to start living independently, what they think worked, what they felt needed improvement, any experiences of hardships since leaving care, and what life is like now for the participants.

Procedures

Researchers used flyers, community, and social media to recruit participants. Social media was used by posting the need for participants and contact information on social networking sites. Researchers also used the social work community to help recruit participants. Upon obtaining participants, a time and place was set for the interview to take place. Interviews took place in a location that was convenient to the participant such as coffee shops, parks, and over the telephone. Interviews were held in February through March of 2018. Interviews lasted about thirty to forty-five minutes.

Participants were provided with an informed consent before starting the interview. If participants agreed to participate in the study, they signed the consent form with an X to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, participants were given the option to consent to be audio recorded. If participants disagreed to being audio recorded, the researchers took detailed notes. Two masters level graduate students in social work conducted semi-structured interviews with participants. The interviewers used an interview guide and asked probing

questions, if deemed necessary. Demographic data was collected in a survey form that was given to the participant to complete after the interview. Upon completion, participants received a debriefing statement that provided them with additional information of the purpose of the study and where they can obtain the results once the study was completed.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researchers took all the necessary precautions to ensure that all participants in this study were protected and their information kept confidential. An informed consent letter was given to participants stating the research topic and the purpose of the study. The informed consent form also outlined to the participants that their participation was voluntary, and they could stop their participation at any point during the interview. The participants were also given the option to consent for the use of an audio recording device. Once the procedures were explained and potential participants agreed to participate in this study, they were asked to sign by using a X on the signature line, to keep their identity confidential. After the data was collected, the audiotapes were kept in a locked drawer only the researchers had access to. The computer used for transcribing the data was password-protected to avoid breach of confidentiality. After the research study was completed, all audio files and transcribed data was destroyed by shredding of paper and erasing audio files. Additionally, a debriefing statement was provided to participants to inform them that no deception was involved in the study.

Data Analysis

This research study used qualitative data analysis techniques. A journal was used to document all rules and techniques used to analyze interviews. Responses were transcribed verbatim and researchers became familiar with data by reading all interviews. Transcribed responses were coded by identifying prominent themes that emerged within the responses, fitting them into categories, and a code was assigned to that category. Categories were refined by adding, collapsing, revising, and/or expanding codes. Similarities and differences within the categories were identified to detect relationships. Next, the number of times each code appeared was counted. Themes that emerged from the data were experiences in foster care, independent living skills learned, perceived challenges/barriers, additional services needed, and outcomes. Both researchers analyzed open-ended responses separately and compared to ensure consistency. Additionally, demographic data was entered, verified, and averages were calculated with Microsoft Excel.

Summary

A qualitative research design was used to explore the research question. Availability and snowball sampling was used to recruit study participants that have aged out of foster care. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten participants who aged out of foster care and are currently aged eighteen through thirty-seven. Interviews were transcribed and coded to identify themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results from personal interviews conducted with study participants. Demographic data were presented along with participant's experiences within eight categories: transition from foster care to independent living, services, skills, social support, advice for social workers, hardships, present life, and additional comments. Direct quotes were used to further understand the findings and study participants' experiences in aging out of foster care.

Presentation of Findings

The study sample was taken from former foster youth locally and nationally. Ten participants took part in this study. In the beginning of the interview process, each participant was given 15 demographic questions to answer. For this study there were 8 females and 2 males with ages ranging between 19 and 37 years of age with an average age of 29.6. Participants were 4 Caucasian, 2 Latino/Hispanic, 2 African American, and 1 Native American. One participant refused to participate in this question. Regarding education, 5 participants obtained their bachelor's degree, 3 had some college experience, and 2 had a master's degree or higher. Of the 10 participants, 5 were single/never married, 4 were married, and 1 was in a long-term relationship.

Eight of the participants were employed and 2 were unemployed. Participants entered foster care from as early as 2 weeks old to age 16. Participant's time in foster care ranged from 3 years to 18 years with an average time in foster care of 8.6 years. At the time participants exited foster care, 7 were placed in a foster home, 2 were placed in group homes, and 1 was placed with relatives. On average, participants had 6.1 placement changes. Additionally, on average, participants attended 5.6 schools and one participant could not remember how many different schools they attended. When participants were asked if they participated in an Independent Living Program 7 reported yes and 3 reported they had not participated. Of the participants who answered no to participating in an Independent Living Program, two participants reported they did not know the program was offered, and one stated they knew the program was offered but chose not to participate in it.

Transition from Foster Care to Independent Living

When participants were asked about their experience in their transition from foster care to independent living, their responses were mixed. Six participants reported a difficult transition, three reported having a smooth transition, and one participant declined to answer. Over half of participants indicated a difficult transition. Participants who reported a difficult transition felt they had little support, lack preparedness, and/or felt they had nowhere to go. One participant reported, "I had no resources, no job, no guidance, the only thing that kept me from being homeless was that I still had my biological mother, whom

I could stay with” (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported, “It was terrible, it felt like I was kicked out onto the streets to fend for myself with no family at all” (personal communication, March 2018). Participants who reported a smooth transition indicated they felt prepared and/or they had the support from their foster parents. One participant reported, “My transition from foster care to independent living was pretty smooth. I was in transitional housing first and they taught me a lot of life skills because I didn’t know anything about the adult world” (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported,

It was a little bit easier than I expected, I went directly from high school to undergrad so I had a lot of assistance from my current, at that time, foster mom, who helped me pack and get to my college dorm. (personal communication, February 2018)

When participants were asked about what helped them the most in their transition from foster care to independent living, results varied. Participants most often indicated the services they were provided, mentors, their social worker, social support, and/or family aided in their transition. However, one participant indicated nothing, or no one helped their transition. One participant reported, “One social worker from LA County helped me with getting on the road to independency and transitioning out of the foster care system. He always told me of different resources and opportunities I could take advantage of” (personal communication, February 2018). On the contrary, another participant reported,

“No one helped me, I helped myself, had to live in my car for a summer then basically just bounced around a lot of different places where people would let me stay” (personal communication, March 2018).

When participants were asked how prepared they felt after exiting foster care results were mixed. Six participants reported feeling unprepared and four participants reported feeling prepared to exit foster care. One participant reported,

Not prepared at all- it felt like a dream, like it wasn't real. One moment I had finally stabilized in a home for more than a year, and the next I was expected to just go out and survive- somehow. (personal communication, February 2018)

Another participant reported, “I felt like I was going to be homeless again because my social worker just wanted to get rid of me. She had too many kids on her caseload” (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported,

I would say on a scale from 1-10, 4. I feel the county in which I resided did not adequately provided me the level of care for transitioning me out of foster care. I was not notified of my emancipation hearing and the courts exited me from the system without my knowledge. (personal communication, February 2018)

On the contrary, one participant reported, “I was very prepared I think. Like I said I think those long relationships and support networks and just the skill that I got” (personal communication, March 2018).

Services

When participants were asked what their view was of the Independent Living Program, participant responses were mixed. Five participants indicated that the Independent Living Program was helpful for them. On the contrary, four participants reported the Independent Living Program was not helpful for them and one participant reported he was not aware of the program. One participant reported,

I believe the Independent Living Program is amazing for young adults to shift shape their skills into a competent level and use those skills to better enhance themselves and their futures. I believe this program should not be voluntary but a mandatory program for all foster youth to participate in.
(personal communication, February 2018)

Another participant reported, “I actually wish it was at an earlier age instead of 15, 16 I believe it is now. It doesn’t hurt to start early, even at 12” (personal communication, February 2018).

When participants were asked what additional services they believed could have helped them transition out of foster care results were varied. Participants reported housing resources, peer support, therapy, additional social worker contact, and job resources could have aided their transition. One

participant reported, “A place to live while going to college, going into a dorm room all alone is very scary to a foster child, they feel very alone, nowhere to go on Spring Break or Holidays” (personal communication, March 2018). Another participant reported, “So supposedly I was getting good enough grades. My behavioral issues were very minimal. So they didn’t check in with me as much as they should have” (personal communication, February 2018).

When participants were asked if they felt they still needed assistance today results were mixed. Seven participants felt that they still needed additional services. On the other hand, three participants felt as though they were not in need of any services. Participants indicated they would benefit from peer support/community, therapy, and education. One participant reported,

I actually do wish I could come together with foster youth and just let us know what they are up to, and just sharing. Cuz it is interesting to see where, especially if I can see the girls I grew up with, and my foster home.
(personal communication, February 2018)

Another participant reported, “Yes, wish I could get more education and figure out what I am good at so I can have a career and finally feel good about myself” (personal communication, March 2018). On the other hand, one participant reported, “No, I believe that I understand what my needs are as in terms of my life and I am living comfortable currently” (personal communication, February 2018).

Skills

When participants were asked what skills they learned during their time in foster care, results varied. Participants most often identified learning financial education skills. Additionally, participants identified learning to advocate for themselves, to complete chores, to be patient, responsibility, job skills, and daily living skills. Three participants reported learning no skills through foster care. One participant reported, "I would have to say something I learned, one thing would be to advocate for myself and all the other foster youth that would come after me" (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported, "A lot of the skills I learned and adapted were from other individuals. Learning how to conduct chores in an appropriate manner, daily living and survival skills, money management and how to budget were just some of those skills" (personal communication, February 2018). On the contrary, one participant reported,

None. In fact, my social development was stunted due to foster care, combined with the medications I was subjected to. I learned zero life skills, job skills, or any real world experiences, normally expected to encounter in a normal childhood. (personal communication, February 2018)

When participants were asked what skills they think they should have learned while in foster care results were varied. Four participants identified wanting to have received more in-depth financial management skills which include filing taxes and saving for the future. Participants also identified wanting

to have learned additional living skills, coping methods, job skills, educational, reproductive health, and legal education. One participant reported,

How to cope in life, how to manage money, how to turn on utilities, how to apply for a job, etc. When you are in care you do not see the outside world, you don't see supermarket, you do not buy food, you do not pay bills. (personal communication, February 2018)

Another participant reported, "How to manage money a little bit better. Actually, having a monthly budget and sticking to it and saving for emergencies because nowadays I have a lot of emergencies" (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported,

I wish I learned about how to establish credit, I wish I had someone who helped me with school, I wish I had someone to help me with becoming an adult, or simple things like teaching me how to do my hair, makeup, how to dress. (personal communication, March 2018)

Social Support

When participants were asked if they received any social supports that aided in their transition out of foster care, their responses were mixed. Six participants reported receiving social support from mentors, services received, their social worker, and/or family or friends. However, four participants reported receiving no type of social supports. One participant reported,

I received a lot of support from mentors and different people I've met throughout my years in foster care. If I ever need any advice or anything I

know I can count on them. The lady who ran the group home I was in, we still correspond, I call her 'granny'. (personal communication, February 2018)

Another participant reported, "Well social supports would my foster parents. After, I still keep contact with them and I have friends at school and coworkers and also the social workers" (personal communication, March 2018). On the other hand, one participant reported, "Not at all" when asked what type of social support they received (personal communication, March 2018).

Advice for Social Workers

When participants were asked if they had any advice for social workers helping foster youth transition out of care responses were varied. Five participants most often responded with connecting the youth to resources and advocating for them. Additionally, participants identified building rapport, listening, and genuinely caring for the youth. One participant reported,

Don't be so quick to push us out into the world we know nothing about.

Just because you want to get rid of a case don't push us out. Help us find a job before you push us out into the world. (personal communication, February 2018)

Another participant reported,

I was never able to talk to any of my social workers it's because I didn't trust them because they were always in and out of my life so it's really important to build that rapport. From personal experience it's hard to open

up to someone that you don't know if they are going to be there in the next 2 weeks. (personal communication, February 2018)

One participant reported, "It is so vital to keep up on new and modified resources to reach out and advocate to foster youth so they may have a positive future. Informing foster youth of all resources and opportunities increases their future survival" (personal communication, February 2018).

Hardships

When participants were asked if they had experienced any hardships after leaving foster care, their responses were consistent. Nine out of ten participants reported experiencing some type of hardship. Participants most often identified suffering from a mental health illness or experiencing housing insecurity. Additionally, participants identified financial insecurity, a death in their family, medical concerns, and having experienced domestic violence. One participant reported, "I got extremely sick and lost everything my job, my home, my car, everything. My friends and mentor helped me get through it" (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported,

I experienced homelessness for 30 days after my first year of being at a university. I had an altercation with my foster aunt and she disowned me the day after. I have also experienced more family members that passed away. (personal communication, February 2018)

Present Life

When participants were asked what their life is like as of today responses were mostly positive. Participants reported pursuing their educational goals, employed, married, and currently engaged in mentoring. One participant indicated she would like be more connected with her family. One participant reported, "I'm happily married and working my way back up to where I want to be. I also speak to at risk teens and foster youth at events. I love giving back" (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported, "I do really like where I am at right now. I just wish that I was more connected with my family to share what I have been up to" (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported, "I think that um that my experiences have definitely impacted me in kind of the way that I carry myself, the way I work with people, my choice, obviously my choice in career, in education" (personal communication, March 2018).

Additional Comments

Participants were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments. One participant reported, "Create as much normalcy in the youth's life and help build a legacy for the child before they leave care. Everyone needs to know where they came from. If at all possible, encourage connections with siblings" (personal communication, February 2018). Another participant reported, "I think foster parents and social workers should have better training, more in-depth training and also feel they should get paid more. And social

workers should do house visits more often than they do and not scheduled. Just pop up so foster parents don't have time to make things look perfect when they are not. (personal communication, March 2018)

Another participant reported,

Don't just put us in a home and you don't know how it really is. Do a lot of unannounced visits. If social workers did unannounced visits they would have seen I was locked in my closet, I was starved, I was beaten.
(personal communication, February 2018)

Summary

This chapter presented the finding of this qualitative research study to explore the research question. The findings were obtained from the results of ten study participants and their experiences in aging out of the foster care system. Results were grouped into eight categories that helped explore participant's experiences. These categories were: transition from foster care to independent living, services, skills, social support, advice for social workers, hardships, present life, and additional comments.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter identified and discussed the major findings of this study. This chapter also presents the limitations of this study and provides recommendations for social work practice, policy, and future research with foster youth transitioning out of foster care.

Discussion

This study found that over half of participants experienced a difficult time transitioning from foster care to independent living. Participants who reported a difficult transition felt they had little support, lack preparedness, and/or experienced housing instability. It appears that foster youth felt as though they were not properly prepared to live independently and lacked the social support they felt they needed. Additionally, it seems that housing insecurity after exiting foster care was a prominent theme among participants. This finding is consistent with Woodgate, Morakiyo, and Martin's (2017) finding that noted, even with support, youth experienced a difficult transition out of foster care, specifically in obtaining employment and stable housing.

This study also found over half of participants felt unprepared after leaving foster care. It appears that most participants did not have a stable place to live after leaving foster care which contributed to them feeling unprepared to living

independently. Participants also reported not being aware of their emancipation date and getting little to no information from their social worker. This finding is consistent with Krinsky and Liebmann's study (2011), stating, participants were not properly prepared to live on their own. Krinsky and Liebmann (2011) also identified that less than half of their study participants, who were former foster youth, had any type of income and less than one fourth of them had the skills to help them find their own place to live. Additionally, they found that most foster youth participants only had a bag full of personal items. This finding is also consistent with Reilly's study (2003), which found that a third of participants reporting not having a place to live after leaving foster care and half of participants did not have at least \$250 when they exited foster care.

This study also revealed that almost all participants reported needing additional services. Participants identified possibly benefiting from peer support/community, therapy, and education. It seems that participants identified needing additional therapy services to treat past trauma and mental health concerns. Additionally, participants identified wanting a support group or an avenue where they can join other foster youth and talk about their experience. This finding is consistent with Bederian-Gardner et al. study (2018) that found that instability is a strong association with mental health problems, in particular post-traumatic stress disorder, indicating a need for mental health services.

This study also found that when participants were asked what they should have learned while in foster care, they identified wanting to have received more

in-depth financial management skills which include filing taxes and saving for their future. Participants also identified wanting to have learned additional living skills, educational resources, coping methods, job skills, and more education on health and legal matters. It appears participants felt they did not have the proper training to be able to cope with their transition out of foster care or the proper skills to be able to attain housing and employment. This study finding is consistent with Lavin and Gantwerk's study (2013) finding that a positive factor that provided a smooth transition out of foster care was access to programs such as money management, emotional support, educational support, and life readiness.

Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. One of the limitations of this qualitative study was its small sample size due to limited accessibility to former foster youth who were willing to have face to face interviews or telephone interviews with prospective social workers. With this small sample size, it made it harder for the researchers to have more comparison data to analyze. Another limitation of the study was the self-reported data which could possibly have some biases. The researchers relied on the memory of the participants which could have been selective memory.

Another limitation was that participants all had some type of college education, which could be a representation of only former foster youth whose

outcomes were successful and positive. The researchers were expecting for a more mixed set of participants in the study, to avoid this limitation however, due to resistance from former foster youth to be interviewed by the researchers who are prospective social workers, and not enough time to recruit more participants, this was not possible.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

Practice

Using the data gathered from the participants of this study, the researchers believe that the independent living program should be stressed upon to the foster youth transitioning out of care. Two participants in this study did not know the independent living program was available to them. Thus, social workers working with foster youth should make the independent living program available to them and should present it at an early age. Foster youth should know that independent living skills are necessary tools they will need when they leave care and live independently. Half of the participants in this study disclosed that the independent living program was helpful to them and indicated it is a necessary part of the transitioning process for foster youth to have positive outcomes. The independent living program is in place, but it is voluntary, and some foster youth are not aware that the program exists. However, of the youth who participated in the independent living program, some were still not given the tools to help them carry out daily living skills. For example, some of the participants disclosed that even though they attended the independent living program, they wish they were

taught financial management skills such as filing taxes, how to open a bank account, how to carry out daily chores, job skills, or even real-world experience such as turning on utilities in their apartment.

Additionally, it might be helpful for child welfare agencies to talk with former foster youth to see where the agency fell short on services and incorporate that in their service plan for other foster youth. The agencies could incorporate hiring former foster youth to help be a mentor to other youth transitioning out of care. They could help by providing resources, guiding them through the steps of applying for colleges, trade schools, or jobs. Former foster youth could also be a source of long term peer support for these youths.

Participants in this study discussed that they could have used more help from their social workers with getting resources to help them find a place to live, connecting them with more peer support, therapy, more social work contact, rapport building, listening more, and having the social workers advocate more for them. Some of the participants felt as though the social workers did not care about them, and they only cared about lessening their work load. The researchers suggest that the agencies hire more social workers to minimize case load. This would help the social workers serve their clients in a more effective goal centered way. This in turn would help bring about better success rate of youth aging out of care. Additionally, the researchers suggest more unannounced visits with foster families, which participants indicated would have reduced abuse or neglect they experienced while in foster care.

Policy

Through information gathered from this study, it is strongly recommended that the Independent Living Program be made mandatory for foster youth and that it incorporate the important daily and independent living skills necessary for successful transition out of the foster care system. Participants discussed that because the program was voluntary, most of the time they did not participate, or they would only participate if there was some type of incentives, such as gift cards. After they aged out of foster care and lived independently, they realized how important the Independent Living Program was. The researchers concur with the participants of the study; there should be a policy in place for all foster youths to take part in Independent Living Program services. The researchers believe that child welfare services should look at the disparities that youth transitioning out of care are facing and strive towards revising the existing policy.

Another policy revision that the researchers recommended is for foster youth to be able to take part in Independent Living Program services starting at a younger age. Preparing the youth emotionally, mentally, and educationally during their time in foster care will aid in needing little or no intervening in the future. If youth are given the chance to take part in Independent Living Program services at a younger age, they will be able to start thinking and preparing for the future at an earlier stage.

Research

The researchers are also recommending a research study be conducted with social workers as participants to gather their perception and experience working with foster youth transitioning out of foster care. In addition, the researchers believe that a research investigating former foster youth perceptions on the foster care system should be carried out with a larger sample size with former foster youth from varying educational backgrounds. This would help to shed a better light on some of the factors that possibly contributed to former foster youth who did not seeking higher education.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the discussion of the significant findings found in the data analysis process of the study, and how these themes apply to the former foster youth who are transitioning out of the foster care system. Also, this chapter outlined the limitations of the study and made recommendations for social work practice, policy, and future research with foster youth transitioning out of foster care.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Demographic Information

The following questions are optional. The information below will help us learn more about you. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses will remain anonymous. Please circle or write your answer. You may skip questions or stop taking the survey at any time. After you complete the survey, please return it back to the researcher.

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your ethnicity?
 - a. African American
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. Caucasian
 - d. Asian/Pacific Islanders
 - e. Native American
 - f. Other, specify _____

4. What is your highest level of education?
 - a. Less than high school
 - b. High school graduate
 - c. Some college
 - d. Associate degree

- e. Bachelor's degree
- f. Master's degree or higher

5. What is your present marital status?

- a. Never married/ single
- b. In a long-term relationship
- c. Married
- d. Divorced
- e. Widowed
- f. Other, specify_____

6. Are you employed?

- a. Yes (please answer question #7)
- b. No (move on to question #8)

7. If you answered (Yes) to **question 6**, where are you employed?

8. What was your annual family income before taxes last year?

- a. less than \$9,999
- b. \$10,000-\$19,999
- c. \$20,000-\$29,999
- d. \$30,000-39,999
- e. \$40,000-49,999
- f. \$50,000 or higher

9. At what age did you enter foster care? _____

10. At what age did you exit foster care? _____

11. Where you in a foster home or a group home when you aged out of foster care?

- a. Foster home
- b. Group home
- c. Other, specify _____

12. How many placements did you have? _____

13. How many schools did you attend while in care? _____

14. Did you participate in independent living programs?

- a. Yes
- b. No (please answer question 15)

15. If you answered (No) to **question 14**, did you know these programs were offered?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Thank you very much for your participation!

Open-Ended Questions

The following questions are designed to understand your perceptions on the skills and services that were provided to you during your time in foster care. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

16. How would you describe your transition from foster care to independent living?

17. What skills did you learn from foster care?

18. Can you tell me what helped you the most in your transition out of foster care (ex: services, friendships, mentors)?

19. Did you receive any social support that you believe helped you transition out of foster care?
 - a. If yes, what type of social supports?

20. What skills do you think you should have learned prior to leaving foster care?

21. What is your view of the independent living program?

22. How prepared did you feel after leaving foster care?

23. Do you have any advice for social workers helping foster youth transition out of care?

24. While in foster care, what services were you aware of that were available to you?

25. What additional services do you believe could have helped you transition out of foster care?

26. Have you experienced any hardships since leaving foster care?

27. Do you feel that you still need additional assistance?
 - g. If yes, what type of assistance?

28. What is life like for you as of today?

29. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share with me?

Thank you very much for your participation!

Developed By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

BENEFITS: There will not be any **INFORMED CONSENT** participants.

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine former foster youth perception on the skills and services that was provided to them while in care. The study is being conducted by Judy Lawrence and Cynthia Villagrana, MSW students under the supervision of Dr. Janet Chang, professor in the School of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-Committee, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to examine former foster youth perception on the skills and services that was provided to them while in care. In addition, the efficacy of these services in helping them move from foster care to home stability, educational accessibility, employment opportunities, and lifelong supportive relationships.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked open-ended questions on their perceptions of needed skills and services that foster youth transitioning out of the system need to acquire to become successful adults out of care. Some demographic questions will be asked along with questions regarding experiences in foster care independent living skills, perceived challenges/barriers, and outcomes.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Your responses will remain anonymous and data will be reported in group form only.

DURATION: It will take 30 to 45 minutes to complete the Interview.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

909.537.5501 · 909.537.7029

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

The California State University · Bakersfield · Channel Islands · Chico · Dominguez Hills · East Bay · Fresno · Fullerton · Humboldt · Long Beach · Los Angeles · Maritime Academy · Monterey Bay · Northridge · Pomona · Sacramento · San Bernardino · San Diego · San Francisco · San Jose · San Luis Obispo · San Marcos · Sonoma · Stanislaus

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at 909-537-5184 (email: jchang@csusb.edu).

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu>) at California State University, San Bernardino after December 2018.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

I agree to be tape recorded: _____ Yes _____ No

APPENDIX C
DEBRIFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

This study you have just completed was designed to examine former foster youth perceptions on the skills and services that was provided to them while in care. In addition, the efficacy of these services in helping them move from foster care to home stability, educational accessibility, employment opportunities, and lifelong supportive relationships. This is to inform you that no deception is involved in this study.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at 909-537-5184. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after December 2018.

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

Two researchers were responsible for completing this study. Responsibilities were divided in the following matter:

1. Collecting Data:

By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

2. Transcribing and Analysis:

By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

3. Report Writing:

a. Introduction and Literature Review:

By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

b. Methods:

By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

c. Results:

By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence

d. Discussion:

By: Cynthia Huizar and Judy Lawrence