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PROMOTING RESILIENCE FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Brenda Lara

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PROMOTING RESILIENCE
FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

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
Brenda Lara
May 2023

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Many children enter the child welfare foster system every year and spend a significant amount of time in this system. While in foster care, many children experience stress and trauma. Trauma and adversity have been found to have a significant negative impact on children's future success and well-being. Resiliency becomes important when combatting trauma experiences. This study looked at how child welfare social workers play a role in promoting resilience for children in foster care. The purpose of this study was to explore and highlight positively impactful resilience building child welfare social work practices from the perspective of former foster youth and social workers who have experience working with foster children. In this study, we virtually interviewed three now adult former foster youth who were current students at a public university in Southern California and five social workers who had experience working with foster children. The participant's responses were analyzed, and several themes were identified to present child welfare social work practices that were impactful in promoting resilience. Resilience theory and the Predictive Six-Factor Resilience Scale (PR6) were used to guide the study and define resilience. The findings from this study provide guidance to current and future child welfare social workers who want to learn how to further advocate for foster children. The study also contributed to research focused on improving outcomes for children after foster care.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

Data presented by the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2020) shows that nearly half a million children were in foster care in the United States in September 2018. Of the 250,103 children who exited the foster care system in 2018, the median time spent in foster care was 14.7 months (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020). At a national level, thousands of children reside in foster care placement for a substantial amount of time.

As they enter the foster care system, many children experience trauma and loss (Mitchell, 2017). Aside from the shock of the initial removal from their biological homes, there are many kinds of distressing and difficult situations that children can experience after entering the foster care system. Some of those hardships include repeated placement changes and environmental stress (Healey & Fisher, 2011). Repeated placement changes produce instability, and stress in the environment triggers behavioral problems as children may struggle with anxiety and a lack of intimate support (Healey & Fisher, 2011). Additional examples of trauma experienced in foster placement include abuse and neglect and separation from siblings (Riebschleger et al., 2015). Many foster children have reported feeling that foster care was a continuation of the abuse and neglect that had occurred in their biological homes, and others expressed feeling

depressed when separated from their siblings with whom they felt safe (Riebschleger et al., 2015).

Research has found that trauma and adversity in childhood, including trauma from being in the foster care system, can have negative impacts on a child's future success and well-being (Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016). Children in foster care have been found to struggle academically and are less likely to complete high school and go to college (Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2016). Not only does childhood trauma have a negative impact at the micro level, but it also has an impact at the community level (Beyerlein et al., 2014). Childhood trauma is found to influence low socioeconomic status, criminal activity, drug addiction, mental health, and physical health concerns, which results in billions of dollars needing to be spent to address those issues (Beyerlein et al., 2014). Resiliency and the ability to overcome hardships become important when combatting trauma experiences.

Per the California welfare and institutions code 16000(a), the best interest of the child is a primary focus in child welfare agencies (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). Child welfare policy aims to, whenever possible, preserve family and sibling relationships and place children with relatives; child welfare policy also aims to provide nurturing foster homes that can facilitate a normal childhood experience as much as possible, and provide the appropriate services to the children and families (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020). Although the legislature supports the overall best interest of children,

complicating factors such as large caseloads and high burnout and turnover rates greatly impact a child welfare worker's ability to meet the wide range of needs of foster children (Hurley et al., 2013).

The issue is that many children experience stress and trauma while in the foster care system, and that trauma can later create a likelihood for negative outcomes. Resilience building child welfare social work practices can help children overcome trauma and can create more positive outcomes for children after foster care. When considering the large caseloads and high burnout and turnover rates that child welfare workers face, it is beneficial to bring a clear focus to what child welfare social work practices have made a positive impact in promoting resilience for foster youth in the past.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to give former foster youth a voice in the research and allow for the perspectives of former foster youth and social workers regarding resilience to be compared and analyzed. This study specifically focused on the perspective of now adult former foster youth who were pursuing a college education and were enrolled at public university in Southern California and that of social workers who had experience working with foster children. The study is important because it identified and highlighted impactful resilience building child welfare social work practices to help contribute to a greater understanding of what can be done to further promote positive outcomes for children after foster care.

The research methods used in this study followed an exploratory and cross-sectional design using qualitative data obtained through one-time one-on-one virtual interviews. A qualitative research design was selected for this study because its focus was the participant's personal beliefs and experiences. Probing questions also allowed the researcher to gain clarity and a deeper understanding of the participant's responses. This study was exploratory in nature because it allowed flexibility in the participants' responses. In addition, the data sources for the study were now adult former foster youth who were current college students, and social workers who had experience working with foster children.

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

The proposed study was needed because very limited studies allow for the direct voices and experiences of former foster youth to be heard. This study gave a voice to former foster youth and gave them the opportunity to contribute to research by offering their perspective on resilience building social work practices. The findings from this study greatly contribute to child welfare social work practice because it highlighted which specific social work practices positively impact and encourage resilience in foster children from both the former foster youth's perspective and the social worker's perspective. The findings provide guidance to current and future child welfare workers who want to learn how to further advocate for foster children by using a trauma-informed approach to promote resiliency. The study also allows for child welfare workers to reflect on

their presently used practices and examine how their current practices compare to the practices identified by former foster children and other social workers.

This study further brings focus to the issue of trauma in foster care, the short and long-term impacts of trauma, and how child welfare workers can support the children's future successes and well-being by prioritizing resilience building practices. In addition, the findings from the study supplement existing research for the improvement of child welfare practice and policy to allow for the development of increased use of resilience building practices when working with children in foster care. The study could contribute to policy by further bringing light to the importance of resilience building social work practices and the impact of those practices on foster children.

Under the generalist intervention model, this study informs the assessment phase. The issue identified was that trauma from being in foster care can have a negative impact on a child's future and well-being. Promoting resilience for children in foster care can help promote a positive outcome for the child's future while in foster care and after leaving foster care. This study assessed for specific child welfare social work practices that helped build resilience in former foster children, therefore promoting a positive outcome for children after foster care. Ultimately, the question addressed by this study is: What child welfare social work practices are most positively impactful in promoting resilience for children in foster care?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a critical review of previous research studies and literature directly related to promoting resilience for children in foster care. This chapter identifies common themes and gaps in the existing literature, touches on complicating factors for child welfare workers, and describes why the present study was necessary. This chapter also discusses theoretical perspectives that have guided prior research and the theoretical perspectives that guided the present study.

Promoting Resilience for Children in Foster Care

Children entering the foster care system have already experienced some sort of abuse or neglect by their parent or previous caregiver. The foster care system should be a place where these previously abused and neglected children receive appropriate care and mental health treatment to help them overcome previously experienced trauma. The reality is that being in the foster care system creates new traumatic experiences for these children.

Trauma in Foster Care

The literature shows there have been several studies that have found that being in foster care can create a wide range of traumatic and stressful experiences for children within the child welfare system, which can later have a

negative impact at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Separation from biological family and support systems has been shown to be a traumatic experience for many children in foster care (Healey & Fisher, 2011; Mitchell, 2017; Riebschleger et al., 2015). Several studies have found that the separation of a child from their parent or caregiver negatively impacts the child's cognitive and neurobiological development, which can then negatively impact future well-being and functioning (Healey & Fisher, 2011; Riebschleger et al., 2015).

In addition, the literature presents that the instability caused by frequent changes in foster placement, schools, and child welfare social workers are also consistently found to be distressing experiences for many children in foster care (Beyerlein & Bloch, 2014; Jankowski et al., 2018; Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2016). Damaging effects that are often found to be a result of frequent change and instability while in foster care include anxiety, behavioral issues, and increased intensity of prior trauma experiences (Beyerlein & Bloch, 2014; Healey & Fisher, 2011; Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016). Youth in some studies reported that being uninformed and confused about the process of entering foster care, not feeling heard, and not feeling that their losses and feelings were acknowledged or validated was damaging (Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2009;). On a larger scale, untreated trauma can have an impact at the community level by impacting taxpayers economically (Beyerlein & Bloch, 2014).

Promoting Resilience

A reoccurring concept in the literature was that the definition of the word resiliency ranges and is defined differently by different individuals. In general, resiliency is described as a process in which an individual can adapt, overcome, thrive, and advocate for themselves in the face of adversity (Bell & Romano, 2015; Hurley et al., 2013; Yoon et al., 2020). Several studies conclude that it is important for a child welfare worker to be able to identify the resilient traits within a child and be able to support and help strengthen those traits (Hurley et al., 2013; Riebschleger et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2020). Numerous studies also point out the importance of protective factors, trauma informed interventions, and a focus on mental health resources to mitigate trauma and promote resilience for children in foster care (Healey & Fisher, 2011; Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016; Riebschleger et al., 2015).

Other common themes among studies include the importance of social and emotional support, mentorship, quality long-term relationships, stability, and transparency with the children in foster care to help them feel more secure and supported (Bell & Romano, 2015; Mitchell, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2009; Riebschleger et al., 2015; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2016). Furthermore, several studies have suggested that collaboration between different involved agencies and systems such as the foster parents, biological parents or caregivers, the children's school, mental health professionals, and the child welfare workers can together create a more cohesive, stable, and effective support network for the

child versus if each system or agency acted alone (Bell & Romano, 2015; Beyerlein & Bloch, 2014; Hurley et al., 2013; Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016; Riebschleger et al., 2015).

Complicating Factors for Child Welfare Workers

Previous research indicates that although the importance of mitigating trauma and promoting resilience for children in foster care has been recognized, there are complicating factors present, specifically in the public child welfare field, that impact the existence of trauma in foster care. Studies show that child welfare workers are overworked and unprepared to meet the distinctive needs of children faced with adversity and trauma (Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016). Due to being overworked, child welfare workers often do not have the time to form genuine connections with their foster children (Bell & Romano, 2015). A study by Lizano & Mor Barak (2012) describes how overworked child welfare workers often experience depersonalization, which is a protective reaction due to emotional fatigue and excessive work demands. Depersonalization can negatively impact clients as the social worker will hold a dehumanized view of the client and that can negatively impact the way they provide services (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2012).

Other complicating factors for child welfare workers such as emotional fatigue, burnout, and high turnover rates are well documented in research (Hurley et al., 2013; Perry & Connors-Burrow, 2016). Issues such as job strain and burnout can have significant negative impacts on the child welfare worker and in hand affect their own well-being and work performance (Lizano & Mor

Barak, 2012). In addition, a study by Beyerlein & Bloch (2014) describes that some child welfare workers feel pressured and rushed to find placements for children, which can lead to dishonesty regarding a child's behavioral issues to speed up the placement process. This issue ultimately leads to placing a child with a foster family that may not be a good fit and later require a placement change creating more instability for the child.

Gaps in the Literature, Methodological Limitations, and Conflicting Findings

Although there has previously been a robust amount of research revolving around trauma and resilience in foster care, a lot of the data sources for the studies are usually social workers, other professionals in the child welfare field, and even foster parents (Skilbred et al., 2016). While using social work professionals and foster parents as a data source may provide several strengths and insights for a study, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the voices and perspectives of former foster youth. It is a methodological limitation for studies to exclude using former foster youth as a data source for research revolving around trauma and resilience practices in foster care. It can be constructive for research to include the perspectives and experiences of clients in the child welfare field and not solely limited to the involvement and insight of social work field professionals.

Seeing as previous studies found that one negative experience for children in foster care included not feeling heard or not having their feelings acknowledged, the present study used former foster youth as part of its data

source (Mitchell, 2017). This study builds on research centered directly on the experiences of former foster children and brings their voices and feelings to the forefront of the study. The present study differs from many prior studies because it directly focuses on now adult former foster youth in addition to social workers who have experience working with foster children. The study asked former foster youth to identify what child welfare social work practices they felt positively impacted their resilience and asked social workers to identify what practices they felt positively impacted the resilience of foster youth. Furthermore, it is conflicting that the main focus for many Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies is safety, permanency, and well-being for children, but the system itself can create additional trauma for children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018). Other than this issue, there were no significant conflicting findings in the literature specifically revolving around trauma and resilience in foster care.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Several theories have been used to guide past research on the issue revolving around promoting resilience for children in foster care. Some of the theoretical perspectives used in previous works include the job demands and resources theoretical model of burnout development, a grief and loss theory, and the ecological model. The theoretical model of burnout development was used to support a study focused on workplace demands for child welfare workers and the impact of those factors on the agency's clients (Lizano & Mor Barak, 2012). One author used a grief and loss theory to guide their study focused on the different

forms and impacts of loss and grief that children in foster care experience when they are separated from family, siblings, schools, communities, and so on (Mitchell, 2017). Furthermore, a study by Bell & Romano (2015) used the ecological model to point out the benefits of interactions with different support systems in the child's life and how having different sources of support can be advantageous for the child.

Multiple studies referenced in this paper used a form of trauma informed practice model or resilience theory as their theoretical perspectives. These studies focused on the importance of being conscious of children's past and present trauma experiences and what can be done to counteract that trauma with support and efficient resources. A study by Yoon et al (2020) used resilience theory along with strength and empowerment-based theory to support their study, which explained the importance of identifying and reinforcing strengths and traits of resiliency in children in foster care.

The present study used resilience theory and the Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale (PR6) to guide its research (Rossouw & Rossouw, 2016). This theory and scale fit the present study because the study sought to explore and identify what child welfare social work practices were positively impactful in promoting resilience for children in foster care. With the research question as the focus, it was important to approach the study with an understanding of the effects of trauma in foster care and the importance of resiliency for the well-being of children after foster care. By following a resilience theory approach, this study

aimed to expand on research to identify the most effective protective factors and social work practices that positively impact youth in and after foster care.

Likewise, by referencing the Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale to guide this study, a clear understanding of the definition of resilience was provided. The PR6 scale defines resilience using six domains, which are identified as composure, reasoning, health, tenacity, collaboration, and vision (Rossouw & Rossouw, 2016).

Summary

This study explores and highlights the child welfare social work practices that promoted the resiliency of former foster youth and identified practices that should be utilized because they would help promote resilience. The goal was to contribute to the literature and child welfare practice and policy by bringing attention to and providing clarity surrounding the practices that were most impactful in the former foster youth's and social worker's experiences. There are several barriers and complicating factors for child welfare workers so this study aimed to provide a clear understanding of a few resilience building social work practices that a child welfare worker can continue to use or incorporate into their practice for the benefit of a child's well-being.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter consists of eight total sections that will describe the research methods and design used in this study. Following this first introductory section, section two will cover the study design, research method, and methodological strengths and limitations of the design. Section three will describe the sample and selection criteria and section four will explain data collection and provide information on the instrument utilized. The fifth section will cover procedures and the specifics of how the data was gathered. In section six, the steps taken to protect confidentiality and the health and safety of the participants due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed. In section seven, data analysis will be covered, specifically the qualitative procedures that were utilized to answer the research question. Section eight will close out the chapter with a summary.

Study Design

The purpose of the study was to explore and bring focus to the child welfare social work practices that former foster children believe promoted their resilience and that social workers believe best promote resilience. The study focuses on the personal experiences of former foster children while they were in foster care and of social workers who worked directly with foster children. This

study was unique in that it focused on the personal experiences, feelings, and perspectives of former foster youth who were pursuing a college education and that of social workers who had experience working with foster children.

The study design selected to best address the research question was an exploratory and cross-sectional research study using qualitative data obtained through one-to-one interviews. A strength of an exploratory and qualitative design is that it allows for more flexibility in the data collection process and focuses on uncovering themes and patterns from the participant's detailed responses. This design allowed for a deeper understanding of the participant's lived experiences and perspectives and gave the participants a voice in the research by highlighting what they identified was important to them. The cross-sectional element of this study was beneficial because it highlighted the perspectives of the participants at a single point in time without requiring follow-up.

Furthermore, this study design allowed the researcher to ask clarifying and probing questions to ensure a more thorough and clear understanding of the participant's responses. A one-to-one interview approach provided a confidential setting for the participant as only the participant and researcher was present during the interviews. In addition, the interviews were conducted online via the Zoom platform, which further protected the confidentiality of the participants as they had the option to keep their camera off.

One limitation of the exploratory and qualitative design included a smaller sample size since one-to-one interviews are more time consuming. The data from this study design was not generalizable since sample size was small. Another limitation of this study design was that the interview questions required the participants to share personal beliefs or experiences and some participants may not feel comfortable elaborating on such experiences or beliefs. In addition, processing the data was time consuming and intensive as it needed to be transcribed, coded, and categorized. Since the study design was cross-sectional, this study did not allow for comparison between two points in time to see if there had been any changes or development in data.

Sampling

The specific data sources were current students enrolled at a public university in Southern California who were 18 years of age or older and were former foster youth in addition to social workers who had experience working with foster children. Individuals who met these criteria were a good source for the data because they were former foster youth with direct experience from being in the child welfare system and they were social workers who had direct experience in working with foster youth. In addition, the students who met the criteria were a great source for the data because they were pursuing a college education, which can be identified as aligning with the definition of resilience from the Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale (Rossouw & Rossouw, 2016; Rossouw, 2021).

The general sampling method used was non-probability sampling, since all participants fulfilled a specific eligibility criterion and either were current college students, aged 18+ years old, who are former foster youth or were social workers who had experience working with foster children. Convenience sampling was used in this study since part of the sample was limited to college students that the researcher had direct access to. Voluntary response sampling was also utilized in this research project, since all participants had to see the recruitment flyer and volunteer to participate by contacting the researchers. Purposive sampling was also utilized, since there were specific criteria that each participant had to meet to be eligible, and the study focused on the responses of specific populations. This study had a total of eight participants. Three of those participants were former foster youth, and five were social workers who had experience working with foster children.

Data Collection and Instruments

This study was qualitative, and the data collection technique utilized was one-to-one virtual interviews via the Zoom meeting platform. The interviews were video and audio recorded through the Zoom meeting platform and the live transcription feature on the Zoom meeting platform was enabled. The instruments used were two newly created interview guides. One interview guide was tailored for participants who were former foster youth, and the other interview guide was tailored for participants who were social workers. The interview guide for participants who were former foster youth consisted of thirteen

demographic questions and nine open ended questions. The interview guide for participants who were social workers consisted of five open ended questions. Each interview took between twenty and thirty minutes to complete. The data collected was the verbal responses of the participants to the questions asked. To ensure good reliability and face validity, the demographic and interview questions developed were informed by the existing literature and further discussed and refined under the guidance of California State University, San Bernardino Research Supervisor and Principal Investigator Thomas Davis.

For participants who were former foster youth, the demographic questions collected data including but not limited to participant age, how many years the participant has completed at their University, at what age they first entered foster care, and approximately how many child welfare social workers they remember having contact with. For participants who were former foster youth, the interview questions covered topics including but not limited to what resilience means to them, if they think of themselves as resilient, if there was ever anything they remember a child welfare social worker doing or saying that promoted their resilience, and if they are still in contact with any of their child welfare social workers. For participants who were social workers, the interview questions inquired about the capacity in which they had experience working with foster children, if there were any specific social work practices they believed were most important in helping foster children become resilient, and if there was anything

they wished child welfare social workers would do or do more of to better promote resilience for foster children.

The greatest strength of these instruments was that they were created specifically for these samples and study. A limitation of these instruments was that they are new and have not been used in other studies before. This study also refers to the six domains of resilience identified in the Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale to guide a clearer definition of resilience throughout the interviews (Rossouw & Rossouw, 2016; Rossouw, 2021). The interview guides and Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale diagram used can be viewed in the Appendices section of this article.

Procedures

Social distancing and face mask policies were closely followed in the recruitment and data collection of this study due to COVID-19 pandemic. To recruit participants who were former foster youth, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved flyer was posted on available bulletins inside a few college buildings and the library of a public university campus. The researcher also walked across the outdoor areas of a public university campus and handed flyers out to students, while following mask policies. To recruit participants who were social workers, the initial flyer was edited to reflect eligibility criteria for social workers who have experience working with foster children; the flyer was posted online on two Facebook social work community pages accessed through the co-investigator's personal Facebook account.

The flyers advised interested participants who met the eligibility criteria to email or call the principal investigator or email the co-principal investigator for further information or to schedule a date and time for a virtual interview. All interested participants met the eligibility criteria for the study. The interviews required a single on-on-one meeting between the participant and the co-principal investigator, which were held virtually over Zoom.

Each participant was assigned a participant number and this number was used in place of the participant's name to protect their identity. Personal identifying information of the participants was not used in the study and the participant's identities remained confidential. Information such as the specific child welfare agency involved, or any child welfare social worker's name was not collected or used in the study for further protection of confidentiality. In the interviews, the researcher made sure to be in a private room or area during the virtual interview to protect the participant's privacy and avoid any other person from listening in on the interview. In the interviews, each participant was informed that they could choose to have their camera turned on or off.

In addition, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and that they could skip any of the questions or end the interview at any time without any repercussions. The researcher went through the informed consent form with each participant, which each participant electronically signed and returned to the researcher. The researcher then introduced the purpose and goals of the study, assured the participant it was a safe place with no judgment

where they could answer honestly, and the researcher then proceeded to ask the demographic and interview questions. Once the interview was complete, the researcher read the debriefing statement, emailed the participant the debriefing statement, which included a list of available mental health and crisis support related resources, and thanked the participant for contributing to the study. The researcher also sent each participant an electronic Starbucks gift card of five dollars, which was used as an incentive to participate in the study.

During the interviews, the participant's responses to demographic and interview questions were recorded over the Zoom meeting platform. The interviews were video, and audio recorded, and the Zoom transcription feature was turned on. The study gathered data from eight total participants. The interviews took between twenty and thirty minutes to complete. After the interview process, no additional participant contact was required. Participant recruitment, interviews, and data collection began after Human Subjects IRB approval in January 2022 and concluded by the end of May 2022. The informed consent form and debriefing statement used can be viewed in the Appendices section of this article.

Protection of Human Subjects

When the participants initially emailed the researcher to schedule an interview date and time, personal identifying information such as their name and email was revealed in the email. That personal identifying information was not collected. The participant's emails were stored on the researcher's personal

laptop which was password protected and was only accessible to the researcher. The participant's emails were deleted as soon as their interviews were complete and the debriefing statement, resources, and digital gift card was sent to them. The data collected was also kept secure on the researcher's password protected laptop. At the time of the interviews, the participant was provided the choice to interview with their camera either on or off. The participant also received a participant number to use in place of their actual name. The public university that the participants attended was also kept confidential.

The data collected was the video and audio recording of the virtual Zoom interviews. At the end of each interview, the data, in the form of a video and audio file, was directly downloaded onto the researcher's password protected laptop. The participant's identifying information was not used or associated in the data. In the research, no results were presented that could be connected to any of the participants. This was ensured by using participant numbers and summarized responses instead of verbatim quotes. Others were prevented from knowing who participated in the study since participants privately communicated with the researcher through email and no identifying information was presented in the published study.

The password protected laptop was kept with the researcher and was not accessible to anyone other than the researcher. Data did not need to be emailed between researchers at any time. The downloaded files containing the video and audio data collected, files containing the participant's identifying information, and

data collection files for this study in general were completely and securely deleted from the researcher's password protected laptop at maximum three years after the completion of the research project.

In addition, prior to asking the demographic and interview questions, the researcher went over the informed consent document with each participant. At the end of the interviews, the debriefing statement was read, and the participant received an emailed copy of the debriefing statement which included a list of mental health and crisis support related resources. There was no risk related to contracting COVID-19 as the interviews were all virtual. The researcher came into physical face to face contact with possible participants only briefly when the researcher was passing out flyers at the public university campus in the recruitment stage of the study. The passing out of flyers took place outdoors and the researcher made sure to closely follow distancing and face mask guidelines.

Data Analysis

This study was qualitative, and the data collection technique used was one-on-one virtual interviews via the Zoom meeting platform. The interviews were video, and audio recorded through Zoom and the live transcription feature on Zoom was enabled. The data analyzed were the verbal responses from the participants to the demographic and open-ended interview questions. To process and refine the data collected from the on-on-one interviews, each interview was closely listened to and transcribed verbatim into written form. Nonverbal communication was also included. The transcription feature in Zoom that was

enabled during the online interviews facilitated the transcription process, and those transcriptions were reviewed and edited for accuracy and corrections. The transcriptions from each interview were saved on the researcher's password protected computer.

The data was coded using a system of first and second-level coding (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). In this process the transcriptions were read, and first, meaning units were identified, which are main ideas or topics that clearly stood out (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018). The researcher reviewed notes of main ideas identified during the interviews. The meaning units that were similar were grouped together and sorted into categories. Content analysis was also utilized as the researcher read each interview transcription and used a color-coding system to identify text to be grouped into categories. Each category was assigned a color and the transcription was color coded to group together the data in the categories identified. The researcher used preliminary categories and adjusted those categories as needed throughout the process of data analysis to best reflect the data (Williams & Moser, 2019). In second-level coding, the researcher analyzed the data again in a more close and abstract way to identify underlying and deeper meanings or relationships within the categories identified (Grinnell & Unrau, 2018).

The data analysis for this study followed a cyclical process as data analysis occurred simultaneously with data collection. The researcher read, reread, analyzed, and synthesized the data to understand the data more deeply.

The themes found in the data were what answered the research question. The researcher referred to multiple works for guidance in data analysis including Grinnell & Unrau (2018) and Williams & Moser (2019). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the demographic data by describing and analyzing significant features in the data.

Summary

This study used the methods outlined in this chapter to guide its data collection and research. The focus of the study was to explore the experiences of former foster youth and social workers in relation to social work practices that help build resilience. This exploratory, cross-sectional, qualitative study empowered former foster youth and social workers to use their voices and reflect on their experiences to contribute to research in analyzing which child welfare social work practices best promote resilience for foster youth.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter provides a demographic description of the sample, describes the data that was obtained, and explains how the data was analyzed. The qualitative procedures used and the results of the analysis along with how the results answer the research question is presented. This chapter provides data tables to facilitate a clearer understanding of the data collected. This chapter is organized into three main sections: analyses, data thematic results, and summary.

Analyses

Tables 1-3 display demographic information collected from each participant involved in the study. Table 1 shows general demographic and education information for the three participants who were former foster youth. This table displays that most participants identified as female, all were in their mid-twenties, all identified as Hispanic or Latinx, and each were in the process of pursuing different degrees at the university. Two of the participants had completed 6 and 6.5 years in university respectively and the other participant had completed one year so far. Additionally, all three participants started college the school year right after completing high school or its equivalent and did not indicate taking a gap year or time off before starting college after high school.

Table 2 displays information collected regarding the three former foster youth participant's time in foster care. The data indicates that most of the participants were removed from their parent or caregiver and placed in foster care more than one time, their ages ranged from two to fifteen at the time they first entered foster care, the longest amount of time they spent in foster care away from their parent or caregiver ranged from five to thirteen years, the amount of placement changes ranged from two to ten, the amount of different social workers they had or interacted with while in foster care ranged from one to twenty, and all three participants indicated they were at one point placed in the same home as their sibling(s).

Table 3 displays demographic data for the social workers interviewed. The data shows all five participants were female and all indicated they had a wide variety of experience working at child welfare agencies in varying roles. Tables 4-7 contain the categories that were utilized to organize and analyze the data and the findings for each category. From category one, it can be seen that the former foster youth and social worker participants had very similar definitions and understandings of what resilience is. Categories 2-4 also show similarities between the former foster youth and social worker's experiences and thoughts about what practices have promoted resilience, what practices should be utilized more, and who else had been involved aside from the social worker that had a positive impact on foster youth.

Data Thematic Results

The research question being addressed in this study was: What child welfare social work practices are most positively impactful in promoting resilience for children in foster care? The research question was meant to be qualitative and exploratory to allow for a more detailed and in-depth understanding of the lived experiences and beliefs of former foster youth and social workers who have experience working with foster children and allow for the responses of the two types of participants to be compared. From the data collected, three major themes emerged as practices that are most positively impactful in promoting resilience: encouraging foster youth to set and pursue goals for their future, encouraging genuine connections, and having open and honest age-appropriate communication with the foster youth so that they understand their situation.

Table 1. Demographics of Research Participants (Former Foster Youth)

DEMOGRAPHIC	Participant Response
Gender	Male, Female, Female
Age	26, 28, 24
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic, Latinx, Hispanic
Degree Currently Pursuing	Undergraduate, Graduate, Credential
Total Years of University Completed	1, 6.5, 6
Started College Right After Highschool	Yes, Yes, Yes
Do you Think of Yourself as Having Resilient Characteristics	Yes, Yes, Yes
Referring to the 6 Domains of Resilience Diagram, which Skills or Characteristics do you Identify with	Tenacity, vision, health; Tenacity, vision; Tenacity, health, collaboration, composure

Table 2. Demographics of Participant's Time in Foster Care

DEMOGRAPHIC	Participant Response
Total Times Removed from Parent/Caregiver and Placed in Foster Care	2, 1, 4
Age (in Years) When First Entered Foster Care	2, 15, 7
Longest Amount of Time (in Years) in Foster Care	13, 6, 5
Placement Changes	10, 2, 4
Amount of Child Welfare Social Workers they had or Interacted with	5, 20, 1
Placed in the Same Foster Home as a Sibling	Yes, Yes, Yes

Table 3. Demographics of Research Participants (Social Workers)

DEMOGRAPHIC	Participant Response
Gender	Female, Female, Female, Female, Female
Roles/Experience Working With Foster Children	Case carrier with Children & Family Services (CFS), Intake worker with CFS, Juvenile justice system, Placement services, In-home/school-based therapy, CFS, Medical social worker (SW), CSUSB foster youth program, Working with non-minor dependents/aged-out/emancipated youth in transitional housing, Internship for the child protection team at a local children's hospital, Foster care SW, Medical SW, County child welfare drug court unit, Program for youth aging out of foster care

Table 4. Research Category 1: Definition of Resilience

Content/Theme
<p>Responses from Former Foster Youth Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “being successful, being able to see a straight line without curving or, if you do curve, you can jump back on that straight line or if it does break you can repair it and keep going forward, having a nothing could get in your way mentality”• “being able to bounce back from any circumstances or challenging circumstances, reaching equilibrium, making things go back to a little bit normal”• “tenacity, the endurance of somebody, characteristics of how they're able to endure, manage stress, composure” <p>Responses from Social Worker Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “being persistent, being able to bounce back, strong relationships make it very likely they'll have everything else whether it's with family or whoever is involved in their life”• “able to build relationships over time, being able to open up, trust, it depends on the individual, there's not a one cookie cutter fit”• “tenacity, children who will still succeed in academics, maintain a placement, maybe not need therapy/counseling or be successful in therapy/counseling, there is a toxicity that can be the resiliency of foster youth (be sensitive about it), the way we determine resilience is not the same for every child, it depends on their baseline”• “ability to ask for help when they need it, ability to self-reflect, self-awareness to say, “I need help”, to be able to acknowledge the adverse experiences that these children have had and then figure out a way to move on/become successful”• “being able to bounce back from setbacks, able to set their own goals, have positive relationships, self-control, resilience is shown differently in all foster kids”

Table 5. Research Category 2: Practices that Promote Resilience

Content/Theme
<p>Responses from Former Foster Youth Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I was getting into trouble at school and the social worker (SW) talked to me about how college could positively change my life and my perspective on life, the SW gave me advice about making good choices, and pushed me to set goals for my future”• “When I had nowhere to go the SW was persistent about getting me into therapy to support me in going through a hard time/transition, she reminded me of my goals and the importance of staying on track, she acted quickly to get me into therapy when I needed it, the SW showed that she was invested and genuinely cared about my wellbeing, she knew what I needed it was just her trying to make me believe that that was what I needed, she fought hard to place my siblings and I together and keep us connected with family which softened the trauma a bit”• “None”. <p>Responses from Social Worker Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Have and allow open communication, no judgement, allow the youth to speak how they want and express themselves and express their needs, make the youth feel comfortable, build rapport, help the youth build the skills necessary to voice their needs, encourage relationships and consistent contact with family/friends so the youth can have a sense of belonging”• “Be genuine, take an interest in the child, build a relationship/connection, have a good heart, don’t get lost in just doing the work, understand each child is unique/an individual, the youth is what is most important, find therapeutic programs/sports for children so they can express themselves, identify and enhance their strengths, help youth build relationships, have open/clear communication, active listening”• “Meet the child where they are, understand the impact of what the child has gone through and what they are going through now and provide the correct resources, there is no one size fits all approach so unique/individualized assessment/service plan is needed, get to know families you work with, be creative with case management, allow the child to see healthy collaboration so they don’t feel like they’re the problem, inform the children of options for school, jobs, and things that will benefit them, help the child develop a positive outlook, be honest/caring, explain things in a developmentally appropriate way, help youth build a network of support that is regularly in contact”

Table 5. Research Category 2: Practices that Promote Resilience (Continued)

Content/Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Connect them to their biological family” • “Foster self-determination, allow them to take ownership of what they do and give them choices, give them some control back so they can feel motivated to invest in their progress, being available as much as possible”

Table 6. Research Category 3: Practices Participants Want to See

Content/Theme
<p>Responses from Former Foster Youth Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “involve a friend or peer mentor at SW visits to make the visits more fun and distract the kids from their current situation, take the kids out of the house on SW visits for example to get ice cream, SW should be more friendly instead of business-like, be more personable, friendly, and genuine, kids get over all the questioning at SW visits, the SW should do things that help the kids enjoy their childhood more because I feel like I missed out on regular childhood things” • “family finding, try harder to find the missing parent and involve that parent” • “be competent, understand the system, give accurate/correct information, have positive conversations, be able to talk to children and be sensitive to avoid trauma due to the SW being a bad communicator and youth being uninformed and not feeling secure, keep youth informed” <p>Responses from Social Worker Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “have an open mind about parents, not that we're going to be permissive or allow unsafe situations but understand that situations are not simple and really try to help the family and understand the situation and see how we can help turn it around, understand people are going to make mistakes and clients often have a trauma background, be open to working with their mistakes”

Table 6. Research Category 3: Practices Participants Want to See (Continued)

Content/Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “always focus on safety and the intentions of people involved in the youth’s life, be where you say you were, document, equip foster parents to be able to handle children’s behaviors” • “systemic changes that allow the SW more access to the children, lower caseloads, collaborate with families/service providers in a way that’s meaningful/effective, provide quality service, remember that every child has potential, don’t criminalize child/their behaviors, be mindful of how we treat/interact with children and remind ourselves these are children, and understand the root of their behaviors” • “connect child to a mentor/someone who they can have consistent contact with, give child your attention when you can and help them with what they’re going through, use more positive language since negative language can have an impact on the child, make sure the youth are getting their basic needs met across the board not just in their problem areas, looking at children more holistically and focusing on helping them achieve their goals as a whole starting at a young age” • “help the children recognize their emotions for example what they’re feeling and why they’re feeling that way, be more optimistic, encourage youth, create a positive atmosphere, follow the strengths-based perspective”

Table 7. Research Category 4: Other People who had a Positive Impact

Content/Theme
<p>Responses from Former Foster Youth Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “friend or peer mentor” • “siblings, therapist, attorney, school SW from AVID program (she was the reason why I went to college, she helped me apply to and informed me of grants for foster youth),...

Table 7. Research Category 4: Other People who had a Positive Impact (Continued)

Content/Theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ...FFA SW (she was consistently present, I could vent to her, she was invested in my journey and I could tell she tried her best)”• “my parents”
Responses from Social Worker Participants:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• family, foster family, friends• intervention specialists, staff from extracurricular activities, foster parents• biological families, foster families, mentor, school staff• mentor• none mentioned

Summary

The data collected was organized into four categories as is presented in the above tables. Categories one through three were influenced by the questions in the interview guide as participants were directly asked questions that would elicit answers that fit into those categories. The data was further organized and analyzed through the process of content analysis. Category four was identified through the process of content analysis through the data found in the interview transcripts and a theme emerged of additional people who played a part in positively impacting foster youth. A discussion about interpretation and the meaning of the data is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter interpreted and discussed the meanings of the categories and themes identified through the research conducted. The significance of the themes found and how the results answered the research question are also discussed. The findings in this research study were compared to the findings of studies cited in the literature review. Additionally, unanticipated results, limitations, suggestions for further research, conclusions, and implications for social work are presented. This chapter includes the following three sections: discussion, recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research, and conclusions.

Discussion

Definition of Resilience

This category was directly guided from questions in the interview guide. Every participant who was a former foster youth was asked what resilience meant to them, and every participant who was a social worker was asked what resilience looks like in foster children from their point of view. This category was important because as stated in the literature review, past studies about resilience of foster children lacked a uniform definition of resilience. This category in the study allows for a greater understanding of how resilience was defined by both

former foster youth and by social workers who have experience working in the child welfare field.

A significant finding from this category was that the participants in this study, former foster youth and social workers, defined and perceived resilience in similar ways. This similarity suggests a natural collaboration between foster youth and social workers regarding the topic of resilience. Both sets of participants expressed common views on what resilience is and what it looks like. Some terms that the former foster youth and social worker participants both used to describe resilience were “bounce back” and “tenacity.” “Tenacity” is a domain from the Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale (PR6) that outlines six domains of resilience which was provided as a reference to help define resilience during interviews with the participants (Rossouw, 2021). “Bounce back” is a term listed under the Tenacity domain as a descriptor of tenacity (Rossouw, 2021).

The tenacity domain from the scale was identified most frequently to define resilience, which might suggest that the foster youth and social workers in this study feel that some important characteristics of resilience include “persistence, bounce back, realistic optimism, and staying motivated”, which are all descriptors under the “tenacity” domain (Rossouw, 2021). These findings could imply that this could be an important area in which child welfare social workers could help support foster youth’s resilience by trying to help promote realistic optimism and help the youth stay motivated.

Another significant finding from this category of defining resilience was that several of the social worker participants described that foster children who are resilient often have strong relationships and connections, which falls under the “collaboration” domain of the Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale (Rossouw, 2021). The “collaboration” domain of the PR6 was described as also involving “support networks, building trust, and teamwork” (Rossouw, 2021). This finding was important and could imply that this would be another area of interest in which social workers could help promote resilience for foster children by promoting strong relationships and connections.

Practices that Promoted Resilience for Foster Youth

Every participant that was a former foster youth was asked if there was ever anything a child welfare social worker did or said that helped them become more resilient, that impacted their life positively, that had a positive impact on their personal success today, and what their favorite child welfare social worker was like if they had one. The social worker participants were asked if there were any specific social work practices that they believe were most important or beneficial in helping foster children become resilient and if there were any specific practices that they have seen work to have a positive impact or that children were receptive to. The significance of asking these questions was to help gather results that would help answer the research question of what child welfare social practices best help promote resilience for foster children.

A recurring response from both former foster youth and social worker participants was that encouraging a child to set goals for their future and informing them of options they have related to pursuing education was beneficial in helping promote resilience. This finding might suggest that feeling encouraged, setting future goals, and being informed on their options in case a foster youth wants to pursue higher education can be beneficial in the process of helping to promote resilience for foster youth. The findings from this category could imply that social workers should inform their foster children of different options they have regarding pursuing higher education and encourage them to set goals that could benefit their future. This finding aligns with the “vision” domain of the PR6 which is further defined as involving “meaning and purpose, congruence, and goals” (Rossouw, 2021).

Additionally, encouraging self-determination stood out as a significant finding and it was described as meaning to help a child learn to voice their needs and give the child some power by giving them choices. This point was brought up by the social worker participants and was important because it could imply that teaching foster youth skills that encourage self-determination could be a protective factor that could facilitate a collaboration between the foster youth and social worker. Collaboration would be facilitated in that the foster youth would need to voice their needs and concerns for the social worker to be better able to support their individual needs. Furthermore, the idea that foster youth should be given power in the form of being provided with choices was significant as it

suggests that foster youth can benefit from feeling a sense of control over their situation.

Another significant finding from the data was that the social worker participants again identified strong relationships and connections as a social work practice that helps promote resilience for foster children. This supports responses from the previous category of defining resilience and provides a better understanding of how important strong relationships and connections really are for foster youth. This finding further suggests that social workers need to make practices such as family finding, encouraging consistent contact, and maintenance of relationships a priority if they want to help promote resilience and support better outcomes for foster children. This finding aligns with the “collaboration” domain of the PR6 which is further defined as involving “strong relationships, support networks, building trust, and teamwork” (Rossouw, 2021).

Social Work Practices Participants Want to See

For the former foster youth participants, the third category from the study involved identifying if there was anything the former foster youth wish their child welfare social worker(s) would have done or done more of to better support their resilience. From the former foster youth participants, some of their responses continue to identify connections as an important factor in promoting resilience. Specifically mentioned were feeling a genuine connection from the social worker, family finding, and promoting connections to biological family members. Not only do former foster youth identify relationships and connections as a factor that

promotes resilience, but it was also identified as a factor that they believe needs to continue to be prioritized. This may suggest that foster children find comfort in having a good connection with their social worker and with their family members, which in turn promotes resilience.

For the social worker participants, this category involved identifying if there was anything they wished child welfare social workers would do or do more of to better promote resilience for foster children. From the social worker participants, strong relationships and connections was again identified as an important factor in promoting resilience. For this category, the responses from the social worker participants were fairly different. Some of the other significant findings included suggesting changes to the child welfare system itself that would allow a social worker more consistent contact with foster children in addition to providing trauma informed care. These findings may infer that social workers should be aware of the trauma backgrounds that children and families may have and understand how that impacts the behaviors and situations of these children and families. Social workers should practice in a way that is cognizant of the trauma experiences that children and families have had and strive to be more understanding and do what they can to not cause more trauma. Some social worker participants mentioned that it is important to be open minded about the families they work with in addition to being aware of possible trauma backgrounds.

Additionally, macro level policy changes were identified by the social worker participants as being necessary. Specifically, the social worker participants mentioned that caseloads need to be decreased to put the social workers in a position where they could have more consistent contact with foster children and therefore be better able to support them and build connections with them. This implies that the connection between the social worker and the foster child is important but could currently be strained due to high caseloads. It was further identified that social workers need to effectively collaborate with families and other service providers to increase quality of service for clients. The findings from the social worker participants suggest that the participants have a wide variety of suggestions as to what social workers can change or do to further help promote resilience.

Other People who had a Positive Impact on Foster Youth

As has been presented, strong relationships and consistent connections has emerged as a reoccurring theme in the data. This category was created to present who the participants identified as other people who had a positive impact on foster youth. The participants were not directly asked who other than the social worker played a role in having a positive impact on foster youth's resilience, but as the interviews were conducted the participants naturally mentioned other supportive people in their responses.

This category was important because it highlighted how the resilience of foster children is a collaborative effort between all who are involved in the

children's lives. Between both sets of participants, biological family, such as siblings and parents, was identified as a positive support. People in a mentor role and people encountered at school such as counselors and school social workers were mentioned as well. In addition, the foster family and staff encountered through extracurricular activities were also mentioned.

The findings in this category could imply that to promote resilience in foster children, social workers should encourage and support strong connections with people who are consistently involved in the child's life. If the social worker is realistically not in a position in which, due to high caseloads, they cannot nurture a more consistent or strong relationship with the foster youth then they should encourage connections with other people that are involved so that the child can still have the comfort and normalcy of long-lasting connections. Responses from the former foster youth participants for this category show that to them it was important to feel a genuine caring connection and for that supportive person to help them make good decisions and set goals that would benefit their future. These responses are significant because they might suggest that foster youth benefit from support in the areas of stability and guidance.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

Social Work Practice

By allowing resiliency theory to guide social work practice, one can work with foster youth through a lens that is trauma informed, strength-based, and utilizes protective factors. There were many significant findings that emerged

from this study that highlighted protective factors that social workers can utilize in their practice to help promote resilience for foster youth.

This study helped to address research that is missing the foster youth's perspectives and experiences. One recommendation for social work practice is to encourage self-determination for foster youth by teaching skills that help the child voice their needs, give the child a sense of control by providing choices, inform the child about opportunities that could enhance their future, and help them set goals. These practices promote resilience by teaching skills that could give the child more agency over their present situations and their futures.

Another recommendation for social work practice is to encourage the development or continuance of strong and consistent long-term relationships and connections for foster youth. Having a support network was a major reoccurring theme identified in the data by both the former foster youth and social worker participants. Additionally, it is recommended that a social worker should be trauma informed and understand possible trauma that foster youth have experienced and how that impacts the youth as an individual.

Policy

A recommendation for policy in child welfare includes making changes that would facilitate connection between a social worker and a foster youth. For example, this can look like reducing caseload standards for social workers, so the social worker can be more available to consistently meet with children on their caseload. The presence of positive and genuine connections was found to

promote resilience. Additionally, enacting policy that helps to address high burnout and turnover rates would facilitate continuance of care by possibly decreasing the chance of children getting assigned new social workers as often.

Research

The categories and themes discussed in this study attempted to answer the question of what social work practices best promote resilience in foster youth. Although the findings in this study answer the research question, from the perspectives of former foster youth and social workers with experience working with foster children, further research needs to be done. This study sought to highlight resilience building social work practices in an exploratory and qualitative format, which limited the sample pool. This might prompt further research in a format that is quantitative to allow for more data and to allow for descriptive and explanatory designs to provide a deeper understanding of the data.

Conclusions

This study achieved its purpose in highlighting social work practices that promote resilience in foster children. Through a qualitative and exploratory design, the researcher explored the practices that promote resilience from the participants' personal experiences. This study will serve to provide guidance to current and future child welfare social workers with an interest in learning more about how social workers can promote resilience for foster youth. This study supports the field of social work by furthering research focused on practice guided by resiliency theory, being trauma informed, and strength based.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide (Former Foster Youth)

Demographic Questions:

1. What is your gender? (Female, Male, Non-binary, Other not Listed, Prefer Not to Answer)
2. What is your current age in years? ()
3. Which of the following best describes you? (American Indian, Alaskan Native, African American, Black, Asian, White, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Other _____, Prefer not to Answer)
4. Are you of Hispanic, Latina(o), or Spanish origin? (Yes, No, Unknown)
5. Which of the following are you currently pursuing? (Undergraduate Degree, Graduate Degree, Other Credential)
6. How many years of university have you completed in total so far? ()
7. Did you start college the school year right after completing high school or its equivalent? (Yes, No)
8. Approximately how many separate times were you removed from your parent/caregiver and placed in foster care as a minor? ()
9. Approximately how old were you in years when you first entered foster care? ()
10. What is approximately the longest amount of time you spent in foster care away from your parent/caregiver in years? ()
11. Approximately how many placement changes or foster homes did you have while in foster care? ()
12. Approximately how many child welfare social workers did you have or interact with while in foster care? ()
13. If you have a sibling that was also in foster care, were you ever placed in the same foster home at any point? (Yes, No, Does Not Apply)

Interview Questions:

1. What does resilience mean to you?
2. Do you think of yourself as having resilient characteristics?
3. Referring to the 6 Domains of Resilience diagram, which skills or characteristics do you identify with?
4. Was there ever anything a child welfare social worker did or said that helped you become more resilient?
5. Was there ever a child welfare social worker that impacted your life positively? If so, how?

6. Was there anything your social worker did or said that had a positive impact on your personal success today?
7. If you had a favorite child welfare social worker, what was he or she like or what did you like most about him or her?
8. Is there anything you wish your child welfare social worker (s) would have done or done more of to better support your resilience?
9. Are you still in contact with any of your child welfare social workers?

Interview Guide (Social Workers)

Interview Questions:

1. In what capacity do you have experience working with foster children?
2. In your point of view, what does resilience look like in foster children?
(Can refer to the 6 Domains of Resilience diagram)
3. Are there any specific social work practices that you believe are most important or beneficial in helping foster children become resilient?
4. In working with foster children, are there any specific practices that you have seen work to have a positive impact or that children are receptive to?
5. Is there anything you wish child welfare social workers would do or do more of to better promote resilience for foster children?

All interview questions developed by Brenda Lara

APPENDIX B
PREDICTIVE 6-FACTOR RESILIENCE SCALE DIAGRAM

Predictive 6-Factor Resilience Scale (PR6)
The 6 Domains of Resilience



This diagram is only used as a reference to help define resilience

Citations:

- Rossouw, J. G. (2021). *The 6 domains of resilience - driven*. Driven Resilience. Retrieved December 3, 2021, from <https://home.hellodriven.com/articles/6-domains-of-resilience/>.
- Rossouw, P. J., & Rossouw, J. G. (2016). The predictive 6-factor resilience scale: Neurobiological fundamentals and organizational application. *International Journal of Neuropsychotherapy*, 4(1), 31–45. doi: 10.12744/ijnpt.2016.0031-0045

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

INFORMED CONSENT (Former Foster Youth)

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to identify and explore the most positively impactful resilience building child welfare social work practices you experienced while in foster care. The study is being conducted by Brenda Lara, a graduate student, under the supervision of Thomas Davis, Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: To identify and highlight the best resilience building child welfare social work practices to help contribute to a greater understanding of what can be done to further promote a positive outcome for children after foster care. The findings can provide guidance to current and future child welfare workers who want to learn how to further advocate for foster children.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked a few questions on what resilience means to them, how a child welfare social worker might have positively impacted their resilience, what their favorite child welfare social worker was like if they had one, what they wish their child welfare social worker would have done to help them become more resilient, and some demographic questions including their age when they first entered foster care, how many times they were removed from their parent/guardian by a child welfare agency, how long they lived in foster care, how many foster homes they were in, how many child welfare social workers they remember having, and whether they were ever placed in the same foster home as a sibling.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can skip any of the questions asked, discontinue your participation at any time, or refuse to participate in the study without any repercussions, even after you have signed this letter of consent. This is a safe place and there is no judgment to responses provided.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses and your identifying information will remain confidential. You may choose to interview with your camera either on or off. This interview will be audio and video recorded for data collection purposes only. If you consent to this interview, you will be provided with a participant number to use in place of your actual name. Your actual name will not be used in the research project itself and prior documentation of your name will be deleted as soon as you are provided a participant number. The video and audio recording will be downloaded to the researcher's personal password protected laptop which will be kept with the researcher and will not be accessible to anyone other than

INFORMED CONSENT (Social Workers)

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to identify and explore the most positively impactful resilience building child welfare social work practices that foster children can experience. The study is being conducted by Brenda Lara, a graduate student, under the supervision of Thomas Davis, Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: To identify and highlight the best resilience building child welfare social work practices to help contribute to a greater understanding of what can be done to further promote a positive outcome for children after foster care. The findings can provide guidance to current and future child welfare workers who want to learn how to further advocate for foster children.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked a few questions on what resilience looks like in foster children, if there are any specific social work practices that they believe are most beneficial in helping foster children become resilient, if there are specific practices that they have seen work to have a positive impact or that children are receptive to, and if there is anything they wish child welfare social workers would do or do more of to better promote resilience for foster children.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can skip any of the questions asked, discontinue your participation at any time, or refuse to participate in the study without any repercussions, even after you have signed this letter of consent. This is a safe place and there is no judgment to responses provided.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses and your identifying information will remain confidential. You may choose to interview with your camera either on or off. This interview will be audio and video recorded for data collection purposes only. If you consent to this interview, you will be provided with a participant number to use in place of your actual name. Your actual name will not be used in the research project itself and prior documentation of your name will be deleted as soon as you are provided a participant number. The video and audio recording will be downloaded to the researcher's personal password protected laptop which will be kept with the researcher and will not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher. The downloaded files containing the video and audio data and all other data collected will be completely and securely deleted from the researcher's password protected laptop at maximum three years after the completion of this research project.

DURATION: This interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

RISKS: You may potentially experience some discomfort in answering some of the interview questions. You are not required to answer all questions, you can skip any of the questions, and you can end your participation at any point during the interview without any repercussions. In the instance that you request to end the interview, the researcher will read a debriefing statement and provide you with a list of local and readily available mental health and crisis support related resources.

BENEFITS: You may potentially benefit from participating in this study because it will allow you to use your voice to contribute to the research, advocate for foster children, and possibly have an impact on future child welfare policy. A \$5 gift card is also provided as an incentive.

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this research study, your rights as a participant, or if you experience any research-related injury, please contact the Primary Investigator and CSUSB Professor Thomas Davis at tomdavis@csusb.edu or (909) 537-3839, the Co-Principal Investigator Brenda Lara at 004570955@coyote.csusb.edu, or the CSUSB IRB Research Compliance Officer Michael Gillespie at mgillesp@csusb.edu or (909) 537-7588.

RESULTS: Results of this study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2023.

.....

I agree to have this interview video and audio recorded: _____ YES _____ NO

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older and have experience as a social worker working with foster children to participate in this study, have read and understand the consent document, and agree to participate in this study.

_____ _____ _____
Place an X mark here Participant Number Date

APPENDIX D
DEBRIEFING STATEMENTS

Study of Promoting Resilience for Children in Foster Care Debriefing Statement (Former Foster Youth)

The study you have just completed was designed to identify and explore the most positively impactful resilience building child welfare social work practices you experienced while in foster care. In this study, you were asked several questions to help identify those resilience building social work practices that best promoted your resilience. We are particularly interested in how your social worker(s) helped promote your resilience so that we can see what social work practices need to be highlighted and promoted in practice to support a more positive future for children after foster care.

Thank-you for your time and effort in participating in this study. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Brenda Lara or Professor Thomas Davis at (909) 537-3839. If you would like to access the completed results of this study, they will be available at the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2023. Some risks of this study may include discomfort in answering some of the questions. The benefit of this study includes having the opportunity to use your voice to contribute to the research, advocate for foster children, and possibly have an impact on future child welfare policy by bringing attention to the social work practices that former foster children believe best promoted their resilience.

If you have experienced any distress by the questions of this study, additional information for emergency hotline phone numbers and counseling services are available below.

- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained volunteer crisis counselor for support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at no cost.
- The Trevor Lifeline: National organization providing crisis and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) Youth, (866) 488-7386.

- HELPLine: 24 Hour Crisis/Suicide Intervention, free, confidential service operated by highly trained volunteers, (951) 686-4357.
- San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Community Resource Guide link: <https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dbh/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Community-Resource-Guide.pdf>
- CSUSB Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS): Call CAPS to schedule an appointment at (909) 537-5040. CAPS is located in the Health Center (HC) Building, north of the Meeting Center and East of the SMSU Expansion Site. Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm, Friday 9:30am-5pm, closed Sat-Sun. Virtual Appointments available Mon-Thurs 8am-6:30pm, Fri 9:30am-5pm. Phone support is available after hours.

Study of Promoting Resilience for Children in Foster Care Debriefing Statement (Social Workers)

The study you have just completed was designed to identify and explore the most impactful resilience building child welfare social work practices for foster children. In this study, you were asked several questions to help identify social work practices that you believe best promote resilience. We are particularly interested in how social workers help promote resilience so that we can see what practices need to be highlighted in practice to support a more positive future for children after foster care.

Thank-you for your time and effort in participating in this study. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Brenda Lara or Professor Thomas Davis at (909) 537-3839. If you would like to access the completed results of this study, they will be available at the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2023. Some risks of this study may include discomfort in answering some of the questions. The benefit of this study includes having the opportunity to contribute to research, advocate for foster children, and possibly have an impact on future child welfare policy by bringing attention to the social work practices that best promote resilience.

If you have experienced any distress by the questions of this study, additional information for emergency hotline phone numbers and counseling services are available below.

- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a trained volunteer crisis counselor for support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at no cost.
- The Trevor Lifeline: National organization providing crisis and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) Youth, (866) 488-7386.
- HELPLine: 24 Hour Crisis/Suicide Intervention, free, confidential service operated by highly trained volunteers, (951) 686-4357.

- San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Community Resource Guide
link: <https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dbh/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Community-Resource-Guide.pdf>
- CSUSB Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS): Call CAPS to schedule an appointment at (909) 537-5040. CAPS is located in the Health Center (HC) Building, north of the Meeting Center and East of the SMSU Expansion Site. Office Hours: Mon-Thurs 8am-5pm, Friday 9:30am-5pm, closed Sat-Sun. Virtual Appointments available Mon-Thurs 8am-6:30pm, Fri 9:30am-5pm. Phone support is available after hours.

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL LETTER



January 16, 2022

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Administrative/Exempt Review Determination

Status: Determined Exempt

IRB-FY2022-88

Thomas Davis Brenda Lara
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Thomas Davis Brenda Lara:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Promoting Resilience for Children in Foster Care" has been reviewed and determined exempt by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino. An exempt determination means your study had met the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has weighed the risks and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants.

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

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

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

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2022-88 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Nicole Dabbs

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

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