Copyright

by

Toni Kay Johnson

2005

The Dissertation Committee for Toni Kay Johnson Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

HIDDEN VOICES: THE LIFE EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT GIRLS WITH MOTHERS IN PRISON

Committee:

____

Laura Lein, Supervisor

____

Calvin Streeter, Co-Supervisor

____

Darlene Grant

____

Steven Larsen

____

Elizabeth Pomeroy

____

Dorothy Van Soest

HIDDEN VOICES: THE LIFE EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT GIRLS WITH MOTHERS IN PRISON

by

Toni Kay Johnson, B.A.; M.S.S.W.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

the University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2005

I dedicate this manuscript to:

To the six young women, and their families, who openly and generously shared their thoughts, time, and experiences with me. They continue to inspire and guide me.

To all children of prisoners who are negatively effected by parental crime, arrest, and incarceration. Our society must work in unison to assure the best future possible for these children.

Acknowledgements

An endless number of people assisted and supported me through the entire process of planning, researching, and writing this dissertation. I feel compelled to acknowledge as many of them as possible here.

First, I would like to acknowledge and thank my dissertation co-chairs, Dr. Calvin Streeter and Dr. Laura Lein. Despite being on more than 25 other dissertation committees, Dr. Streeter was willing to step in when my first chair, Dr. Kathryn Wambach, unexpectedly became ill and ultimately died. Dr. Lein consistently stood by me as my life and my research took a number of unexpected twists and turns. Her timely replies, critical questioning, careful copyediting, and enduring support will never be forgotten. She serves as a role model for the type of social work scholar I hope to be.

Second, I would like to give my eternal gratitude to the rest of my committee: Dr. Darlene Grant, Dr Steve Larson, Dr. Elizabeth Pomeroy, and Dr. Dorothy Van Soest. Each individual served as a valuable resource during different stages of the process, and all could be counted on for continuous support and encouragement. Even as Dr. Van Soest assumed the position of Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Washington at Seattle and stepped down as my dissertation Co-Chair, she remained an active member of my committee and surprised me by returning to Austin for my dissertation defense. Her dedication to global non-violence, social work education and research, students, and scholarship inspires me to give my best at all times.

I would next like to thank the teens and their families for opening their hearts and their homes to me. They honestly shared uncensored, and often painful, information

about their lives. Their desire to help others allowed a rare glimpse into the lives of teenagers deeply affected by maternal (and in some cases also paternal) incarceration.

I owe another debt of gratitude to my doctoral cohort who provided continuous emotional support and critical feedback before, during, and after this process. I look forward to having them as colleagues and will continue to nurture the friendships that we have developed. My undying thanks to Beverly McPhail, Tamara Davis, Christine TenBarge, Hyun-Sun Park, Deborah Stokes Sharp, Seo-Koo Yoo, and Nancy Francisco Stewart. They are bound to have a profound effect on the social work profession, destined to establish and guide social policy, fated to provide innovation in social work education, and certain to contribute new knowledge to the social work literature.

Additionally, I would like to thank, several other faculty members who provided me with constant mentorship and guidance with no direct acknowledgement. Because I consulted with them so often and because they were so willing to advise, guide and mentor me, many students and faculty were certain that they were part of my committee. My profound thanks to Dean Barbara White, Dr. Ruth McRoy, Dr King Davis, and Dr. Michael Lauderdale.

There are few words for the gratefulness that I feel for the entire clinical faculty. I was on the UT Austin clinical faculty for eight years. After I decided to pursue a doctorate, they sent me on my new journey with a huge party, good wishes and pledges of support. They never failed me, and they actively advised and supported me throughout the entire 5-year process. I can’t name them all here but they know who they are and how I feel about them!

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their constant encouragement and unwavering faith in me. Special thanks to my mother and father, Eunice and Jesse Shoemake, who always thought I could truly accomplish anything. My siblings, Alnetia McClendon and Jessie Shoemake Jr., are not only a wonderful sister and brother to me but great friends. My sons, Victor and Carlos Johnson, thought I was crazy when I decided to go back to school but stood by me in every way possible. My grandchildren, Vonte Johnson, Ashlynn Johnson, Aderic Johnson, and Stephon Johnson, brought constant joy and happiness and helped to remind me of the important things in life. What would we do and where would we be without family and friends?

Hidden Voices: The Life Experiences of African American Adolescent Girls with Mothers in Prison

Publication No.______________

Toni Kay Johnson, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2005

Supervisors: Laura Lein, Ph.D.
Calvin Streeter, Ph.D.

On any given day, parental incarceration affects roughly 2 million children. The increasing number of prison inmates is causing an alarming increase in the number of children impacted by the phenomenon of parental incarceration, and yet little is known about this population. Existing studies indicate that these children experience feelings of extreme sadness, fear, anger, guilt, anxiety, abandonment, and loneliness. Some of these young people display problematic and aggressive behavior at school, home, and in the community, while others turn inward, withdraw, and become seriously depressed. Scholars report that these young people are six times more likely to go to jail or prison than their peers, activating the continued cycle of incarceration started by their parent or grandparent.

Almost none of the existing data has been collected directly from the children of prisoners. This dissertation is a detailed examination of the perceived impact of maternal imprisonment from the perspective of a select group of teenage girls whose mothers are in prison. Using an ethnographic approach, this 18 month long study included multiple individual interviews, participant observation, and document/artifact review to better

understand the lives of these African American adolescent females. Multiple theoretical frameworks are examined to understand the needs and concerns of the girls as well as their interactions with their incarcerated parent, their custodial parent or caregiver, and the ecology at large. Special attention is given to issues of race, culture, and adolescent development.

Findings suggest that caregiver identified needs and concerns regarding young people with a parent in prison may differ from those identified by the youth themselves. Data from this study show that children of prisoners may have unmet physical and health needs and unnoticed psychological and emotional needs. They often live in families with very limited financial, social, and emotional resources. Additionally, community support and services appear to be sorely lacking for these teens and their families. The dissertation ends by considering implications for social work and making practice, policy, and research recommendations.

Table of Contents

	Page
List of Charts, Tables and Figures	xiii
CHAPTER 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
Introduction	1
Overview of the Proposed Study	5
The HCW Evaluation	6
The Dissertation Research	7
Critical Analysis of the U.S. Criminal Justice System	15
Components in the Criminal Justice Domain	16
Legislative Component & Drug Enforcement Policies	16
Law Enforcement Component & Racial Profiling	19
Court System & Sentencing Disparities	20
Correctional Component & Prison Industry	23
Community/Societal Impact	25
Significance of the Problem	25
Summary	27
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	29
Methodological Considerations of a Literature Review	29
Early Intersection of Social Work & Criminal Justice	31
Shifting Ideologies About the Treatment of Prisoners	33
Considering the Families of Offenders	35
Children of Criminal Offenders: An Emerging Concern	37
Predicting Criminality	39
Impact of Parental Incarceration: Parent/Caregiver Perspective	40
Custody & Placement of Children	43
Maintaining Parent-Child Contact	45
Reunification & Related Issues	48
Direct Impact to the Child	52
Impact of Parental Incarceration: Direct Examination of Youth	53
Focus on Adolescents	56
Summary	58
CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	59
Prominence of Attachment Theory	59
Developmental Theory and Culture	60
Ecological Systems Theory	61
Family Systems Theory	64
Coping Styles of Families Impacted by Incarceration	67
Theories on African American Families	70
Psychosocial Development of Adolescents	74
Adolescent Children of Incarcerated Parents	76

Summary……………………………………………………………… 79

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY………………………………………………… 81
Purpose of the Study…………………………………………………... 81
Methodology and Method……………………………………………... 82
Qualitative Methods…………………………………………… 82
Ethnographic Inquiry…………………………………………. 84
Recruitment and Sampling Strategy…………………………………... 86
Data Collection………………………………………………………... 90
Data Management and Analysis…………………………………….... 93
Member Checking and Audit Trail……………………………………. 98

CHAPTER 5., INTRODUCTION TO THE PARTICIPANTS........................... 100
Overview……………………………………………………………… 100
Valina…………………………………………………………………. 102
Doniece……………………………………………………………….. 106
Brandy………………………………………………………………... 110
Shimika……………………………………………………………….. 112
Micah…………………………………………………………………. 115
Anisha………………………………………………………………… 118

CHAPTER 6. THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF MATERNAL
INCARCERATION.. 122
Summary …………………………………………………………….. 122
Contextual Background ……………………………………………… 123
Needs, Concerns, and Coping Skills ……………………………….... 125
Basic/Material Need.. 127
Emotional and Psychological Need... 133
Safety Need ………………………………………………...... 137
Opportunity Need …………………………………………..... 140
Parent and Caregiver Response 143

CHAPTER 7 COMPARING INDIVIDUAL DATA WITH
FOCUS GROUP DATA…….. 148
HCW Evaluation: The Focus Group Process…………………………… 148
Eight Cluster Solution……………………………………………….... 150
Comparative Analysis………………………………………………… 151

CHAPTER 8 LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS…... 153
Summary of Findings…………………………………………………. 153
Limitations of the Study………………………………………………. 156
Recommendations for Addressing Needs…………………………...... 157
Basic Needs…………………………………………………..….. 158
Emotional/psychological need………………………………….... 159
Safety Needs……………………………………………………... 161

Recommendations for Increasing Coping Skills………………………… 162
Recommendations for Strengthening Family Relationships……………. 165
Maintaining Family ties………………………………………….. 165
Parenting Skills and Social Support…………………………….. 166
Recommendations for Future Research………………………………… 168
Implications for Social Workers and Social Service Providers………… 170
Conclusion... 171

DISSERTATION ADDENDUM: MEDIA INFLUENCE……………………… 174
APPENDICES…………………………………………………………………... 178
Appendix A – Rates of Incarceration in Selected Nations……………… 179
Appendix B – Predictors of Youth Violence…………………………..... 180
Appendix C – Developmental Effects of Parental Incarceration……….. 181
Appendix D – Demographic Information Form………………………… 182
Appendix E – Interview Question Guide……………………………….. 183

REFERENCES……………………………………………………………….. 185

VITA 196

List of Charts, Tables and Figures

Chart 1.	Annual Prison Admissions for Women………………………......	22
Table 1.	Living Arrangements for State & Federal CIP's…………….....	44
Table 2.	Overview of Participants in the Study…………………………	89
Figure 1.	Family Configurations for research participants………………	89
Figure 2.	Information Chart on Valina……………………………….….....	97
Figure 3	Unmet and Under-met Needs………………………………….	127
Figure 4.	Cluster Point Map……………………………………………..	153
Table 3.	Reflections of HCW Program Experiences: 7 Themes…..……	164

CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

On any given day, estimates suggest more than 1.5 million U.S. children have at least one parent in jail or prison (Greenfield & Snell, 1999). If we include children whose parents are on or have completed probation or parole, the number soars to close to 10 million (Mumola, 2000). The number of children affected by the phenomenon of parental incarceration is growing at an alarming rate and yet little is empirically known about this population (Johnston, 1995; Wright & Seymour, 2000).

However, what we have been able to learn about the potential effects that this particular type of parent-child separation has on children and adolescents causes serious concern among advocates of underserved youth.

Studies indicate that these children experience feelings of extreme sadness, fear, anger, guilt, anxiety, abandonment, and loneliness (Block & Potthast, 1998; Gabel, 1992; Johnston, 1995; Gaudin & Sutphen, 1993). Some of these young people display problematic and aggressive behavior at school, home, and in the community, while others turn inward, withdraw, and become seriously depressed (Block, & Potthast, 1998; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1982; Hunter, 1980, Sack 1976). Research predictions suggest that these young people are very likely to continue the cycle of incarceration started by their parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent (Johnston, 1995, Mumola, 2000). What needs do these children and their families have? How can they best be helped? We have only recently begun to direct these questions to inmate parents and their families. Very little information has been collected directly from the children. We need to know the child's perception of having a parent in prison. We need to know if that child or teenager would

describe their needs in the same way as their incarcerated parent or custodial caregiver would describe their needs.

Using ethnographic methods, this study is a detailed examination of the perceived effect of maternal imprisonment on a select group of girls as seen from the girls' perspective. The study used semi-structured interviews along with participant observation and document and artifact review to better understand the lives of six African American, adolescent females who have or had a mother in prison.

The dissertation begins with a critical analysis of the criminal justice system and the cumulative effect that system has on communities and families, specifically the children of offenders. Multiple theoretical frameworks explore the needs and concerns of the girls as well as the interactions that they have with their incarcerated parent, their custodial parent or caregiver, and the ecology at large. Special attention is given to issues of race, culture, and adolescent development.

The dissertation ends by considering the implications for practice and research. The social work profession has a serious and long standing interest in serving children declared "at risk" but has shown little awareness or understanding of this population of "at risk" youth. This dissertation is a first step in that direction.

No one knows for certain how many minor children this issue touches. Law enforcement agencies do not gather information about children of arrested adults; correctional institutions do not ask prisoners for specific information about their children; and many child welfare agencies do not discern between children involved in the system due to direct parental abuse/neglect and those in the system due to inadequate care giving

arrangements during a parent's incarceration (Beatty, 1997; CWLA, 1998; Hairston, 1998; Johnston, 1995).

African American and Hispanic children are affected in larger numbers than other children. A bulletin released from the Bureau of Justice Statistics states that African American children are nine times more likely to have a parent in prison and Hispanic children are three times more likely to have a parent in prison than White children (Mumola, 2000). These statistics do not reflect the number of children born to teen parents involved in the juvenile justice system.

Despite the large numbers of children affected by the phenomena of parental incarceration and the multiple ways that these children are affected, very little is genuinely known about the lives of these children or the impact that the event of incarceration (or in some cases multiple incarcerations) has on them (Johnston, 1995; Seymour, 1998). Scholars have identified children of incarcerated parents as the least served and least studied sub-group of at-risk youth. There is a plethora of research on the impact that imprisonment has on inmates, but the literature only recently has begun to acknowledge inmates as members of families or parents of minor children (Johnston, 1995; Seymour, 1998; Wright & Seymour, 2000). There is a growing awareness of the issues surrounding children of incarcerated parents and their families but few empirical studies have been conducted. Most of the sparse research available consists of surveys of incarcerated parents or caregivers of the children.

Why should this particular at-risk population warrant the attention of social service providers, policy makers, and social science researchers? The first consideration is the level of human suffering: including the physical and emotional health experienced

by many members of this group. Existing studies and anecdotal reports suggest that children of incarcerated parents often experience depression, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, guilt, loneliness, and feelings of abandonment (CWLA, 1998; Johnston, 1995). Many exhibit negative behavioral outcomes such as poor academic performance, alcohol and/or drug use, and gang involvement (Bjannes, 1995; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981; Johnston 1995).

The second consideration is the economic impact on these children and families. Research shows that single, poor, often elderly, women of color most often head the families responsible for the care of these children whose parents are incarcerated (Johnston, 1995; McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978; Seymour & Wright, 2000). These families frequently straddle the poverty line and are ill equipped economically or emotionally to care for additional people. Communities are also impacted economically because these children are more likely to drop out of school, to become teen parents, to have difficulty holding a job, and to participate in delinquent or illegal activity. Economist, Murray Cohen (1998), estimates the value of saving one at-risk youth to be between $1.7 and 2.3 million dollars. Cohen's calculations include the cost of dropping out of school, criminal activity, drug use and incarceration.

The third consideration is the predicted legacy for children of offenders. Data suggests that the economic, emotional, psychological, and social impact of having a parent in prison may converge in ways that support intergenerational incarceration. The literature states that children of incarcerated parents are five to six times more likely to be incarcerated than children who have never been separated from their parents due to incarceration (Johnston, 1995). Thus, our society, like the children, is impacted

economically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually by the growing phenomenon of parental incarceration.

However, in addition to not knowing exactly how many children are affected by parental incarceration, we don't truly know how to help those at risk for the poorest outcomes. As a profession, we can ill afford to ignore the impact that parental crime, arrest and incarceration has on families and communities but especially on the children.

Overview of the Proposed Study

This qualitative study examines the influenced of maternal crime, arrest, and incarceration on African American adolescent females. Using thick description, I analyze the perspectives of six adolescent females, whose mothers are incarcerated, McQuaide & Enhrenreich (1998) state that to get a true understanding of the lives of offenders and their families, researchers must consider the use of thick description for reflecting their "lived experiences." A thick description of an individual's experience is characterized as a description that presents detail, context, and emotion for the reader without using an interpretative filter (Denzin, 1989b).

Most of the limited research available on the children of prisoners focuses on young children. This study adds to this research by focusing on the experiences of those in the adolescent stage of development. It also contributes to existing research by examining the affect of parental imprisonment from the adolescents' perspective.

The adolescents chosen to participate in this study were recruited from a high school based program located in Houston, Texas. This program serves children of incarcerated parents. In consultation with my dissertation co-chairs, Dr. Laura Lein and

Dr. Calvin Streeter, I limited my inquiry to examining the lives of African American girls who have or had a mother in prison.

The following criteria were used to select participants for the dissertation study:

1. The teen must be female aged 13 to 18 years old and has experienced at least one maternal prison incarceration within the last three years
2. The teen must currently live in a kinship care situation rather than a foster care environment or group home
3. The teen must self-identify as Black or African American
4. The teen must be enrolled in the No More Victims, Inc – Healing the CHILD Within program (HCW)

This study builds on data that I gathered and analyzed during a Fall 2002 funded evaluation of the HCW program. That evaluation study informed and shaped the direction of my research and provided information that, in essence, formed the foundation for a pilot study.

The HCW Evaluation

I used a process evaluation to understand the program and to help administrators and staff who were modifying, and improving program services. A logic model was constructed to graphically depict the theoretical model of the HCW program, and an evaluation plan was crafted based on that model. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect qualitative data from the interviews, and concept mapping was used to collect quantitative data from the focus groups.

The evaluation took place over 11 months, and it consisted of four phases. In phase one of the study, I established rapport with the program staff, participants,

volunteers, school personnel, and community members. I also began to observe and document daily support group activities.

In phase two, I conducted key informant interviews with program staff, volunteers, school personnel, and community residents. Sixteen key informants were individually interviewed in this phase. I also began the process of reviewing school and agency records. However, I had limited success with access to school records; I was unable to collect consistent information on all of the participants. Although the agency gave me full access to their records, I learned that staff members were concerned about possible legal access to agency information. Therefore, the staff had maintained limited documentation on program participants.

In phase three, I conducted face-to-face, semi-structured individual interviews with students and parent/caregivers. Ten youth were interviewed multiple times and five parent/caregivers were each interviewed once. Additionally, I reviewed artifacts and documents such as letters, poetry, short stories, television and radio interviews, and home videos. I also completed sixteen observations of randomly selected peer support groups.

In phase four, I facilitated a two-part focus group with fourteen youth using concept-mapping technology. Phase four is presented in more detail in Chapter Seven. This chapter presents a comparative analysis of the needs identified by the participants in this study to the needs identified by participants in the HCW evaluation.

The dissertation research study

After completing the evaluation of the HCW program, I selected specific questions from the data to further explore in my research. In February 2003, I began

formally crafting the dissertation research study. A detailed timeline for the HCW evaluation and the dissertation research can be found in attachment F.

I chose to recruit students from the HCW program for several reasons. Historically, researchers have experienced great difficulty convincing offenders' families to participate in research studies (Finney-Hairston, 1998; Johnston, 1992; McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978). Shame and lack of trust are only two of many reasons why offenders' families can be reluctant to participate in research. Researchers have experienced greater success when the "invitation" to participate is preceded by an introduction from a trusted source. In addition to the relationship that I have established with the families through evaluating the HCW program, I continue to rely on the trust that the families have in Marilyn Gambrill, the executive director of the HCW program. Further, reviewers serving on the IRB board feel that enlisting the support of trusted individuals offers greater protection for human subjects. Trust reduces the probability that subjects are unconsciously coerced into participating in a research project.

Seven African American girls were recruited from the evaluation study to participate in the dissertation research. One teen moved out of the city during the study and, as a result, she was unable to complete her participation in the study. The research study that follows, then, is a culmination of more than eighteen months spent talking to, interviewing, observing, recording, and "hanging out" with six very interesting young women.

The decision to keep the sample small was a deliberate one. Unlike quantitative methodologies, decisions about sample size in qualitative studies can be more challenging. In qualitative studies, the researcher seeks information "saturation" on a

particular topic or area. The number of cases needed to accomplish this can range from a single case to as many as the researcher deems necessary (Padgett, 1998). Denzin & Lincoln (1998) urge the researcher to choose cases based on "opportunity to learn." They further argue that choosing a case for the potential to learn is a different and sometimes superior criterion to others such as representativeness.

The evaluation of the HCW program provided multiple interviews and observations of more than twenty-four youth, thirteen of them African American adolescent girls. Although the interviews for the program evaluation were different than the ones for the dissertation research, much of the information needed to answer the dissertation research questions was provided during the process of answering those questions. Permission was given to use any and all data collected for the evaluation for my dissertation research. Therefore, the dissertation study allowed me to fill in gaps in the information previously collected and to fully describe the group under study. I was able to comprehensively explore the identified sub-questions, to identify concepts that emerged from the data, and to explore the relationships that the concepts have to each other.

I took additional precautions to protect my human subjects. As with the HCW evaluation, before contacting the teen, I obtained a caregiver's consent for the teen to participate in the study. When the caregiver consented to allow the teen to participate, only students who assented to participate were interviewed. Also, to support students who experienced uncomfortable feelings stemming from their participation in the study, I maintained a strong relationship with the program.

This study explores the full breadth and depth of the perceived experiences of a small group of participants in similar life circumstances. Therefore, I decided that teenagers living in a foster care situation would be excluded from the study. My decision was largely due to access issues and the desire to have a sample that has some key elements in common, such as living arrangements. I expected that an adolescent with a parent in prison who was placed in out-of- home care would have some very different needs and concerns than those living with a custodial parent or a family member.

Additionally, the study focuses on teens with moms who have been to prison versus jail, as jail time differs from prison time in many important respects. The primary differences include: length of incarceration time, severity of crime, and the nature and depth to which the event affects family members.

My focus on specific characteristics such as race, gender, and type of maternal incarceration also increased the homogeneity of the sample.. I chose African American teenagers as the target population primarily because the majority of youth in the HCW program are African Americans. However, the ethnicity of youth in the HCW program also accurately reflects the fact that African American adults comprise 45% to 50% of the prison population (Cole, 1999; Gilliard & Beck, 1998; Mumola, 2000). This fact indicates that African American children are more likely to experience parental incarceration than other groups of children (Mumola, 2000).

I chose to work with African American teen girls for several reasons. Much of the literature on African American adolescents is focused on African American boys in the juvenile and adult justice and corrections system. Little attention is focused on African American adolescent girls, and this study investigated newly developing

concerns about adolescent girls. Recent literature identifies concerns for adolescent girls such as: the rising number of girls in the juvenile justice system, increased reports of physical and sexual victimization, unmet emotional needs, and unacknowledged developmental needs (Beyer, 2001; OJJDP, 2000).

First, in terms of juvenile justice concerns for African American girls, the delinquency rates for girls increased 83% between 1988 and 1997, despite reports that boast a decline in overall juvenile delinquency rates since 1993 (CWLA, 2001). Additionally, the rate at which African American girls were detained between 1988 and 1997 was three times greater than the rate for white girls (OJJDP, 2000). Although, the 2000 U.S. Census reports African American girls to be 15% of the female population under age 18, juvenile justice statistics state that they make up almost 50% of all girls in secure detention (Jones & Poe-Yamagata, 2000). Having a mother in prison is a possible risk factor that may account for these increasing numbers.

Second, another concern is the differing vulnerabilities and protective factors that girls have in terms of physical and sexual victimization when compared to boys. Girls are more often the victims of physical and sexual abuse than boys. As a result, the probability of developing post-traumatic stress disorder is higher for girls than for boys. This is especially true for those girls who have committed delinquent acts.

Third, adolescent girls often have unmet emotional needs. Irritability, defiant behavior, and aggression are common emotional defenses among girls who have been traumatized and put into positions where they were unable to defend themselves. When a traumatized girl's emotionally charged behavior is an attempt to survive, she may be misunderstood and given an oppositional label,. Typically, such a girl's behavior

problems are the focus of intervention. As such, her underlying emotional needs can remain ignored or unmet. Girls may receive little help for learning how to manage extreme feelings loss, sadness, despair, fear, or isolation (Beyer, 2001).

Finally, in terms of developmental needs, girls' developmental needs are more centered on relationships. Relational centeredness also makes their emotional support needs different from that of boys. Girls tend to exhibit higher rates of depression, anxiety, and eating disorders than boys (Beyer, 2001). However, common depression often goes completely undiagnosed in delinquent girls (Beyer, 2001). Additionally, girls are highly reactive to stressful events. They need the approval of others and, compared to boys, they rely on support from parents and peers as a coping mechanism (Beyer, 2001; Leadbeater, et al 1999). For example, a study done by Colarossi & Eccles (2003) looked at the impact of support on the mental health of 217 adolescents over two different time periods separated by one year. The study found that female adolescents had significantly higher levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem at both time periods in the study than did males. Using structural equation modeling, Colarossi & Eccles also found that maternal support had the largest effect on reducing depression for both sexes, followed by friend and teacher support. (As a side note, friends and teachers had the largest positive effect on self-esteem. Mother and father support did not significantly impact self-esteem.)

The situation for many African American adolescent girls is even worse than those represented in Colarossi & Eccles' study. Despite distinctive characteristics of female adolescent development, research has been scattered. Further, a cohesive developmental framework for understanding at-risk girls, especially girls of color, is lacking (Beyer,

2001; Morris, 2002; Stevens, 2002). African American girls continue to be exposed to racism and sexism. Also, they are increasingly being raised by single and/or divorced mothers who are either chronically unemployed or chronically under-employed.

In comparison to white girls, African American girls are more likely to: (1) report the death of a parent, grandparent, sibling or friend; (2) live in a single parent/guardian household; and (3) experience school failure or suspension (Beyer, 2001; Stevens, 2002). They are also much more likely than white girls to have a mother in prison. Psychosocial problems such as these are highly correlated with substance abuse, suicide ideation and attempts, early sexual involvement, school difficulties, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

A better understanding of the challenges facing these girls allows us to increase the effectiveness of interventions designed to promote positive life outcomes. The term, *children of incarcerated parents* (CIP), introduced by Dr. Denise Johnston, refers to children who currently have or had a parent incarcerated in jail or prison. This term encompasses the entire experience of incarceration, a process that includes criminal offending, arrest, incarceration, and the offenders return to the "free world." Because this study focuses on the minor female children (18 years of age or younger) of women who have been incarcerated in a prison facility, I use the abbreviation CIP in reference to children of incarcerated parents.

The primary research question of this study is the following: ***What is the perceived impact of maternal imprisonment on African American adolescent girls?*** The following sub-questions provided additional guidance to the research:

(1) What needs and concerns do these teens have?;

(2) What coping strategies do they use?; and

(3) How does the incarcerated parent and custodial parent or caregiver respond to them?

To a limited extent, I was able to glean insight into how systems in the ecology, such as family, peers, school, and community organizations, respond to these young women.

This study provides answers to some of the questions that plague researchers about adolescent CIPs. . First, I contribute to the knowledge base about both “at risk” children and those separated from a parent due to incarceration. In this way, I add the “voices” of adolescent CIP’s to the scant existing literature. Second, this study explores a range of African American teen CIPs’ experience. Research indicates that these teens are often victims of psychological, emotional, and economic trauma, yet they are rarely considered survivors or provided with appropriate support for recovery. Information gained from the teens in this study, then, may help to develop programs than can increase resilience of at risk African American teen CIPs.

Although the methodology used in this study impedes generalizability, findings suggest programmatic considerations. For example, all of the teens interviewed have strong religious and spiritual beliefs; they rely on these beliefs as one way of coping with the difficulties associated with having a mother in prison. This information may prompt a service provider to assess the need for a spiritual component in services designed to help African American teens at risk.

Also, I have included an addendum that reflects my thoughts about the affect that a media spotlight may have had on the participants in the dissertation study. Five of the

six girls in the study were involved in high profile television reports, news reports, and talk show interviews during the life of the study. Thoughts and observations about the effect that media activities may have had on the young women in the study came too late to be included in the research. However, these activities warranted inclusion as a collection of thoughts for future research.

Critical Analysis of the U.S. criminal justice system

Parental incarceration is affecting more U. S. children than ever before. This situation exists for two reasons: (1) the prison population itself has increased; and (2) prisoners are being incarcerated for longer and longer periods of time. With these facts in mind, it is not surprising that the U.S. has recently assumed the dominant position in worldwide incarceration rates. For instance, in 1997, the Sentencing Project, a Washington based organization widely respected as a source for criminal justice policy analysis and information, reported that the U.S. was second only to Russia with regard to the percentage of incarcerated citizens per capita (Mauer, 1999). However, a dramatic increase in the number of prisoners granted amnesty by the Russian Parliament, combined with the increased reliance on incarceration as a correctional sanction in the U.S., has resulted in the U.S. moving from the number two position to the top spot (The Sentencing Project, May 2003). [Attachment A].

A report released by the National Institute of Justice states that the prison population has increased by 5% or more over the past several years (Chaiken, 2000; Mauer, 1999). Such reports fail to alarm some U.S. citizens who appear calmed by the idea that an increased number of criminals are being successfully sentenced and placed behind bars. However, these statistics present a slightly different picture when we realize

that increases have been reported each year for the past 50 years (Mauer, 1999). Thus, the prison population has increased 500% over the past 20 years; a number that far outpaces the 28% rise in the national population (Mauer, 1995). And yet, reliable sources for criminal justice statistics reports that the actual percentage of reported and sanctioned criminal acts has consistently decreased over the past several years (Maguire & Pastore, 1999; Samaha, 2000). How is it that reported acts of crime have decreased but the number of individuals being incarcerated continues to increase? When criminal justice statistics are deconstructed, we began to more clearly see how criminal justice policies might affect the offenders, but also their families, their children, and our communities.

Components within the Criminal Justice Domain

Initially based on the European tradition of criminal justice, the U.S. system of justice, over time, has fragmented into five independently operated sub-units consisting of the legislature, law enforcement, the court system, corrections, and juvenile justice (Butts, 1995; Friedman, 1993; McNeece, 1995). This section presents a brief overview of the sub-units affecting adult offenders and the accumulative impact of that involvement on children and families.

Legislative Component and Drug Enforcement Policies

Empowered by the U.S. constitution, state legislative bodies constantly define and re-define the U.S. system of justice. For example, state legislators may reconstitute the following aspects of the criminal justice system: (1) what qualifies as criminal behavior; (2) where states should locate incarceration facilities; (3) what types of rehabilitative or punitive programs are available to incarcerated populations; (4) (who may go to prison;

and (5) the length of time certain individuals or categories of offenders will remain incarcerated.

Public opinion has been a significant force in influencing how legislative bodies approach defining or re-defining the U.S. system of justice.. In the 1960's, a liberal political environment supported rehabilitation and mental health treatment (Henry & Einstadter, 1998). However, in the latter part of the 20th century, public sentiment about crime and punishment shifted dramatically: a conservative "get tough on crime" ideology become dominant in the 1990's. Harsher prison sentences, increased imprisonment of the mentally ill, increased imprisonment of other populations at risk, and a burgeoning prison industry have been the result (Gendreau, 1995; McNeece, 1995).

The 1990's public "get tough on crime" sentiment usually appears without discussion or understanding of how this "tough" approach negatively affects the offenders' non-incarcerated family members. Lengthier prison sentences often contribute to increased rates of divorce, have a negative impact on the maintenance of family bonds and, in some instances, makes parent-child reunification problematic (Block & Potthast, 1998; Johnston, 1995; Seymour, 1998). The advent of the rising incarceration of women has substantially increased the number of grandparents caring for grandchildren (Barnhill, 1996; Gibson, 2002). It has also increased the number of children placed in the child welfare system because relatives are unable or unwilling to care for them (Wright & Seymour, 2000). Despite these facts, the popular discourse of today's conservative climate suggests that confinement remains a popular response to crime (Butts, 1995).

For example, The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, designed to decrease the sale and consumption of cocaine, provides an example of legislation grounded in the current

"tough on crime" political climate. This policy is particularly harsh on individuals charged with the use of or possession of crack cocaine, known as the "poor people's cocaine." In some states, it takes only 5 grams of crack cocaine, compared with 500 grams of cocaine in powder form, to trigger a five-year mandatory sentence (DiMascio, 1997; Raspberry, 1999).

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 has indeed "succeeded" in increasing the prison population. It has also dramatically increased the population of poor and female prisoners, (Cole, 1999; Singer et al, 1995; Snell, 1994; VanWormer & Bartollas, 2000). However, it has failed to cope with many social and economic issues surrounding drug abuse. For instance, Mauer (1999) argues that The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 has failed to capture those individuals who economically profit from the large-scale sale and distribution of drugs. In this way, the legislation does not address the economic roots of drug related crime. Further, the Act emphasizes users as targets for arrest, while ignoring support services for those addicted.

Many alcohol and/or drug related crimes are committed by individuals with drug and alcohol addictions yet, governmental institutions often fail to provide adequate care for or help to addicts. (Sharp, et al., 1999; Singer, et al., 1995; Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). The lack of drug treatment in penal institutions-- especially facilities for female offenders--reflects legislators' failure to acknowledge information provided by the National Institute of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, the National Institute of Mental Health and prevailing research in the field of addictions (Katz, 1998; Van Wormer & Barttollas, 2000). The frequent result is that the harshest and most expensive criminal sanction is used for non-violent offenders with substance addictions. These individuals are often

released with little or no rehabilitation; they continue to have active addictions. Those who know little about the treatment of addictions hold the erroneous assumption that alcohol or drug dependency can be cured by institutionally generated abstinence.

Law Enforcement Component and Racial Profiling

Police officers, county sheriffs, state patrol officers, FBI agents, and other officials investigate crime and arrest suspects. While law enforcement officers are commonly known as protectors of the public and "peace keepers," this view is not one that is universally held, especially among ethnic minorities who are victims of racial profiling.

Racial "profiling" is the practice of unlawfully detaining a person solely because he or she appears to be an ethnic minority. In an article entitled *The Color of Suspicion* (Goldberg, 1999), Los Angeles county deputy Bobby Harris states, "Racial profiling is a tool we use and don't let anyone say otherwise. Like up in the valley, I knew who all the crack sellers were----they look like Hispanics who should be cutting your lawn" (p. 54)". Like deputy Harris, sociologist Jerome Skolnick maintains that racial profiling is a tool used by police to make decisions regarding whom to arrest easier. Skolnick argues that police officers often keep a picture of a symbolic assailant in their minds, and that picture is a young Black man (Golberg, 1999). The job is to connect the "symbolic" assailant to the "real" young Black man visible during crime investigations.

The problem of racial profiling is suggested in findings such as the following: for every one African American male who graduates from college, one hundred African American males are arrested (Cole, 1999). Many examples suggesting racial profiling exist. For instance, in the summer of 1999, an undercover drug operation in Tulia, Texas

resulted in 43 people arrested. 40 of the arrested individuals were African American (93%), even though the city's population of approximately 4700 includes only 237 African Americans (5%). In New Jersey, where only one fourth of the drivers on the Jersey Turnpike are Black, more than one half of the vehicles stopped and searched are driven by Blacks (Goldberg, 1999).

The tragedy of an unlawful or unwarranted arrest due to racial profiling extends to children. For example, it is estimated that over 100 children were subject to negative economic, psychological, social, and emotional effects due to the racially motivated 1999 arrests in Tulia, Texas. Some of these negative effects may be related to the fact that one in five children is present during his or her parents' arrest (Johnston, 1995a). This experience can leave a child feeling vulnerable and frightened; it may also contribute to serious emotional problems. Kampfner's (1995) study of children of women prisoners found that 70% were present during their mother's arrest, and all of the research participants reported symptoms associated with post traumatic stress syndrome. Such post traumatic stress outcomes are not unusual. And more information on post traumatic stress symptoms will be provided on the emotional outcomes of CIP's in chapter two.

Court Systems and Sentencing Disparities

Sentencing in U.S. court systems shows disparities among groups of people. Although court systems are legally charged with creating fair and objective trail outcomes and penalties, these responsibilities can be skewed by prejudice. For instance, mandatory sentencing does not allow judges to vary from the sentence recommended by law or to consider individual circumstances when making sentencing decisions As a result, mandatory sentencing laws that accompany drug possession and distribution

legislation have resulted in sentencing disparities by gender, race and class (Gabel & Johnston, 1995; Iglehart, 1995; Mauer, 1999).

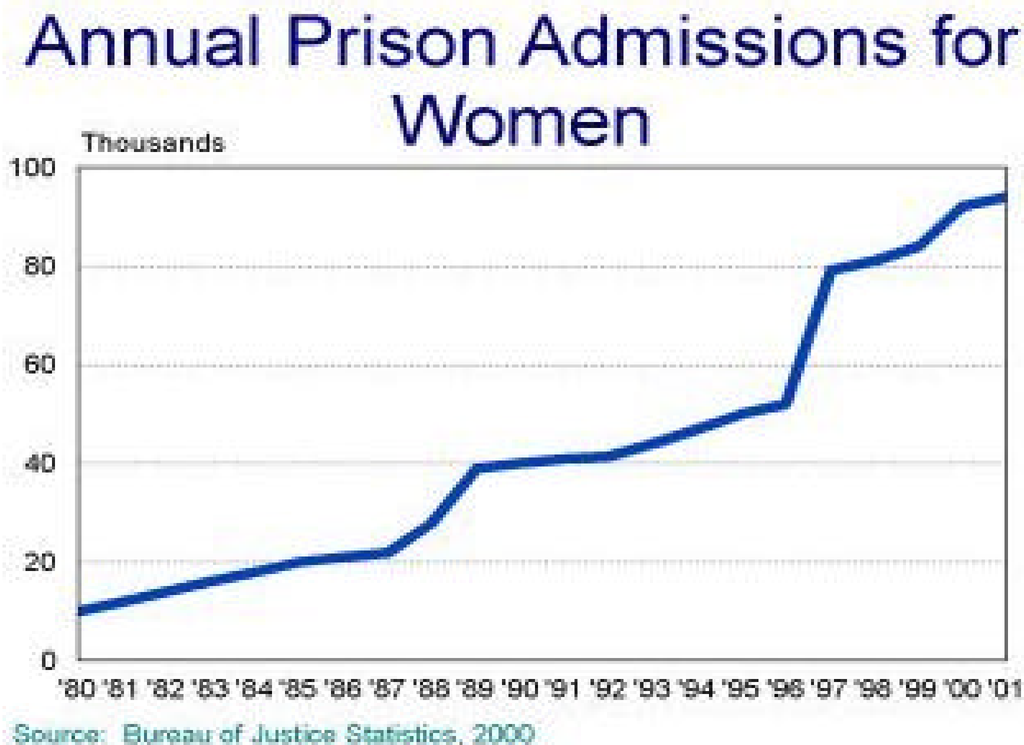
Disparities resulting from gender, race, and class bias can show up at many points in the process between being arrested and being sentenced. While moving through the court system, an individual may have many opportunities to exit the system and avoid sentencing that demands incarceration. For instance, only 3-10% of people arrested face actual incarceration related to sentencing; the remaining 90-97% are released without proceeding to trail (DiMascio, 1997; Mauer, 1994). According to DiMascio (1997), only 7.5% of all felonies are disposed of by trial. However, examination of who is more likely to be among the 7.5% reveals that people of color, women, people with mental illness, and people who are poor are more likely to be tried and sentenced.

As in other areas of the criminal justice system, people of color are over-represented in the percentage of individuals prosecuted and incarcerated (Johnson & Schwartz, 1991; Mauer, 1999). The U.S. Justice Bureau predicts that, if current incarceration rates remain unchanged, 1 out of every 20 persons in the U.S. (5.1%) will serve time in prison during his or her lifetime (Chaiken, 2000). However, 1 out of every 4 African American males (28%) will serve time in prison during their lifetime. This is compared with a prediction of 16% for Hispanic males and 4.4% for White males. These figures, which do not include jail time, reflect prison sentences that are usually more than a year in length for felony convictions (Beck, 2000; Chaiken, 2000). In 1998 African Americans totaled only 12% of the U.S. population and yet they represented 30% of the convictions in U.S. district courts, 39% of the U.S. jail populations, and 46% of the U.S.

prison population (Maguire & Pastore, 1999). A large percentage of the men and women are parents to more than 1 minor child.

We have seen that people of color are over represented in the criminal justice system. In addition, women are increasingly at risk of overrepresentation. For example, the chart below indicates that women are increasingly among the 7.5% who do not exit the legal system before incarceration.

Chart 1. Annual Prison Admissions for Women



Although the majority of incarcerated women are sentenced for nonviolent offenses, women are sentenced more frequently than men for drug use and possession (Cole, 1999; Morash, Bynum & Koons, 1998). Conservative explanations of the increased incarceration of women include the deterioration of internal and external social controls and a decline in morality that accompanies changing gender roles (Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000). Some feminist criminologists contend that the increase is explained

by women's position in the patriarchal structure of society and that the male-dominated justice system punishes women for deviating from traditional gender roles (Chesney-Lind, 1978; Freidan, 1989; Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000).

However, little attention has been paid to the societal and familial impact of the rapidly rising number of incarcerated women. It is argued that children of female offenders are more negatively impacted by parental incarceration than children of male offenders (Katz, 1998; McQuaide & Enhrenreich, 1998). Only 2% of children with mothers in prison live with their fathers, while 90% of children with fathers in prison live with their mothers. Also, it is estimated that 8-10% of children with imprisoned mothers are more likely to enter the child welfare system when compared with the estimated 1 to 2% of those with imprisoned fathers. Finally, children with mothers in prison are far more likely to have multiple caretakers, less likely to be taken for a visit, and more likely to have unstable economic and emotional lives during the parent's incarceration (Katz, 1998; Wright &Seymour, 2000).

<u>Correctional Component and the Prison Industry</u>

The correctional system consists of jail and prison facilities and community based programs such as probation and parole (Fox, 1985; Snarr, 1992). Incarceration in a corrections facility is designed to punish individuals who commit wrongful acts. Community based programs, such as parole, are intended to assist offenders with reintegration back into society as they complete their judicially determined sentences (Cromwell & Killinger, 1994; Snarr, 1992).

In 2000, over 1.7 million people were incarcerated in U.S. jails and prisons, with the prediction that this number could increase to two million by the end of 2001 (Beck,

2000). As stated earlier, we lead the world with regard to incarceration rates. This is the case in spite of evidence that, except for violent crimes, U.S. crime rates are comparable to those in other industrialized nations and in fact have been steadily declining (Mauer, 1995; Schoen & Peterson, 1996). While violent crime, such as murder, is higher in the U.S. than in comparable industrialized nations, the number of murders has not greatly fluctuated over the past two decades (DiMascio, 1997). Yet, in spite of no great changes in crime rates, new prisons continue to be constructed, leading to the contention that the prison system has become a growth industry spiraling out of control. Mandatory sentencing laws, longer prison terms, and conservative policies are responsible for some of the growing inmate population in the U.S. (DiMascio, 1997; Mauer, 1999). While conservatives argue that increased incarceration deters crime (Thomas, 1998) jail and prison expansion has done little to effectively reduce the overall rate of crime (Mauer, 1999).

Another explanation for the increase in incarceration rates is that prisoners have become commodities in the global economic market (Mauer, 1999). While in decades past residents protested the building of a prison in their community, cities across the country have actively competed for prison contracts since the late 1980's. Now entire communities are being supported by the economic growth that has resulted from building new prisons and adding beds to existing ones (Mauer, 1999). A privatized prison system has arisen as corporations see prison as profit makers. It is argued that this capitalist approach to corrections has contributed to a myriad of problems such as the over representation of poor people and people of color in the system, failure to provide

rehabilitative activities, and a lack of mental health and chemical dependency services (Cole, 1999; Mauer, 1999).

Community/Societal Impact

No society can afford the costs of maintaining a large percentage of its population in prison. Families are disrupted, communities lose income, and children suffer. Larger numbers of parolees and their families often live in concentrated areas of a city. What is the political impact on a community where a majority of its members lose the right to vote as happens to individuals in many states after serving time on a felony conviction? How do having a substantial portion of its young men, and an increasing number of young women, ensconced in the criminal justice system affect African American families and communities? Mauer (1999) states that,

> At various times in history, prisoners have been thought of as sinners, deviants, or members of an oppressed class. As we approach the twenty-first century, they have now become mere commodities in the eyes of global entrepreneurs (p. xiii).

Significance of the Problem

Research on incarcerated individuals suggests that maintaining family ties during incarceration as a way to reduce recidivism. However, keeping families together while a member is incarcerated can be a daunting task. Prison locales, poor economic situations, and adversarial prison policies are but a few problems that families can face. Another problem is intergenerational incarceration and/or negative repercussions for the children of incarcerated adults.

Even though approximately 10 million children will experience the phenomenon of parental incarceration at some point in their lives (Johnston, 1995), only recently have

service providers considered targeting this population. The social work profession needs to prioritize a response to this population.

It is reasonable to assume that children of incarcerated parents may suffer from isolation and a lack of social support due to the problems that led to their parent's incarceration. It is also reasonable to assume that they may have difficulties expressing their feelings and concerns about their parents and/or their living environments. Johnston (1995, 2001) states that CIPs often suffer from stigma and shame; they do not receive the kind of support that children may get when separated from their parents due to divorce or death. In fact, it is not uncommon for the parent or family member providing their care to refuse to discuss the incarcerated parent (Johnston, 1995; Kampfner, 1995). Even worse, some CIPs are often made to feel like a burden by family members providing care. They can be compared to the incarcerated parent and told things like "you're going to be a loser just like your father" by their biological parent; and assumed to be a future offender by society (Johnson, 2002; Johnston, 1995).

Research has established the fact that CIPs often suffer before, during, and after the incarceration of a parent (Block & Potthast, 1998; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Johnston, 1993a; Sack, Sadler & Thomas, 1976). Research also shows that CIP's have needs that often go unmet (Kampfner, 1995; Stanton, 1980). Finally, research states that these children often respond to their parents' incarceration by demonstrating a pattern of negative behaviors or trauma reactions (Gabel, 1993; Johnston, 1992; McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978; Stanton, 1980).

Social work has established a solid commitment to providing for the needs of all children, but especially at-risk children. Yet, children of incarcerated parents-- the largest

sub-group of at-risk children-- remain outside of the focus of our profession. A plethora of information and research exists on children separated from their parents due to divorce, death, abandonment, and physical or emotional illness but little on children separated due to incarceration. Studies showing positive outcomes for intervention with CIP's indicate the need to continue our intervention efforts with this population and to implement and expand prevention efforts in the area of social welfare and corrections policy. We also need direct social work practice with offenders and their children. This notion was supported by the July 2001 congressional appropriation of $4 million dollars to the Department of Justice, via P.L. 93-415, to address issues of children who have experienced parental incarceration. The stated goals of the 5 solicitations were:

- Reduce children's trauma, stigmatization and stress of separation caused by parental incarceration of the primary parent in prison; and
- Enhance opportunities for positive life experiences and outcomes for children/youth whose primary parent has experienced incarceration. (Travis & Waul, 2004).)

Although this money only funded five solicitations, it provides evidence that the needs and issues of these families are starting to gain attention.

Summary

Chapter one has provided a socio-political context of issues related to children of incarcerated parents and provided the foundation for the research. The central idea of this study is to identify and to understand the perceived impact of maternal imprisonment on African American adolescent girls. This dissertation consists of eight chapters and an addendum. Chapter two provides a literature review of the existing empirical data on

CIPs, and chapter three reviews the theoretical frameworks that provide the foundation for this study. Chapter four outlines the methodology and design used in this study, and chapter five introduces the participants in the study. Chapter six explores the findings from the study, and chapter seven compares the self-identified needs of the six African American girls in the dissertation reach study to the needs identified by the group of adolescent CIPs involved in the HCW evaluation study. Chapter eight, the final chapter, discusses implications of the findings for social work and makes practice and research recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1 provides a sociopolitical context of issues related to children of incarcerated parents and reflected a foundation for the research. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of the existing empirical data on CIPs. It starts with a discussion about the use of literature reviews in qualitative research and ends by looking at the literature on adolescent CIPs.

Methodological considerations of a literature review

There are conflicting views about the timing and use of a literature review in qualitative research. Some qualitative researchers argue that literature reviews should be delayed until the completion of the study. These researchers cite concerns that it might hinder the emergence of new ideas or constrain a researchers ability to interpret the data from alternative perspectives (Padgett, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996).

Researchers that favor reviewing the literature at the beginning of a study, or soon after entering the field, assert that an early literature review has multiple benefits. For instance, a review can provide support in shaping a study and promote accumulated knowledge. The literature review also places the study in a scholarly context and provides a clear rationale for the research (Padgett, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Bogden & Biklen (1992) along with Strauss & Corbin (1998) encourage a thorough review of the literature before beginning a study but caution against allowing the concepts or models developed by others to hinder the expansion of ideas or the creation of new streams of thought.

Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell (1996) encourage the researcher to not only do a literature review as soon as possible but to revisit the literature as the study progresses. These authors suggest that a review of previous works can provide a source for making comparisons and can prevent the researcher from overlooking critical but easily missed elements that exist in the data. The work of Bogden & Biklen (1998) and others prompted me to consider the following questions: What are some of the current issues in the literature? How does your perspective differ from what you've read? What has been neglected in the literature? How have other researchers conceptualized the problem?

It seems important to consider ethnicity in the context of child development. Although child development is largely universal, scholars acknowledge the behavioral variations that may occur across ethnic groups and the responses that may be elicited from the larger society. For example, the identity development of girls who are ethnic minorities is influenced by an awareness of the current and historical position of their particular ethnic/racial group within the larger social structure (Ritchey, 1996). Therefore, the way an African American girl experiences her mother's incarceration is very likely to be influenced by cultural beliefs, family ideology, and societal events. Throughout the review of the literature, the following questions drive the proposed study:

- What information do we have about the impact of parental incarceration?
- What are the needs and concerns of CIP's as stated in the literature?
- How do CIP's cope with parental incarceration?
- How do incarcerated parents and custodial parents (or caregivers) respond to the needs of CIP's?
- What responses do CIP's receive from systems in the ecology?

Literature on the impact of parental incarceration is limited. To better understand this phenomenon this dissertation includes literature from criminal justice history, adult corrections, child welfare, and child development. The first part of the chapter begins with a brief review of the early involvement of social workers in the field of corrections and traces that involvement to the inclusion of families of offenders as a part of the client system. The second half looks specifically at the literature available on children of offenders, dividing it into two perspectives: studies that surveyed parent/caregivers and/or incarcerated parents and studies that directly examined the youth. The section also examines factors that mediate the impact of a parent's incarceration on their children, specifically adolescents. In addition, it considers the interaction of race/ethnicity and gender.

The Early Intersection of Social Work and Criminal Justice

As social work began to develop as a profession in the latter part of the nineteenth century, charity and settlement home workers (pre-professionals) expressed concern about correctional policies in the adult and juvenile justice systems (Lubove, 1965; Leiby, 1979). Efforts to place these early concerns on the program of the National Conference of Charity and Corrections indicate our involvement in the field of criminal justice even as we were evolving as a profession.

By 1910, there were more than 400 settlements focused on a variety of issues, including corrections (Lubove, 1965). The development of organizations such as the Board of Public Charities and the Board of Charities and Corrections marked our movement away from religious conversion as the primary goal for involvement with individuals and prayer as the intervention of choice. These organizations also marked a

distinct movement toward a more scientific way of assessing social problems (Miller, 1995).

Settlement leaders of the time became convinced that the boom in institutional construction, including prisons, would not solve the problems that created them and, in fact, would facilitate the creation of new problems (Miller, 1995). Thus, settlement workers began to expand the target of change from individuals and families to organizations and institutions. Settlement organizations focused their efforts on larger societal change such as the reform of penal institutions and the establishment of juvenile courts (Leiby, 1979). Soon these organizations moved beyond working in neighborhoods and communities and progressed toward the establishment of national organizations such as the Women's Trade Union League and the National Consumers' League. (Lubove, 1965).

During the early 1900's, some settlement workers focused on issues concerning African Americans. They segregated from other settlements, established the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Although the organization's goals have changed and its prominence in the African American Community is different, the NAACP continues to serve the African and African American community through its national headquarters and local affiliates. One of the NAACP's major concerns is the over representation of African Americans in the criminal justice system (Carlton-LaNey, 2001).

In an effort to parallel the work of the settlement home workers, American charity organizations remained more focused on casework with individuals and families; their efforts stimulated the creation of a formal social work training program (Leiby,

1979). However, the philosophical views of working with criminals to reform the sinful and penitent shifted to a secular view more aligned with the humanistic perspective of understanding and influencing human behavior change. Nevertheless, for those involved in working directly with prisoners, the focus remained on the incarcerated individual and the impact of the incarceration to the offenders' family and children was not considered relevant to the change process.

Prison visitation is the one exception to this failure to consider the welfare of offender's family and children. Visitation has been a part of prison programming since the early 1900's and appears to be the singular reflection of early discussions around issues related to the families of offenders. A national comparison examining visitation policies in the late 19th century and early to mid 20th century reveals a wide variety of approaches and philosophies with very little mention or consideration of the children of prisoners.

Shifting Ideologies about the Treatment of Prisoners

In the 1950's, social work appeared to renew its interest in the field of corrections. A study commissioned by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) resulted in a report titled, *A Conceptual Approach to Teaching Materials: Illustrations from the Field of Corrections*. This report indicates that social work students were being prepared to work in corrections (Boehm, 1959). Additionally, public sentiment and social work values supported the concept of rehabilitation and therapeutic treatment for prisoners. The ideology that incarceration should provide rehabilitation and prepare the offender for integration back into society was reflected in the liberal politics of the times (McNeece, 1997).

Social change events of the 1960's & 1970's, specifically the civil rights movement and the women's movement, created an environment ripe for concerned researchers to begin looking at the needs of prisoners' families. At this time, we also began to see empirically based surveys asking prisoners about their families' circumstances and surveying the wives of male inmates about their needs and the needs of their children (Friedman & Esselstyn, 1965; McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978; Sack, Seidler & Thomas, 1976; Zalba, 1964).

However, the past two decades produced a shift in criminal justice policy. The "get tough on crime" philosophy, put forth by conservative politicians and propelled by public demand, resulted in harsher and longer prison sentences and a prison population that continues to increase despite the reduction in reported crimes. Research on prison inmate populations indicates a larger number of recidivists compared to inmates incarcerated in prison for the first time.

Currently, many probationers and parolees are re-incarcerated for not paying probation or parole fees; failing to find employment within a specific time frame; or for not attending alcohol or drug treatment support groups, all actions that are considered "technical violations" (Miller, 1997). The societal and community impact of technical violations and non-violent crimes are different from crimes of violence, but in many instances, the consequence of long-term incarceration is used for both.

We are only just beginning to see the implications of using the harshest penalty of long-term imprisonment for so many of the nation's citizens (Mauer, 1999). One implication is the social and financial devastation to families and communities. In

particular, we see accumulated risk to young people who experience multiple parental separations due to parents' repeated incarcerations.

Considering the Families of Offenders

Initially, the involvement of inmate families in correctional programming was viewed as a means of control over male prison inmates (Carlson & Cervera, 1991). Family visits were used as a reward for acceptable inmate behavior and taken away when behavior was unacceptable. Some states even allowed extended family visits that included conjugal rights (Carlson & Cervera, 1991). Fore example, Mississippi was the first state to support extended family and conjugal visits in 1918. Ironically, however, they initially extended the privilege only to Black male inmates because of the racist ideology of the times that "over sexed" Black inmates were easier to control if allowed to release sexual tension (Monk, 2001).

However, supporting the relationships between inmates and their family members has been controversial, especially when extended to conjugal visits. Individuals protesting the consideration of family involvement with inmates did so based on issues of security, costs related to maintaining private visitation areas, and taxpayer reaction to what was seen as "good treatment of prisoners." On the other hand, supporters of extended and conjugal visitation have expanded the rationale to include the importance of maintaining family ties. Currently only 10 states allow extended or conjugal visits (Monk, 2001).

In addition to inmate control attention to inmates' families has also reflected concerns for inmate rehabilitation. In the 1950's, correctional institutions viewed families and other positive relationships as useful societal connections for the

rehabilitation of offenders (Hairston, 1997). Prevailing logic assumed that families would support institutional attempts to rehabilitate errant individuals. Hairston (1991) empirically established that inmates with strong family relationships were more likely to experience better mental health and better post incarceration outcomes than those who did not.

This was one of several studies that indicated that positive support had an impact on recidivist behavior. Jail and prison inmates who had no family connections or outside supporters were more likely to return to prison and to return at a faster rate than peers with family and community support (Hairston, 1991, Johnston, 1995). The limited research on extended family programs report that inmates had better parole outcomes, couples report stronger relationships and children exhibited less negative behavior. However, extended family visits did little to improve the lives and experiences of families who exhibited dysfunctional behavior prior to the event of incarceration (Carlson & Cervera, 1991).

Eventually, researchers examining the support needs of prisoners discovered that in addition to the inmates' need for support, the families of inmates have their own needs. When an individual becomes seriously involved in the criminal justice system, that individual's family is greatly impacted (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Hairston, 1991; Swan, 1981). Arrest and incarceration of a family member cause many problems including financial and legal difficulties, and the disruption of normal family (Hairston, 1997). In addition, families experience huge social cost as well, such as a sense of isolation, social stigma, and shame (Hairston, 1988, 1991). The cost that children pay for parental incarceration is becoming of particular concern.

However, public policy discourse and social service planning seldom addressed issues related to families of prisoners despite long standing public rhetoric on family preservation. The social service community and the social work profession, in large measure, have been unresponsive to the needs of prisoners and their families and no traditional government entity or system (e.g., child welfare, mental health, juvenile court) have taken responsibility for the care of children in these families (Johnston, 1995; Hairston, 1997; Wright & Seymour, 2000).

Nevertheless, the growing population of inmate parents, particularly women, high recidivism rates and the community re-entry of thousands of prisoners have challenged the tendency for policy makers and social service providers to ignore the families of prisoners as has been historically true (Eddy & Reid, 2001; Hairston, 2001).

Children of Criminal Offenders: An Emerging Concern

In the last few years, children of prisoners have started to garner national attention. In 1997 the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) became concerned about the increasing numbers of children of prisoners in the child welfare system (Seymour, 1998). They surveyed state child welfare agencies to identify the extent of their knowledge of parental incarceration and to determine what programs and services these agencies offered to the families (Seymour, 1998). The dearth of knowledge and responsive policies in state organizations and their requests for information and assistance prompted the CWLA to develop a 1998 initiative focused on children of prisoners.

In February 2001, Congress voted to allocate ten million dollars toward a mentoring program for children of prisoners. On February 13, 2003, Congress completed

action on that decision, making G.W. Bush the first president to allocate funds to implement programming focused on children of prisoners.

In April, 2003, the Family and Corrections Network, a grassroots advocacy organization, added the “Children of Prisoners library” to their website. This “library” makes instructional materials on supporting prisoners and their families, especially their children, available to prisoners’ families and to service providers.

Despite the recent interest in CIP’s, the lack of scholarly research on the children of prisoners and the impact of single or multiple incarcerations on the lives of these children creates a significant gap in the knowledge base (Adalist-Estrin, 1994; Bjaanes, 1995; Block & Potthast, 1998; CWLA, 1998; Johnson, Selber & Lauderdale, 1998; Johnston, 1995; Wright & Seymour, 2000). The majority of references in literature that relates to children of prisoners are descriptive studies and anecdotal reports (Johnston, 1995; Seymour, 1998). In addition, some literature describes programs designed to provide support and advocacy services to offenders and their families (Johnson, Selber & Lauderdale, 1998; Johnston, 1995; Reed & Reed, 1997).

Existing studies indicate that relatively few CIPs remain impact free and the majority of that impact is negative. Most of the published studies collected information from the imprisoned parent or the child’s caregiver as to the impact of the parents’ crime, arrest, and incarceration on the child. Few studies have collected data directly from the child or youth’s perspective. (Johnston, 1991, 1995; Seymour, 1998).

One possible negative impact identified for CIPs is an increased risk for criminal behavior. Therefore, historically much research on the impact of parental incarceration has centered on predicting criminality.

Predicting Criminality

From the 1920's to the 1950's, studies targeting children of offenders focused on predicting criminality in the children of criminal offenders. These studies concluded that parental criminality is an effective predictor of juvenile crime (Brackenridge & Abott, 1912; Glueck & Glueck, 1950, 1968). Two distinct themes emerged as the reason for this correlation.

One theme emerged in the 1950's and suggested that criminality was innate. The emergence of the book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) reintroduced the idea that traits, such as criminal behavior, are passed on through genetic make up rather than cultural transmission or learned behavior. Herrnstein and Murray maintain that factors such as socioeconomic status and peer involvement may influence delinquent and criminal behavior, but IQ is often the single best predictor of criminality. They further asserted that, African Americans, as a group, have lower IQ's.

Other studies conducted in the 1950's & 1960's suggested that the criminality was rooted in the family structure. Such studies supported the early theory that juvenile delinquency, especially in boys, is an outcome of parental dysfunction. This theme centered on criminal behavior in fathers and the overarching conclusion in the first half of the twentieth century was that criminal fathers produce criminal, often violent, sons (Johnston & Carlin, 1996). No studies could be located that assessed the offspring of criminal mothers. During this period of time, women were less than 3% of the inmate population and little attention was given to them (Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2000).

Recent studies focused on predicting violent or serious delinquent behaviors have presented conflicting results. Some researchers argue that having an anti-social parent or set of parents is a strong predictor for anti-social behavior in adolescent or young adulthood (Baker & Medzick, 1984; Farrington, 1989). In contrast, other researchers have found that individuals with an anti-social parent or parents are no more likely to become offenders than those with non-criminal parents (Moffitt, 1987; Larzelere & Patterson, 1990). A study sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Programs authored by Hawkins et al (2000) found parent criminality to be one of 27 predictor variables categorized over five domains. The domains included individual factors, family factors, school factors, peer related factors and community and neighborhood factors [See Attachment B]. In the 1970's and 1980's, researcher concerns became focused on the quality of these children's lives.

Impact of Parental Incarceration: Parent/Caregiver Perspective

Studies that interview or survey the parents and caregivers of CIP's to determine the impact of parental incarceration on children focus their inquiry primarily in a single area or a combination of one of the following four areas:

1. Custody and placement of the children
2. Maintaining contact between parent and child
3. Reunification and related issues
4. Direct impact to the child

For instance, the seminal work of McGowan and Blumethal (1978) focused on the first three areas listed above. They established the need to examine the lives of these children from a psychosocial perspective by focusing on the impact of parent-child

separation as it related to placement of the child, visitation, and reunification. The study posed the overarching question, "What happens to the children after the arrest and incarceration of the mother?" In answer, the study offered a vivid description of the respondents' lives.

McGowan and Blumenthal informed us that in the late 1970's these children were primarily poor, non-white, and in the care of poor women. In addition, they (1978) assertively stated that CIP's fail to fit neatly into the auspice of any social serving agency and consequently have been overlooked for services.

> No one agency or group of agencies is assigned responsibility for considering the total needs of children or families. Yet children of women prisoners as a group cannot be assigned to any of the usual diagnostic labels nor can they fit into neat bureaucratic categories such as the neglected, the abused, the retarded, the psychotic or the delinquent. Too often, no one assumes responsibility for providing support or needed services; as a result, these children are allowed to fall into the gaps between social programs. (p. 2)

The statement above, made in 1978, continues to ring true more than 25 years later. Dr. Denise Johnston, Co-editor of *Children of Incarcerated Parents* (1995) and Chris Mumola, author of *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Incarcerated Parents and Their Children* (2000), present facts that indicate that little has changed as we entered the new millennium. Thus, these children and their families continue to be ignored, over-looked, and under-served even as more men and women are incarcerated and more children are affected (Johnston, 1995; Seymour & Wright, 2000).

The McGowan & Blumenthal (1978) study surveyed 9, 379 women in U.S. prisons and jails. Of the women surveyed, 3,121 were mothers of minor children. The book, *Why Punish the Children: A Study of Women Prisoners* (1978), reports about those mothers and their families.

Many of the existing research studies involving incarcerated parents or the children's caregivers involve a much smaller number of research participants (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1982; Hunter, 1984; Johnston, 1992; Sack, Sadler, & Thomas, 1976; Sharp, et al, 1998). Despite the dearth of research and the small sample sizes, descriptive information on children of prisoners has proven to be very consistent. The following paragraphs statistically describe these findings.

In 1997, on a given day, an estimated 2.8% of all U. S. children under age 18 had at least one parent in a local jail or a state or federal prison. This number greatly increased when parents who have been previously incarcerated or young people who are incarcerated in juvenile facilities and have children are included. In 1997, it was also estimated that 59% of women in federal prison and 65% of those in state prison are mothers of minor children (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999; Mumola, 2000). Among male prisoners, approximately 63% in federal prison and 55% in state prisons were fathers to minor children. (Mumola, 2000).

Many criminal justice researchers feel like these estimates are too low to be accurate. Inmate parents have verbalized concerns about reporting the existence of children to criminal justice authorities and child welfare officials for fear that their children will be taken from them (Baunach, 1985; Hairston, 1991; Koban, 1983). The number of children that are reported by inmates translates into about 1 in 40 children with

a father in prison and approximately 1 in 359 with an incarcerated mother (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999).

These numbers vary by race and ethnicity. Approximately 7% of African American children have a parent in prison, compared to 2.6% Hispanic children and 0.8% of white children (Mumola, 2000). Nearly 50% of all parents in state prisons are African American, 29% are white, and 19% are Hispanic (Mumola, 2000).

Custody and Placement of the Children

One of the primary areas of inquiry into the effects of parental incarceration is placement of children during the parents' imprisonment. The placement of children whose mothers are in prison is very different when compared to those whose fathers are in prison.

Mothers were more likely to report living with their children prior to admission to prison, which means that children of mothers are more likely to be subjected to a change in living arrangements during the period of incarceration than children of incarcerated fathers (Wright & Seymour, 2000). Approximately 64% of mothers in state prison and 84% of those in federal prison reported living with their minor child prior to admission to prison. In comparison, only 44% of fathers in state prison and 55% of those in federal prison lived with at least one of their minor children prior to incarceration (Mumola, 2000).

The contrast between children of incarcerated mothers and children of incarcerated fathers is even greater with regard to actual placement during incarceration. Mothers in state prison most often identify the child's grandparent (53%) or other family relatives (26%) as the custodian of their minor children (Mumola, 2000). This is in stark

contrast to the 90% of fathers in state prison who said that at least one of their minor children were in the care of their biological mother (Mumola, 2000). Mothers in a state prison (8-10%) were also more likely than fathers (1-2%) to report that their children were in the care of a foster home, child welfare agency, or institution (CWLA, 1998; Mumola, 2000, Wright & Seymour, 2000).

Table 1 presents a national overview of living arrangements for youth affected by parental incarceration. The table below reflects information for youth with mothers in state and federal custody as well as fathers in state and federal custody. Approximately 25% of the children with mothers in state prisons live with their fathers. While 90% or more of children with fathers in state prisons live with their mothers.

Table 1: Living arrangements for children of state and federal prisoners

Mothers in state prisons	**Mothers in federal prisons**	**Fathers in state prisons**	**Fathers in federal prisons**
25% of children live with their fathers	33% of children live with their father	90% of children live with their mother	91% of children live with their mother
50% live with grandparents	54% live with grandparents	10% live with grandparents	14% live with grandparents
24% live with a relative or friend	44% live with a relative or friend	3% live with a relative or friend	5% live with a relative or friend
10% live in substitute care or on their own	6% live in substitute care or on their own	2% live in substitute care or own their own	1% live in substitute care or on their own

(Hostetter & Jinnah, 1993; Mumola, 2000)

Note: percentages may exceed 100% because some prisoners had multiple children living with multiple caregivers.

As Table 1 presents, when fathers are incarcerated, the child's mother is often the primary caregiver. This is frequently the case before the father is arrested or

incarcerated. Therefore, there is often less change in life circumstances for children of incarcerated fathers than incarcerated mothers. When a mother is incarcerated, a grandparent or another relative is more often the caregiver (Hostetter & Jinnah, 1993; Mumola, 2000). This reflects the current societal norms where mothers are the primary caregivers for the children whether the family is intact or not (Coltrane, 1996; Parke, 2002). Approximately 8 to 10% of the children with mothers in prison go into state care (Mumola, 2000; Wright & Seymour 2001).

Maintaining Contact Between Parent and Child

The literature strongly encourages the maintenance of family ties based on research indicating the social, emotional and psychological benefits to parent, spouse, and child (Hairston, 1991b, 1998; Johnston, 1995). In a 1997 survey of inmates in state and federal correctional facilities, most parents in both state (80%) and federal (93%) prison report some form of contact with their children, at least once after incarceration. The forms of this contact included letters, phone calls, or face to face visits (Mumola, 2000).

In terms of frequency of contact, mothers seemed to be in contact with their children more often than fathers. In state prisons, mothers consistently reported more frequent contact with their children than fathers (Mumola, 2000). On a monthly basis, 78% of mothers had at least one contact with their child or children, while 62% of fathers reported some type of monthly contact (Mumola, 2000).

The appropriateness of different forms of contact with the incarcerated parent raises some debate. There seems to be little controversy over allowing children to write to incarcerated parents or talk to them on the telephone. However, allowing children to

visit a parent in prison has been a much-debated issue among incarcerated parents and custodial parents as well as in the general public (Hairston, 1988; Johnston, 1995).

Incarcerated and custodial parents often express ambivalence when it comes to the topic of child visitation. Some parents' report that they live for visits with their children while others prefer not to have their children see them in prison and discourage face-to-face visits (Block & Potthast, 1998; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Johnston, 1992, 1995; McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978).

Studies show that visits can be beneficial. Visits can decrease the stress of parental imprisonment on both the child and the parent, can help to nurture the parent-child relationship, and can support reunification efforts after incarceration (Block & Potthast, 1998; Johnston, 1995; Sack, 1977). Like adults, children often imagine the worst about what's happening to their incarcerated parent when deprived of age appropriate, accurate, or concrete information. Without direct contact with the parent, children must rely on media representations and hearsay reports. They often see depictions of harsh prison life on television programs such as *OZ,* hear about the violence of prison life in adult and peer conversations, and draw the worst possible conclusions (Johnson, 2002). Therefore, seeing the parent for themselves can be very calming (Johnston, 1995).

Confusion about parent well being is often exacerbated in situations where family members have been deceptive about a parent's whereabouts. In an effort to protect children emotionally or avoid problems later, children are frequently told that an incarcerated parent is away at work or at school (Johnson, 2002; Johnston, 1995). If the

child did not live with the parent at the time of incarceration they may not be told anything at all (Hairston, 1991b).

Critics of children visiting a parent in prison cite concerns that children will normalize incarceration or no longer fear going to jail or prison for committing a crime (Hairston, 2001). They also express concerns about exposing children to what some consider the overtly dismal, tense and oppressive environment of a penal institution.

In studies where caregivers were asked about taking children to visit a parent, caregivers reported a number of barriers and difficulties. Because 60% of state prisoners are placed in facilities 100 miles or further from their last place of residence, it becomes costly for a caregiver to take a child for a visit (Mumola, 2000). This cost includes transportation to and from the prison, meals eaten during the trip, as well as food consumed during the visit. Families generally come prepared to purchase snacks to share with their loved one during the visit.

This cost comes in addition to any money that family members may be sending to the incarcerated parent for necessities, medical care, or personal supplies. In states like Texas, inmates do not earn any income for their labor, must pay for items outside of those used for basic hygiene, and are charged $3.00 per doctor's visit. Because inmates earn no money, this becomes a cost shouldered by family and friends.

Environmental and emotional factors also affect caregivers' choices about bringing children to visit incarcerated parents. Families feel constrained visiting environments that seem unfriendly, lack privacy, and are severely controlled (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Hairston, 2001; Johnston, 1995). In addition, caregivers report that children are often tearful, depressed, moody or belligerent after a visit with their

incarcerated parent (Block & Potthast; Johnston, 1995). Although mental health professionals report that this behavior is not uncommon or even unhealthy, caregivers state that it adds to their reluctance to take children on prison visits (Johnston, 1995).

Institutional personnel who speak against child visitation often voice concerns about security issues and the impact of having children in a correctional environment. In addition to safety concerns, correctional personnel do not want children to normalize the prison environment. There is also a pervasive belief that lawbreakers and criminals do not deserve to have visits with their children (CWLA, 1992; Jefferies, Menghraj & Hairston, 2001). In some instances this beliefs extends to the families of the incarcerated parent.

Due to in part these various constraints, the majority of incarcerated parents do not have regular visitation from their children if they have visits at all. Only 24% of mothers and 21% of fathers in state prison report monthly visits from their children. In 1999, a large percentage of mothers (54%) and fathers (57%) had never received visits from their children since entering prison (Mumola, 2000).

Reunification and Related Issues

Although the majority of inmates do not have regular visits with their children while incarcerated, many intend to reunite with their children after completing their sentence. Prior to incarceration, most parent inmates were the primary caregivers of at least one of their minor children and expressed hopes of reuniting with their children upon release (Block & Potthast, 1998). however, reunification can be difficult in the best of circumstances as parolees must also adapt in general to being in the "free world" (a term used by many prisoners), They must work to find employment, struggle to satisfy

parole requirements and endeavor to re-establish themselves in the family. Additionally, parolees frequently return with unresolved substance abuse issues and a variety of health problems. Approximately 49% - 55% of parolees cannot successfully navigate the myriad of challenges before them and end up returning to prison within two years of release (Travis, 2000).

Although the majority of inmates' children are taken care of by the remaining parent or other family members, some are placed in out-of-home care. Such families experience additional difficulties with reunification. In such instances, child welfare workers' efforts at permanency planning are often hampered by distant prison locations, inconvenient visiting schedules, large caseloads, adversarial prison policies, and personal beliefs about individuals who commit crimes (Seymour, 1998).

Ultimately, uncooperative correctional facilities combined with the lack of training that child welfare agencies provide for staff working with these families and the push to find permanent homes for children in foster care provide a situation likely to lead to the separation of parent and child (Hairston, 2001). First, uncooperative correctional facilities present a major hurdle. Research has shown that the frequent relocation of prisoners makes it challenging for workers to even find an inmate in the correctional system (Genty, 1995).

Second, because staff receive little training in dealing with these families, their personal beliefs about persons in prison may interfere with reunification. There is no research that shows that parents in prison are more abusive or neglectful to their children than those who do not go to prison; in fact, research shows that incarcerated parents love their children and the separation from their children is often the worst part of the

experience of incarceration (Hairston, 1991b, 1995; Johnston, 2001). However, strong advocates for children's rights argue that the conscious decision to commit a crime, even if it is not directly against the child, is a reflection of abusive and neglectful parenting (Seymour, 1998). As one counselor stated in the pilot study that I completed, "Once you decide to sell drugs or commit a robbery that's the same as saying 'I don't deserve to be a parent.' I think children of prisoners have a better chance in the foster care system or anywhere other than with their parents" (Johnson, 2002).

Finally, laws like the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 further complicates child welfare workers efforts to reunite families affected by incarceration. This act intended to prevent children from indefinitely languishing in the foster care system. The ASFA requires states to move to sever a parent's rights to his/her child after the child has spent 15 of the most recent 22 months in out-of-home care (Parke & Clark-Stewart, 2001). Thus, reuniting an inmate parent with their child can be extremely difficult given the fact that the average state prison sentence is 48-52 months (Mumola, 2000).

Although laws like the AFSA make reunification legally difficult, incarceration alone is not a legal justification for severance of custody. For example, in the 1999 case of *Michael J.* vs. *the Arizona Department of Economic Services*, the Department attempted to server the father's rights to his child based on the fact that he was incarcerated. The father was not incarcerated for child abuse or neglect. The decision from the Arizona Court of Appeals stated that, although the father's incarceration hindered his relationship with the child, the Department of Economic Services "failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that the father abandoned the child". The

decision further stated that his efforts to discover the child's whereabouts and establish visitation, despite the child welfare agency's failure to assist him, demonstrated his intent to form or maintain a relationship with the child (CLP, 1999).

Despite the many obstacles there are also positive programs intended to facilitate visitation and reunification. The research purports visitation to be a very important element in forming, establishing, or maintaining a relationship between parent and child. A two year study completed by evaluators of the a nationally recognized Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program (GSBB) states that a program designed to enhance visitation between mother and daughter can also work to strengthen the parent child relationship, decrease reunification problems, and increase the likelihood that the mother will successful reintegrate back into the community and the child's life (Block & Potthast, 1998; Parke & Clark-Stewart, 2001). To achieve these goals the GSBB program, holds mother/daughter scout meetings inside the prison and involves the girls in scouting activities outside of the prison. There are GSBB programs in several states across the country and some offer parenting programs for mothers and counseling programs for the daughters.

Although resulting information from the GSBB study may be useful to service providers, the two year study was started after the mother and daughter pairs joined the program, and it remains unclear whether the program prompted a positive parent child relationship or supported an existing relationship. In addition, the study lacks follow-up data and it is not known if or how long the positive effects remained after the mothers' release.

Direct Impact to the Child

In studies that surveyed incarcerated parents and/or the caregivers of their children about the impact of parental incarceration on the child, the majority of the adults report a wide variety of behavioral and emotional problems in the children (Fritz & Burkhead, 1992; Sack, Sadler & Thomas, 1976; Sharp, Marcus-Mendoza, Bentley, Simpson & Love, 1998; Stanton, 1980). Emotions that parent/caregivers report witnessing in their children include anxiety, sadness, fear, anger, guilt and loneliness (Gaudin & Sutphen, 1993; Johnston, 1995). Reported behaviors also include acts of aggression, use of alcohol or drugs, truancy, and involvement in delinquent behavior (Henriques, 1982; Sack, Sadler & Thomas, 1976; Stanton, 1980). Other examples of behavior eliciting parental concern reflect behavior turned inward such as an unwillingness to engage in play, fear of school, a drop in school work, increased crying episodes, inability to sleep, and suicidal thoughts or actions (McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978; Morris, 1965; Sack, Sadler & Thomas, 1976)

Researchers interpret the great variety of caregiver reported responses to parental incarceration in different ways. Many researchers identify the separation between parent and child as a pivotal event that triggers the cascade of problems often seen in the children of prisoners. Other researchers disagree and posit that the separation itself is only a small part of the problem. Rather than being a single event that children experience, these researchers argue that parental incarceration should be considered an unfolding process that includes criminal activity, arrest, conviction, separation, and for some children, reunion with the parent. As such, these researchers suggest that each one of these stages may present unique and different challenges for the child.

Finally other researchers consider other factors, such as gender, as having an influence on the type of response a CIP may exhibit. For example, a 1981 study by Fritsch and Burkhead suggested that the gender of the absent parent correlated with the type of behavior a CIP exhibited. In this study, children whose fathers were incarcerated exhibited more "acting out" behaviors, while children whose mothers were incarcerated exhibited more destructive behaviors turned inward. In this study, the gender of the child seemed to be inconsequential. The attached chart [Attachment C] outlines the possible impact that a parent's crime, arrest and incarceration might have on a child's development (Johnston, 1995). In the 1990's, researchers asserted that little of the available data came directly from the children of prisoners.

Impact of Parental Incarceration: Direct Examination of the Youth

An extensive literature search revealed less than 40 studies focused directly on children of jailed or imprisoned inmates. Less than one third of these studies directly interviewed, surveyed, or examined the youth. However, the few existing studies that have directly examined the children support the findings of studies that have surveyed or interviewed incarcerated parents and custodial caregivers. For example, children and youth themselves reported feelings of anxiety, shame, depression, guilt, anger, resentment and confusion (Block & Potthast 1998; Johnston, 1992, 1993a; Sack, 1977; Stanton, 1980). They also struggled with drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, poor school performance, and exhibited behavioral problems at school and at home. (Block & Potthast, 1998; Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Friendman & Esselstyn, 1965; Gabel, 1992; Gabel & Shindledecker, 1993; Johnston, 1992). The question remains, however, how

much of the behavior is directly related to parent-child separation and how much can be attributed to other causes?

Kampfer attempted to address this question in a 1988 study and connected CIP responses to posttraumatic stress Disorder (PTSD). CIP's in Kampfner's 1988 study exhibited, among other symptoms, intrusive thoughts about their incarcerated parent, which is considered a symptom of posttraumatic stress disorder. Kampfner (1995) asserts that symptoms of PTSD are often present long after the traumatic event(s) takes place especially in the 25% of children present during their parents' arrest. The extent to which a child may be affected by parental incarceration depends on a number of factors including age, length of separation, amount of lifestyle disruption, relationship with the incarcerated parent, relationship with the parent/caregiver, nature of the parent's crime, and the availability of family & community support (Gaudin & Sutphen, 1993; Johnston, 1995).

Kampfner also suggests that the impact can be made more devastating by the "conspiracy of silence" that Kampfner (1995) discovered among her respondents. In a study where she compared 36 children with mothers in prison to children from the same high-risk background whose mothers were not in prison, she found that caregivers frequently prevented children from discussing the trauma surrounding a parent's incarceration. The caregiver often downplayed the child's pain and even forced the child to remain silent about their mother's crime, arrest, and incarceration (Kampfner, 1995). Kampfner states that this "conspiracy of silence" can and will shape a child's subsequent reaction to trauma causing long-term effects.

Serious methodological limitations plague the research studies available on CIP's when examined from the CIPs own perspective. These limitations include the following:

1. An over reliance on information from parents or caregivers who may have spent minimal time with the child, a failure to use standardized assessment instruments (Fritz & Burkhead, 1982; Zalba, 1964).
2. Studies with very small sample sizes (Gabel & Shindledecker, 1993; Sack, 1977; Sack, Sadler & Thomas, 1976; Springer, Lynch & Rubin, 2000).
3. Studies that lack or have inadequate control or comparison groups (Block & Potthast, 1998; Gabel, 1993;Henriques, 1982).

In addition, although all of these studies report on children of incarcerated parents, the samples reflect very different segments of a larger population. Some studies examine CIPs in clinical treatment. For example, Gabel & Shindledecker (1993) studied and reported on 15 abused and molested CIP's in a psychiatric day treatment program. They conclude that there is an association between severe family dysfunction and behavioral disorders in children and that a history of parental incarceration may be common in some samples of children with serious mental health problems. Sack (1977) also studied CIPs under psychiatric care. However, he studied eight behavioral disordered boys of fathers in prison who were residents in a psychiatric clinic and found that children may experience temporary behavioral problems following a parents' incarceration and some pubertal children exhibit antisocial behavior.

On the other hand, Block and Potthast (1998) examined non-clinical CIPs, when they interviewed incarcerated mothers and caregivers of 13 girls involved in the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Program. An estimated 70% of the mothers and 52% of the

caregivers reported that the daughters were experiencing emotional problems (e.g., depression, anger, sadness), behavioral problems (e.g., bed wetting, fighting, adversarial attitudes) and problems in school (e.g., poor grades, suspension, disobeying school rules).

These studies all assess children of incarcerated parents, but youth involved in psychiatric treatment programs are bound to be very different when compared to non-clinical populations. However, despite the dearth of information and the methodological limitations of existing studies, the defensible premise exists that children seem to suffer in numerous ways when a parent is incarcerated. What lacks clarity is how much of the observed and reported behaviors are the result of parental incarceration and parent-child separation as opposed to social environment, including family poverty and past trauma. In addition to social environment, a child's stage of development will influence the effects of parent-child separation.

Focus on Adolescents

According to a U.S. Department of Justice report, a majority of the children left behind during a parent's incarceration tended to be under the age of 10 with 8 years being the average age (Mumola, 2000). However, at any given time, an estimated 15% to 40% of the children of incarcerated parents are teenagers and the rest soon will be (Hairston, 1989; Henriques, 1982; Fritsch & Burkhead, 1981).

Although these children suffer in ways that other disenfranchised children do, the often do not receive the same sympathy and concern. For example, studies of childhood bereavement have found that the impact of a temporary, parent loss may be as traumatic as that of a permanent loss (Kruger, 1983). Children whose separation from a parent is due to incarceration will often respond in the same way as a child whose parent has died

(Johnston, 1995; Kampfner, 1995). Unfortunately, many individuals, (individuals in social work or in society in general?) although hesitant to be quoted, feel that CIP's are destined to be problematic members of society. Therefore, many perceive CIPs as less deserving of assistance than children exhibiting problems from more "acceptable" forms of parent-child separation such as children whose parents have divorced, died, abandoned them, or struggled with mental illness.

In the few political or social instances where concern is shifted to children of prisoners, sympathy and concern tends to be directed toward younger children. Young children seem more malleable with less accumulated problems. However, we should not ignore the 40% of youth who are no longer considered cute and who are no longerable to hide the effects of their difficult lives. Research show that prevention goals are attainable and intervention efforts are a worthwhile possibility.

In working with adolescent CIPs, the overarching concern continues to center around decreasing or eliminating antisocial behavior. Patterson (1982) defines "antisocial behavior" as a cluster of related behaviors including: aggression, temper tantrums, lying, stealing, and violent behavior. While some of these behaviors are normative at certain stages of a child's development, these clustered behaviors during adolescence serve as the strongest predictors of adjustment problems during adulthood (Kohlberg, Ricks, & Snarey, 1984).

Such adult adjustment problems increase the likelihood of adult imprisonment and other long-term problems. Children with incarcerated parents are said to be at least 5 to 6 times more likely than their peers to go to prison as adults, making anti-social behavior a primary concern (Johnston, 1995). These youth are also at high risk for other

problems such as dropping out of school, substance abuse, and early sexual involvement, all of which carry the possibility of serious and long-term consequences (Dryfoos, 1990; Howell, 1995).

Indeed, Kazdin (1994) identifies youth antisocial behavior as one of the most costly child mental health problems in the U.S. today. Economist, Mark Cohen, concluded that the monetary value of saving a high-risk young person from criminal behavior, drug use, or dropping out of school could range from $1.2 to $1.5 million dollars. If we include non-monetary cost such as pain and suffering and quality of life, the savings increases (Cohen, 1998).

The relationship between parental incarceration, the demonstration of antisocial behavior, and problematic outcomes during adolescence and adulthood provides us with essential reasons to be concerned about adolescent CIP's and to seek a better understanding of their service needs.

To contribute to this better understanding, this study proposes to investigate how African American adolescent girls define the experience of maternal incarceration. Chapter three provides the theoretical frameworks used in this study to carry out that investigation.

The next chapter presents the theoretical frameworks used to guide the research.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature that includes a discussion of the intersection of social work and criminal justice; changing societal views on the treatment of prisoners and their families; and the effects of parental incarceration on children. Chapter 3 presents the multiple frameworks used to implement this study.

A number of theoretical frameworks have informed research on CIPs study including: attachment theory, ecological systems theory, family systems theory, and theory on the psychosocial development of adolescents. This chapter will explore each of these and explain their relative significance for this study.

But first, what is a theoretical framework? Kerlinger (1986) states that theory is comprised of three elements that explain observed phenomena and begins with a set of ideas. A set of ideas connected by clearly defined, inter-related variables or constructs marks the first element Kerlinger identifies. The second element of a theory is its ability to present a systematic view of the phenomena that the variables or constructs describe. Finally, the third element of a theory specifies which variables or constructs are related and how they are related.

Prominence of Attachment Theory

A variety of theories can be found in the research literature on CIPs but attachment theory has held a prominent place in this literature since Bowlby (1969, 1973, & 1980) introduced his three volume set on attachment and lost. Attachment theory essentially asserts that an infant who has been unable to establish a caring relationship with its mother may have difficulty 1) relating to and interacting with others, 2)

developing individual capabilities, and 3) self-regulating behavior (Easterbrooks, Davidson, & Chazen, 1993). Attachment theory further suggests that changes in family structure such as divorce, foster care or other types of parent-child separation may produce attachment disturbances and may have implications for attachment related problems in infancy and childhood (Johnson & Waldfogel, 2002).

Much of the research efforts with incarcerated mothers examined the short-term and long-term consequences of separating incarcerated mothers from their infants (McCall & Shaw, 1985; Shelton, Armstrong & Cochran, 1983). However, this research study examines adolescent youth in their homes and community, rendering attachment theory less useful as a theoretical guide. Although attachment theory did not guide this dissertation research, its prevalence in the literature warrants an acknowledgement.

Developmental Theory and Culture

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter describes the deleterious effects that parental incarceration can have on the child and the family, especially, children with mothers in prison. Despite the fact that African American and Mexican American children are more likely to have a parent in prison (Mumola, 2000), few studies exist that focus on the experiences of children of color. While much of the literature utilizes the developmental perspective to understand the impact of incarceration on children and teens, few studies examine the influence of race and ethnicity on children's psychosocial development. Although maturational processes are largely universal, social science researchers have shown that these processes are subject to ethnic variations in their behavioral manifestations, their symbolic meanings, and their societal responses (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987; Powell, Yamamoto, Romero, & Morales, 1983; Stack, 1974).

This study combines developmental theory and family systems theory to examine the research questions. Scholars use developmental theory to consider how teens may cope with an incarcerated parent and to understand the needs and concerns that a young person may have at the adolescent stage of development. Family Systems theory along with the work of Billingsley (1968, 1992) and others on African American kinship and family relationships is used to specifically examine the lives of these girls and their mothers. I use the work of these theorists to begin exploring the responses that incarcerated African American mothers and caregivers have toward their teen daughters. Family systems theory, with a focus on African American families, and developmental theory are brought together under the meta-theory of ecological systems theory. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) work on ecological systems theory examines the complex interplay between the individual and the environment and attempts to understand the influence that each has on the other. The meta-theory provides a broad understanding for the study and is used to explore the ecology's response to CIPs.

Ecological Systems Theory

In the review of the literature it became evident that many systems affect prisoners and their families; as the numbers of prisoners increase, the impact that these families have on multiple systems is beginning to be acknowledged.

Therefore, general systems theory provides a theoretical framework for social workers who attempt to understand human behavior in a broader systemic context (Germain & Gitterman, 1995). Drawing from biology, philosophy, psychology and neurophysiology, general systems theory finds its roots in of the work of Viennese

biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy (Germain & Gitterman, 1980). Bertalannfy defines a system as a group of elements that interact with one another (von Bertalanffy, 1968).

A basic assumption of systems theory focuses on homeostasis, and a general systems theorist would argue that the arrest and incarceration of a parent causes changes in homeostasis for a child and their family, which often result in disequilibrium (Germain & Gitterman, 1980). Then, the child's and the family's focus is to regain equilibrium.

Around 1980, general systems theorists began to use the language found in the field of human ecology to more specifically conceptualize dynamic exchanges between individuals and their social and physical environments (Germain & Gitterman, 1995). Ecological systems theory takes this understanding of the impact of environment on an individual to another level by specifically focusing on how the two fit together. An emerging ecosystems perspective posits, "persons and environments are not separate, but exist in ongoing transactions with each other" (Miley, O'Melia, & DuBois, 1998, p. 32). Thus, the ecological systems perspective emphasizes the dynamic and reciprocal interaction between individuals, families, communities, social systems and institutions.

The problematic behavior of a teen with a parent in prison cannot be understood by just examining the behavior of the youth. Ecological systems theory would argue that both the individual and the environment constantly impact each other, and researchers should see each as having both strengths and deficits.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two identified concerns about the impact that parental incarceration has on the mental health and the behavioral outcomes of CIPs. Strategies CIPs use to cope with life stressors and attempts to regain equilibrium may manifest as antisocial behavior. To understand a young person's behavior, we must

understand the meaning that he or she has assigned to any given interaction or exchange. We must also acknowledge the likelihood that the personal experiences, including those related to gender, age, class and race, have profoundly shaped that meaning (Young & Smith, 2000).

Ecological systems theory is useful for exploring the impact of parental incarceration on teen CIPs as it presents a view of human beings as systems interacting in context with other systems. The theory encourages the consideration of behavior as actions developed from a series of interactions, over time, in response to internal and external forces (Miley, O'Melia & Dubose, 1998).

> The ecological systems view acknowledges that humans react consciously and intentionally but also act unconsciously and spontaneously. Humans are neither powerful nor powerless. Instead, humans play an active role in creating events which shape their lives, a role tempered by environmental forces and conditions. (Miley, O'Melia & Dubose, 1998, p. 33).

Thus, this theory presents a contextual conceptualization of behavior as adaptive or logical, which is in opposition to the medical or person-deficiency model that emphasizes an individual's problems or deficits (Finn & Jacobson, 2003). It supports the importance of understanding the person-in-environment relationship, a principle feature of social work practice. Within the ecological systems perspective, the person-in-environment fit is generally categorized as favorable, minimally adequate, or unfavorable (Germain & Gitterman, 1995). When the fit is unfavorable both the individual and the environment suffer.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two also argues that incarcerated mothers and their children experience a host of problems related to mother-child separation, and far too often the fit for these individuals is unfavorable or barely adequate. A mothers' incarceration drastically alters her own environment as well as that of her child and the child's caregiver. Germain & Gitterman (1995) refer to issues that profoundly affect family life as "second-order" life issues.

Maternal incarceration would be an example of a second-order life issue. When a mother is incarcerated, the child often has to adjust to a new caregiver and a new routine. Schools may change, institutions, such as the child welfare system, may become involved, and living arrangements may be rearranged more than once. To maintain contact with the parent, a child must learn and follow correctional institution's rules and procedures. Additionally, the child's view of the mother is often altered along with his or her existing view of the world. In all of this change, teenagers may be especially vulnerable to the stresses of having an incarcerated mother (Young & Smith, 2000).

Family Systems Theory

Ecological systems theory allows us to understand the impact of parental incarceration from a broad and inclusive perspective. It provides a framework for understanding family functioning and relationships within the family system and community and social systems in the family's environment (Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002). Family systems theory examines the family as a basic social system and helps to explain interactions within the family system as it adjusts and adapts to change. In the literature, "family" is defined as two or more individuals who share space, have emotional ties, establish relationships, share commitment, and have established roles and

tasks to accomplish functions of the family (Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002). African American families are frequently comprised of a mix of individuals who may or may not be related by blood or marriage.

Consistent with general systems theory, families are comprised of subsystems, such as parents and sibling subsystems, which comprise the whole system. Families establish boundaries that define the family and its subsystems.

According to family systems theory, healthy family units will evolve to greater levels of organization and functioning while engaging in self-regulation so as to maintain equilibrium and homeostasis of the family unit (Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002). This balance between change and stability enables the family to function adaptively throughout both the families' and the individual members' life cycles (Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002). When a family member goes to prison, the family changes and evolves as it adapts to pressures from internal and external environments. The CIP literature suggests that families of prisoners often encounter difficulty with effectively adapting to the event of imprisonment. These families are often reluctant to seek help and communities are reluctant or unaware of how to provide it (Hairston, 2001; Johnston, 1995).

Families impacted by incarceration are living systems ensconced within larger systems. These families display a range of differences in their willingness to transact with other systems and in the flexibility of their outer boundaries. Flexibility of boundaries is defined as 1) the extent to which outsiders are permitted or invited to enter the family system; 2) the extent to which members of the family are allowed to engage in

relationships outside of the family; and 3) the extent to which information and materials are exchanged with the environment (Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen, 1999, p.291).

Kantor & Lehr (1975) identified three prototypical-bounding arrangements of families: open, closed, and random. Each of these types involves distinctive styles of relating to the outer environment. A closed family system exemplifies strict regulations of interactions with the outer environment. It restricts incoming and outgoing people, objects, information, and ideas. It serves to protect the family from undesired intrusions, safeguards privacy, and may even foster secrecy (Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen, 1999). In contrast, an open family system favors interaction with the environment and has permeable boundaries that allow energy and information to be exchanged among the family's subsystems and between the family and its external environment (Germain, 1991; Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 1997). Finally, a family system with random boundaries is comprised of several boundary patterns that reflect the interaction styles of members in the family system. In essence, this reflects a bounding pattern that is a conglomerate of individual styles. In this pattern, limits on entry or exit to the family are not imposed (Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen, 1997). An identification of bounding patterns must include an understanding of the extent to which relatives or non-relatives are included in the families' boundaries. An African American family, for example, may have a "play" brother, godparents or a pastor who wields considerable influence in the families' affairs.

Subsystems are formed and coexist within the family system and are defined by internal boundaries. According to Minuchin (1974) these subsystems may be formed on the basis of gender, interest, generation, or functions necessary for the family's survival. Members of the family may simultaneously belong to a number of subsystems, entering

separate and reciprocal relationships with other members of the family, depending on the subsystems they share in common. For example, the subsystem could be husband/wife, brother/sister, father/son, or mother/son-in law.

Each subsystem can be considered a natural coalition between participating members (Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen, 1997). Many of these coalitions or alliances may be situationally related or temporary in focus. For example, a father supports his teen's daughter's desire to visit her mother in prison against her grandmother's wishes. This results in a situational-related alliance between father and daughter.
Subsystems forged between spouses and siblings are often enduring in nature. Minuchin (1974) asserts that the formation of well-defined coalitions between members of these subsystems is critical to the health and well being of the family. However, the event of incarceration has a profound impact on familial relationships and the way that internal and external boundaries are established or perhaps re-established.

Coping Styles of Families Impacted by Incarceration

There are many variations in the relationship patterns of prisoners and their children prior to incarceration (Bloom & Steinhart, 1993; Hairston, 1989; Johnston, 1994). Some prisoners were primary caregivers before the incarceration, while others were minimally involved with or even disconnected from their children. Many prisoners who did not share a residence with their child prior to incarceration are still caring, concerned, and involved parents. Others are able to maintain a consistent parent-child relationship while incarcerated, but encounter difficulty sustaining the relationship upon release.

It is often difficult to know the depth of the attachment between the parent in prison and the child left behind. In some instances, the child's view of the parent-child relationship may vary radically from that of the parent. We know, however, that supporting or strengthening the relationship can critically enhance the child's overall development as well as their adjustment after the parent's release (Adalist-Estrin, 2003; Hairston, 2001).

The style of coping used by the family can be directly related to the child's ability to cope with the parents' incarceration. Adalist-Estrin (2003) identified four coping styles used by families impacted by the incarceration of a loved one. Adalist-Estrin identifies these coping styles as: the family on hold, the parallel family, the estranged family, and the turbulent family. Each family coping style deals differently with the prisoner during incarcerations.

First, the *family on hold* describes a family that maintains contact with the inmate through letters, calls, and visits; they often make a commitment to stay positive and upbeat. They attempt to keep their loved one connected to their lives by sharing pictures of events and people. Any feelings about the crime or the incarceration are placed on hold until the loved one is released.

Second, the *parallel family* primarily keeps in touch through letters and phone calls with an occasional visit. These family members cope by moving forward with their lives. They meet new people, develop new interests and grow in completely separate ways from the incarcerated person.

Third ,the *estranged family* is separated from the incarcerated family member. The family may not visit or even maintain contact through letters and phone calls.

According to Adalist-Estrin, there may be little family discussion or conversation about the incarcerated member.

Finally, the *turbulent family* copes through expression of negative feelings and emotions about the inmate's crime, arrest and/or incarceration. Contact between the family and the inmate can be unpredictable and inconsistent at its best. At its worst contact can be confrontational or devastating.

These different family coping styles produce quite distinct responses to the prisoner's release as well. When the loved one is released, the *family on hold*, initially experiences relief and often expresses the belief that the worst is behind them. Unresolved or unexpressed feelings the family may have related to the loved ones crime and incarceration often strip away this initial feeling of relief and joy. Difficulties and frustrations that the released prisoner may face attempting to re-establish him or herself in the family and community may exacerbate these feelings. This is especially difficult for children who have unresolved feelings that they hesitate to share for fear of threatening the stability of the family.

The *parallel family* often struggles to regain the pre-incarceration image of the family. In this effort, the family encounters difficulty in incorporating changes that took place while the loved one was away. The released prisoner will often feel threatened by the changes that have taken place, which in turn, pose a challenge to the maintenance and growth of sub-unit relationships.

The *estranged family* struggles with re-integrating the released prisoner back into the family. They find it difficult to return to where life stopped before the incarceration. Adalist-Estrin (2003) states, "For children, the conflict caused by the decision to

welcome parents back versus rejecting their overtures may cause massive distress, internal conflicts, and loyalty issues with custodial caregivers (p.4)".

The *turbulent family* continues to operate in the same negative fashion that it did during the incarceration. After the incarcerated parent's release, the child may attempt to express feelings that that he or she was unable to express during the incarceration. If the child is concerned about a parent or caregiver's reaction, this expression may take the form of anti-social behavior at school or in the community.

Although Adalist-Estrin (2003) does not present a coping style that may be defined as effective and positive, the research suggested that protective factors present for the family and child, such as community support and strong spiritual beliefs, increase the potential for positive family and child outcomes as well as post incarceration adjustment (Hairston, 2001; Johnston, 1995). This may be especially true for African American families given their historical reliance on extended family networks as a mechanism for surviving racially hostile laws and policies, institutionalized discriminatory practices, and separate and unequal treatment (McRoy, 1990a).

Theories on African American Families

There is no single entity known as the "African American" or Black family. Like other families, these families vary in their backgrounds, their socioeconomic status, their values & principles, and their degrees of acculturation to the norms and values of the dominant society.

However, there are commonalities derived from, among other things, the dominant system's devaluation of African American people (Gibbs & Huang, 2001).The present status of African Americans has been shaped by history, especially slavery, and

social and economic discrimination and oppression (Gibbs & Huang, 2001; MCHB, 1998). A theoretical framework used to understand adolescents and their families must acknowledge the historical and ecological context of these families' lives. Theories that attempt to understand the relationships between and among African American family members may help to explain how African Americans respond to parental incarceration, especially as it relates to providing care to a child left behind.

Competing Ideologies

Theorists present conflicting theoretical views when examining cultural features within African American families. Billingsley (1992) and other researchers developed a theoretical orientation called the "cultural variant" approach which takes history and ecology into consideration when examining African American families (Gibbs & Huang, 2001). This approach embraces a strengths-based perspective. It states that, although modified by the experience of slavery, African American families retained many of the values and strengths passed down by their African ancestors (Billingsley, 1992). For instance, many African American families hold West African values such as protecting children, maintaining flexible gender roles, respecting elders, and maintaining extended family configurations (MCHB, 1998).

This "cultural variant" perspective challenged the approach that viewed African Americans as deviant and described the African American family in pathological terms. Supporters of this "deviant" view stated that slavery had obliterated all traces of African family heritage, forcing African Americans to adopt the white family system (Davis, 1993; Logan, 1996). The 1965 Moynihan report supported this "deviant" view approach. It blamed any problems identified in African American families on the innate inferiority

of Blacks (Gibbs & Huang, 2001), devalued African American family structures, and portrayed African American families as deviant from the norm of mainstream white nuclear families (Davis, 1993).

Critics of the "deviant" conceptual view argue that this approach ignores socio-cultural and historical context, fails to consider the impact of social and economic oppression on African American family, and does not acknowledge the proven capacity of the African American family to adapt to difficult and challenging societal conditions (Davis, 1993; MCHB, 1998).

On the other hand, critiques of the "strengths-based" conceptual view contend that this view ignores class oppression, fails to consider the diversity found in African American families, and does not address the imbalance of power between men and women. They argue:

> A more culturally competent perspective views the range of family structures among African Americans today as the result of a long history of racial discrimination, oppression, forced adaptation and cultural resilience (MCHB, 1998, p. 26).

Only recently have family systems theorists begun to integrate individual development, family development, and the socio-cultural context of families to better understand family systems (Feldman, 1992). However, this integration of information is crucial to understanding the bounding processes found in African American families impacted by parental incarceration. The history of dependence on mutual aid for the survival of the African American family has supported the development of more fluid boundaries between many African American families and the external environment.

However, experiences with the dominant culture determine the level of openness and willingness to seek and accept help from individuals outside the family system (Billingsley & Giovanni, 1972).

For instance, Stack (1970) noted that there is an obligation among African American families to provide for their members or kinsmen (relatives and friends treated as relatives). Stack further observed that these families established social networks based on the mutual aid (giving and receiving) process. This observation may explain the variation by race and ethnicity in placements for children of incarcerated women. Although children of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system (National Black Child Development Institute, 1995; Wright & Seymour, 2000), studies show that women of color, specifically African American women, rely more often on their mothers and other relatives to care for their children during incarceration than white women (Enos, 1998; U.S. Department of Justice, 1994). This tendency reflects the long-standing commitment to collective responsibility for children in African American families (Danzy & Jackson, 1997; Wilhelmus, 1998). Despite the decrease in communal networks found in today's African American communities, extended kin networks continue to provide an invaluable source of support in the daily lives of African American people (Billingsley, 1992; Gibb & Huang, 2001; MCHB, 1998). A network of extended kin can be particularly valuable to youth moving into the adolescent stage of development. Adolescence can be a time of confusion and crisis for youth in the best of family situations.

Psychosocial Development of Adolescents

The literature presented on adolescent development range from theorists who reject the notion of adolescence as a distinct stage of development to those who characterize it as having clearly defined early, middle, and late phases (Erikson, 1968; Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002; Johnston, 1995). Theorists most often characterize adolescence as having early and late phases with the early phase occurring around ages 11 through 14 and the late phase around age 15 through 19 (Johnston, 1995; Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002).

Erikson's (1959, 1963, 1968) theory on psychosocial development, coupled with some refinements of the theory by Marcia (1980; Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973), offered a useful perspective for considering the impact of parental incarceration on a young person at the adolescent stage of development. Erikson argued that social development results from the interaction between internal biological forces and external cultural pressures. He also provided a model that reflected his view of the eight stages that occur over the span of a human life (Erikson, 1958).

This theoretical model suggested that individuals encounter identifiable psychosocial crises at each stage of development. These psychosocial crises can be resolved in either an adaptive (positive) or a maladaptive (negative) way. Erikson posited a positive to negative continuum associated with each stage of development, and when an individual encounters sufficient emotional or psychological trauma, there is an increased possibility of negative developmental outcomes (Erikson, 1959). Erikson stated that outcomes at each of the later stages are somewhat dependent on the outcomes of earlier stages. However, adolescence, the fifth stage of development, is the exception to the

developmental patterning of the eight stages (Erikson, 1959). Erikson asserted that during adolescence, crisis outcomes from stages 1 through 4 can be altered and issues found in stages 6 through 8 can be addressed in preliminary form (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson stated that identity development is the major crisis in adolescence (Erikson, 1968). In the early phase of adolescence youth generally engage in the establishment of relationships, begin the process of self-identification, and start to pattern their behavior in pursuit of distant goals. They begin to re-evaluate themselves personally, physically, and socially due in part to the changes associated with puberty (Erikson, 1958; Herbert & Harper-Dorton, 2002, Johnston, 1995). They also began a period that Erikson referred to as a "moratorium". According to Erikson (1956, p.5), "Moratorium is a period of delayed entry into adulthood".

Later adolescence is the bridge to adulthood, and youth begin to incorporate personal values and goals, develop abilities that lead to adult work, and establish their own moral, religious, & sexual identity. Marcia (1980) expanded on Erikson's moratorium concept arguing that adolescents encounter crises or decision points about various phenomena (such as occupation) and make commitments to specific positions (such as choice of religion) (Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973). Based on "crisis" and "commitment" each person can be classified as having one of four identity statuses:

1. *Identity achieved* – reflects an individual who has encountered crises, has made commitments, and has formed a workable identity when entering adulthood. According to Marcia (Orlofsky, et al, 1973), this status signifies a stable individual able to pursue realistic goals and effectively cope with sudden shifts in the environment.

2. *Foreclose* – reflects an individual who has not encountered crises but has committed to an identity planned for them by parents or caregivers. They often commit to an ideology or profession without searching for alternatives.
3. *Moratorium* – describes an individual who is currently experiencing an identity crisis and has made no commitments or only vague ones. They are in the process of considering a range of options.
4. *Identity diffused* – describes an individual who has remained uncommitted whether or not they have experienced a crisis. This status indicates a confusion of goals and is usually manifested during the early part of development.

According to Erikson, an important aspect of adolescence, is that issues occurring during an earlier stage of development can be addressed during the period of delayed entry into adulthood. Youth may revisit any of their earlier crises and can redirect an outcome as he or she evaluates options during the search for an identity in the adolescent stage of development (Erikson, 1959). For example, the crisis in stage one is *Trust vs. Mistrust* (Erikson, 1959). From birth to about age two, infants attempt to form stable reliable relationships, especially with their mother or mother figure. If the outcome is such that the individual has difficulty trusting others, a teenager can do the internal work necessary to replace mistrust with increased trust in self and others during the "moratorium" period.

Adolescent CIPs

By the time CIPs enter adolescence, many of them have typically experienced multiple separations from a parent due to incarceration and approximately seven out of ten have witnessed the arrest of a family member (Johnston, 1995; Stanton, 1980). A

youth's ability to get along with others, to achieve success in school, and to control their emotions may be significantly affected by these experiences (Johnston, 1995).

Reports produced by the Osborne Association (1993) and others suggest that children of offenders, similar to children separated from parents for reasons other than incarceration, frequently attempt to assume the role of a parent (LaPointe, Picker & Harris, 1985). Parentification, a reversal of roles between parent and child, is commonly seen in children with parents impaired by mental illness or chemical dependency (Johnston, 1995). However, other studies document increased dependency and/or behavioral regression (Fritsch & Burkhead, 1982; Johnston, 1992).

In accounting for these different responses, Johnston (1992, 1995) asserts that parental incarceration impacts a child differently at each stage of development. She stated that by early adolescence:

- Most CIPs have had at least one prior experience with parent-child separation
- 7 out of 10 have witnessed the arrest of a parent or other family member
- Teens begin to test or reject limits placed on them by parents or authority figures
- CIPs begin to exhibit what Johnston refers to as "trauma reactive" behaviors such as fighting, withdrawal from peers, or self medicating with substances

She further stated that the impact of experiences around a parent's criminal behavior, arrest, and incarceration often prevents a youth from accomplishing the developmental tasks necessary to delay gratification, to work productively with others, and to lay the emotional and psychological foundation necessary to successfully achieve later goals (Johnston, 1995).

Johnston's body of research, supported by a handful of other studies, also reflected an increase in the negative effects of parental incarceration in the later stages of adolescence. These studies indicated that CIPs in the late stage of adolescent:

- have had multiple life disruptions due to parents' criminal activity, arrests, and incarcerations
- are less likely to be re-unified with an incarcerated parent
- visit an incarcerated parent less frequently and are subject to more caregiver changes
- are more likely to establish maladaptive coping patterns
- are more likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system
- are more likely to exhibit mental health problems such as depression or serious conduct disorders

(Johnston, 1992; 1993a, 1995; McCord & McCord, 1958; McGowan & Blumenthal, 1978; Morris, 1965; Stanton, 1980).

According to Johnston"

> Some adolescents are able to overcome the absence of parents, caregiver stress, lack of finances, stigma, and /or changes of placement with their own internal and external resources. Others may supplement the developmental imperatives of adolescence with the effects of these experiences to organize their behavior into stable, productive patterns. However, many children of prisoners and other offenders will organize their behavior into patterns that are ultimately maladaptive. When options for utilizing adaptive patterns of coping behaviors do not exist, trauma-reactive children will chose accessible but maladaptive coping mechanisms such as gang activity, that meet the same needs. The long-term outcome of most maladaptive coping mechanisms is delinquency or adult crime. (Johnston, 1995, p. 79)

The possible impact and outcome of trauma to CIPs is disturbing given the urgent concerns identified in the 2000 report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health. This report predicted where mental health problems facing children and adolescents are likely to be a "public health crisis". The report maintains that only one in five youth receive needed mental health services despite the fact that one in ten children and adolescents are estimated to suffer from mental health problems or mental illness serious enough to cause some level of impairment (USPH, 2000). The report further stated that youth are suffering because mental health treatment for children and adolescents is a low priority, because opportunities for prevention and early identification are missed, and because treatment programs often provide fragmented services. Another primary concern of the report was evidence that showed that incarcerated juveniles are often individuals whose mental health problems were not identified or treated (USPH, 2000, p. 11). The possibility of serious mental health problems, juvenile and/or adult incarceration, decreased quality of life and increased human suffering dictates that CIPs, especially adolescents, be targeted for research that guides prevention and intervention services.

Summary

The theories described in this chapter provide the foundation upon which the study's research questions were developed. first, ecological systems theory was used to understand the interactions prisoners and their families may experience with each other and the systems that comprise the ecology at the four ecological levels; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem, described in Bronfenbrenner's model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Next, family systems theory provided a

guiding framework for understanding the complexities and challenges found in families involved in the criminal justice system. Theories on African American families provided a foundation for understanding how African American families may experience and respond to maternal incarceration. Also, historical information on African Americans in the U.S. provided reflection on how ethnicity and race may influence outcomes at the four ecological levels. Finally, psychosocial development theory on adolescence was used to consider the effect that parental incarceration may have during this stage of development. From this multi-viewed theoretical framework, this study gained a fuller understanding of the effect of maternal incarceration on African American teen girls. The following chapter, Chapter Four, describes the research design and methodology used for the study.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature identified a lack of research on children of prisoners. Chapter two also pointed out the absence of data gathered directly from the youth and the fact that data available on this population is primarily limited to maternal perceptions (Dalley, 2003). Then, Chapter 3 explored the theoretical frameworks used in this study and explained their signification to the research. This chapter outlines the methods used to plan and implement this study and provides the sampling and data collection strategy used. Finally, it ends with a review of how the data was managed and analyzed.

Purpose of the Study

Maternal incarceration is a serious and growing problem. (Between 1990 and 1999 the female prison population in the United States increased 106% compared to the 75% increase in the male population (Dalley, 2003). Current estimates indicate that 1.3 million children have mothers under correctional supervision, and more than 400,000 of those children are separated from their imprisoned or jailed mothers, (Greenfield & Snell, 1999, p.5). Because of this growing problem and the lack of sufficient research information addressing it, this dissertation study attempts to expand the knowledge base on children of prisoners. Specifically this study examines adolescents by gathering information directly from the youth. The primary goals of this descriptive and exploratory ethnographic study are 1) to bring attention to this population and 2) to provide information that may be useful to policy makers, service providers, and researchers.

In this endeavor, the broad research question is: **What is the Perceived Impact of Maternal Imprisonment on African American Adolescent Girls?**

Specific sub-questions include:

1. What needs and concerns do these teens have?
2. What coping strategies do they use?
3. How do the incarcerated parent, the caregiver and other family members respond to the teens and their needs?

Methodology and Method

Qualitative Methods

This study used qualitative methodology to answer the research questions posed above. Qualitative methods often refer to a family of methods, where some members are more compatible than others (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Cresswell (1998) defines qualitative research as:

> Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p.5).

Although the terminology used in qualitative literature is sometimes confusing and vague, the reference to *qualitative methods* generally reflects methods that are inherently inductive, seek to discover, and favor the use of natural settings (Cresswell, 1998; Padgett,1998). Qualitative traditions of inquiry include grounded theory, narrative analysis, ethnography, biography, phenomenology, and case study.

The traditions in the family of qualitative methods differ based on the origin of the discipline, the focus of the inquiry, the way data is collected and analyzed, and the presentation of the findings (Cresswell, 1998; Padgett, 1998; Tutty, Rothery & Grinnell, 1996). For example, the focus of a case study might be the in-depth analysis of a single organization, while the focus of a grounded theory study might be to develop a new theory grounded in data from the field. Data collected for a phenomenological study might include lengthy interviews with up to 10 people. On the other hand, data collected for an ethnographic study would primarily consist of interviews and observations done during an extended amount of time (6 months to a year) in the field.

Although the method of data collection used in this study share common characteristics of case studies, this study used an ethnographic method of inquiry. What defines this study as an ethnographic study rather than a collection of case studies? Both are considered qualitative traditions of inquiry and share many characteristics. For example, both may employ multiple approaches to collecting data, such as observations and interviews, and often use similar approaches in data analysis. The primary difference between the two is that a case study is a study of a bounded system and an ethnographic study is a study of a cultural system. Case study research works with a smaller unit such as a program, an event, an activity, or a set of individuals and explores a range of topics, only one of which might be cultural behavior, language, or artifacts. In ethnographic research, the investigator studies a culture-sharing group using anthropological concepts (e.g., myths, stories, rituals, social structure). These concepts may or may not be present in a case study. Because this study explores a cultural system, it is an example of ethnographic inquiry.

Ethnographic Inquiry

I selected ethnography for use in this study for several reasons. First, it provides a vehicle to study the detailed life experiences of these youth in a way that is difficult to attain with standardized measures, a primary tool in quantitative inquiry. Second, it allows for an interpretation of an individual's "lived" experiences supported by their own words. Third, the ethnographic approach's flexibility allows the researcher to pursue constructs and themes as they emerge; this pursuit of emergent themes and constructs seem critical in an exploratory study. Finally an ethnographic study provides a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group by studying the behavior, language, artifacts, and interactions of individuals in the group (Cresswell, 1998) making this methodology a good fit with the theories used to guide this study.

The term *ethnography* invites much debate. Some consider it to be a philosophical view, while others see it as a specific method of social research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Ethnographic research has root in cultural anthropology famous 20th century anthropologists such as Mead and Malinowski popularized it (Cresswell, 1998).

When it emerged as a formal science at the end of the nineteenth century, ethnography focused exclusively on "primitive" (non-literate) cultures, but since then its focus has shifted. British-naturalized anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski is credited with moving the focus of anthropological studies from disappearing tribes to studying the form and function of contemporary groups (Foster & Kemper, 1974). He promoted the concept of doing long-term analysis in a viable community. He also promoted emphasis on form and function in their synchronic (concerned with the complexity of events in a limited period of time while ignoring historical antecedents) rather than their diachronic

(dealing with phenomena, especially language, as they occur or change over a period of time) dimensions. At the time, this represented a new concept in field research (Foster & Kemper, 1974, p. 4).

As Malinowski's new concept of ethnography developed, researchers began to use ethnography in a variety of contexts. In the late 1920's and early 1930's, a number of years after Malinowski introduced this new approach, American anthropologists began to explore small rural communities in modern or developing nations (Foster & Kemper, 1974). Around this same time, sociologists such as Park and Dewey, at the University of Chicago, began adapting anthropological field methods to study urban phenomenon in the United States (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The great variety of ethnographic approaches contributes to a lack of orthodoxy in ethnography.

Cresswell (1998), states that scientific approaches to ethnography have led to the proliferation of "schools" or subtypes in ethnographic research making the identification of the approach used by the researcher critical.

> This has led to a distinct lack of orthodoxy in ethnography as a general approach to the description and interpretation of a cultural or social group, and authors need to be explicit about what school they espouse when they discuss this approach, especially as it has been embraced by researchers in many fields outside anthropology and sociology such as the health sciences and education (p. 59).

Therefore, I will identify the "school espoused" in this study for greater clarity. This study primarily used procedures and techniques established by sociologists Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson who were strongly influenced by anthropologically

trained ethnographers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) ethnographic research primarily employs three kinds of data collection: interviews, observation, and documents. In turn, these collection methods produce three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts from documents.

Researchers often use ethnographic methods to shape new constructs or paradigms, or to build theories. This study attempted to gain new analytic insights about the impact of maternal incarceration through examining the experiences of affected youth.

An ethnographic approach also encourages the researcher to get as close as possible to the participants' experiences. In this study, information gained from this level of understanding can be particularly useful in planning interventions to serve CIP's and their families. Additionally, such an approach explores how a particular youth experiences her own unique life as well as how the shared experiences of age, gender, and ethnicity affect her (McQuaide & Ehrenreich, 1998).

Recruitment and Sampling Strategy

Recruitment and selection of girls for the study used a combination of convenience, criterion, and theoretical sampling. I talked with a total of 8 parent/caregivers and 7 teenage girls about the study. One parent, a formerly incarcerated mother, initially agreed to participate in the study but was never available to sign the consent form giving permission for her daughter to participate. Four visits were arranged, where I drove from Austin to Houston specifically to meet with this mother. I also attempted two unscheduled "drop-by" visits. None of my attempts to get consent from the mother were successful so I never approached her daughter about participating.

Halfway through the study, another participant was sent to live with an aunt in Dallas. Her new location made it impossible to continue the data collection process. Six families remained from the group of families initially targeted for recruitment into the dissertation study. The following criteria were used to select participants for the study.

First, for convenience, all of the participants in this dissertation study also participated in the evaluation of the HCW program. Previously established relationships with the girls and their families allowed me to directly approach them about the dissertation study. Also, the Director of the HCW program strongly supported the dissertation study, which provided an added level of validation for the research. However, the director's enthusiastic support caused me concern about the potential for respondents to feel an unintended pressure to participate. This concern motivated me to recruit participants for the dissertation study without the Director's assistance.

Second, The following criteria were used to select participants for the study:

1. the teenager must be a girl who is 13 years or older and has experienced at least one maternal prison incarceration within the last three years

2. the teen must be living in a kinship care situation rather than a foster care environment or group home

3. she must be or must have been a participant in the HCW program

4. she must self-identify as Black or African American

In particular, I selected gender, race and living situation as significant criterions for participation in the study. In terms of gender, I chose adult women and teenage girls to narrow the focus of inquiry and to increase the depth of understanding from a gendered perspective. The gender of the incarcerated parent became part of the selection criteria because the literature states that mothers' incarcerations impact children differently and

more deeply than fathers' incarcerations. I chose to study teenage daughters of prisoners because child development literature suggests that the emotional and psychological needs of teenage girls are different from those of teenage boys.

In terms of race, I chose to study African American women and girls because of the rates at which they are affected by imprisonment and parental incarceration respectively. Anecdotal, statistical, and empirical evidence should elicit particular concerns about CIP's who are ethnic minorities, and yet the literature rarely raises ethnicity and race in research on children of prisoners. Some research studies even fail to provide race/ethnicity as a demographic descriptor of the sample.

Finally in terms of living situation, I chose participants in a variety of living situations. According to the literature, children of mothers in prison primarily reside with their maternal grandmothers. I was curious about the similarities and differences for girls living in a variety of kinship care situations and therefore selected girls in different living situations. The six respondents in the study represent five somewhat different care giving arrangements.

Table 2 below reflects the participants in the study and identifies their family configuration, number of people in the household, age, grade, religion, family income and the amount of time that each participate has participated in the HCW program. The names in the table reflect the pseudonyms used for the research participants. Figure 1 follows with a definition of the numerical codes used to describe caregiver situation and family income. Figure 1 also identifies primary and secondary caregiver information for each participant and indicates mothers and fathers' involvement in the family.

Table 2. Overview of Participants in the Study

Name	Caregiver Situation **	Age	Current Grade	Religion	# in Home	Family Income **	Time in HCW
Valina	5	16	11	Methodist	3	1	16 mo
Doniece	5	18	12	Baptist	4+ *	2	18 mo
Brandy	3	18	11	Baptist	5+ *	3	10 mo
Shimika	4	16	10	Catholic	5+ *	2	10 mo
Micah	1	17	10	Baptist	6+/- *	2	15 mo
Anisha	2	16	10	AME	4	1	12 mo

* The number of people actually living in the household increases and/or decreases on a frequent basis.

Figure 1. Family Configurations for Research Participants

	Caregiver Situation	Family (household) Income
1	Primary Caregiver: Mother Secondary Caregiver: Extended family members Mother: (Re-incarcerated b/f study completed) Father: Estranged from family/lives in Houston	**1** = $0 – 15,000
2	Primary Caregiver: Maternal Grandmother Secondary Caregiver: Mother Mother: (Released 10/02, remains out) Father: Addict/whereabouts unknown	**2** = $15001 – 25,000
3	Primary Caregiver: Maternal Aunt Secondary Caregiver: Maternal Grandmother Mother: In prison Father: In prison/ estranged from family	**3** = $25,001 – 35,000
4	Primary Caregiver: Stepmother Secondary Caregiver: Paternal grandmother Mother: In prison Father: In jail	**4** = $35,001 – 45,000
5	Primary Caregiver: Maternal Grandmother Secondary Caregiver: Extended family members Mother: In prison Father: Estranged from family	**5** = $45,001 +

Data Collection

All of the respondents live in an area of Houston known as the Fifth Ward. This community is home to a significant population of ex-offenders, probationers, parolees and their families. Data collection took place in the respondents' homes, at their school—M. B. Smiley High School, and in various locations in the community. Information was also collected at the HCW Program office, located in the Third Ward in Houston, TX.

Smiley High School, located in North Houston, has a unique character; approximately 40% of the 1500 member student body are or have been CIPs during their enrollment at Smiley. In other words, 600 or more students have at least one parent in prison. Smiley High School is located in a community characterized as having high rates of crime, problems with gangs, and rampant drug related activity. is the area's small groups of neighbors working to make the community better, longtime business owners that bring stability to the community, and families that do everything possible to keep from "losing their children to the streets" seldom get highlighted Thus, informal conversations with families, business owners, and individuals living in the Fifth Ward provide a different perspective of this area than the media often provides.

General demographic and descriptive data such as age, socioeconomic status, and current living arrangement was captured on a form designed by the researcher for this research study [see Attachment D]. Fictitious names and ID numbers were assigned to all data collection forms to protect confidentiality. The researcher primarily gathered data through multiple, audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews [see Attachment E].

Interviews completed as part of the HCW evaluation also became part of the data collected for the dissertation study.

Counting the interviews from the HWC evaluation, each girl was interviewed a total of 6-8 times with the interviews ranging from 15 minutes to an hour and half. Each respondent had at least 2 interviews that lasted over 1 hour. Some interviews were formally scheduled while others occurred informally. At least one of the interviews took place over a meal. The girls always had input into where and when the interviews would take place as long as confidentiality could be maintained and interruptions kept to a minimum. Audiotapes were made during the scheduled interviews for all but one of the girls. She initially agreed to be audio taped, but then she changed her mind right before the recorder was turned on. I took copious notes during her interviews.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews with the girls, I also observed research participants during participation in HCW program activities, during interactions with peers and teachers at school, and during interactions with family and friends at home and in the community. I also obtained data through review of letters, artwork, pictures and other artifacts in the teens' possession.

Personal notes that I kept throughout my time in the field also became key as I made attempts to understand, categorize, manage, and analyze data collected over 18 months from a variety of sources. The qualitative literature refers to these personal notes as "field notes" (Padgett, 1998). These notes became invaluable as I referenced items that required further investigation, grappled with my feelings about the incoming information, documented each study-related decision, and struggled to understand the ever-mounting mass of data.

Whereas researchers studying inmates and their families often complain about the lack of information, I experienced the opposite. I encountered an explosion of data. To state that there were approximately seven sources of data fails to accurately present the fact that data collection included:

1. multiple individual interviews with the girls;
2. one or more interviews with their caregivers;
3. conversations with the other family members of each of the girls;
4. observations of the girls at home, at school, and in the community;
5. observations of the girls being interviewed by media professionals;
6. review of school records at Smiley High School;
7. review of documents at the No More Victims Inc. organization;
8. analysis of letters to and from incarcerated mothers (and in one case an incarcerated father);
9. analysis of interviews of the girls by newspaper reporters, magazine; writers, and television anchors;
10. review of poetry, short stories, and video briefs created by the girls;
11. conversations with members of the Fifth Ward community.

Corbin & Strauss (1998) refer to *saturation* as the point at which no new information seems to be emerging from the respondents. I initially thought that two additional interviews (formal and/or informal) with each girl, along with data collected from at least two other sources would provide me with the amount of information necessary to reach the point of "saturation." However, although information collected during the HCW evaluation provided valuable information toward answering questions

posed in the dissertation research, additional information was needed from each respondent.

The questions related to *needs and concerns of the youth* and *coping strategies* were answered to the point of saturation early in the dissertation study, close to the expected number of interviews. However, I continued to collect as much information as possible to identify diverse ideas among the respondents and to gather information for the two remaining questions, which proved more elusive.. Specifically, additional interviews data collection helped me to answer the following questions: 1) *How does the incarcerated parent and custodial parent or caregiver respond to the teenager?;* and 2)*How do systems in the ecology respond to them*?

Data Management and Analysis

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) stated that in ethnographic research, data analysis is not really a distinct stage of research. Rather, it represents a continuous part of the research that begins in the pre-field work stage where the researcher is formulating and clarifying the research problem. The authors considered data analysis to be an iterative process that "formally takes shape in analytic notes and memoranda" and informally in the ethnographer's ideas and hunches (p. 205).

Data analysis methods provided by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) resemble the constant comparative method used in grounded theory, but provide a better fit for an ethnographic study because the process does not exclusively focus on theory development. Barney Glaser, a sociologist credited with being one of the founders of grounded theory, states that the primary purpose of grounded theory is to generate theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior (Glaser, 1992). Although more explicitly

described in the literature, grounded theory provides little support for the ethnographer striving to explore and describe data collected from a culture-sharing group.

There are four stages in the process developed by Hammersley and Atkinson, and this study closely and consistently followed the procedures within these four stages. The four stages to the method include: 1) creating and organizing the data, 2) coding the data, 3) developing themes from the data, and 4) connecting and interpreting the themes.

The first stage, organizing the data, includes creating the data by making verbatim transcriptions from the audiotapes and notes taken during formal interviews. I also generated typed notes from informal interviews with special care taken to maintain the integrity of exact quotes from individuals. I stored all audio tapes in a locked location at my home office and destroyed each tape after transcribing it. In addition, I organized by source. Each piece of data fell into one of seven categories:

1. formal interviews,
2. informal interviews or conversations,
3. researcher observations,
4. researcher field notes,
5. administrative documents (school records and notes from agency files),
6. media interviews (news stories, magazine interviews, etc.), and
7. artifacts (letters to or from a parent, poetry authored by the teen, etc).

The second stage of the process focuses on coding the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). I generated codes, also referred to as categories, directly from the "language" of the data by reviewing each line of the transcript or document. I also analyzed transcriptions using qualitative methods of content analysis.

Content analysis is the label given to textual analysis that involves comparing, contrasting, and categorizing a corpus of data. Classic content analysis emphasizes a systematic, objective description of content derived from researcher-developed categories (Schwandt, 1997). This process allows concepts to emerge directly from the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). I assigned phrases or short labels to blocks of information or quotes deemed related to the research questions.

Throughout this second stage, I considered the need for additional data. As new categories emerged, I re-coded previously coded data to see if they contained any examples of the new codes. For example, many of the youth talked about not having enough food at home. Initially, I coded references to a lack of food as "unmet need-food." As the list of needs diversely expanded, I re-coded references to a lack of food as "inconsistently met-physical needs."

As stated by Hammersley and Atkins (1995), the second stage of the process ultimately aims to formulate a stable set of categories and to perform a systematic coding of all of the data in terms of those categories. As the study unfolded, the codes moved from being generic and mundane to categories that appeared to be more analytically significant. During this process, I consistently asked myself if I could explain to someone why I decided on a particular code. If someone viewed the text without benefit of explanation, would the assigned code make sense? In an effort to allow the data to speak for itself, I deferred any attempt to tie the information to particular theories until later stages in the process. Before the next stage of the process, I reviewed the coded data for redundancy and overlap.

In the next stage of the process, developing themes from the data, I did a second level of analysis that assigned themes to the coded data. I placed data with similar or related codes in piles. I labeled each pile with a word or phrase that captured the essence of the data in that pile. Then, I reviewed the piles several times with the following three questions in mind: 1) Can some of the piles be combined? 2) Should any piles be deleted because they are insignificant or unrelated to the research questions?; and 3) Does information in each pile truly relate to the phrase assigned to that pile? Throughout the assignment of themes, I also looked for patterns. In the process, one pile was deleted, and several piles were combined.

The fourth and final stage included connecting and interpreting the themes. This stage of the analysis permits the researcher to tie the data together, to make sense of the themes and patterns, and to answer the research questions. I used information grids to consider the relationships between themes. Figure 2 provides a partial example of a grid used to analyze data collected on Valina around the issue of "need." The horizontal axis of the grid identifies the sources of information, while the vertical axis indicates the kinds of information tied to that source.

Figure 2. Information Chart on Valina

Source of Information

Valina	Interview with P.I.	Observation	School Records	Agency Records	V's Letters To Mom	Letters from Mom
Physical Need	Food Clothes for school School supplies Hates to ask for help (Often borrows clothes from friends) "I have to use torn sheets instead of tampons"	Tries to keep appearance up May have health problems		Basic needs not met Hygiene items needed Possible medical problems Utilities bills paid 3x		Tells V that she has it easy and doesn't know what it's like to be in prison (lack of understanding of V's needs) [Ask V to send money if possible]
Emotional Need	Wants hugs and non-intrusive touch Past suicidal thoughts Positive words- "That someone cares" That she can achieve Feels parentless A "burden" to grandmother Concern about sib Support during critical events (positive & negative)	Appears angry much of the time Wants to belong Feels accepted by HCW group	Has temper Behavior Problems Alt. Ctr. Recommend/ Discipline action	Needs support but can't ask Two past suicide attempts	Wants Mom to get out and "be a Mom" Afraid to trust her Expresses anger, takes parent role	Expresses the need for emotional support <u>from</u> V/ Takes child role
Safety Need/ Concern	Previous rape Gang affiliation Feels that no one is there to take up for her		Problem w/violent Ex-boyfriend [Feels that D is a threat to others]	Previous rape Concerns about depression Problem w/Ex		
Opportunity Need	Wants to work Doesn't want to be a burden Concerned about being able to graduate	Has leadership potential – articulate speaker Needs academic help		"Has leadership potential" Targeted for summer hire		Wants her to graduate and "do better than I did"

Ideally, the fourth stage of the process includes a level of analysis that goes beyond the obvious; it allows the researcher to support current thinking, to offer contrasting views, or to provide original contributions to the field (Cresswell, 1998).

In addition to the Hammersley and Atkinson process, I also used additional methods to increase rigor and to decrease bias in the study. These additional methods do not fall with the methods Hammersley and Atkinson proposed. Instead, I incorporated them from more generic qualitative methods. Specifically, I drew from Padgett (1998) who outlined several methods for enhancing the rigor and trustworthiness of the data including *member checking* and establishing an *audit trail*.

Member Checking and Audit Trail

Member checking means periodically going back into the field and checking with respondents for verification of coding decisions and interpretations (Padgett, 1998). As the study progressed, I periodically met with research participants to discuss coding decisions and interpretations of the data. This work proved to be very useful as the participants confirmed interpretations, clarified findings, and provided additional information in a variety of areas. During one instance, for example, Valina further explained the desire to go college so that she could "make something of herself." This desire often conflicted with the desire to do whatever she can to add income to the home so that she "wouldn't be a burden" to her grandmother. The member checking technique helped to illuminate the nuances embedded in Valina's interpretation of unavailable opportunities. Overall the process helped to increase both the rigor and the validity of the results. An audit trail is accomplished by maintaining field notes, written

analysis of documents, raw data transcription, and notes on coding decisions. Padgett (1998) states,

> Leaving an audit trail provides a way to reproduce a study and verify the findings. The audit trail in this study proved important for establishing the emergence of both descriptive and thematic categories from the data (p. 56).

This chapter outlined the methods used to plan and implement this study and provided the sampling and data collection strategy. Finally, it reviewed the data management and analysis strategy used. Chapter 5, the next chapter, introduces the research participants and provides a limited glimpse of their lives.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESPONDENTS

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the girls who participated in the study and is intended to offer an integrated and detailed profile of each teenager and her family. Chapter six provides categorical analyses of specific aspects of their lives as they relate to the research questions.

Six African American teenage girls living in the Fifth Ward area of Houston, TX participated in this study. They all are or have been active members of the HCW program. All of these young women are also high school students in grades 10 through 12, and their ages range from 16 to 18 years old. In the past three years, all of their mothers have served a prison sentence of one year or longer in length. Five of their mothers are currently incarcerated while one reunited with her daughter shortly before the study began. This mother is still "out". One mother was released and re-incarcerated during the progression of the study. None of the mothers are or have been incarcerated for abuse or neglect of a child. Five of the participants had little contact with their fathers during the course of the study.

All of the girls have been active participants in the HCW program for approx. one to one and one half years; they attend the same school, and all report a religious preference. One astounding connecting factor is that all six girls have been victims of sexual assault or incest. However, there are some differences in their situations.

There is variation in the number of people residing in their households, the incomes of their households, their general home environments, their relationships with

their mothers, the arrangements made for their care, and their relationships with their caregivers. Several of the teens live in homes that are run down and in need of repair, while others live in well-kept homes with manicured yards. From a variety of external perspectives these girls look very different from each other, and yet all six are experiencing problems severe enough to warrant our attention.

The findings from this study support the literature on child development, "at risk" children, and children of incarcerated parents. All that literature places them at high risk for negative social, emotional, psychological, developmental, and behavioral outcomes. However, all six have also shown behaviors that reflect resilience, remarkable strength, generosity, leadership skills, and concern for their families and their community.

Valina

(16 years old/ grade 11)

Valina lives with her sister and maternal grandmother whom she says she "adores" and who "adore her." They live in a very small house on a cul-de-sac that sits close to a major highway. When devastating floods hit Houston in the summer of 2001, the area where Valina and her family live was hit extremely hard. Thanks to funds from a federal program, their home was restored to a condition that Valina's grandmother says is better than before the flood.

Valina is a tall, slim, dark skinned young woman with striking features. She does well in school and considers herself a "poet in training to be a writer and a pediatrician." Valina is very articulate and passionately expresses herself whether she is expressing joy or anger. It was her anger that caused her to seek out the HCW program. During an all school assembly, an announcement was made that a group was starting for kids who had a parent in prison. Valina and a friend decided to check the program out together. She hoped that people starting the group would be able to help her get a job or find resources that would help her to help her grandmother. At the program, she says that she found people who "understood her problems and were able to help her family."

Valina has been very angry with her mother and her mother's inability to stay off drugs and out of jail. She says that she has been in the care of her grandmother for "as long as she can remember." She pours her heart and inner most feelings into her poetry and journals and finds that to be a form of therapy.

A lot of those feelings have to do with her shame and embarrassment at the family's frequent need for help paying the light bill and keeping food in the house.

Valina's grandmother explained that the family's economic situation suffered when her husband, Valina's grandfather, died three years ago. Since the loss of her grandfather, Valina says that she has been obsessed with fear of losing her grandmother. This fear conflicts with the view that she has of herself as the family caregiver. Valina sees herself as the caretaker for her sister and her grandmother and feels a strong sense of responsibility. Letters to her mother, letters from her mother, and Valina's poetry also reveal the possibility that the mother has taken the role of the child and the child has taken the role of the parent.

Valina's grandmother is also afraid that something will happen to her before Valina and her sister become adults or their mother "gets herself together." She suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. During one of my conversations with the grandmother, she asked me who would see the information that I was collecting. She was not concerned with confidentiality as I thought was the case. She wanted to know if her words could be transported to someone with the power to change policy. She also asked if there was any way that I could talk to the governor and other officials to let them know that there are many grandmothers in her position. In her very frank way she said,

> Baby, I want you to let the government know that we need help, and we need it now. It don't make no sense that foster parents can be paid for taking care of our children, but we can't get any help to take care of our own children! I'm not looking for a handout, just a little help. I never thought I'd be taking care of kids at this stage of my life-----old and sick. It ain't right, but if I don't do it, who's going to? The Lord knows that I

love my children and grandchildren with all my heart, but don't I deserve some rest?

Valina appears to be mature in her behavior at home and at school. She worked for the first time this past summer through the Summer Youth Employment program, and the city department where she worked was so taken with her work manner that she received a glowing performance report. She was even promised a spot in next year's program. However, Valina remains frustrated by her inability to get an after school job, to obtain her drivers license or to do more to take the load off of her grandmother. She says that if she can't help her grandmother at the moment, at least she canhelp others. She's considered a "veteran" at the HCW program and has assumed a counselor role on occasion. She often listens to the problems of new members to the group, encourages them to share their feelings about their parents, and mediates disputes between participants. Valina feels that she can help others because she knows what they're going through, especially if "they have a mother in prison or have been raped."

She shared the fact that she was raped by someone that she went out on a date with during one of our taped interviews. She says that her trust in the HCW program grew when she reported the rape to a staff member and the staff member took it seriously. The rape was reported to the police and a warrant was issued for the young man's arrest.

During the time that Valina has been in the study, I have seen the increase in her self-confidence and the cultivation of her skills as a captivating public speaker. Several months ago, she was featured in a television newscast on children with parents in prison. Her passionate and heart wrenching words attempted to reach people in a position to help

individuals like her. She and other participants have benefited from generous contributions to the HCW program.

Doniece

(18 years old, grade 12)

Like Valina, Doniece (known as D in the program) lives with her maternal grandmother, her sister, and several other family members. D's mother is in prison, and her father is in the city jail. She attempts to maintain communication with both of them through letters and infrequent visits. D's grandmother's home is on a street where all of the homes appear nicely kept and the yards are well maintained, many with flowers or gardens.

D is very petite and short but is constantly vigilant about self-protection. She has a very tough appearance and is "ready to fight" at the drop of a hat. Her school records document multiple referrals to in-school suspension, frequent physical fights with other students, and her general "bad attitude." Written statements in her school records, made prior to her joining the HCW, reflect the behavior of a perpetrator of violence rather than a victim. One partial statement claims,

> "---- refuses to respect authority and is a menace to other students. She's known to affiliate with gang members and may be willing to physically challenge a teacher. Be alert! "

Although school records reflect that teachers and students have witnessed her previous boyfriend subject her to the physical and verbal abuse, the records make no mention of her need for protection or state concerns about her safety.

D's grandmother supports school related statements made about D's problematic behavior:

> This time last year, she was a pistol. She came home when she wanted and didn't want to listen to nobody. I told her if she was going to act like she was grown, I was going to treat her like she was grown. She was going to keep on until she ends up just like her Mama.

She says that she's seen remarkable improvement in D's behavior since she joined the HCW program, and she's hoping for the best.

Like D, her grandmother was initially very untrusting of my motives and was not comfortable talking with me. For my first interview with D, I took her to lunch at her favorite hamburger place so that we could have some privacy. Her home was brimming with people so there was nowhere for us to have a confidential conversation. Her Grandmother gave permission for me to take her to the hamburger place, and we agreed on the time that I would return. Bumping into one of D's "crazy" uncles and the slow food service delayed our return by 10 minutes. About two blocks from D's house, D saw her grandmother's car coming toward us, so we stopped. Her grandmother told me that she was on her way to find me. I apologized profusely and was never late returning D home again. Over time, my relationship with D's grandmother greatly improved.

D openly admits that she thought about suicide frequently and made two attempts, once with pills and once with a knife.

> I tried cutting myself but that hurt way worse than I thought it would. When I took the pills I just went to sleep. I was very disappointed when I woke up the next day feeling very sick and unsuccessful.

She links part of her distress to the sexual abuse that she suffered from age 8 to 11 from a maternal uncle. The abuse stopped when her uncle was

arrested for armed robbery and received a lengthy prison sentence. D states that she told her grandmother who encouraged her to put it behind her. Her grandmother told her that many women have gone through this, implying that she was one of them, and that D just had to move on. D has never shared this information with either of her parents.

Eventually D was very forthcoming and honest about her life and behavior, but she was not willing to be recorded on audiotape. We had approximate eight interviews that were more than 45 minutes in length and many more brief conversations. Initially, conversations were very difficult; D was willing to be present at the interview, but not willing to share much information. Over the months, this reluctance started to change. She would inquire about my schedule each week and began to greet me with a warm embrace. She once stated that I reminded her of a favorite aunt.

As time moved on, I began to worry that I was losing the ability to see her circumstances in any objective way. I thought for sure that I saw measured improvement in the way that she interacted with her peers, her family, and her teachers. Was I seeing improvement because I wanted to see it? Was I beginning to believe that the school was giving her an undeserved negative reputation? Was I going native!? (Going *native* is a concept posed in qualitative literature where researchers are no longer able to be objective about what they are seeing and align themselves with the research respondents.)

I made notes of my concerns in my field journal and initiated an even more concerted effort to collect evidence that corroborated "the truth." D's improvement appeared to be evident to others. The school records reflected an extended period where no referrals were made to the in-school suspension center; there were no documented

fights. In addition, the teachers I interviewed stated that D was "easier to deal with" than in the past.

Although D's grandmother is pleased to see the change in her behavior, she is not as pleased to see her "sharing their family's business" on television and in the newspaper. D has become part of a group of approximately 10 HCW youth who frequently share their stories with the media with the intention of bringing positive attention to the program. D's Grandmother states,

> Don't get me wrong, the program has helped us out a whole lot, and I'm grateful. I just don't want everybody knowing our business. Ms Gambrill [the CEO of NMVI-HCW] sometimes acts like she those children's Mama. Sometimes I feel like she's trying to replace D's Mama. D got a Mama. She might not be the best, but she loves her just like I do.

D is currently working part-time in the HCW office and has become somewhat of an ambassador for the program. She has become a confidante of many of the other members of the program and was voted into a leadership position during the previous school term.

Brandy

(18 years old, Grade 11)

Brandy, her little brother, a maternal aunt, and several older cousins live with her maternal grandmother and grandfather. Their home is nicely furnished, landscaped, and situated close to a park. Brandy's maternal grandmother and maternal aunt share the care giving responsibility for Brandy, but Brandy considers herself to be without parents. Over the years, Brandy has lived off and on with her grandmother and grandfather, but she has also maintained a strong relationship with her mother. All three of these women (Brandy's aunt, grandmother, and mother) see themselves as an active parent figure in Brandy's life, and yet Brandy sees herself as being "on
her own."

The love and caring in Brandy's family is readily apparent, but so are unresolved resentments, complicated alliances, and many family secrets. For example around the age of11 or 12, Brandy was repeatedly "fondled" and touched inappropriately by an "Adopted Grandfather." This man was an old friend of the family's at a time when her family lived in another state. Most of the family lived in this same state, and the "Adopted Grandfather" was a financial lifesaver for many family members. According to Brandy, his generosity and willingness to help them allowed the family to overlook his fondness for alcohol and his attraction to the young girls in the family.

> "I was always trying to escape his wandering hands and sloppy kisses. When I refused to sit on his lap, I would get in trouble for being disrespectful and rude to someone who had been 'so good' to me and my

family. No one wanted to confront him and risk losing his generosity. I later found out that I wasn't the only one".

School and agency records refer to her "moodiness" and have documented reports where she has made threats of suicide as well as superficial suicide attempts. However, there is no documentation of referrals to a trained therapist or to public or private mental health services. School records also reflect the belief that Brandy's behavior is purely attention seeking and should be ignored. Conversations with HCW staff reveal the belief that participants are distrustful of mental health practitioners and repeatedly fail to make appointments. The agency director further feels that community organizations and practitioners are poorly prepared to address the mental health needs of the kids on their program, and "more importantly they have a tremendous lack of concern."

Brandy admits that she has a temper, but she says that she also likes to laugh, play and have fun. Brandy is never without a boyfriend and says that in the past she used to be promiscuous. Brandy admits to frequent marijuana use and weekly alcohol and beer binges. As she's gotten more involved in activities related to the program, she says that she has less time to hang out and get into trouble. Since her story was released in a national magazine, she's gotten more positive attention at school; someone who saw the story even helped her to get a job at a local auto parts store.

Brandy even feels better about her relationship with her mother. Brandy's mother told her that she never knew how badly her incarceration and drug use affected her. The story gave Brandy a level of validation that had previously eluded her. Brandy's life is far from perfect, but she currently feels confident that she'll graduate from high school, which is something that she never thought she would do.

Shimika

(16 years old; Grade 10)

Shimika is not only the quietest of the participants in this dissertation study, but she was also the quietest member of the group of 15 youth involved in the evaluation of the HCW program. As I observed youth participate in the daily support groups that took place at Smiley High School and the weekly activities that occurred at the HCW office, Shimika was one of the few participants that never vied for attention from the staff. They would always have to seek her out, which was not always easy to do.

Shimika is less than 5 feet tall and probably weighs less than 100 lbs. When I first met her, she looked fairly unhealthy. However, her health and appearance have improved over of the past few months. Shimika appears to blend into her surroundings, becoming almost invisible at times. She's very young in appearance but, to me, her eyes and behavior reflect those of a much older, life-worn person.

Shimika and her older sister live with her father's girlfriend, a woman Shimika refers to as her stepmother. In addition, the stepmother's son and the stepmother's nephew reside in the home. Shimika's father is currently in jail, and her mother is in prison. She has little to do with her mother or her mother's family, but she's constantly being reminded that she'll be sent to live with her mother once she gets out of prison. Shimika says that she knows that the only reason her stepmother is letting her and her sister stay there is because she wants to "hold on" to their father. Shimika's mother has had serious drug problems most of her life; Shimika's father and his mother have been the primary caretakers for Shimika and her sister. Shimika's paternal grandmother has

been in poor health for the last few years, so Shimika and her sister have lived with their father and “his women.” Shimika says that this is her third stepmother. She states,

> “I can’t complain about [it]---because I’m grateful to have a roof over my head and food to eat. I just wish that I could have a little time off.”

Shimika says that she is the primary babysitter for her stepbrother and her stepmother’s nephew. She is also responsible for the cooking and cleaning while her sister works as a maid for a local hotel and her stepmother works in a school cafeteria. Shimika doesn’t see herself as a child of an incarcerated parent, nor does she connect any of the difficulties in her life to this circumstance. She sees the incarceration of her parents as a string of events that she chalks up to bad luck.

Shimika looks forward to working and earning money of her own but has been unable to get her stepmother to sign her up for any of the youth employment programs. Her father leaves “ business with the kids” up to his girlfriend, and Shimika’s stepmother finds it “foolish” to take off work for such matters. This notion was supported by my discussions with the stepmother. The stepmother confided that her employer takes a dim view of her taking days off and of even coming in late. Using the bus as transportation also makes it difficult to get anything else accomplished during a workday. Further, she said that she wasn’t sure she would if she could. She claims,

> These kids want everything they want and they want it now. They have to learn to sacrifice sometime. We all have it rough----it makes you tough enough to deal with life. I’m not going to coddle these kids.

Shimika’s stepmother seems hardhearted on the surface, but she also seems to truly care about Shimika and her sister. She struggles to provide clothes and food for

everyone, while she also has to care for a son with chronic respiratory problems. Her son's father recently moved back to Houston and is getting re-involved in his son's life. Shimika's stepmother feels sorry for Shimika and her sister, but she also feels overwhelmed with the care of four children. However, she feels that it's her Christian duty to do what she can. Given the fact that both of the girls' parents are in jail, Shimika's stepmother thought she would be able to get assistance with food and clothes. However, her income combined with Shimika's fathers past income put them over the eligibility line. Fortunately, the HCW program has been able to provide help with school clothes and supplies at the beginning of the year and help during the holidays.

When the HCW group first started, one of Shimika's teachers encouraged her to talk to the HCW staff, but Shimika never felt comfortable doing so. One day, the teacher took her to the HCW group room and introduced her to the director who invited Shimika to sit in on the group and just listen. After her initiation to the group, where you must say why you want to join the group and take the oath to keep information confidential, she didn't say another word for two months. Ten months later, she still listens much more than she ever talks. Whenever she does request "group time," the other participants immediately yield the floor to her. Shimika is the only participant in this study who has never talked to a member of the media. She does appear to be slowly coming out of her shell, though, and she gives most of the credit for that to her participation in the program.

Micah

(17 years old, Grade 10)

At this writing, Micah would qualify as a homeless individual. Her mother was re-incarcerated four months ago and Micah, her siblings, and several nieces and nephews were all evicted. Micah lived with her grandfather for a time and then her uncle. Now she's living with a friend of her mother. Her mother was able to stay out for almost a year. Before that, Micah lived with first one family member and then another. Her father lives in Houston, but according to Micah and her mother, he has nothing to do with them. He has a business of his own, a wife and a new baby.

Both Micah and her mother had huge hopes of successfully keeping their family together. During my first interview with her, Micah's mother excitedly told me of the programs that she plan to enter, the goals that she set for herself, and the dreams that she had for her daughter. Although, the HCW program reached out to her, she never followed through on meetings with staff members. Eventually the pressures of parole, the cravings for drugs, and the lack of community support led to her return to prison. Although Micah's mother was never overly involved in the program, she always readily signed consent forms for Micah to participate in activities. She was initially willing to talk to me because she thought it would help the HCW program.

Micah is very proud and states that it is hard to come to school when her access to clean clothes is limited; she often doesn't have school supplies and maintenance of daily hygiene is a struggle. She explains that,

> You just can't come to school looking any kind of way, you have to have acceptable clothes or you'll get dogged. I'm not at all into name brands

> like ---, I just want to look decent. The teachers and other kids already look down on us [CI's].

Micah feels proud of her involvement in the HCW program and says that she feels accepted for who she is there. Run-ins with teachers have caused her to be labeled a disciplinary problem. She says that she only talks back to teachers who "front her" or disrespect her in front of other students and teachers. When asked for a specific example, she recounted a time when she had fallen asleep in one of her classes. The teacher dropped a book on her desk, causing her to wake abruptly. Once awake, the teacher yelled at Micah not to come to her class and sleep. After cursing the teacher, Micah was sent to the principal's office. The teacher did not know that Micah's failure to find a safe place to sleep forced her to go to a friend's home located in the Third Ward. Way before dawn, she had to go to a relative's house to "take a sponge bath" and to yet another house to borrow clothes from a friend. She then had to borrow money to take the bus to school.

Micah works to keep up her grades in school, but she says that it's a constant struggle. She says that she is sometimes late because of her other activities. She admits that she has sold drugs and prostituted herself to take care of herself, her siblings, and at times, her mother. Micah has had a few scrapes with the law, the most current being a shoplifting charge. Her current goal is to stay out of juvenile detention so that she can finish school and "make something" of herself.

In spite of Micah's circumstances she almost always has a smile on her face and a kind word for everyone. She's very outgoing and is a favorite among the program participants. She has an extraordinary singing voice and is a talented basketball player. She hopes that one of these talents will get her into college some day. She credits the

HCW program with encouraging her to believe in herself and with urging her not to give up. She shares her story with other kids so they will not feel alone. The HCW staff consistently praise Micah for her ability to overcome any obstacle and to stay in school. They do whatever is possible to remove the barriers that she encounters. This includes looking the other way when she returns a consent form that everyone knows that she signed herself.

Micah is very proud of the fact that Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, quoted something she said in one of his speeches. She is even more proud of the fact that Senator Whitmire requested that she sing during his visit to the HCW program. The song that she sang moved many of the audience members to tears.

Anisha

(16 years old, Grade 10)

When I initially interviewed Anisha, I wasn't sure that she was going to be appropriate for the study. I had concerns about undiagnosed emotional problems that I did not want to unconsciously exacerbate through the interview process. However Anisha's mother and grandmother consented to her involvement in the study, and like the other participants, Anisha signed an assent form. I knew that Anisha had been the victim of a gang rape two months prior to our first interview and that the boys had been caught and the case was proceeding to trial. Anisha was working through her issues with one of the HCW staff and attended the support group on a daily basis.

Anisha's situation and emotional problems were complicated by behavior that caused other group members to shun her. Information disclosed during one of the HCW group meetings was spread around school and the leak was traced back to her. After several weeks of not attending the daily support group and of avoiding group members, Anisha, with HCW staff support, decided to return to the group. She admitted her wrongdoing and asked for forgiveness. Her peers agreed to give her another chance but were distant in their treatment to her for several weeks following her return. For many weeks after, some members of the group refused to disclose feelings unless she stepped out of the room. During this time, her already immature behavior became even more childlike. At times she was clingy with HCW staff, and at other times she brooded and was unwilling to talk. She required a lot of time and attention from family members and HCW program staff.

Anisha's mother was released from prison in October, 2002 and immediately started her fourth drug treatment program. Anisha's mother got a job as a nursing home attendant and became involved in the HCW program. After 6 months of sobriety, she came to talk to the group about her past. She wanted the youth to know that a parent can change.

Anisha's mother has a lot of guilt over the kinds of difficulties that Anisha and her brothers have suffered as a result of her incarceration and seems determined to "make it up to them". The stress and strain of navigating "the free world" have caused her to be "short tempered and impatient" with her children and with her mother. After slapping one of her children during a heated discussion, Anisha's mother decided to attend an eight-week anger management class. She has done several media interviews with the program and has become a requested speaker. Telling her story and receiving positive feedback has allowed her to experience a level of self-respect and respect from others that she has not felt in many years. She seems to work hard to live up to this new image that her children, family, friends and community have of her.

Instead of answering the questions that I posed, Anisha gave me information that she felt was important. Her responses forced me to consider the legitimacy of the questions to her situation. Upon further reflection, she answered the questions but from a different perspective. For instance, her answers reflected how the needs and concerns of youth with a mother in prison might differ from the needs of those whose mother has been released. During the time that Anisha's mother was incarcerated Anisha was more concerned about getting her basic needs met. Once her mother was released, got a job

and was able to contribute to the family, Anisha's concerns shifted to her mother's ability to remain clean and sober.

These needs and concerns seem to differ from teen to teen, even among siblings who are close in age. While Anisha allowed herself to need and hope for a warm, caring, and sober mother, her 14-year-old brother appeared to refuse such hope. He has no intention of participating in the HCW program and resents Anisha and her mother for their participation. He would prefer that his mother's incarceration remain a secret to be kept within the family. Anisha's grandmother told me that he was mortified when he heard that his mother had disclosed her past drug use and prostitution to the members of the HCW program.

In the spring of 2003, Anisha was part of a group of HCW teens taken to a male prison to talk about how their parents' incarcerations had affected them. Anisha was there to support the three youth who would be sharing their stories. The director was surprised when Anisha whispered that she also had a few words that she wanted to share with the inmates. The director gave Anisha a space on the program, and everyone was astonished when she eloquently told the inmates how she felt when her mother was arrested and taken to prison. She also talked about the joy she felt when she her mother was released, and she encouraged the inmates to let thoughts of their children help prevent them from returning to prison.

This chapter provided an overview of the teen participants and gave some salient, although limited, information about their situations and their families. Information was limited to protect the identities of the girls and their families. Chapter 6, the next chapter, will provide an analysis of the three sub-questions used to guide the study. The chapter

starts by providing contextual information intended to identify the environmental influences affecting this group of research participants. The chapter ends with a discussion of the descriptive themes that resulted from the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 6

THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF MATERNAL IMPRISONMENT

Summary

The previous chapter provides an overview of each of the girls in the study. This chapter addresses the three sub-questions that guided this research design. The questions are:

1) What needs and concerns do these teenagers have?
2) What coping strategies do they use?
3) How do the incarcerated parent and custodial parent/caregiver respond to the teen?

Data reflecting answers to the sub-questions work in unison to inform the broad question of the perceived impact that maternal imprisonment has on African American adolescent girls Answers to these sub questions informed the basic research question.

This chapter first presents several contextual notes to provide relevant background information. These contextual notes provide a more detailed view of the environmental influences that affect this particular group of research participants. The remainder of the chapter provides descriptive themes identified for each of the three sub-questions. This description presents needs, concerns, and coping strategies under one unified discussion; As I present the needs and concerns, I also discuss coping strategies that the teens used to meet those needs. The chapter ends with a discussion of the teens' perceived responses, from their incarcerated parent and caregiver, to their concerns.

Contextual Background

Before presenting the descriptive findings, it may be helpful to provide additional context for this study. Although Chapters 1 and 2 presented the general context related to children of prisoners, several important contextual pieces specific to this group of girls emerged throughout the data collection process. This information may help to more fully understanding the lives of these girls and their families.

The first contextual note relates to the concept of "mother" and "mothering." Although I have been mothered for most of my life and have been a mother for more than half of my life, I discovered in the process of this study that my views of "mothering" and "motherhood" were very narrowly defined and reflective of mainstream ideology. This study attempts to understand the mothering process for women who have turned the care of their children over to others while still attempting to maintain their mother-child relationships. The mothers and mother figures of these six teenage girls represented a variety of mothering styles and beliefs about how women go about the task of "mothering." Any attempts to understand these women quickly challenge simple assumptions.

The complexity of the situation becomes even more apparent when one tries to understand the thinking process for a child in this position. I became aware of such questions as: *What defines a mother? What does it mean to be a "good" or a "bad" mother? What constitutes good mothering for a child whose mother is in prison?* Many times during the research, I believe each member of the triumvirate (mother, caregiver, and teenager) would have provided different answers to these questions if asked.

The second contextual note acknowledges the multiple traumas these girls have experienced in their lives over the course of the last two years. First, traumatic local and national events affected the girls during the course of the study. Devastating floods hit Houston in the summer of 2001, causing many Houston residents to lose their homes. Such was the case for Valina and her family. Two of the other girls and their families spent time in a local shelter. The flood rendered an entire section of M.B. Smiley High School unusable at the beginning of the fall semester. For that entire semester, the school system bussed the youth to an overcrowded school where they felt un-welcomed and physically unsafe. At about that same time, the whole nation sustained trauma from the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001. In fact, one of the girls in the study continues to mourn a cousin whose body was never found in the collapsed World Trade Tower.

In addition to local and national events, all of the girls experienced trauma on a personal level in one way or another both before and during the incarceration of her mother. All six girls have been victims of sexual assault. In addition, each has dealt with additional challenges such as changes in living circumstances. Some girls have experienced multiple caregiver changes; in some cases, their caregivers have even asked them to leave.

This combination of traumas puts these girls' mental health at risk. Prompted by the September 11th terrorist attack, The National Institutes of Mental Health issued alerts and fact sheets (NIMH, No. 01-3518) highlighting the need for adults to help children and adolescents cope with violence and disasters. The research indicated that the impact of a traumatic event is likely to be greatest for an adolescent with previous experiences of

trauma or with an existing mental health problem (Garbarino, Kostelny, & Dubrow, 1991; Boney-McCoy & Finkelhorn, 1995). Further, children who lack family support, for whatever reason, have a poorer prognosis for recovery. All of the girls in this study have suffered repeated trauma, placing them at risk for future mental health problems.

The last contextual note relates to the teens and families' involvement in the HCW program. All six of the teen girls actively participate in the program and currently receive two or more services. One mother from this sample also strongly involves herself with the HCW program on a consistent basis, while two others maintain written communication with the program and had the intention of seeking out the HCW upon release from prison. Two of the caregivers are also extremely involved in the program, and all six access one or more services.

The weekly, sometimes daily, involvement with the HCW program distinguishes this sample from other adolescent children of incarcerated parents. As the program's visibility has increased, so has its ability to provide resources, support, and assistance to the participants. Documented improvement, in one or more ways, exists for every girl in the study. Grades and attendance are up, referrals to detention are down, and there are no recent notations of gang involvement in the school records for any of the girls. It seems appropriate to note the shifting circumstances of the study participants, as part of the context for the study prior to examining the data on the teens' ongoing needs, concerns and coping strategies.

Needs, Concerns, and Coping Strategies

Analysis of data gathered for this study indicates that four primary stressors stymie these adolescents:

1. unmet basic needs,
2. unacknowledged emotional and psychological needs,
3. threats to physical safety,
4. blocked or unavailable opportunities.

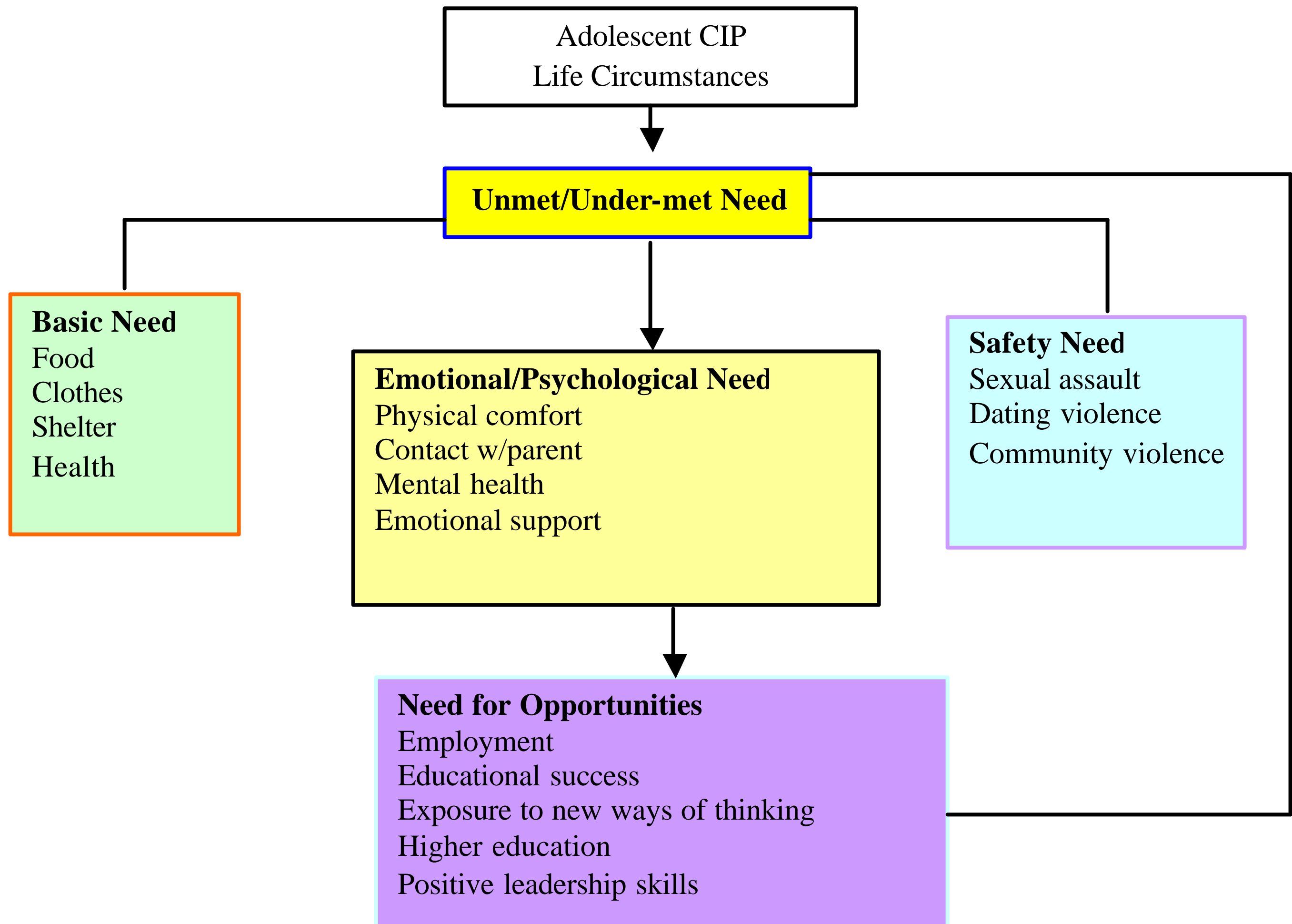
All four of these stressors fall best under the umbrella heading of unmet need. Figure 3 contains a visual image of these needs as outlined in the data.

The first three un-met needs in the list can be indirectly responsible for the fourth, unavailable or blocked opportunities. For example, if the youth does not have a stable place to live, she can encounter difficulty getting to school, which in turn will prevent her from receiving an education that will prepare her for better employment opportunities. In some cases, life circumstances have directly prevented the youth from accessing opportunities. Consider the HCW youth whose guidance counselor never talked to him about college because she assumed that he was not interested. She may also have believed he was incapable of academic achievement. She told him that she assumed that he would graduate and go to work in order to help his family.

Figure 3 below indicates the variety of needs as captured in the data collected from the participants. I grouped needs related to food, shelter, clothes, and healthcare together under the category of *basic need*. I categorized lack of physical comfort, desire for contact with one or both parents, concern about mental health issues, and the need for emotional support as *emotional/psychological need*. *Safety need* reflects any fear of violence. This category includes the emotional, physical or sexual violence that several of the girls experienced in dating relationships or at the hands of family members as well as random community related violence. Finally, I categorized the lack of employment

opportunities and the desire for educational success, leadership opportunities and exposure to new ways of thinking as the *need for opportunities*.

Figure 3. Unmet and Under-met Needs



Basic Material Needs

Of the four "need" groups, the need for food, shelter, and clothing--items needed for basic survival---surfaced most often as the primary concerns for the youth as well as their families. Most of the caregivers in the sample lived on an income that placed them at or just above the poverty level. Those who had moderate incomes often depended on income and resources provided by other family members. Although the help was

extremely appreciated, it was inconsistent and often unpredictable. Doniece's Grandmother explains,

> Sometimes it's feast, and sometimes its famine. My children will often just show up with boxes of detergent and cleaning items, bring huge bags of groceries or give me money on a bill. Near the end of the month, when everyone is low, we're scraping for food.

Staff members of the HCW program validate this reality with agency documentation that reflects daily attempts to secure and deliver food to families.

In this country, we seldom consider the idea that young people are going without food; however, basic food needs often pose a serious problem for these youth and their families. Free and reduced lunch diminishes the problem through the week but doesn't account for the weekend or the times when youth cannot get to school. One of the teachers at Smiley High provided the following example. Valina came to school on a Monday looking very lethargic. The teacher said that Valina seemed uncharacteristically quiet and "looked dazed about the eyes." Another teacher concluded that Valina had probably experimented with drugs. This teacher talked with an HCW staff member about Valina's behavior and the staff person did further investigation. After several conversations and probing questions, they learned that Valina had only eaten rice for two days because rice was all that the food that they had at home. Later that day HCW without solicitation took food to Valina's grandmothers home. In addition to connecting families with local food banks, the HCW program has started a food bank that is able to help families in an emergency situation and with "zero humiliation."

At the very beginning of the study, I learned a valuable lesson about using food as an incentive for recruiting youth to the study. I don't consider myself to be an insensitive person but the idea of taking youth out for a meal during their first interview was not as well thought-out as I initially believed. The budget for the HCW evaluation provided a food allowance for 10 individual interviews with youth and 2 focus groups. I gave each youth a range for what we could spend on the meal and allowed them to choose the restaurant. (I later learned to set a limit on how far away the restaurant could be. Some youth greatly enjoyed riding in my car and being away from home.) During my second interview, which took place at *Joe's Crab Shack*, I noticed that my interviewee was only ordering French fried potatoes. After many probes and a lengthy conversation, I learned that she felt guilty about eating out. "I feel like I'm eating a gourmet meal behind my family's back." I offered an alternative solution that worked for everyone. We went to *Burger Barn*, ate and completed the interview. Afterwards we ordered a bag of burgers, purchased a liter of soda at the store and surprised the family with the food. I was able to stay near the budget and learned a valuable lesson in the process. With each subsequent interview that involved a meal, I evaluated the ramifications of feeding one person in the family.

In addition to help with food, the HCW program frequently helps families with shelter needs, either directly or by providing referrals for rent assistance and utility reconnection. The only time that most Americans ever consider the effect of not having electricity or gas in our homes is during those unusual situations involving a natural disaster, such as a tornado or flood. However, shut off notices and the disconnection of services occurs frequently for these youth. The disconnection of utilities creates a serious

challenge to completing homework or study, to keeping food from spoiling, to controlling the temperature in the environment, and even to waking up in time to attend school. Most of the girls in the study take great pride in their appearance and felt humiliated during times when they have difficulty keeping themselves or their clothes clean because of disconnected utilities. In addition to receiving direct help from the program, HCW participants formed a network that allowed them to help each other. For instance, they would loan each other clothes and make-up or provide a refuge for the night. Often the girls' primary goal was just to make it to school. Once there, the girls felt someone would be available to help them get through the day.

Finally the youth also had clothing needs that represented both basic survival needs and esteem needs. Like most teenagers, these youth are often consumed with the types of clothes they wear. They appeared to believe that it is okay to be poor but not okay to "look poor." Four of the six girls go to great lengths to wear popular, designer "knock off" fashions. In addition to purchasing the clothes outright, several of the teens admitted to trading clothes with others, borrowing clothes from others, buying clothes from "boosters" (individuals who stole items and sold them for a living) at greatly reduced prices, becoming boosters themselves, and returning clothes after wearing them once. For two of the girls, clothes needs were more basic; they just wanted clothes that "weren't raggedy looking."

Clothing also seemed to represent social needs. The youth talked about being taunted by peers and being looked down on by some teachers because they didn't fit in. They believed that wearing "the right clothes" reduced some of the stigma of being poor. However, any expression of stigma seemed to relate more to poverty than to parental

incarceration. The HCW Director, Marilyn Gambrill, said that it was not at all unusual for youth to refuse to attend school because they felt their clothes were inappropriate or because they didn't have school supplies.

I've known teachers that have mistakenly assumed that laziness caused a student to attend class without paper or pencils. The teacher's way of preventing that behavior in the future is to yell at the student and embarrass them in front of their peers. The student's way of avoiding such a scene is to skip school or drop out all together. When the HCW staff saw that many children skipped school because they lacked basic necessities, the program began to provide program participants with paper and pencils and hygiene products such as tampons, deodorant, and toothbrushes. They feel this service alone increased the number of "in-school" days for this population.

Health related concerns did not appear as a frequent topic during the interviews. However, when the issue did come up, it usually involved neglected medical situations that had become serious. For example, one of the respondents stated that she had contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that turned into "serious female problems". She did not go in to great detail about the "serious female problems," because she was embarrassed. When the youth reported her medical problems, she had difficulty getting caregivers to take her to the doctor. They did not taker her problems seriously because she appeared physically fine. As the problems worsened, the teen found that healthcare professionals would not see her without a parent or guardian. Thus, even though the teen acted responsibly and in her own best interest, she was unable to access health care services. This is a single example among many others. However, in general, the girls in the study and their families used the emergency room more often than

primary healthcare doctors or medical specialist. Caregivers did not appear unconcerned about the youth, but rather appeared overwhelmed with responsibilities and short on time, energy, and money. In each case, where the youth attempted to take responsibility for their own health or dental care needs they encountered systems unable or unwilling to serve youth under 18 unless accompanied by an adult.

Two additional items fit in the "basic needs" category did not seem apparent at the beginning of the study. Approximately halfway through the study, I realized that families without transportation or without telephone service had a more difficult time getting their needs met. In this part of the country, having a car and a telephone has become a part of everyday life for most people. For these youth, however, the absence of access to reliable transportation and telephone service potentially prevented needs from being met, resulted in missed opportunities, and reduced their quality of life.

Most of the youth in the HCW program have access to a telephone, but do not have a consistently working telephone in their homes. I frequently encountered great difficulty scheduling and completing appointments with families that did not have consistent telephone service. They in turn encountered difficulty taking care of household business, attending to employment matters, and making and keeping important medical, school, or business appointments. For youth seeking employment, the absence of a telephone makes it difficult to follow up on advertised openings and to stay in contact with an employer once they have submitted an application.

To some extent, the same problems arise for families who do not have their own transportation. All of the study participants live on or near a bus line. However, dependence on the bus limited how and where youth or their caregivers could seek

employment and made chores such as transporting groceries a challenge. Lack of transportation also posed a more serious problem for caregivers or youth with health problems.

Youth and their families coped with the lack of basic and material needs by relying on each other, friends, family members, and the HCW program. The youth also get their basic needs met through their "church families." All of the youth claim a religious denomination, and three of them very actively take part in their churches. All six of the caregivers have mentioned their reliance on God to "get them through," and five of them actively participate in churches located in the community.

Emotional/psychological needs

The literature review of this study already explicated concerns about the unmet emotional and psychological needs of this population. Although scant, the available literature implied that a child separated from a parent due to incarceration often suffered emotionally and/or psychologically. Although the number of youth in this study prevented generalization, data from this study did support these findings. Valina, Doniece, Brandy & Micah all reported having feelings of hopelessness and thoughts of suicide over the past three years. Anisha has reportedly attempted suicide twice, and her grandmother reports that she took her to the doctor because "Anisha's nerves were bad." Shimika says, "I have had days where I cried and cried, and I didn't think I would ever stop. My nerves were so bad that I wondered if I was losing my mind." In the African American community a reference to "nerves" often means that an individual was or is suffering from a form of depression that may range from mild to clinically severe. In some instances, "bad nerves" may indicate a serious mental illness such bi-polar disease

or schizophrenia. Thus, plenty of supporting evidence exists among this group of girls to indicate unmet emotional and psychological needs such as the need for support, acceptance, and unconditional love and concern.

One way these teens appear to seek unconditional love and concern is through non-sexual, physical comfort from caring adults. Teens in the HCW program would stand in line to get a hug from one of the staff before entering the group environment. When asked to list the strengths of the HCW program, the teens repeatedly cited "hugs from the staff" as an important aspect of the program. As the teens began to know me better, an individual interview would end with the teen hugging me before leaving the interview session.

Initially this behavior took me by surprise. In my nuclear and extended family, as in many others, adults hug a teenager with the expectation that the teen may gently reject this form of endearment. Generally, as children get older, they become less likely to participate in physical expressions of affection with adults. However, the teens that I encountered as a result of this study, have not only willingly hugged adults, they appear to need and desire non-sexual physical comfort. Literature on adolescent age children of incarcerated parents did not mention this need nor do we associate such a need with teenagers. However, during the interviews conducted as part of the HCW evaluation, the concept surfaced so often that I identified it as an emotional need.

Both boys and girls mentioned going to the HCW staff for hugs during times of disappointment and stress. They also sought hugs to celebrate and express joy. I observed students, ranging in age from 13 to 19, waiting for hugs both before and after

the daily support groups. In addition, they sought physical comfort during the report of a traumatic event during support group meetings.

Because of the variety and frequency of hugging situations, I flagged the concept for observation during the interviews for this study. Each of the six girls mentioned it at least once during the interviews conducted for this study. While many schools and social service organizations serving youth have instituted a "no touch" policy, the HCW program has no concerns about physically comforting youth and has made physical comfort an established part of the program intervention.

Maslow (1998) states that needs are "prepotent." This term means that unfilled needs have great influence over individual actions (Maslow & Lowry, 1998). Therefore, a youth's unmet need for physical comfort from an adult potentially poses a major concern. Such a youth would potentially attempt to get that need met in inappropriate ways or from adults who may victimize them. For example, when Anisha and Brandy talked about some of their past "boyfriends," among the list were older men who appear to have taken advantage of the girls' desire to have someone love them. The potential for abuse is seriously heightened when alcohol and drugs are a factor, as they are with many of the girls in the study.

Despite the abusive and \potentially abusive situations these girls put themselves in, they all aspire to find someone who will treat them well. Anisha says that she is going to wait for the "right man" this time. Although she has had many sexual partners and has rarely used protection, she is more concerned about being seen as a "hoe" and less concerned about contracting a sexually transmitted disease. When asked about her lack

of concern, she says that the boys that she's with are "all clean" and they are "not the kind to have any diseases."

The literature states that children of incarcerated parents frequently endure emotional and psychological stress (Johnston, 1995; Parke & Clark-Stewart, 2001). The data from this study consistently supports this statement. These girls cope with difficult emotional and psychological times by relying on friends, family, the HCW program, and their religious beliefs. The girls use spiritual beliefs as a sort of protective shield. Youth frequently say, "You have to put that in the hands of the Lord," or "I'm just giving it up to God; there's nothing else that I can do." I found that the majority of the parent/caregivers also rely on their faith in God and their spiritual beliefs to see them through the trials and tribulations of life and to cope with situations where they had little control.

As the Director of the HCW program revealed her personal beliefs against organized religion, I noticed that the teens mentioned religion in conversations with each other but less often brought it up during open group discussion. Ms. Gambrill attributes the abuse and suffering she sustained as a child to religion. She assumes the same was true for many of the youth in the program. This difference represents one of the few culturally-related tensions I ever sensed between Ms. Gambrill, a white woman, and her African American staff. Both of her primary staff members profess a strong faith in God and are active in their respective churches.

The general challenges that youth encounter during adolescent development in today's society can cause stress that places emotional health at risk. Scholars believe that the risks may be even higher for youth of color. Surveys and clinical studies of mental

health in African American youth indicate that 20 to 40 percent suffer mild to moderate rates of depression, while 5 to 15 percent exhibit severe depression in non-clinical samples (Gibbs, 2001). Although research done over the last 20 years has consistently found that the self-concept and self-esteem of African American youth is as positive if not more positive than comparative samples of whites youth (Gibbs, 1985, Gibbs, 2001), children of prisoners may not fare as well. Data from this study amplifies the need to consider the mental and emotional health of adolescents affected by a parent's criminal behavior and subsequent incarceration. By studying the youth who seem to do well despite difficult circumstances, we can identify information that enables us to increase the resilience of those who are at risk for mental health problems.

Safety Needs

Safety resonates as a constant concern for every participant in this study. At an early age, each of these girls gained beliefs, developed from painful experiences, that the world is an unsafe place for girls and women. Anisha remains unable to be alone, regardless of the time of day; and she continues to suffer nightmares from the vicious sexual assault that she sustained last year. Doniece believes that sexual assault is something that every woman has to deal with as a "downside of being a female."

The painful experiences are not just personal and individual, but frequently rooted in the family and community. Narratives from four of the girls contain references to men who have physically and emotionally abused women in their families. Two of the narratives reflect situations where violence occurred during a dating relationship. In addition, narratives from all of the girls contain stories of drive-by shootings, "beat downs," and stabbings that occurred in the community or even at school. Two of the

girls admit to carrying weapons "for protection," and four of the six seem hyper alert to threats of physical safety. Doniece and Brandy, the oldest members of the study, express their belief that ethnicity is related to their feeling of a lack of societal concern about their safety. Brandy said,

> I ain't gone be no statistic. I keep a little something, something [weapon for protection] with me at all times. Half the streetlights don't work, if somebody is raped they don't believe you, and when something happens it takes the police an hour to get there. Nobody cares about Black girls in this world, but we look out for each other in the hood.

Part of an ethnographer's job is to ascertain what the research participant thinks is happening. Individuals in Brandy's community may not agree with her statement, but this statement truly represents of her current view of the world.

Violence appears to be an accepted part of these kids' lives. Some face greater risk of victimization and violence than others, but all of them experience more risk than teenage girls in other communities in the city. With no conscious provocation on their part, an incident may occur and their physical safety can instantly become an issue.

At times, however, their chosen response to a situation creates a safety concern. One day, shortly before group began, a student ran into the group room to get Perry Beasley, a male HCW staff member. Perry ran to see what was going on and the rest of the group and staff followed close behind him. A male student had called Micah "out of her name," and she had slapped him. "I can't let that nigger call me a hoe and get away with it!" she claimed. Later, another student kindly explained to me, the ignorant researcher, that after Micah slapped the boy, he had permission to treat her like "she was a man." In other

words, he could disregard gender and be as physically violent and/or as verbally abusive as he chose to be. The HCW staff worked quickly to find a resolution to the problem between Micah and the male student. Apparently, group culture would not allow this young man to ignore the slap and retain his dignity. From my perspective, Micah's own actions had transformed the threat of violence into an impending reality for her.

Other times, violence exists within the home situation. Some of the girls live with families where the behavior of individuals within the family or home creates a safety concern for everyone in the household. Although I have reason to believe that at least two of the girls were at risk of abuse from men living in the home, they did not mention such concerns to me during any of the interviews. I made the girls aware of the limits of confidentiality in the study, and they may have chosen not to disclose any recent instances of abuse. I felt comforted by the fact that the youth appeared comfortable disclosing instances of abuse to HCW staff. The staff maintained regular communication with child welfare professionals and the domestic violence office of the Houston Police Dept.

These teens need someone to talk to about his or her safety. They need someone who can protect them in unsafe circumstances. These needs are not limited to concerns about their physical safety, but also extend concern about their general well-being. Valina's favorite story recounts the time that her grandmother threatened to "whip a teacher's ass" about the "disrespectful" way that she had talked to Valina in front of other students. However, for many of the girls, the persons who seem most willing to stand up for them in their lives are often not physically present to do so; these persons are their incarcerated mothers. Some caregivers are too tired, sick, overwhelmed, or distracted to

do so. Others just don't see the need. Ms. Gambrill's willingness to be a forceful, verbal advocate for the youth in program has greatly contributed to her popularity.

Recent incidents of young girls and women being kidnapped and murdered has greatly increased our country's concern for the safety of our youth. We have instituted neighborhood and community mechanisms to decrease and eliminate physical threat to their safety. However, based on comments that these teens made, they fail to e exercise any concern from others about their health and wellbeing beyond that shown by their immediate family or close friends.

Opportunity Needs

In this study, esteem refers to two types of esteem needs: 1) the self-esteem that results from competence or the mastery of a task; and 2) the esteem that results from recognition or attention from others (Maslow & Lowry, 1998). Individuals that show some evidence of self-esteem and confidence are often the ones presented with opportunities to grow. Two of the girls in the study felt they only came to the attention of others (authority figures at home & school) as a result of negative activities. Even as they attempt to change their behavior, they receive little positive attention outside of the HCW program. The other four girls, each in their own way, expressed a concern about unavailable opportunities. They attributed this lack to a number of causes such as: 1) the failure of others to see them as competent, 2) poverty, 3) the lack of family members who were successful [and could teach them], 4) the lack of good fortune.

Each of the girls talked about their "desire to succeed" or their intention to "become somebody." Several of their stated goals hinged on two things: 1) their ability to overcome barriers created by unmet basic needs and 2) their ability to access a variety

of opportunities. Valina, the poet in the group, often talked about becoming a pediatrician. She had good grades and above average intelligence. However, she is not being academically prepared for college; she has no college graduates in her family from whom she can gain information; and she is not being encouraged to consider college by her guidance counselor.

During the 18 months that I observed these youth, I noted clear leadership abilities, and I was impressed by their public speaking skills. If a young person can effectively lead a gang, as some of the youth in the HCW program do, couldn't they become effective leaders of a group with a positive goal? Many of these young people would not only survive, but could thrive if they had opportunities such as gainful employment, skills training, and exposure to new ideas, people and places.

Most high schools pour their time, energy, and resources into academic achievers who pose few problems, have needs that are met at home, and more importantly, clearly indicate their potential for future success. During my observations, I identified youth with great potential. Unfortunately, they often came to the attention of others for their negative behavior or the negative behavior of family members, rather than for the great potential that I saw.

Two of the girls in the study expressed their strong disappointment at not being able to secure summer or after-school employment. Summer and after-school jobs can provide useful skills for career building. For instance, these jobs can lead to long-term work possibilities. Summer and after-school work may also introduce youth to individuals who may become mentors. Finally, such work can provide opportunities that

encourage youth to pursue higher education or other career dreams once thought impossible

However, although summer employment programs did exist funding cutbacks caused employers to be very selective about their chosen protégés. Employers showed no interest in youth who appeared to have family problems, potential transportation issues, or, difficulty presenting themselves to the general public. No one can say for sure why these girls encountered such difficulty. However, my observations showed that parents or guardians' lack of knowledge about employment programs stymied the youth. Uninformed parent and guardians could not inform their children about opportunities and were unable or unwilling to sign the appropriate paperwork.

The girls focused on lack of employment opportunities, but I observed other kinds of opportunities that seemed out of reach for these teens. For example, they did not appear to consider or be considered for school opportunities such as running for an office in the student government or working for clerical and support staff. These girls did not participate in the band, the drill team, the school newspaper, the drama club, or the yearbook committee. They did not mention girl scouts or explorers clubs. They were not nominated for any kind of awards nor were they involved in any post high school preparation except through the HCW. The only notable exception occurred near the very end of the study. Valina, with the support of her friends and family, began preparing for drill team try-outs. I enjoyed seeing everyone around her become excited for her and personally invested in her success.

The literature states that growth-producing activities are critical for a young persons successful movement from one stage of development to another. Social and

economic opportunities available through school and community activities help to prepare youth to develop and pursue adult goals and dreams (Stevens, 2002). Adolescent preparation and transitional adulthood status remain relatively undeveloped topics in the adolescent literature (Santrock, 1998). We must consider the ultimate impact that unavailable opportunities may have on this population of at risk youth.

Incarcerated Parent and Custodial Caregivers Response

Every girl in the study expressed a mixture of feelings and emotions when talking about her mother. These discussions were complex and multileveled. The girls' perceptions of the mothers' responses to them often changed from one week to another. This, in and of itself, did not seem much different from a typical teen experiencing the expected complexities of adolescence. However, the fact that these girls have been separated from their mothers for a significant amount of time as a result of criminal activity does make them different. The feelings they expressed reflected that difference and also reflected the pain residing at the core of their mother-child relationship.

Feelings of abandonment always appeared among the plethora of other responses being expressed. Conversations about the mothers' incarceration seemed especially sensitive, and the girls frequently cried when sharing their thoughts. Although Anisha has reunited with her mother, she too feels like her mother abandoned her and may do so again in the future. In fact, every one of these girls has been separated from her mother on more then one occasion—often due to previous incarceration but also for other reasons. For example, mothers who have alcohol or drug problems often left because they didn't want their children to see them high or "strung out". Anisha's mother told me,

> I would stay away from home for weeks at a time. I didn't want my kids and my family to see me when I was high. I didn't want anything to interfere with my enjoyment of being high. After I came down, I was too shamed to be around them. When I thought of some of the things that I did to get my dope I didn't want to see myself in the mirror, let alone face anyone else.

Three girls felt like their mothers would have been great moms if they had not gotten hooked on drugs. Two others felt like their mothers really didn't care about them anyway.

Definitions of "mother" and "mothering" proved to be complex and multi-dimensional. The feelings that the girls' caregivers have toward their incarcerated mothers complicates the girls' own feelings. In two cases, the caregivers feel angry for things that the mother had done in the past, and they resent having to care for their children. The recognition of these feelings in no way implies that these caregivers do not love these children, as most of them do. However, these caregivers often feel unable or unwilling to hide their anger at the teens' mother. Many times, that anger unconsciously transfers to the teen. On more than one occasion, members of Micah's family have told her that she is destined to turn out just like her "no good mother."

Other girls resented their mother for attempting to mother while in prison but then paying no attention to them when released in the free world. Brandy argued with her mother during a prison visit and told her,

> How the hell are you going to try to talk to me about my behavior when you locked up?" She said, "I felt bad afterwards but I'm out here struggling, and she has no idea what life is like for me. When she is out

> [not in prison or jail], I can't find her--she's in the streets. When she's in prison, she always writes, constantly bugs me to visit; she wants to play the mommy role. Well, I wasn't up for it that day.

The teens keep in touch with their mothers primarily through letters. Collect phone calls from a correctional facility are extremely expensive. In one case, these calls resulted in the family's telephone service disconnection. The literature states that teenagers are less likely to visit an incarcerated parent than younger children, and that is certainly true in this group of teens. In part, this lack of visitation reflected a lack of transportation and the hardship that such a visit creates for the caregiver, since the teen could not visit without an adult. However, the lack of visitation also reflected the teens' feelings about their parents, their feelings about correctional institutions, and the difficult emotions that may surface as a result of the visit. Anisha said,

> Visiting Mama always took a whole day and night. It took us four hours to get there. We visited for two hours, and it took us four hours to get back home. It was fun eating out on the way up there and back, but I know that it put a strain on my grandmamma. Once we got there, I always hated the way the guards look at you like you've committed a crime. The minute the door slams behind us, locking me into the prison, I instantly become depressed. I was always happy to see Mama but sad when it was time to leave. We would all cry and I would cry half of the way home. Writing and sending cards was a lot easier.

Two of the girls in the study felt more like a parent to their mothers than their mothers were to them. When their mothers were not in prison, the teens often took

responsibility for housework care of their siblings, dealing with bills and bill collectors, and caring for their mothers needs. On the other hand, when their mothers went to jail or prison, the custodial parent or caregiver often expected them to assume a child's role. Some of the girls found it difficult to function in an adult role part of the time and then abruptly return to the status of a child. The girls felt that caregivers allowed them little involvement in decisions affecting their lives and paid scant attention to their feelings.

There is really no way to easily explain or summarize the responses that the girls received from their incarcerated parents or their caregivers. The responses shifted and changed based on the current status of the relationships, the dynamics within the family, and their current life circumstances. Although complicated, the discussions about parental and caregiver responses reflected a capacity for building or rebuilding the relationship between mother and daughter. In addition, almost all of the mothers and daughters seemed to desire reconnection.

The girls made a point to say that no one ever asked them how they felt about separation from their mothers, and they appreciated the opportunity to talk about it. Their caregivers didn't ask nor did other members of their family or friends. When divorce, abandonment, or death separates a child from his or her parent, adults generally express concern not only about the child's physical wellbeing but also about the child's emotional and psychological health. Information published on children's mental health has increasingly made us aware of the effects that separation from a significant adult has on the health and wellbeing of a child. Community organizations and even schools frequently offer support groups for young people whose parents have divorced or died. The literature states that this is generally not true for children or teenagers separated from

a parent due to incarceration (Johnston, 1995, 2001; Travis & Waul, 2003). Such research supports statements that the participants made.

Chapter 7 follows with a comparative analysis of the needs identified by the respondents in the dissertation study to the needs identified by the teens participating in the HCW evaluation.

CHAPTER 7

COMPARING RESPONDENT NEEDS TO THOSE OF A LARGER GROUP

Chapter 6 provided an analysis of the responses that the research participants gave to the sub-questions guiding the study and introduced the themes reflected in the data. Data revealed four areas of need that were unmet or under-met for each girl. Chapter 7 compares the needs identified by the individual girls in this study to the needs identified by the youth involved in the HCW evaluation.

The HCW Evaluation Focus Group Process

This section compares needs respondents identified to needs identified by a larger group of African American teenage children of prisoners. This larger group consists of teen boys and girls in the HCW program, ages 16 to 18, who have experienced parental incarceration within the last three years. Phase IV of the HCW evaluation employed the use of concept mapping to capture qualitative data from these youth. This methodology and software developed by Concept Systems Inc. (Trochim, 2001) allowed for the capture and display of qualitative data in quantitative form. A total of 14 youth, 7 males and 7 females, participated in this phase of the evaluation. Phase IV also involved all six of the girls in the present study. Phase IV's specific aim was to identify the youths' perceived needs by asking them to identify the essential elements in a program serving teenage children of incarcerated parents.

On the first day of a two-day process, researchers asked the youth to brainstorm statements that would complete the following sentence. This sentence is referred to as a focus statement.

A Program Serving Youth Impacted by Parental Incarceration is Effective When _____________.

The brainstorming activity generated a total of 49 statements including:

- it provides a safe house
- it gets your parents involved in the process
- it helps the kids who are in and out of school find employment
- it gives positive reinforcements
- it is available to all races
- I get a hug when I need it
- it treats me with respect
- it helps me learn to control my behavior
- it provides a safe place to talk about your problems

(See Attachment F for a complete list of the statements.)

On day two, researchers asked the youth to sort and rate the data. Sorting gives the data value and rating gives the data meaning. First, to sort the data, each participant received a stack of 49 cards. Each of the two-by-three cards contained one printed statement taken from the generated list. The researchers asked the youth to group the statements in a way that made sense to them and to label the groups or piles with a descriptive word or phrase. For example, one youth placed the following statements in a pile and labeled them: ***Help for parents.***

Statement # 9: **Includes parents and siblings**

Statement #10: **Gets your parents involved in the process**

Statement #12: **Provides parenting classes**

Statement #13: **Helps teen parents w/daycare, food, etc.**

Statement #31: **Helps families w/ Medicaid forms**

Statement #36: **Have a group for parents**

Then to rate the data, the researchers asked participants to provide interpretative value to each of the statement by rating them in several areas, including *importance.* Participants used a five-point scale with one indicating “no importance” and five

indicating "extreme importance." The rating question was, *"How important is this example for meeting the needs of kids with incarcerated parents?"* (See Attachment F for a sample, rating sheet). Each individual's response was entered into the computer to produce an overall understanding of the value participants placed on the importance of the statements.

The Eight-Cluster Solution

The Concept Systems software uses two major statistical analyses, multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis, to analyze the data. Once the analysis is complete, graphic representations, or maps, are provided. First, multidimensional scaling takes the sort data across all participants and develops a basic map where each statement represents a point on the map. Statements that more people piled together situate closer to each other on the map. Then, cluster analysis takes the output of the multidimensional scaling and partitions the map into groups of statements or clusters (Trochim, 2001). The maps show both how participants' ideas cluster together and how participants place value on those conceptual clusters. The software also allows for comparison of the ratings between different groups, such as males and females.

The cluster map in Figure 4 indicates the activities/services that youth feel are most important in serving young people affected by parental incarceration. The map illustrates an eight-cluster solution. A combination of participant input and computer calculations generated the labels assigned to each cluster. The numbers on the clusters indicate which of the statements participants assigned to that cluster. During the interpretation session, participants had an opportunity to replace cluster labels that, in their opinion, failed to accurately reflect the contents of that cluster.

After determining the final cluster map, the analysis generates maps according to how participant ratings place value on the individual clusters. All the participants' ratings for each statement in a cluster are averaged together to form an average rating value for that cluster. The layer value legend, in the bottom left corner of Figure 4 shows how important participants found the cluster statements to be.

As mentioned above, participants used a five point rating scale with 1 indicating "no importance" and 5 indicating "extreme importance." The legend of Figure 4 shows the averages for all the statements. It indicates that on average, participants rated all of the statements very highly. Ratings for individual statements range from 4.30 to 4.67 on a five-point scale.

The number of layers in each cluster reflects the average rating for the entire cluster. The clusters with the most layers reflect higher ratings, and those with the fewest layers reflect the lowest. In this map, statements related to the clusters *judicial system*, *respectful treatment*, and *what the program provides*, rated the highest with five layers. *What staff should do* comes next with four layers, followed by *expanding the program*, *important needs for youth* and a *better future*, each with three layers. *Help for parents* rated the lowest with only one layer. Therefore, although participants rated all of the statements as important, their perceptions of the level of importance differed.

Comparative Analysis

The clusters with the most layers included statements related to having material and emotional needs met, to getting fair and respectful treatment, and to having access to opportunities. As discussed in Chapter 6, unmet material and emotional needs and lack of access to opportunities, , surfaced as primary findings in the dissertation research study

focused on the six teen girls as well.

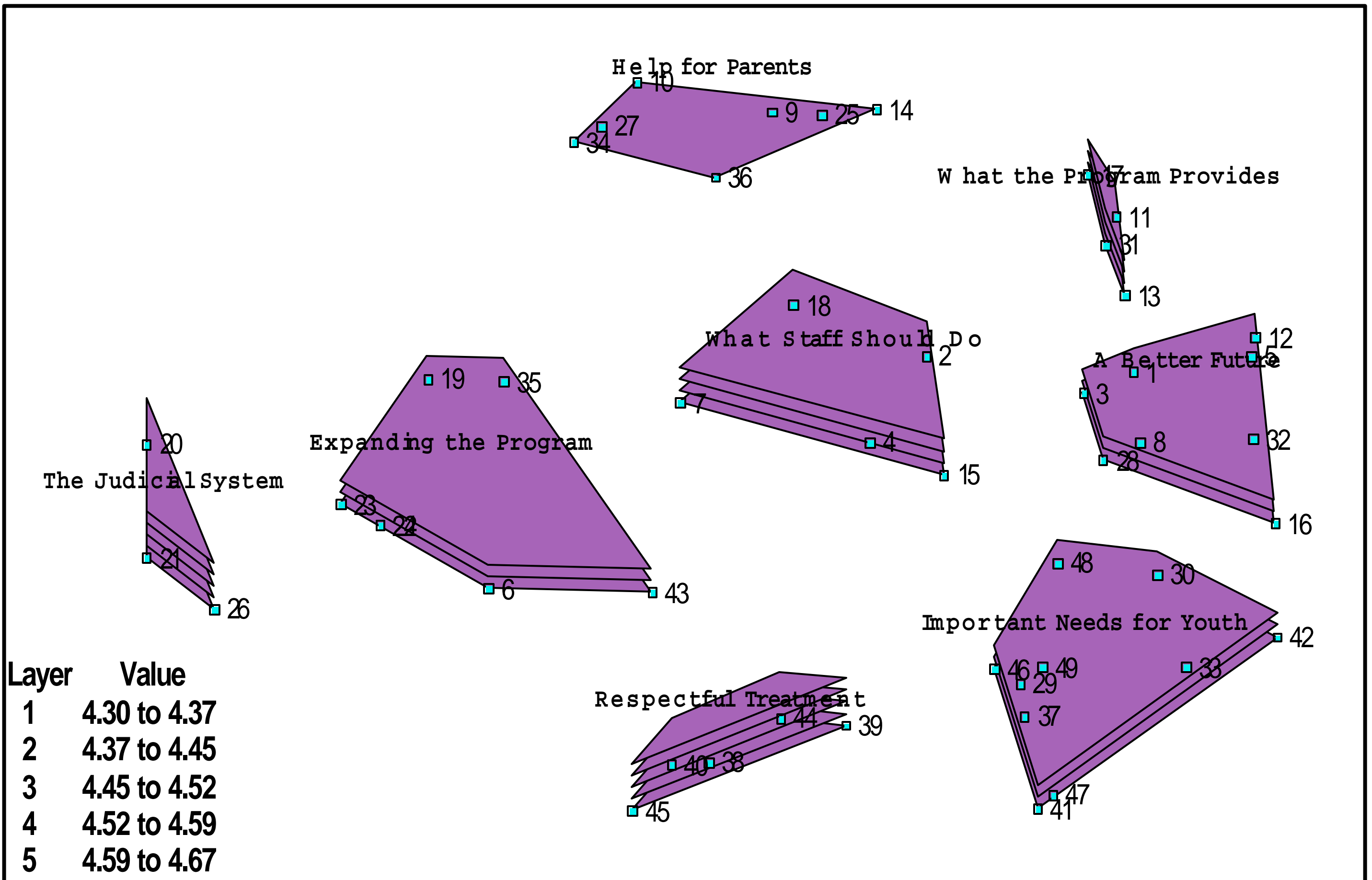
Focus groups held with teens participating in the HCW evaluation yielded very similar information. Clusters with the most layers, which reflected level of importance, included statements related to getting material and emotional needs met, and to having access to opportunities. The focus group participants also saw fair and respectful treatment as important.

In contrast, the issue of safety, that was so obvious in the study focused on the six teen girls, did not surface as important in the focus group data. However, both male and female participants frequently mentioned the issue of safety during individual interviews in the HCW evaluation. In sum, teen participants responding as a group valued a majority of the same needs individual African American CIPs identified as important.

The data presented in this comparison indicate a consistency of concerns across gender. Although the sample remains too small for generalizations to be made, the information gathered warrants the need for further study. Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion of the implications for social workers and makes practice and research recommendations.

To summarize, the point cluster maps consists of statements taken from the brain-storming portion of the focus group. The statements are grouped together according to the number of times that individual participants sorted them together. The shape of the map reflects the mathematical distance between the statements that comprise the map. The title on each map was chosen, by the group, as the one that best reflects that set of statements. The number of layers on each map reflects its importance to the group.

Figure 4. Cluster Point Map



CHAPTER 8

LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 7, the previous chapter, compared the needs identified by the research participants to a larger group of African American youth with a parent in prison. Many similarities were noted. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the study and moves into a discussion of the limitations of the research. The dissertation will conclude with a discussion of the limitations, recommendations, and implications of the research.

Summary of Findings

This ethnographic study focused on six African American girls affected by maternal incarceration in order to answer the overarching question, *What is the perceived impact of maternal imprisonment on African American adolescent girls?* The study investigated this broad question by using three primary sub-questions:

1. What needs and concerns do these teens have?
2. What coping strategies do they use?
3. How do the incarcerated parent and custodial parent or caregiver respond to them and their needs?

The study conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with the adolescent girls along with individual and group observations, and review of agency and school records. In addition, the researcher spent time with the adolescents and their families in their homes and in the community.

Chapter 6 presented the data gathered in the study. Data gathered about the participants' needs and concerns fell into four primary areas: 1) Unmet basic/material needs, 2) Unacknowledged emotional and psychological needs, 3) Threats to physical

safety, and 4) Unavailable or blocked opportunities for growth. The participants used a range of methods to cope with life's challenges including, obtaining legitimate work, seeking help from family and friends, participating in illegal activities such as selling drugs and prostitution, and relying on their religion and faith to sustain them. All of the participants in the research also actively participated with the HCW program and used the program to help meet their needs in all four "need" areas.

The participants expressed a mixture of feelings and emotions when discussing their relationships with their mothers and their primary caregivers. Some of the girls felt like their mothers truly cared about their well-being and wanted to be good parents, while others vacillated in their beliefs about their mothers. It was difficult to categorize participants' responses to the third question, *How do parent/caregivers respond?* Their responses to this question varied and often changed on a regular basis. I imagine that some of the variance can be attributed to the mixture of emotions that accompanies the adolescent stage of development. However, despite the variation in responses, all of the participants clearly loved their mothers and sought their mothers' love and support. Similarly, the participants' views about their relationships with their caregivers also yielded a variety of responses. However, a recurring theme emerged that participants had concerns about becoming a "burden" to the caregiver

Chapter 7 compared the focus group data collected from a group of CIP's in the HCW evaluation study to the participants in this dissertation study. A majority of the needs the individual girls identified in this study correlated with needs male and female participants in the HCW evaluation saw as important. Focus group data collected as part of the HCW evaluation could easily fit into three of the four "need" groups that emerged

from this study. Specifically, focus group data matched the basic/material need, emotional/psychological need, and opportunity need groups. Additionally, t both sets of participants verbalized the desire for hugs and non-sexual touch from adults as part of their unmet emotional and psychological needs. However, although individual in this study identified a need for safety , this need did not emerge as significant in the HCW focus groups.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study utilized rigorous research methods sanctioned by leaders in the field of qualitative research, there are limitations to the methodology and to the resultant findings. first, the inability to generalize the findings from this study to other samples may be seen as a major limitation. The sampling strategy combined convenience, criterion, and theoretical sampling to recruit participants. Neither the goal nor the result of the sampling strategy seeks to be representative or generalizable. The results cannot be generalized to a national sample of African American adolescent girls with mothers in prison or even to a similar sample in the state of Texas. However, processes used to affirm participants' responses support my belief that the descriptive findings accurately represent the experiences and beliefs of the specific participants involved in the study.

Second, the decision to do a literature review prior to interviewing and observing the teens may be considered another limitation. Concepts that emerged may have emerged because they were already familiar. I found myself considering the applicability of concepts described in the literature such as "trauma reactive behavior" or "criminogenic thinking" during several of the interviews and observations. Therefore, I

can see the benefit to entering the field prior to doing a literature review as proposed by Glaser (1998) and others. However, I am not certain that the questions developed and asked would have yielded as much substantive information without first reviewing the literature.

Although some researchers might cite the small sample size as a limitation, most researchers knowledgeable about qualitative methods would not. The intent of an ethnographic study is to describe and interpret a cultural or social group by studying the behavior, language, artifacts, and interactions of the group members (Cresswell, 1998). Focusing on a smaller number of research participants and increasing the amount of information collected provides more in-depth analysis.

Recommendations for Addressing Needs

Advocacy based research, my intended goal, seeks to make a difference by providing information that informs others. The scant research on children of prisoners primarily centers around young children and fails to identify the unique needs of teenagers. It does not reflect data captured directly from teens and has not yet begun to look at the specific needs that may be present in youth from diverse ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds. The work of this study has implications for social workers, social service administrators, and policy makers. Providing these key individuals with a better understanding of the needs and concerns that adolescent children of prisoners have may produce more effective services, more supportive policies, and may ultimately interrupt the cycle of intergenerational incarceration currently taking place.

Basic and Material Need

Participants' needs and concerns ultimately sorted into four categories: basic/material need, emotional/psychological need, safety need, and the need for growth producing opportunities. The literature states that material needs of children of prisoners often go unmet, and this study supports those findings (Johnston, 1995; Travis & Waul, 2003; Wright & Seymour, 2000). Many of these children live in poverty before their mothers' incarceration, and because their mothers are often the sole support of their children, their incarceration leaves the children even more impoverished (Beatty, 1998).

Many of the caregivers rely on public assistance and the caregivers' own income to provide for the children. Most caregivers report that their current level of income does not sufficiently allow them to care for these additional family members. This request to me from Valina's grandmother reflects the need for financial support:

> Baby, I want you to let the government know that we need help and we need it now. It don't make no sense that foster parents can be paid for taking care of our children but we can't get any help to take care of our own children.

Current laws make it difficult for blood-related caregivers, such as grandmothers to obtain financial support from the state in order to care for their grandchildren (Wright & Seymour, 2000). In many states, the caregiver can obtain financial support if they successfully complete the process of becoming a foster parent. However, the stringent rules and policies governing the foster parent program often prevent many caregivers from being eligible to participate. Some caregivers fear and mistrust the "government" and have concerns that their grandchildren will be "lost" to the system. Many also fear

that seeking help from the state would cause their daughters to lose custody of their children.

These families would be greatly served by policies that would allow caregivers to obtain the same or similar kinds of financial support from the state that is available to foster parents. However, inflexibilities in the national foster care financing system contribute in part to the lack of available services. For example, Tennessee has a documented lack of adequate services for children in kinship care. in The national foster care financing system provides Tennessee with over $155 million dollars per year in funds but places significant restrictions on how those funds are used (Bissell & Zawisza, 2004). The Department of Children's Services can use the money to provide room and board for children in foster care, but cannot use the funds for preventive or post-permanency services. As a result, programs designed to help grandparents care for children during a parent's incarceration remain chronically under-funded (Bissell & Zawisza, 2004).

<u>Emotional/Psychological Needs</u>

Feelings of grief and loss surfaced frequently during both the interview and data collection processes for this study and for the HCW evaluation. CIPs often have unexpressed grief about their situation, yet they have few opportunities to work through their grief. Unlike children separated from their parents due to divorce or death children of prisoners often have few individuals with whom to share their feelings. However, CIPs do benefit from the same types of services provided to young people separated from a parent due to divorce, death, abandonment, or mental illness. They should have services and programs made available to them.

One such program, the New York based Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) operates a variety of programs that primarily serve students whose parents are incarcerated (Weissman & LaRue, 1998). Administrators with CCA state that teen CIPs are often distrustful and suspicious of people offering help. Program developers with CCA work hard to build rapport and establish trust with the youth (Weissman & LaRue, 1998). However, once providers establish trust and youth willingly seek services, providers must remain flexible and creative in their approach. For example, both CCA and HCW established flexible and easily accessible mutual aid support groups to meet the need for teens' support. They also provide socialization and leadership skills to help CIPs cope with the stigma of parental imprisonment. . (Johnson, 2002; Weissman & LaRue, 1998).

Programs should not only be accessible and flexible but culturally competent. A culturally competent program incorporates clients' cultures into the development of effective services (Sue & Sue, 1999). Staff should know about the community and about the ethnicity of the population they serve. Posters, fliers, and brochures should acknowledge and reflect aspects of the culture; i.e. African American materials in an African American culture. The assumption behind cultural competency is the belief that services tailored to culture would be more inviting, would encourage people of color to seek services, and would improve service outcomes (DHHS, 2001).

Given the numbers of youth affected by parental incarceration, professionals in many areas are likely to encounter children of prisoners and should develop programs responsive to their needs. Existing youth development programs, such as mentoring

programs and summer employment programs, can serve as an entry point for helping CIPs.

Although programming specific to children of prisoners is generally considered a positive concept, conflicting opinions exist about the value of some programs directed toward CIPs. In January 2003, President Bush provided funding for a three year, $150 million program that provides mentors to children of prisoners (Boudin, 2003). Chesa Boudin, whose parents were incarcerated for approximately 21 of his 22 years, feels that mentoring programs do not support the parent/child relationship (Boudin, 2003). He states,

> Bush's mentoring program represents at best a misguided approach to dealing with this problem. Often mentors compete with and undermine the crucial relationship between children and their incarcerated parents, only to disappear when the program ends. While some mentoring programs have proven long lasting and effective, many have little or no positive impact and may divert attention, time, and resources from more substantial needs. (Boudin, 2003) "

Safety Needs

In this study, two of the participants were victims of dating violence, three were victims of random community violence, and almost all were survivors of sexual assault. These findings are congruent with The Child Welfare League of America's (CWLA) findings that a parent's incarceration can increase her or his child's risk of abuse or neglect (Beatty, 1998). Because families facing the incarceration of a member may also

be coping with poverty, domestic violence, and substance abuse, child abuse and neglect is likely.

For the girls in this study, the perceived potential for violence at home and in the community appeared to be an accepted reality. Not only are violence and neglect things that can happen; they are things that did happen. As such, violence and neglect exist to the extent that they can greatly influence general worldviews and everyday behaviors. Thus, CIPs may have very urgent needs in learning how to cope with abuse and neglect..

The CWLA views the period of parental incarceration as a time to e help children with needs arising from violence and neglect. According to Beatty,

> By identifying these children and helping develop and provide services to meet their needs, we make successful reunification more likely for children already in care and we lessen the likelihood of more children entering the system. (1998, p. 26)

Programs like the CWLA should be encouraged to decrease violence in the home and community.

Recommendations for Increasing Coping Skills

Youth in the study coped with the social, emotional, and financial impact of their parents' incarceration using a mixture of internal and external strategies. They sought assistance fulfilling basic needs through family, friends, and the HCW program. Combinations of legal and illegal methods were used to obtain basic needs items such as food, shelter, and clothes. They used the same methods to obtain luxury items such as commercially recorded movies, music cds, or trendy clothes.

Some turned to their faith to sustain them during difficult emotional times; others used alcohol, drugs, or sex to numb themselves emotionally. Many times multiple coping strategies were used simultaneously. I saw this most often when the teen was overwhelmed with sadness or experiencing hopelessness.

While the coping strategies observed and documented were varied and produced a variety of outcomes, two consistent mechanisms emerged. First, all of the youth in the study were active participants in the HCW program and used the program, at some time or other, to meet their needs in two or more of the four identified "need" areas. Second, the youth used religious beliefs to cope with challenging situations.

Youth who participated in the HCW evaluation and the dissertation research expressed strong satisfaction with program services geared toward adolescent CIPs (Johnson, 2003). Seven themes surfaced during reflections of their experience with the HCW program. The themes, outlined in Table 3., may serve to guide service providers and administrators seeking to serve teen CIPs. The themes were expressed when the youth discussed support group meetings and individualized participation in the HCW program.

Table 3: Reflections of HCW Program Experiences: 7 themes

	Themes
Theme 1	They felt listened to and heard, even when staff did not agree with what was being said
Theme 2	They felt their lives and experiences were validated
Theme 3	They felt that the program promoted healthy parent/child relationships and family bonds
Theme 4	They felt that when a need was evident, staff took action and/or supported them in taking action themselves
Theme 5	They felt the program supported them in making decisions about the future
Theme 6	They felt unconditional acceptance
Theme 7	They felt supported in their ambitions to excel in school and in life

The abbreviated form of the themes reflected in the table above makes it difficult to understand the value that the youth place on the support received from peers during support group meetings. For more than 15 years, experts have strongly encouraged the use of support groups to help adolescent CIPs (Gamer & Schrader, 1985; Johnston, 1995; Springer, Pomeroy & Johnson, 1999; Travis & Waul, 2003). My research also shows that support group work with this population. Group treatment can provide social support, a structured environment for expressing concerns, opportunities to learn and practice new skills, and a mechanism for diffusing a sense of shame that often plagues CIPs (Spring, Lynch & Rubin, 2000). The data from this study also supports the incorporation of spiritual beliefs into programs developed for some adolescent CIP populations.

Recommendations for Strengthening Relationships

Maintaining Family Ties

The importance of maintaining family relationships during parental incarceration is a recurring theme in the literature on prisoners and their families (Hairston, 1989; Johnston, 1995; Swan, 1981). The ability to continue contact during incarceration can be a significant predictor of family reunification (Beatty, 1998). Although nonprofit service organizations have made the preservation of family ties a policy priority of, the well being of prisoners and their families has only recently been included in community service considerations or social policy priorities (Hairston, 2003). (NOTE: Most of this paragraph is about general research; the bit about your study seems thrown in, but not developed. I suggest that you just cut it)

Maintaining contact through phone calls, letters, and face-to-face visits helps to preserve and strengthen parent-child relationships during parental incarceration. According to Beatty (1998), families prefer phone calls and letters to face-to- face visits. However, they also report that phone and letter contact can be less satisfying.

Regarding face-to-face visitation, studies of incarcerated mothers completed in 1993 and 2000 both report that approximately 54% of mothers were never visited by their children (Bloom. 1993; BJS, 2000). Lack of visitation is often attributed to geographical or relational barriers. First, geographic inaccessibility is often a reason why incarcerated women do not receive visitation from their children. Because few prisons for women exist, prison location is likely to be far away from a child's place of residence. (Beatty, 1998; Johnston, 2001). Thus, even if a CIP's caregivers want to support parental visitation, they may not have the resources to travel to a geographically inaccessible

location. Second, lack of visitation may be caused by a caregiver's negative feelings about the incarcerated parent or by a caregiver's fear about taking a child to a correctional institution. Either way, a caregiver's beliefs about the parent and/or imprisonment in general can prevent visitation.

With these reasons for lack of visitation in mind, however, we can establish programs that reduce caregiver burden while facilitating child visitation. . *The Girls Scouts Beyond Bars Program* (GSBB) is an example of a program that promotes visits between mothers and daughters; it also helps both mothers and daughters increase coping and social skills (Block & Potthast, 1998). Also, in 1992 Maryland's Correctional Institution for Women partnered with the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland to establish a unique visiting program for inmate mothers and their daughters. Since that time, successful GSBB programs have been started in other states (Block & Potthast, 1998, p. 567). While each program has unique features, the common objectives are to enhance the mother-daughter relationship, reduce the stress of separation, enhance the daughters' sense of self and social skills, to reduce reunification problems and, ultimately, to support mothers' transitions back to the community (Block & Potthast, 1998).

Increasing Parenting Skills and Social Support

Increasing the parenting skills of prison inmates is often identified as a way of strengthening the parent/child relationship. Skills can be taught through programs on child development, effective parenting styles and communication patterns, and conflict management. Such programs can help parent's s understand their child's needs and better carry out their parental roles and responsibilities. When parents feel more capable, they are more likely to succeed when they return to their families. Thus, parenting skills

can increase the successful re-integration efforts of parolees (Finney Hairston, 1998; Johnston, 1995; Travis & Waul, 2003).

Over 50% of women inmates are responsible for minor children at the time of incarceration (Rossman, 2003). Unfortunately, national searches of programming available in U.S. prisons indicate a lack of consistent parenting programs for inmates (Finney Hairston, 2003). It is recommended that prison administrators and parole boards identify parenting skills as a priority issue. Parenting programs designed for prisoners can effectively help decrease the problems caused by incarceration (Harris & Miller, 2003. Such programs can also help parents understand the effect that parental crime, arrest, and incarceration may have on their children.

The Women's Prison Association (WPA) in New York has developed and implemented programs specifically for women inmates with children. . The WPA directly serves the inmates or provides linkages to community based services sensitive to inmates' needs. The organization augments its ten-week parenting skills course with peer mentoring, relapse prevention services, and a variety of support groups (Rossman, 2003).

Services like the WPA's should be continued, and even expanded, during the reentry process. Failure to address releasees' or parolees' needs for life management skills, support services, or addiction treatment increases the likelihood of recidivism (Johnston, 1995; Rossman, 2003). The most effective prison and community program provides a full range of services over an extended amount of time. In addition to parenting programs, program services suggestions include the following:

(1) Access to healthcare information, education, and services;

(2) Job development, job search skills, and employment training;

(3) Transitional housing and access to permanent affordable housing;

(4) Life management skills such as time management, anger management, and financial management; and

(5) Collaboration with community services structured to prevent gaps in services or service fragmentation

The concept of social support, often defined as assistance or guidance given or inferred, has great utility for prisoners and their families (Johnson, Selber, & Lauderdale; Whittaker, et al, 1986). Streeter and Franklin (1992) suggest that social support is a complex concept with many dimensions, types, and sources.. Literature on African American families documents a history of communal and extended kin networks that can provide social support. Such. Social support can serve as a protective factor for families in crisis. It can help mitigate the familial effects of parental imprisonment and help the offender transition back into the community (Johnson, Selber, & Lauderdale, 1998). Community programs, then, can provide social support to the offender and family while enhancing a family's own ability to support itself..

Recommendations for Future Research

Mixed methods research would increase our understanding of the effects of parental crime, arrest, and incarceration on CIPs. Recommendations include longitudinal studies, the development and use of appropriate measurement tools, a focus on intervention outcomes, and the use of applied research.

Research on the impact of incarceration on African American families should include questions about cross sections of incarcerated populations. For example, do groups of parents in prison differ based on length of incarceration, offense, gender, geographic location, or institutional system (state versus federal). Longitudinal research

can provide in depth information in these areas. As Parke & Clark-Stewart (2003) suggest,

> Comprehensive longitudinal research on incarcerated parents and their children requires, first of all, identifying parents at risk for incarceration before the period of incarceration occurs so that preexisting conditions and relationships can be described (p. 220).

Some critiques of existing studies on children of prisoners include the absence of standardized measures to capture quantitative data (Johnston, 1995; Parke & Clark-Stewart, 2003; Travis & Waul, 2003). Also, not enough studies are developmentally and ethnically sensitive, observe the children in contact with others, or obtain data directly from CIPs. Finally, much of the existing research relies on parents' or caregivers' reports; these reports can bias a researcher's perception of CIPs and their needs (Myers, et al, 1999).

Research on children of prisoners must begin to move beyond descriptive studies to research that examines individual and family processes. Culture and context are important components involved in family processes; understanding the complex processes in these families is crucial to our development of theories that support meaningful interventions (Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2003). We don't empirically know which interventions are most needed or most effective. For instance, support groups are frequently suggested as interventions for children of prisoners, yet few studies exist that evaluate the effectiveness of group treatment (Johnston, 1995; Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2003; Springer, et al, 2000).

The most significant implication of the lack of research on CIPs is that interventions have been created and implemented without benefit of empirical evidence (Gamer & Schrader, 1985; Johnston, 1995). Parke & Clark-Stewart (2003) and Miller (2003) suggest that researchers use applied research to expand the kinds and amount of data captured. In applied research, interventions are evaluated using random assignments to treatments and systematic follow up assessments. Further, pen and paper measures may be enhanced by documented observations of change in parents and children (Parke & Clark-Stewart, 2003). Interventions would be replicated and studied across various population groups; such replication may allow researchers to make for accurate generalizations about CIPs and their needs.

Implications for Social Workers and Social Service Providers

The primary mission of social work is to advocate for disadvantaged and oppressed populations, but little could be found in the social work literature on the children and families of offenders. The profession must raise awareness at local, state, and national levels about the severity of problems facing African American families, especially those involved in the criminal justice system. Allen-Meares & Burman (1995) propose a model for activism on behalf of African Americans that couples an understanding of the history, culture, and values of African Americans with the current state of social and economic affairs. They further state that professional activism requires a firm foundation in schools of social work that educates future practitioners about the relevance and importance of activism. This ambition can certainly be applied to the work needed on behalf of prisoners and their families. Social work students and practitioners should identify policy and practice strategies that address the needs of families facing the

incarceration of a member. Those strategies should provide education about these families, promote advocacy, pursue social justice, and work towards social change (Allen-Meares & Burman, 1995).

In addition to education, training is needed for direct service practitioners and supervisors. Teachers, child welfare workers, and other professionals who may interact with the children of prisoners would benefit from training on the special issues involved in working with children who have parents in prison. The training might include: (1) content on the emotional, social, and financial effects of parental incarceration; (2) the resource and service needs of families and (3) the benefits of cross system coordination and collaboration.

Conclusion

This study's findings support already existing research suggesting that the material and emotional needs of children of prisoners often go unmet.. However, little research exists about the needs of African American adolescent females whose mothers are incarcerated. This particular population of CIPs does have unique needs regarding safety and opportunity. These needs may include needs for safe, non-sexual touch and spiritual support and opportunity.

The girls in this study used a variety of coping methods. These included effective and ineffective, moral and immoral, legal and illegal strategies. . Data reveals their clear and varied requests for help from family, organizations, and community.

Complex and often conflicting feelings about relationships with their mothers and caregivers were very apparent. Generally these mothers and daughters experienced limited interactions, both when the mother is incarcerated as well as when the mother is

in the “free world.” Due to letters and infrequent phone calls and visits, mother/daughter interactions actually appeared to increase during times of incarceration. All six girls wished for the mother that was clearly defined in their “dreams,” but was not the mother that existed in reality.

Alternately, several of them felt like they functioned in the role of a parent to their mother, and others, as opposed to having a parent. It is unclear how much these complex feelings can be attributed to unmet needs in these particular girls’ circumstances and how much of these feelings are part of the normal processes of adolescent development. The resonant themes in this area are feelings of love and feelings of abandonment, which were felt more acutely during critical life events. Each girl expressed love for her mother independent of how she thought her mother felt about her. Most felt that their mothers wanted to be responsive to them but couldn’t for reasons that varied from “she’s behind bars” to alcohol or drug addiction. Again, the need for advocacy, support, policy change and services was clear.

In 1999, African Americans comprised the largest racial/ethnic group among both state and federal prisoners with minor children (Mumola, 2000). Mumola (2000) states that African American children are nine times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children. The young ladies in this study, all African Americans, have honestly shared their perceptions of how their mothers’ incarceration has affected them. Their multi-level needs are clear. In many cases, they have become the hidden and untended victims of their mothers’ crimes. It is hoped that the data from this study provides useful information to educators, practitioners, policy makers, researchers, and inspires social workers that wish to help families like those in the study.

The addendum, which follows, provides some final thoughts about this particular group of adolescent children of incarcerated parents.

Dissertation Addendum: MEDIA INFLUENCE

As I edited the final draft of this study, I decided to verify a few facts by looking back at the raw data. In my review of the data, I was struck by the list of media appearances in which five of the six girls had been involved. Ideas and questions began to co-mingle and simmer. I clearly remember coding and re-coding important pieces of information identified in each magazine article, television interview, and newspaper story involving the girls. I slowly became aware of a question I never asked, one that could reveal an overlooked variable. I discovered that I never considered the impact of multiple high profile media appearances on the lives of the teenage girls in this study. I only looked at the specific information contained in each contact. Thus, this addendum addresses an idea that formulated too late to become part of the original analysis.

The process of qualitative research makes the researcher an instrument of data collection. A researcher must heighten his or her level of sensitivity to such a degree that he or she can draw categories of meaning from raw data (Padgett, 1998). This process is time consuming; parts of the process can require additional simmering, much like the additional cooking time needed for separate dishes prepared for a single meal. Huberman and Miles (1994) provide a cooking analogy to discuss the process of managing qualitative data. In discussing the process, they explain that researchers transition from raw to cooked data by maintaining an indexing system for storage and retrieval. This storage system includes documentation of analytic decisions and recorded personal observations (Padgett, 1998). It is not unusual for a researcher using qualitative methods to identify a formerly unseen pattern after multiple reviews of coded data and field notes. This was my recent experience.

From June 2001 to April 2003, five of the six teenage girls in this study participated in three or more of the following media activities:

- *Houston Press* article
- *Channel 3 News* telecast
- *Dateline Houston* telecast
- *Houston Chronicle* article
- *U.S. News and World Reports* article
- *People Magazine* article
- *Aaron Brown Tonight*, *CNN* telecast
- National Institute of Corrections live video teleconference
- The *John Walsh Show* telecast
- Negotiating a special on *HBO*

In addition, they have flown to Washington DC to participate in a national criminal justice conference, done a presentation (with the researcher) at the National Institute of Corrections annual board meeting in Denver, CO., and have done approximately 10 or more presentations around the state of Texas, including radio shows and speeches at adult prisons.

I began to consider what it might be like to go from a child considered “bad” “a perpetrator of violence” or a “lost cause”, all phrases previously used to define these youth by others, to a child seen in a totally positive light. Five of these girls have been recognized in national magazines, television news casts, or popular television talk shows as “gifted”, “articulate”, and a “child with great potential” In my analysis of the findings, I entertained the notion that involvement in the HCW program has been largely responsible for the positive changes that I have witnessed, in all of the girls, over the past 18 months. Changes include an increase in school attendance, a decrease in disciplinary referrals, and self-reported increases in esteem. Yet what if prolonged and positive time spent in the media lime- light, rather than HCW alone, established a positive self-

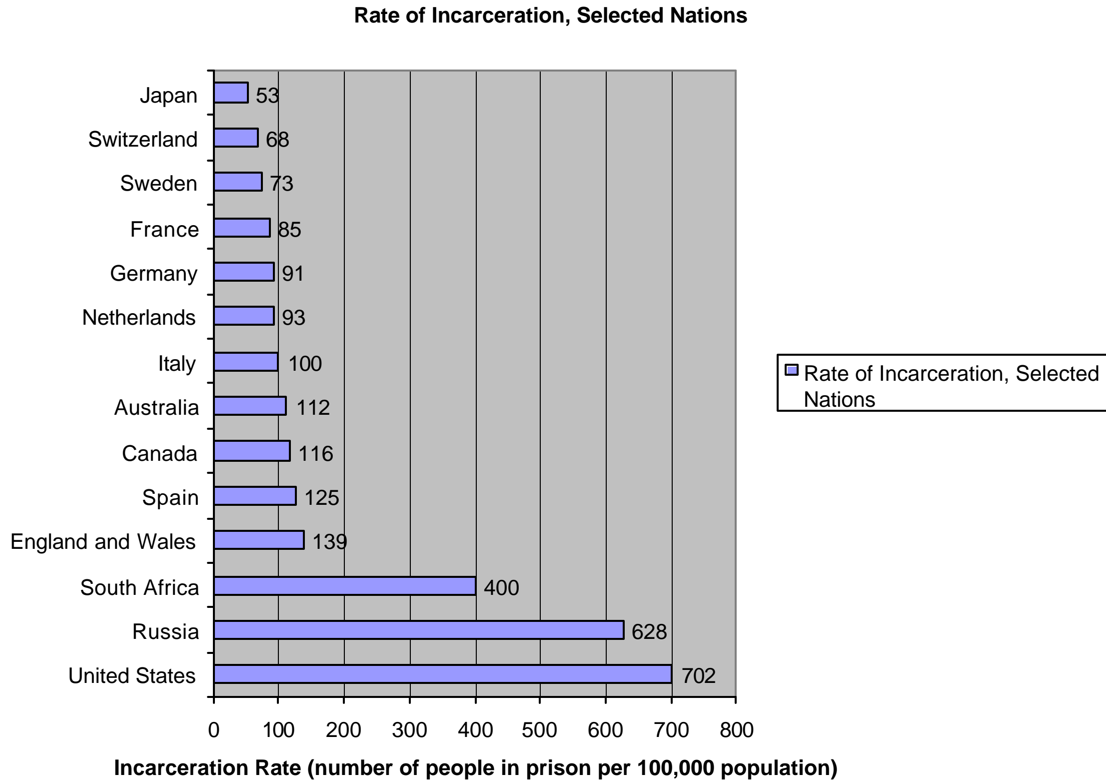
fulfilling prophecy? A brief search for literature in the area found very little. The information that I did locate was primarily found in popular magazines and focused on the life paths of former child stars. Almost every article identified former child stars that grew up and out of the limelight only to experience a life of drugs, alcohol, mental health problems, poverty, family betrayals, serious legal problems, domestic violence, and other kinds of devastating outcomes. In only several minutes, I located 21 articles on Dana Plato the former child star from *Different Strokes*. Journalist examined every aspect of her transition from star to alcohol and drug addict to bank robber and, finally, to suicide victim. I had to look hard to find anything at all on former child stars currently doing well such as the Mayim Bialik, who held the starring role in the comedy *Blossom* and is about to graduate from UCLA. More recent coverage has focused on young people who have experienced some devastating disaster or event, such as 13- year-old surfing sensation Bethany Hamilton who recently lost her arm to a shark attack, or 15- year- old Elizabeth Smart who was abducted from her home in Utah and found alive after ten months with her captors (People, 2003). John Hughes, author of *When is Elizabeth Smart No Longer News*, implies that children such as Elizabeth are often victims of "mutual exploitation". He asserts that the families and the media outlets both benefit economically while the child pays emotionally and psychologically (Christian Science Monitor, 2003).

If receiving positive strokes and attention through newspaper articles and interviews can make a positive impact on a young person's life, the idea generates interesting implications for social work practices. For instance, couldn't we replicate similar efforts in the form of a programmatic intervention? If we could, would it produce

the same or similar positive outcomes? If being in the lime-light is a key part of the equation, what happens after the light shifts to another population, another group, another child? Will the outcome be what we see in the articles on former child stars? If this is true, should we be concerned about the consequences that might befall the girls in this study?

Unfortunately, this collection of ideas came too late to be pursued in this dissertation. However, plans are being implemented to arrange a longitudinal study for the youth that participated in the HCW evaluation and in this dissertation study. This particular theme has been placed in the "ideas to pursue file" and will be implemented at the next level of research on children of incarcerated parents.

Appendix A: Rates of Incarceration in Selected Nations



Source: Mauer, M. (2003, June).Comparative International Rates of Incarceration: An Examination of Causes and Trends. The Sentencing Project.

Appendix B: Predictors of Youth Violence

Individual Factors:
Pregnancy and delivery complications
Low resting heart rate
Internalizing disorders
Aggressiveness
Hyperactivity, concentration problems, restlessness, risk taking
Early initiation of violent behavior
Involvement in other forms of anti-social behavior
Beliefs and attitudes favorable to deviant or antisocial behavior

Family Factors
Parental criminality
Child maltreatment
Poor family management practices
Love levels of parental involvement
Poor family bonding and family conflict
Parental attitudes favorable to substance use and violence
Parent-child separation

School Factors
Delinquent siblings
Delinquent peers
Gang membership

Community and neighborhood factors:
Poverty
Community disorganization
Availability of drugs and firearms
Neighborhood adults involved in crime
Exposure to violence and racial prejudice

Source: Hawkins, J., Herrenkohl, T., Farrington, D., Brewer, D., Catalano, T., Harachi, T. & Cothern (2000, April). *Predictors of Youth Violence*, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Justice Bulletin.

Appendix C: Possible Developmental Effects of Parental Incarceration

Developmental Stage	Developmental Characteristics	Developmental Tasks	Influencing Factors	Effects
Infancy (0-2 years)	Limited perception, mobility, and experience, total dependency	Development of attachment and trust	Parent-child separation	Impaired parent-to-child bonding
Early childhood (2-6 years)	Increased perception and mobility, improved memory	Sense of autonomy and independence, Sense of initiative	Parent-child separation Trauma	Inappropriate separation anxiety, other developmental regression
Middle Childhood (7-10 years)	Increased dependency from caregivers increased ability to reason	Sense of industry Able to work productively	Parent-child separation Enduring trauma	Developmental Regresstions, poor self-concept
Early Adolescence (11-14 years)	Pursuit of distant goals Puberty Abstract thinking	Ability to work with others Control of expression of emotions	Parent-child separation Enduring trauma	Rejection of limits on behavior Pattern of trauma-reactive behaviors
Late Adolescence (15-18 years)	Emotional crisis and confusion Sexual development Increased dependency Formal abstract thinking	Achievement of cohesive identity Resolution of conflicts w/family & society Ability to engage in adult work and relationships	Parent-child separation Enduring trauma	Premature termination of parental relationshipa Intergenerational crime and incarceration

Source: Johnston, D. (1995). Effect of parental incarceration in Gabel, K. & Johnston, D. (Eds.)*Children of Incarcerated Parents.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Appendix D: Demographic Information Form

______________________ ___________

Name Date

Address	
Home Telephone	
Work Telephone	
Cell Telephone	
Other Contact No	

What family members do you have in prison	
How long have you participated in the HCW program	

Gender	
Race/Ethnicity	
Religious Group	
Do you have any type of disability	

What is Your Family's Income Level
$0- 5000__________ $5001 – 15,000__________ $15.001-25,000 _________ $25,001 - $35,000________............$35,0001 - $50,000____________   Over $50,000 _________________

Who Lives In Your Household

Appendix E: Interview Question Guide

The following questions were used to guide the semi-structure interview with the research participants. Probes were used when necessary to obtain detail and context.

- Tell me some of the things that you like to do. (hobbies, activities, etc.)
- Please describe, in detail, what your day was like yesterday. (focus on school day)
- What kinds of things did you do with your mother before her arrest?
- What happened around the time of your mother's incarceration? (general life events)
- How do you Feel about your mother's crime?
- How would you describe your relationship with your mother?
- How did you maintain the relationship with your mother during her incarceration?
- Who takes primary responsibility for your care? How are things different as a result of living with him/her?
- How does the way that he/she takes care of you differ from how your mom takes care of you?
- How do your friends react to your moms' incarceration?
- What's been hardest about your mom's incarceration?
- Has anything good come of this situation?
- Please describe, in detail, a non-typical day in your life?
- What advice would you give a young person experiencing life with a mother in prison?
- What do you think teenagers need from individuals or organizations trying to help teens with a parent in prison?
- Is there anything else that you would like to share with me.

Appendix F: Complete List of 49 Statements

A program serving youth effected by parental incarceration is effective when:

1	It provides a safe house
2	Provide people who really care
3	Provide tutors
4	Gives positive reinforcements
5	Provides you with transportation, takes you back and forth
6	Will have the right amount of publicity
7	Provides leadership
8	Provides you with a safe place where you can have a comfortable environment
9	It includes parents and siblings
10	Gets your parents involved in the process
11	Helps your family with food, financial needs, benefits, and housing
12	Helps the teenage parents with day care, food, pampers, etc.
13	Provides child development classes
14	Provides parenting classes
15	Helps the kids who are in and out of school find employment
16	Helps with college tuition, grants, and the application process
17	Provides anger management and teenage mediation classes
18	The staff does home visits
19	Staff that can keep information confidential
20	The courts actually hear us out
21	The judicial system gets to hear our side of the story
22	The program gets in more schools
23	The program captures the problem at a young age
24	The program is an elective at school
25	Provides an outreach program for parents to be, who are incarcerated
26	Available for all races
27	It has a specific program that reaches out to the women who are incarcerated
28	It provides a safe place to talk about your problems
29	Takes up for you with others
30	Takes you places (museums, parks, etc.)
31	Helps families with Medicaid forms (& other benefits)
32	Buys items that you need (uniforms, etc.)
33	Helps us stay out of trouble
34	Help me stay in touch with my parent/family members in prison
35	Have an office in the neighborhood
36	Have a group for parents
37	Treat us like we're special
38	Take up for us with teachers and others
39	Doesn't yell at us or look down on us

List of Statements Continued, p. 2

40	Treat me with respect
41	Help me when I make a mistake
42	Help me with my problems
43	Give us opportunities to talk to other kids
44	It accepts me like I am
45	Doesn't judge me or my family
46	Let's me express myself
47	Helps me learn how to control by behavior
48	Gives me useful advice
49	Gives me a hug when I need one

References

Adalist-Estrin, A. (2003). Mentoring children of prisoners. *Family and Corrections Nework Report*, Issue #39.

Adalist-Estrin, A.(1994). Family support and criminal justice. In S. Kagan & B. Weissbourd (Eds*), Putting families first: America's family support movement and the challenge of change* (pp.161-185). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

American Bar Association, Child Law Practice (CLP). (1999). *Michael J. v. Arizona Department of Economic Services, WL 92541*, Arizona Court of Appeals.

Baker, R.L.A., & Mednick, B.R. (1984). *Influences on human development: A longitudinal perspective.* Boston, MA: Kluwer-Nijhoff.

Barnhill, S. (1996, Spring). Three generations at risk: Imprisoned women, their children, and grandmother caregivers. *Generations*, 20,39-40.

Beatty, C. (1997). *Parents in prison: Children in crisis.* Washington, DC: CWLA press.

Beck, A. (2000). *Prisoners in 1999, Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Baunach, P. (1985). *Mothers in prison*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Belknap, J. (1996). *The invisible woman: Gender, crime, and justice*. Albany, NY: Wadsworth.

Beyer, M. (2001, Spring). Delinquent girls: A developmental perspective. *Kentucky Children's Rights Journal*, vol IX, #.l, 17-29.

Billingsley, A. (1968). *Black families in white America*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Billingsley, A. (1992). *Climbing Jacobs ladder: The enduring legacy of African-American families*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Billingsley, A. & Giovanni, J. (1972). *Children of the storm: Black children and American child welfare.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & Javanovich.

Bjannes, A. (1995, October). *Children and families of prison inmates: A challenge to the research and service communities*. Paper presented at the 42nd semi-annual conference of The Association for Criminal Justice Research, California.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Block, K. & Potthast, M. (1998). Girl scouts beyond bars: Facilitating parent-child contact in correctional settings. *Child Welfare*, vol. LXXVII, #5 (Sept/Oct). 561-577.

Bloom, B. & Steinhart, D. (1993) *Why punish the children? A Reappraisal of the children of incarcerated mothers in America.* San Francisco. National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

Boehm, W. (1959). *Objectives for the social work curriculum of the future.* Vol. I. New York: Council on Social Work Education.

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Vol.2. Separation: Anxiety and anger*. London: Hogarth Press..

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 3.Loss: Sadness and depression* London: Hogarth Press.

Breckinridge, S.P., & Abbott, E. (1912). Chicago housing problems. *American Journal of Sociology*, 16, pp. 289-308.

Butts, J. (1995). Community based corrections. In R. L. Edwards (Ed). *Encyclopedia of social work* (19th ed. Vol. I., pp. 549-555). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Carlton-LaNey, I. (2001). Introduction and Overview. In Carlton-LaNey, C.(Ed.), *African American leadership: An empowerment tradition in social welfare history*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Carlson, B., & Cervera, N. (1991). Inmates and their families: Conjugal visits, family contact, and family functioning. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 18(3), 318-331.

Chesney-Lind, M.. (1997). *The female offender: Girls, women, and crime.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Chaiken, J. (2000, January). Crunching numbers: Crime and incarceration at the end of the millennium. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 10-17.

Child Welfare League of America. (1998). *State agency survey on children with incarcerated parents.* Washington, DC: Author

Cocozza, J. & Skowyra, K. (2000). Youth with mental health disorders: Issues and emergin responses.*Journal of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention,* vol VI, #1, 3-13.

Cohen, M. (1998). The monetary value of saving a high-risk youth. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 14 (1), 5-33.

Colarossi, L., & Eccles, J.(2003. Differential effects of support providers on adolescents' mental health. *Social Work Research*, 27(1), 19-30.

Cole, D. (1999). *No equal justice: Race and class in the American criminal justice system*. New York: The New Press.

Coltrane, S. (1996). *Family man*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cromwell, P.F., & Killinger, G.G. (1994). *Community based corrections*. St Paul, MN: West.

Danzy, J., & Jackson, S.M. (1997). Family Preservation and support services: A missed opportunity for kinship care. *Child Welfare*, 76(1), 36-44.

Davis, S. (1988). "Soft" versus "hard" social work. *Social Work*, 33, 373-374.

Davis, R.A. (1993). *The black family in a changing black community.* New York, NY: Garland Publishing.,

Denzin, N. K.(1989b). *The research act* (3rd ed.). Englewood, Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (1998). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, (Eds.) *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications.

DiMascio, W. (1997). *Seeking justice: Crime and punishment in America*. New York, NY: The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

Dryfoos, J.G., (1991). Adolescents at risk: A summation of work in the field: Programs and policies. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 12, 630-637.

Easterbrooks, M., Davidson, C., & Chazen, R. (1993). Psychosocial risk, attachment, and behavioral problems among school-aged children. *Development and Psychopathology*, 5, 389-402.

Eddy, M. & Reid, J. (2003). The adolescent children of incarcerated parents: A developmental perspective. In Travis, J. & Waul, M. (Eds.). *Prisoners once removed: The impact of incarceration and reentry on children, families, and communities*, (pp. 233-258). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Enos, S. (1998). Managing motherhood in prison: The impact of race and ethnicity on child placements. *Women & Therapy*, 20(4), 57-53.

Farrington, D.P. (1989). *Early predictors of adolescent aggression and adult violence, Violence and Victims,* 4, 79-100.

Federal Bureau of Prison. (2000). *Federal Bureau of Prison Quick Facts.* (7/20/00) [on line]. http://www.bop.gov/fact0598.html.

Feldman, D. (1992). *Integrating individual and family therapy*. New York, NY: BGRunner/Mazel.

Finn, J. & Jacobson, M. (2003). *Just Practice; A social justice approach to social work*. Peosta, Iowa: Eddie Bowers Publishing.

Fox, V. (1985). *Introduction to corrections.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Friedan, B. (1983). *The feminine mystique*. New York: Norton.

Friedman, L. (1993). *Crime and punishment in American history*. New York: Basic Books.

Friedman, S. & Esselstyn, T. (1965). The adjustment of children of jail inmates. *Federal Probation*, 29(4), 55-59.

Fritsch, T. & Burkhead, J. (1982). Behavioral reactions of children to parental absence due to imprisonment. *Family Relations,* 30, 83-88.

Gabel, S. (1992). Children of incarcerated and criminal parents: Adjustment, behavior and prognosis. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and Law*, 20 (1), 33-44.

Gabel, S. & Shindledecker, R. (1993). Characteristics of children whose parents have been incarcerated. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, 44 (7), 656-660.

Gamer, T. & Schrader, A. (1985). Children of incarcerated parents. In I. Stuart & I. At (Eds)., *Problems and intervention. Children of separation and divorce: Management and treatment.* New York: Van Nostrand Rheinhold.

Gaudin, J. & Sutphen, R. (1993). Foster care vs extended family care for children of incarcerated parents. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation,* 19 (3/4), 129-147.

Gendreau, P. (1995). Rehabilitation of criminal offenders. In R.L. Edwards (Ed.-in-Chief), *Encyclopedia of social work* (19th Ed., Vol II, 2035-2043). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Germain, C., & Gitterman, A. (1980). *The life model of social work practice*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gibbs, J. (2001). African American Adolescents. In J. Gibbs, & L. Huang (Eds.) *Children of color: Psychological interventions with culturally diverse youth.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Gibbs, J. & Huang, L. (2001). A conceptual framework for the psychological assessment and treatment of minority youth. In J. Gibbs, & L. Huang (Eds.) *Children of color: Psychological interventions with culturally diverse youth.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Gilliard, D. & Beck, A. (1998, August). *Prisoners in 1997*, *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice.

Gitterman, A. (Ed.) 1991. *Handbook of social work practice with vulnerable populations.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Gleuck, S., & Gleuck, E. (1950). *Unraveling juvenile delinquency*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goldberg, J. (1999, June 20). The color of suspicion. *New York Times Magazine*, pp. 51-65.

Greenfeld, L. & Snell, T. (1999). *Bureau of justice statistics special report: Women offenders*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Hawkins, D, Herrenkohl, T., Farrington, D., Catalano, R., Harachi, T., and Cothern, L. (2000, April). Predictors of youth violence. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*.

Hairston, C. (1988). Family ties during imprisonment: Do they influence future criminal activity? *Federal Probation*, 52(1), 48-52.

Hairston, C. (1991a).Family ties during imprisonment: Important to whom and for what? *Journal of Sociology and Social* Welfare 18(1), 87-104.

Hairston, C. (1991b).Mothers in jail: Parent-child separation and jail visitation. *Affilia 6,*(2), 9-27..

Hairston, C. (1998). The forgotten parent: Understanding the forces that influence incarcerated fathers' relationship with their children. *Child Welfare*, vol. LXXVII, #5 (Sept/Oct), 617-639.

Henriques, Z. (1982). *Imprisoned mothers and their children.* Washington, DC: University Press of America.

Henry, S. & Einstadter, W. (1998). Introduction: Criminology and criminological theory. In Henry, S., Einstadter, W. (Eds.), *The criminology theory eader.* New York: University press.

Hepworth, D.H., & Rooney, R. & Larsen J. (1999). *Direct social work practice: Theory and skills*. (4th Ed. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Hostetter, E., & Jinnah, D. (1993). *Families of adult prisoners*. Washington, DC: Prison Fellowship Ministries.

Howell, J.C. (1995). *Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Preventioln.

Iglehart, A. (1995). Criminal justice: Class, race, and gender issues. In R.L. Edwards (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Social* Work (19th ed., Vol.I, 647-652). Washington, D.C.:NASW Press.

Jefferies, J., Menghraj, S., & Hairston, C. (2001). *Serving incarcerated and ex-offender fathers and their families.* New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

Johnson, E., & Waldfogel, J. (2002). Children of incarcerated parents: Cumulative risk and children's living arrangements. *Social Service Review*, 76(3), 460-479.

Johnson, T., Selber, K., Lauderdale, M. (1998). Developing quality services for offenders and families: An innovative partnership. *Child Welfare*, vol. LXXVII, #5 (Sept/Oct), 595-615.

Johnston, D. (2001). *Incarceration of women and effects on parenting*. Paper presented at the Conference on the Effects of Incarceration on Children and Families, Northwestern University, Evanston IL., May 5.

Johnston, D. (1992). *Report No. 6: Children of offenders*. Pasadena, CA: The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents.

Johnston, D. (1993a). *Children of the therapeutic intervention projects.* Pasadena, CA: Pacific Oaks Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents.

Johnston, D. (1995). Effects of parental incarceration. In K. Gabel & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Children of incarcerated parents* (pp.59-85). New York: Lexington Books.

Johnston, D. (1995). Intervention. In K. Gabel & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Children of incarcerated parents* (pp. 199-236). New York: Lexington Books.

Johnston, D., & Carlin, M. (1996). Enduring trauma among children of criminal offenders. *Progress: Family Systems Research and Therapy*, 5, 9-36

Johnston, D, Gabel, K (1995). Incarcerated parent.. In K. Gabel & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Children of incarcerated parents* (pp.3-20). New York: Lexington Books.

Johnson, L., & Schwartz, C., (1991). *Social welfare—A response to human need* (2nd ed) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Kampfner, C. (1995). Post traumatic stress reactions in children of imprisoned mothers. In K. Gabel & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Children of incarcerated parents* (pp.89-100). New York: Lexington Books.

Kantor, D. & Lehr. W. (1995). Inside the family: *Toward a theory of family process.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Katz, P. (1998).Supporting families and children of mothers in jail: An integrated child welfare and criminal justice strategy. *Child Welfare*, vol. LXXVII, #5 (Sept/Oct). 495-511.

Kerlinger, F.J. (1986). *Foundations of Behavioral* Research (3rd ed.). Orlando, FL: Harcort/Brace College Publications.

Koban, L. (1983). Parents in prison: A comparative analysis of the effects of incarceration on the families of men and women. *Research in Law, Deviance, and Social Control,* 5, 171-183.

Kohlberg, L, Ricks, D., & Snary, J. (1984). Childhood development as a predictor of adaptation in adulthood. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 110(1), 91-172.

Kruger, D. (1983). Psychotherapy of adult patients with problems of parental loss in childhood. *Current Concepts in Psychiatry.*

Larzelere, R. & Patterson, G. (1990). Parental management: Mediator of the effect of socioeconomic status on early delinquency. *Criminology* 28(2), 301-324.

Leadbeater, B., Kpuerminc, G., Blatt, S., & Hertzog, C. (1999). A multivariate model of gender differences in adolescents' internalizing and externalizing problems, *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 1268-1282.

Leiby, J. (1979). *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Logan, S., (1996). *The black family: Strengths, self-help, and positive change.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lubove, R. (1965). *The professional altruist: The emergence of social work as a career, 1890-1930*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). (1998). *African Americans: Cultural diversity curriculum for social workers and health practitioners.* Austin, TX: TX Dept. of Health, Center for Cultural Competency.

Mauer, M. American behind bars. (1995). American behind bars: U.S. and international use of incarceration, Washington, D.C.: *The Sentencing Project*, 1997, p.10.

McCall, C. & Shaw, N. (1985). *Pregnancy in prison: A needs assessment of prenatal outcome in three California penal institutions*. Sacramento, CA: Department of Health Services, Maternal and Child Health Branch.

McGowan, B. & Blumenthal, K. (1978). *Why punish the children?* Hackensack, NJ: National Council on Crime and Juvenile Delinquency.

McNeece, C.A. (1995). Adult corrections. In R.L. Edwards (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (19th ed., Vol.I,pp. 60-68). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

McWhirter, J., McWhirter, B., McWhirter, A., & McWhirter, E. (2004). *At-Risk youth: A comprehensive response*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Maguire, K. & Pastore, A. (1999). *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1998*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington, DC:USGPO, 1999.

Mauer, M. (1995). *American behind bars: U.S. and International use of incarceration.* The Sentencing Project, Washington, DC.

Mauer, M. (1999). *Race to incarcerate.* New York: NY: The New Press.

McQuaide, S. & Ehrenreich, H. (1998, Summer). Women in prison: Approaches to understanding the lives of a forgotten population. *Affilia,* 13(2), 233-246.

McRoy, R., G. (1990a). A historical overview of Black families. In E.M. Freeman, S. Logan, & R.G., McRoy (Eds). *Social work practice with Black families: A culturally specific perspective* (pp. 3-17). New York: Longman.

Moffitt, T.E., (1987). Parental mental disorder and offspring criminal behavior: An adoption study. *Psychiatry* 50, 346-360.

Morash, M., Bynum, T., & Koons, B. (1998, August). Women offenders: Programming needs and promising approaches. *National Institute of Justice, Research in Brief.* Washington, DC: US Department of Justice.

Miley, K., O'melia, M. & Dubois, B. (1998). *Generalist social work practice: An empowering* approach (2nd ed.), Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Miller, J.G., (1995). Criminal justice: Social work roles. In R.L. Edwards (Ed.-in-chief), *Encyclopedia of social work* (19th ed., Vol. I, pp.653-659). Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Minuchin, S. (1974). *Families and family therapy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Monk, R.C. (2000). *Taking sides: Clashing views on controversial issues in race and ethnicity.* Guild, CT: Dushkin.

Morris, M. (2002, June). Black girls on Lockdown. *Essence Magazine*, p.186.

Mumola, C. (2000). *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Incarcerated parents and their children.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

National Black Child Development Institute, Inc. (1995). The status of African American children and families. *The Black Child Advocate*, 22(3), 3-17.

Padgett, D. (1998). *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Parke, R., (2002). Fathers and families. In R. Bornstein (Ed.) *Handbook of parenting* (pp. 27-72). Mahwah, MJ: Erlbaum.

Parke, R. & Clarke-Stewart, A. (2003). The effects o parental incarceration on children: Perspectives, promises, and policies. In J. Travis & M. Waul (Eds.), *Prisoners once removed: The impact of incarceration and reentry on children, families, and communities* (pp. 189-232). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.

Patterson, G.R. (1982). *Coercive Family Process*. Eugene, OR: Castalia.

Payne, M. (1997). *Modern social work theory* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books.

Poe-Yamagata, E. & Jones, M. (2000). *And justice for some.* Washington D.C.: Building Blocks for Youth. Available on line at: http:www.buildingblocksforyouth.org/justiceforsome/jfs.html.

Raspberry, W. (1999, Nov. 16). Mandatory drug laws need second look. *The Washington Post,* P. A21.

Reed, D. & Reed, E. (1997). Children of incarcerated parents. *Social Justice.* 24 (3) 152-170.

Ritchie, B. (1996). *Compelled to crime: The gender entrapment of batter black women.* New Yor, NY: Routledge Press.

Sack, W. (1977). *Children of imprisoned fathers*. Psychiatry, 40 (2): 163-174.

Sack, W., Seidler, J., & Thomas, S. (1976). The children of imprisoned parents: A psychosocial exploration. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 46 (4) 618-628.

Samaha, J. (2000). *Criminal Justice* (2nd ed.) Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Schoen, K., & Peterson, J. (1996, Summer). How powerful is prison as a crime fighting tool? *Perspectives*, 32-43.

Seymour, C. (1998). Children with parents in prison: Child welfare policy, program and practice issues. *Child Welfare,* vol. LXXVII, #5 (Sept/Oct), 469-493.

Sharp, S., Marcus-Mendoza, S., Bentley, R., Simpson, D., & Love, S. (1998). Gender differences in the impact of incarceration on the children and families of drug offenders. In Carsianos, M. & Train, K. (Eds.), *Interrogating social justice: Politics, culture and identity.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

Shelton, B., Armstrong, F., & Cochran, S.E, (1983). Childbearing while incarcerated. *American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing*, 8, 23.

Singer, M.., Bussey, J., Song, L., & Lunghofer, L. (1994). The psychosocial issues of women serving time in jail. *Social Work* 40, 104-113.

Snarr, R.W. (1992). *Introduction to corrections* (2nd ed.). Dubuque, IA: William A. Brown.

Snell, T.L. (1994). *Special Report: Women in prison* (NCJ-145321). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Springer, D., Lynch, C., & Rubin, A. (2000). Effects of a solution focused mutual aid group for Hispanic children of incarcerated parents. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 17(6), 431-442.).

Stack, C. (1974). *All our kin: Strategies for survival in a Black community.* New York: Harper & Roq.

Stanton, A.(1980). *When mothers go to jail*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Swan, A. (1981). *Families of black prisoners: Survival and progress*. Boston: G.K. Hall.

Thomas, A. (1998). *Imprisoning criminals prevents crime.* In Roleff (Ed.), Crime and criminals: Opposing viewpoints (pp. 158-162). San Diego, Ca: Greenhaven Press.

Travis, J. (2000). But they all come back: Rethinking prisoner reentry. *Sentencing and Corrections Issues for the 21st Century*, Brief No. 7.

Trochim, W. (1989). Concept mapping: Soft science or hard art? *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 12, 1, 87-110.

Tutty, L., Rothery, M., & Grinnell, R. (1996). *Qualitative research for social workers*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bascon.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1999*). Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health.

U.S. Department of Justice (1994). *Bureau of justice statistics special report: Women in prison.* (Publication No. NCJ-173414). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Justice. (1996*). Correctional populations in the United States, 1995*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

VanWormer, K. & Bartollas, C. (2000). *Women and the criminal justice system*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General systems theory: Foundations, development, applications.* New York: George Braziller.

Weissman, M. & LaRue, C. (1998). Earning trust from youths with none to spare. *Child Welfare*, vol. LXXVII, #5 (Sept/Oct). 579- 594.

Wilhelmus, M.(1998). Mediation in kinship care: Another step in the provision of culturally relevant child welfare services. *Social work*, 43(2), 117-126.

Wright, L., & Seymour, C. (2000). *Working with children and families separated by incarceration: A handbook for child welfare agencies*. Washington, DC: CWLA Press.

Young, D., & Smith, C. (2000). When moms are incarcerated: The needs of children, mothers, and caregivers. *Families in society: The journal of contemporary human services* 81(2), 130-141.

Zalba, S. (1964). *Women prisoners and their families*. Sacramento, CA: Department ofSocial Welfare and Department of Corrections.

Vita

Toni Kay Johnson was born in Waurika, Oklahoma on April 5, 1956, the daughter of Eunice and Jessie Shoemake. After graduating from Lawton High School, Lawton, Oklahoma in 1973, she attended Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma for two years. She lived and worked in several states including Honolulu, Hawaii where she was an administrative assistant to a local attorney. She eventually received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma in May 1982 with a major in Sociology and a minor in Psychology. In 1982, she moved to Austin, Texas where she worked in several non-profit, social service organizations. While working at the Center for Battered Women, she attended the University of Texas at Austin and received her Master of Science in Social Work degree in May, 1990. After leaving the Center for Battered Women, she took a non-tenured, clinical faculty position with the University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work. She remained in this position until she entered the doctoral program at the University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work in August, 1998. Throughout her doctoral studies she researched, presented and published on issues related to children at risk, children of prisoners and cultural competency in social work practice.

Permanent address: 8875 Bristol Park Dr., Bartlett, TN 38133

This dissertation was typed by the author.