

2020

Supporting Intervention for Adolescents of Incarcerated Parents in Rural Areas

Jeanette Kathleen Loudy
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Law Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Jeanette Loudy

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Tony Gaskew, Committee Chairperson,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Carolyn Dennis, Committee Member,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Dr. Howard Henderson, University Reviewer,
Criminal Justice Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Supporting Intervention for Adolescents of Incarcerated Parents in Rural Areas

by

Jeanette Loudy

MA, Boston University, 2015

BS, Ashford University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

This study was focused on the challenges experienced by children who had a parent incarcerated during their adolescence. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of adult child survivors of parental incarceration in a rural community and to describe the impact that parental incarceration had on children during adolescence and into young adulthood. The research questions were designed to examine the perceived challenges facing adult children of parental incarceration in rural areas and policy intervention programs that would be most effective at supporting children of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood. Data were collected using face-to-face, semi structured interviews with 6 adult child survivors of parental incarceration in a rural community. The findings of the study indicated that parental incarceration significantly impacted children by creating challenges, stressor, and traumas during adolescence that extended into adulthood. The results of the study highlighted the issues surrounding parental incarceration for children in rural communities and can inform policy on the most effective intervention programs to create social change to better support and assist this population of children.

Supporting Intervention for Adolescents of Incarcerated Parents in Rural Areas

by

Jeanette Loudy

MA, Boston University, 2015

BS, Ashford University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

July 2020

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful daughter, Madison, who has supported me through this entire journey. She is my inspiration, my greatest joy and the example of who I wish to become. I am truly blessed to have you as my daughter. You are the greatest love of my life. I love you Madi. This dissertation is also dedicated to my best friend and biggest fan. You are my one true love. I love you Handsome.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank God for remaining by my side and guiding me through this journey. And for blessing me with this milestone accomplishment. I would like to thank my amazing daughter, Madi, for supporting me and traveling along beside me through this journey. I would also like to thank those who supported and encouraged me along this path. I would like to thank Dr. Tony Gaskew for serving as my dissertation chair. Thank you for all of your guidance, support and encouragement during my dissertation journey. You made this process less stressful and more enjoyable along with providing motivation along the way. I would also like to thank my second committee member, Dr. Carolyn Dennis. Thank you for your guidance and assistance during this journey. And I would like to thank Dr. Howard Henderson for serving as my URR during this process. Thank you all for encouraging and assisting me along my dissertation journey and helping me accomplish this goal.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Purpose of Study.....	6
Research Questions.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Nature of Study.....	7
Definitions.....	8
Assumptions.....	9
Scope and Delimitations.....	10
Limitations.....	11
Significance.....	11
Summary.....	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Literature Search Strategy.....	16
Theoretical Framework.....	16
Literature Review Related to Key Concepts.....	19
Economic Well-being.....	19
Social Well-being.....	20
Social Mobility.....	21

Educational Outcomes	23
Health Outcomes.....	25
Psychological Distress Behavioral Issues.....	27
Stress and Trauma.....	31
Coping Strategies	34
Policy & Intervention.....	35
Summary and Conclusions	36
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	39
Introduction.....	39
Research Design and Rationale	39
Role of the Researcher	41
Methodology.....	42
Participant Selection Logic.....	42
Instrumentation	43
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection.....	44
Data Analysis Plan.....	47
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	49
Ethical Procedures	50
Summary.....	52
Chapter 4: Results.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Setting.....	54

Demographics	55
Participant 1	55
Participant 2	55
Participant 3	56
Participant 4	56
Participant 5	57
Participant 6	57
Data Collection	57
Data Analysis	58
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	59
Results.....	60
Themes	60
Summary	78
Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations	81
Introduction.....	81
Interpretation of the Findings.....	81
Limitations of the Study.....	87
Recommendations.....	88
Implications for Social Change.....	90
Individual	90
Organizational.....	91
Societal.....	91

Conclusion	92
References.....	95
Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire	108
Appendix B: Interview Questions Guide.....	110

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The United States has the highest incarceration rates in the world, and the incarceration rate continues to rise. In 2017, there were approximately 2.2 million adults incarcerated in jails and state and federal prison across the United States (Sentencing Project, 2018, p.1). In 2019 there were an estimated 2.3 million adults incarcerated in jails and state and local prisons (Prison Policy Initiative, 2019, p.12). As this number continues to increase, so does the number of children with an incarcerated parent. There are an estimated 2.7 million children in the United States who have a parent incarcerated and over 10 million children who have experienced parental incarceration during their life (Turney, 2019, p. 218).

Parental incarceration has negative outcomes for children in numerous domains. Researchers have found that children of incarcerated parents suffer from poverty, instability, disadvantage, social inequality, and social exclusion (Ng, Sarri, & Stoffregen, 2013). These challenges can extend beyond adolescence into adulthood, increasing the potential for intergenerational incarceration (Foster & Hagan, 2012). The challenges associated with parental incarceration are social stressors and traumatic experiences for children, which can have lasting negative consequences later in life and create intergenerational trauma (Turney, 2014; Van der Kolk, 1985).

This study is important because it focuses on an area that is least explored: the lived experiences of adult survivors of parental incarceration. The results of this study will add to the research by providing knowledge on the impact of parental incarceration on children through the lived experiences and perspective of adults. The results may also

provide information on the types of resources that are available or lacking for these children during adolescence, which can help to better assist these children and reduce intergenerational incarceration.

This chapter begins with information on the issue of parental incarceration and the effects on the children. I then present background on the issue of parental incarceration followed by the problems associated with parental incarceration. I then explain the purpose of the study and the theoretical framework. The chapter also includes the research questions I explored along with a discussion of the assumptions of the study, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background

Adult incarceration continues to increase in the United States, which also increases the number of children impacted by parental incarceration. More children are impacted by parental incarceration today than ever before (Uggen & McElrath, 2014). Thus, there is an increasing need of understanding the issue and for developing resources to better assist children during the process and into the transition into adulthood (Peterson, Fontaine, Kurs, & Cramer, 2015).

Research has found that parental incarceration has a negative impact on children and creates numerous challenges. Parental incarceration directly affects the economic and social well-being of children. For instance, Mears and Siennick (2016) conducted a study on children of incarcerated parents and found that parental incarceration created economic problems and disadvantage for these children. They further found that children who were already disadvantaged were further disadvantaged and had a lack of economic

stability (Mears & Siennick, 2016). Additionally, children of incarcerated parents face many social challenges including stigma and social isolation (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2009). The social difficulties of stigma and isolation of parental incarceration often leads the children from being socially excluded (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012).

The socioeconomic and social strains of parental incarceration have been found to extend beyond childhood into the transition into adulthood and across the life of adult children. Parental incarceration creates economic and social strains along with stigmatization that can extend into adulthood (Foster & Hagan, 2007; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). For instance, parental incarceration in childhood can increase the risk for intergenerational incarceration (Ng et al., 2013; Foster & Hagan, 2007). Additionally, parental incarceration leads to intergenerational decreased social mobility, inequality, and social exclusion across the transition into adulthood (Foster & Hagan, 2012).

Along with economic and social strain, parental incarceration has been found to create stressors for children that can proliferate across generations. For instance, Turney (2014) examined the relationship between parental incarceration and children's health. Turney suggested that incarceration is a social stressor, finding that stressors experienced by parents including incarceration can create stressors for the children and have negative lasting consequences on children.

Parental incarceration has also been found to be a traumatic experience for children, which can have intergenerational consequences. Parental incarceration is a traumatic experience for children, leading to psychological and behavioral trauma (Figley, 1985). Parental incarceration creates trauma because of a lack of trust and sense

of safety as well as increasing emotional distress and shame, which diminishes a child's sense of self-worth (Van der Kolk, 2007). In addition, the traumas associated with parental incarceration have been found to negatively impact relationships later in life along with increase the potential for intergenerational incarceration (Van der Kolk, 2007).

Research into the issue of parental incarceration has gained attention and continues to grow. However, based on a review of the literature there is a gap regarding the lived experiences of adult survivors of parental incarceration. There is lack of understanding in the life experiences of children of incarcerated parents (Dawson, Jackson, & Nyamathi, 2012). In addition, there is a lack of understanding on the types of resources that are available to these children along with the types of resources that these children feel would be useful for them in dealing with parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood. There is an increasing need for developing resources to better assist children during the process and into their transition into adulthood (Peterson et al., 2015). Therefore, this study is necessary because it involved examining the lived experiences of adult survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities to gain a better understanding of their experience and resources that could better assist children in rural communities overcome the challenges of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood.

Problem Statement

There are an estimated 2.7 million children in the United States who have a parent incarcerated and over 10 million children who have experienced parental incarceration

during their life (Turney, 2019). The incarceration rate continues to rise, which means the number children of incarcerated parents also continues to rise. Children of incarcerated parents are viewed as hidden victims due to the negative consequences and impact that parental incarceration has on these children (Murray, 2012). Children of incarcerated parents have faced numerous collateral consequences including poverty, instability, disadvantage, social inequality, and social exclusion (Ng et al., 2013). Additional challenges include difficulty in school, the negative effects of stigma, and the risk for intergenerational incarceration (Kautz, 2017). Researchers have also found that parental incarceration has an intergenerational socioeconomic effect on children in their late adolescence into their young adulthood in terms of social mobility, inequality, and social exclusion. Social exclusion into adulthood prevents full participation in normal activities of society which can lead to a sense of powerlessness (Foster & Hagan, 2016).

There are various theories concerning the issue of parental incarceration and the consequences to these children but few research studies focusing on the social exclusion perspective. Recent research has begun to focus on the life course perspective, which views parental incarceration as a turning point in the life of a child that can lead to social issues including social exclusion over the course of adolescence into adulthood (Mears & Siennick, 2016). However, there are limited studies focused on the stress proliferation theory to better understand and address the intergenerational traumas children of incarcerated parents endure (Turney, 2016). Numerous studies focus on the impact and challenges of parental incarceration for children and the increased likelihood of intergenerational incarceration; however, there is little information on the life experiences

of adult survivors of parental incarceration including challenges and intergenerational trauma. Additional information is required to gain a better understanding of the multiple risk factors, challenges, and traumas of parental incarceration, which can inform research and policy action to mitigate the outcomes of parent incarceration on children's lives.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain a better understanding of the life challenges and traumas faced by adult survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. The aim of the study was to explore the life experiences of these adults and the impact of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood including the potential for intergenerational incarceration. This study brings attention to the challenges of parental incarceration for children in rural areas along with informing public policy on the need for intervention programs and the resources to better assist these children to work toward reducing intergenerational trauma and incarceration.

Research Questions

The research sought to answer the questions:

Research Question 1: What are the perceived challenges facing adult children of parental incarceration in rural areas?

Research Question 2: What policy intervention programs would be most effective at supporting children of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood?

Theoretical Framework

The stress proliferation theory describes how one stressor leads to more stressors (Ward, 2014, p. 2346). The theory explains how stressors that are associated with one event or individual can lead to an accumulation of stressors in other areas of life for that individual or other individuals (Turney, 2014). When applied to children of incarcerated parents, children of incarcerated parents are subject to negative mental and physical health outcomes due to intergenerational stressors that are passed from one generation onto another (Turney, 2014). Additionally, parental incarceration has been found to be a source of stress proliferation in children because children experience trauma as a result of the incarceration, which creates the stressors of social stigma, emotional distress and isolation, and economic disadvantage that can extend into adulthood and increase intergenerational incarceration (Van der Kolk, 2007). The stress proliferation theory provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the lived experiences and challenges of children of incarcerated parents. It is also useful in providing a better understanding of intergenerational trauma related to the stress and impact of incarceration that proliferates from one generation to another.

Nature of Study

A qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to explore the life experiences of adult child survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. In this qualitative phenomenological study, I explored the experiences of six adult survivors of parental incarceration from a rural community in the United States. The research design included in-depth, semi structured, face-to-face interviews with participants, who

were selected using purposeful and snowball sampling techniques. My goal was to gain a better understanding of the life challenges and intergenerational trauma experienced by children of incarcerated parents in rural communities during adolescence and the transition into adulthood. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and reviewed by each participant for triangulation purposes. All data were managed and analyzed using NVivo software.

Definitions

Family impact statements: “Used to ensure that courts, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and probation officers make sentencing or supervision decisions that are informed by the needs of the defendant’s children and by the potential effect on them if their parents were to be incarcerated” (Cramer, Peterson, Kurs, & Fontaine, 2015, p. 1).

Intergenerational trauma: A trauma experience that occurs during childhood or adulthood that has a profound influence on the well-being of the next generation. Also referred to as intergenerational, multigenerational, and transgenerational effects (Yehuda & Bierer, 2008).

Parental incarceration: A parent who is confined to a jail or prison for any length of time (Johnson & Easterling, 2012).

Psychological trauma: “An emotional state of discomfort and stress resulting from memories of an extraordinary catastrophic experience which shattered the survivor’s sense of invulnerability to harm” (Figley, 1985, xviii).

Social exclusion: The denial and inability to participate in normal activities, resources, and relationships that are available to the majority of individuals in a society including economic and social areas (Foster & Hagan, 2012).

Stressor: Any emotional, physical, social, economic, or other factor that disrupts the normal physiological, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral balance of an individual (DSM-5, 2013).

Trauma behaviorally: “A set of conscious and unconscious actions and behaviors associated with dealing with the stresses of catastrophe and the period immediately afterwards” (Figley, 1985, xix).

Assumptions

There are a number of assumptions concerning children of incarcerated parents. Acknowledging these assumptions is necessary to address the issues surrounding parental incarceration and provide assistance to the children impacted. One assumption is that the negative social and economic challenges of parental incarceration experienced in adolescence can have a negative impact on economic mobility and social exclusion during the transition into adulthood and across the life of the children. This assumption derives from the life course perspective on the issue, which exposes an intergenerational socioeconomic effect on adolescence of incarcerated parents in terms of social mobility, inequality, and social exclusion extending across the transition into young adulthood (Foster & Hagan, 2012).

Another assumption is that parental incarceration creates stressors for the parent who is incarcerated, and these stressors extend across generations to the children, which

can have lasting negative consequences for the children into young adulthood. This assumption is derived from the stress proliferation theory, which explains how a stressor associated with one event or individual can lead to an accumulation of stressors for that individual and others impacted by that stressor across life domains (Turney, 2014).

A final assumption is that parental incarceration is a traumatic experience for children that leaves a lasting negative impact that extends into the transition into adulthood and across generations. This assumption is derived from the study of intergenerational trauma, which is defined as a trauma experience that occurs during childhood or adulthood that has a profound influence on the well-being of the next generation (Yehuda & Bierer, 2008).

Scope and Delimitations

I examined the lived experiences of adult survivors of parental incarceration to gain a better understanding of the challenges that parental incarceration has on children during adolescence and the transition into adulthood. All the participants were adult survivors of parental incarceration. Participants must have resided in a rural community for at least 10 years. The sample population for this study originated from a rural community located in Southwest Virginia, and all participants were adults (18 years or older). The focus was to gain insight into the lived experiences and needs of children in rural areas. Excluded from participating in this study were individuals under the age of 18, individuals who did not have a parent incarcerated during their adolescence, and those who did not reside in a rural community in Southwest Virginia during the incarceration of a parent. Based on the criteria, there was a large section of the

population that was excluded from participating within the study, which limits the study from generalizations. However, the findings from this study are relevant for better understanding the impact for parental incarceration on children in rural communities and provides a foundation for future research.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this phenomenological qualitative study. First, due to the limited number of potential participants in rural Southwest Virginia, racial and/or gender diversity may be a challenge. However, it was assumed that a suitable sampling pool was available for this study. Second, due to social desirability (shame, humiliation, etc.), some participants may not have been fully transparent regarding their responses to some interview questions. However, it was assumed that participants were transparent and honest during interviews. Lastly, the self-selection of the participants could limit full examination and understanding of the aspects of the phenomenon. However, the insight and knowledge obtained from the lived experiences of these participants adds to the literature and provides a foundation for future research on the issue.

Significance

To further understand and address the trauma of parental incarceration, it is important to obtain the perceptions of adults who have experienced parental incarceration during their childhood through their stories. To obtain the lived experiences and perceptions of these individuals, the participants told their story or experience of having a parent incarcerated through semi structured interviews. Storytelling in qualitative

research recreates the experience of a phenomenon as detailed by the individuals who have experienced the issue and provides richness of details (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000). Additionally, storytelling provides a holistic account of lived experiences (Moen, 2006), which helps in exploring the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced a traumatic event such as parental incarceration (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000). Therefore, participants' narratives offered a better understanding to the complex issues and challenges surrounding parental incarceration by providing thick descriptions of the lived experiences of child survivors.

The significance of this study is multi-layered. First, this study not only contributes to the existing body of literature on parental incarceration, but it also adds a significant layer in how this phenomenon can be understood from the unique cultural worldview of rural communities across America. With the growing opioid addiction and subsequent increased incarceration rates facing rural communities, understanding the short- and long-term impacts of parental incarceration is valuable.

Second, the information obtained from the perceptions and lived experiences of those participating in the study can be used to inform public policy on the needs of the children of incarcerated parents. The survivors of parental incarceration can provide valuable insight in the needs of children with parental incarceration experience along with insight into the types of resources that could have assisted them and other children experiencing the issue of parental incarceration. Therefore, this study can inform public policy on the needs of children of incarcerated parents along with the need for

establishing programs and resources to better assist children experiencing this phenomenon.

Summary

Parental incarceration is a growing issue with the continued increase in incarceration rates and more children being affected by incarceration. Parental incarceration creates negative consequences for children including, poverty, socioeconomic disadvantage, stigmatization, and social exclusion. The challenges and consequences extend beyond adolescence and into the transition into young adulthood with the potential for intergenerational incarceration (Foster & Hagan, 2012). Research has also shown a link between parental incarceration and stress proliferation extending across generations for intergenerational trauma (Turney, 2014; Van der Kolk, 1985).

Although research shows that children of incarcerated parents are at an increased risk for disadvantage and negative outcomes, the research is lacking in other areas. There are gaps in the literature concerning knowledge on the lived experiences of children who have experienced parental incarceration. To gain a better understanding of the issue and the types of resources that need to be available to assist the children of incarcerated parents, it was important to examine the experiences of those who have experienced the issue of parental incarceration.

The next chapter will provide more in-depth and detailed insight into the information currently available on the issue of parental incarceration and the impact that this has on children. Information retrieved from various literature reviews on the issue will be discussed and presented to shed additional insight on the issue.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Parental incarceration imposes significant social, economic, and emotional losses and stressors on children that can extend from adolescence into young adulthood (Arditti, 2012). However, there is little information on the experiences of adult survivors of parental incarceration including these challenges and intergenerational trauma.

Additional information is required to gain a better understanding of the multiple risk factors, challenges, and traumas of parental incarceration. This information can be used to develop evidence-based intervention programs that can address these issues, as research and policy action are required to mitigate the challenges and negative outcomes affecting children of incarcerated parents (Peterson, Fontaine, Kurs, & Cramer, 2015).

This chapter begins with information on the literature search strategy that I used to locate various research on parental incarceration. The review of the literature begins with an overview of the theoretical framework of the stress proliferation theory, which supports this study by providing an understanding of the social stressors associated with parental incarceration and how these stressors can have deleterious intergenerational consequences (Pearlin, 1989; Turney, 2014; Ward, 2014). The review of literature will also focus on the general issue of parental incarceration, the economic and social well-being of children, the negative health outcomes for children, and the traumas and loss associated with parental incarceration. The chapter concludes with review of the literature on the need for policy initiatives that focus on this population.

Literature Search Strategy

The primary approach for obtaining literature that was relevant to parental incarceration was using Walden University's Library. Using the library resources at Walden, I searched numerous databases such as EBSCOhost, Sage, and ProQuest. I also conducted searches in Google Scholar and Google to obtain data from the U.S. Census and the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. Various keywords and phrases were used to locate the literature discussed in this review: *parental incarceration; the effects of parental incarceration; challenges of parental incarceration; children of incarcerated parents; trauma, parental incarceration; child well-being, parental incarceration; mental health, parental incarceration; stress-proliferation; stressors, parental incarceration; intergenerational incarceration; and adolescence, parental incarceration*. These terms and phrases were at times used in conjunction with one another.

During the review of the literature, some of the references cited in the articles were used to locate additional literature. There were a number of articles available on the issue of parental incarceration including the areas discussed in this review. However, there were limited resources available in the Walden library on the areas of stress and trauma related to parental incarceration. Therefore, I used Google scholar to locate additional literature on these topics. There were also a number of articles located in the search that were over 5 years old and had to be excluded from the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

The stress proliferation theory suggests that different types of stress from varying sources over time can influence the well-being of an individual (Pearlin, Menaghan,

Lieberman, & Mullan, 1981). Further, the theory describes how stressors can lead to additional stressors (Ward, 2014). Terms that are often used to describe the stress process are stressors, stress, and distress. An exposure to a stressful event leads to the experience of stress, which leads to distress. Stressors are external challenges that affect an individual's adaptive capabilities which leads to distress such as depression, anxiety, fear, anger or aggression. Stress proliferation theory suggests that stressful experiences lead to additional stress in individual's lives, creating a chain of stressors that can directly or indirectly have a negative and harmful impact to their health (Pearlin, 1999; Pearlin et al., 1981; Pearlin & Bierman, 2013).

The theory also explains how stressors that are associated with one event or individual can lead to an accumulation of stressors in other areas of life for that individual or other individuals (Turney, 2014). For example, parental incarceration has been found to trigger social, economic, and emotional stressors in children and are a source of intergenerational stress proliferation (Turney, 2014). Children experience trauma as a result of the incarceration, which creates stressors of social stigma, emotional distress and isolation, and economic disadvantage that can extend into the transition into adulthood and increase intergenerational incarceration (Van der Kolk, 2007).

Previous studies have shown how stress proliferation theory can be used to examine the impact of parental incarceration on children. For example, Turney (2014) investigated the relationship between parental incarceration and the health of the children. Turney analyzed data from the 2011-2012 National Survey on Children's Health, which included data on the health of over 95,000 children of incarcerated parents. From the

data, parental incarceration was independently connected to learning issues, attention-deficit and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, behavioral and conduct disorders, development delay along with speech and language problems. Children's health disadvantages were also an unintended and overlooked effect of mass incarceration, which usually affects children of minorities and lower socioeconomic status who are already a disadvantaged population. Additionally, results indicated that stress can proliferate across generations especially from parent to child. The stressors of parental incarceration including social and economic stressors of poverty, disadvantage, stigma, exclusion, and incarceration can have lasting consequences on the physical and mental health for children (Turney, 2014).

It is important to address this impact of parental incarceration on children and stress proliferation because there is an increasing number of children who experience parental incarceration and the subsequent challenges (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008). It is estimated that there are 1.7 million children who have a parent incarcerated; however, the numbers could be much higher because there is currently no system in place to accurately track the number of children who experience parental incarceration (Kautz, 2017, p. 557). Additionally, there is an estimated 10 million children who have experienced parental incarceration at some point during their lives (Peterson, Fontaine, Kurs, & Cramer, 2015). However, it is difficult to accurately calculate up-to-date and precise estimates of the number of children impacted by parental incarceration due to the complexity, depth, and continued increase in the number of incarcerated parents (Haskins & Turney, 2018).

Research has also shown that children experiencing parental incarceration are often from lower economic and disadvantaged backgrounds (Haskins & Turney, 2018; Turney, 2018), disproportionately impacting children living in poverty (Cyphert, 2018). Further, children in rural communities and in southern areas are much more likely to experience parental incarceration. Children of color who are poor and from rural, metropolitan areas are the most at risk for parental incarceration (Haskins & Turney, 2018). Additionally, the highest risk for parental incarceration is for children residing in the southern states (Haskins & Turney, 2018).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Economic Well-being

Parental incarceration creates economic and social strain in many aspects of children's lives, which can have cascading consequences for children. Children of incarcerated parents experience economic disadvantages and social consequences that expand from adolescence into the transition into adulthood (Gust, 2012; Luther, 2015; & Ng et al., 2013), leading to more economic strain and disadvantage as well as instability compared to other children (Murray & Farrington, 2006). Parental incarceration increases economic insecurity and food insecurity (Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, & Garfinkel, 2011; Turney, 2015). Additionally, parental incarceration increases residential and housing instability and increases the potential for homelessness (Geller & Franklin, 2014; Wildeman, 2014). These hardships have been linked to various negative indicators of the well-being of children including academic, behavioral, physical, and mental outcomes (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001).

Various research has indicated the economic effects of parental incarceration, which may vary depending on which parent was incarcerated. One of the first studies conducted on the economic effects of parental incarceration showed that approximately one-third of the family members experienced serious economic and financial difficulties as a result of the incarceration (Naser & Visser, 2006). Further, research has shown that the incarceration of a father created lower economic contributions to the family, greater likelihood of receiving public assistance, and more residential moves, and the incarceration of a mother created increased residential instability and public assistance (Geller, 2009). Research has also shown that children and families with incarcerated fathers had lower incomes and were more likely to experience financial hardship, creating economic issues for children and families due to loss of employment and by increasing the financial burden (Schwartz-Soicher et al. 2011).

Social Well-being

Children of incarcerated parents are also at risk for social risk factors including stigmatization, shame, lack of support, and ultimately social exclusion (Markson, Lamb, and Losel, 2016). Stigma is an unintended consequence of parental incarceration (Link & Phelan, 2011; Phillips & Gates, 2011) and an ongoing issue for children (Dawson, Jackson & Nyamathi, 2012). Stigmatization consists of the following elements: distinguishing and labeling differences, associating labeled differences with negative attributes, differentiating between “us” and “them” based on labeled differences, and discriminating labeled individuals—all of which perpetuate differences in social, cultural, political and economic power (Link & Phelan, 2001). Children of incarcerated parents

have become recognized by lawmakers, service providers, and society as a unique and distinct group affected by stigmatization (Phillips & Gates, 2011). Though they do not personally have the stigmatized trait, children of incarcerated parents are stigmatized because of their association with their parents who are stigmatized (Phillips & Gates, 2011). Research conducted on children of incarcerated parents has concluded that children worry about how their parent's incarceration will be viewed by others and whether they will be stigmatized (Phillips & Gates, 2011). This concern extends to concerns about being stigmatized at school, which can lead to lack of attendance and academic issues (Parke & Clarke-Stewart, 2001; Phillips & Gates, 2011). Further, the negative effect of social stigma associated with their parent's incarceration has led to isolation, peer hostility, and rejection (Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Due to the concerns of stigmatization, many children hide their parent's incarceration to protect themselves for disclosure can put them at risk of being teased by peers and others in society (Nesmith & Ruland, 2008).

Social Mobility

The negative economic and social effects of parental incarceration affect adolescent's prospects of upward mobility and can have disruptive consequences extending into the transition into adulthood such as social exclusion (Foster & Hagen, 2016; Mears & Siennick, 2016). Social exclusion includes decreased social and economic mobility, stigma, and exclusion from normal social activities in society (Murray, 2007; Ng et al., 2013; Thulstrup & Karlsson, 2017). Social exclusion precludes full participation in normally prescribed activities while denying access to information,

resources, sociability, recognition, and identity, which reduces self-respect and capabilities to achieve personal goals (Foster & Hagan, 2015; Ng et al., 2013). Social exclusion leads to cumulative disadvantage for children of incarcerated parents beginning in adolescence extending into adulthood, which can have an intergenerational cycle (Foster & Hagan, 2016; Murray, 2007).

Research has suggested how parental incarceration can increase social exclusion and impact children. Three types of social exclusion include homelessness, lack of health insurance, and political disengagement, which is more likely to affect children with an incarcerated father (Foster & Hagan, 2007). Paternal incarceration may also have a negative effect on educational attainment and social advantages, which further increases social exclusion. These negative outcomes are further compounded by other social issues such as lower family income that increases social exclusion.

Further, racial and ethnic divisions that are created intergenerationally through incarceration can be reproduced through disproportionate intergenerational social exclusion (Foster & Hagan, 2007). For example, Wildeman (2009) found greater inequality and growth patterns in racial and class inequality in parental incarceration. Wildeman found that racial disparities in incarceration rates have not grown; however, other researchers have found that racial disparities in incarceration have actually grown. He also found that as parental educational attainment decreased there was an increase in parental incarceration for both White and Black children. But parental incarceration is dramatically higher for Black children, and their educational attainment is lower on average, which means that they are disproportionately affected by parental incarceration

than White children. Thus, parental incarceration by race and social class could be exacerbating social inequality and exclusion (Wildeman, 2009).

Additional research has shown the negative socioeconomic and social consequences of parental incarceration on the transition from adolescence into adulthood. Parental incarceration can severely affect several life outcomes for adolescence and during the transition into adulthood, affecting mental health, criminal behavior, drug use, alcoholism, education, economic attainment and mobility, and social relationships (Mears & Siennick, 2015). Therefore, parental incarceration during adolescence is a major turning point in life and has negative outcomes during the transition into adulthood (Mears & Siennick, 2015).

Educational Outcomes

There has been mixed evidence on academic performance and outcomes of children with incarcerated parents. Some studies have reported that academic performance is not affected by parental incarceration, but other studies have shown the opposite. For example, Cho (2009) found that children with an incarcerated mother in a jail experiences more academic challenges that children with a mother incarcerated in a prison. Maternal incarceration also reduced the overall likelihood of grade retention, though it did not affect grade scores, which could be contributed to alternative caregivers being involved in the child's educational performance (Cho, 2009). Additionally, Haskins (2011) found that behavioral school readiness for children 5 years old was decreased with a father's incarceration, though there was no evidence of effects on cognitive school readiness.

Other research has shown that parental incarceration, either maternal or paternal, has negative educational outcomes for the children of incarcerated parents and can spill over to other children at the school (Hagan & Foster, 2012). Hagan and Foster (2012) found significant negative effects on the average high school grade point average (GPA) of students with a mother incarcerated. Further, children that went to schools with higher proportions of incarcerated fathers had lower GPAs and were less likely to complete a college degree and ultimately had lower overall levels of education (Hagan & Foster, 2012). Additionally, both maternal and paternal incarceration had a negative impact on college graduation rates. The results of the study suggested that maternal incarceration has a much more profound impact on children's educational outcomes than paternal incarceration, leading Hagan and Foster to argue that the increasing incarceration rate for women suggests a "prison generation" may be forming in the United States.

Research has further shown that incarceration of any household member whether related or not has an impact on educational outcomes of youth. Nichols and Loper (2012) found that children and adolescents who had an incarcerated family member had lower cognitive skills and abilities compared to their peers. These children also showed higher levels of extended absences from school along with lower high school matriculation rates. In cases where the incarcerated family member was not a parent, the severity of the findings increased dramatically. It is suggested that the loss of this individual may not be such a great loss to the child as a parent, so these children are overlooked and do not receive the necessary attention and services as a child losing a parent to incarceration would receive. Therefore, there it is possible that children with incarcerated siblings or

other extended family members may receive less attention and support, which increases academic challenges and could have a great impact on educational outcomes.

Furthermore, Turney and Haskins (2014) examined the relationship between grade retention and parental incarceration by examining retention rates, parent reports, test proficiency, and reports from teachers on behavior and proficiency of children with incarcerated parents. They found that children that previously or were currently experiencing parental incarceration were more likely to be retained a grade. However, the study found a negative correlation between proficiency ratings from teachers and retention rates for children with lower proficiency ratings from teachers were more likely to be retained than other children. The researchers suggested that these findings could be based upon two explanations 1) children of incarcerated parents are stigmatized by the teachers or 2) the teachers' perceptions of children's academic proficiency are more accurate measures of children's capabilities than are test scores (Turney & Haskins, 2014, p. 254). The results of this study suggest that teachers not only observe academic difficulties but emotional difficulties as well and may view children of incarcerated parents as being overwhelmed or ill-prepared to move into the next grade level due to the effects of parental incarceration.

Health Outcomes

Research has documented higher rates of negative health outcomes among children of incarcerated parents including anxiety, depression, and other mental and physical health issues (Johnson & Easterling, 2005; Phillips & Gates, 2011). Children of parental incarceration experience negative physical and mental health outcomes due to

the intergenerational stressors passed from their incarcerated parent. Research on adverse child experiences, such as parental incarceration, have shown that the stresses associated with parental incarceration can lead to multiple physical and mental health issues (Borja, Nurius, & Eddy, 2015). Turney (2014) conducted a comprehensive examination into the effects of parental incarceration on children. Turney suggested that parental incarceration is a stressor that can proliferate on to the children and increase their risk for health issues. The study focused on the determination of the relationship between parental incarceration and the overall health of the children including physical and mental health, activity limitations, and chronic absences from school, compared to other adverse childhood experiences of parental divorce or death, witnessing parental abuse, and household mental health or substance abuse issues (Turney, 2014). The results of the study found that children who experience parental incarceration had a higher rate of mental health issues, ADD/ADHD, and anxiety than other children. The results of the study confirmed other studies linking parental incarceration to mental health issues in children experiencing parental incarceration (Turney, 2014).

Lee et al. (2013) also conducted a study to investigate the relationship between parental incarceration and the physical and mental health of the children experiencing parental incarceration. Lee and other researchers looked at 16 health conditions and found a positive association with parental incarceration in 8 of these health conditions. The conditions looked at were cancer, hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, migraines, depression, PTSD, anxiety, epilepsy, ADHD, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, obesity, and fair or poor health. Of these a positive relationship between

parental incarceration and health issues in children was found in the following; depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, HIV/AIDS, migraines, cholesterol, asthma, anxiety and fair or poor health (Lee et al., 2013).

Psychological Distress Behavioral Issues

Most of the literature on the effects of parental incarceration on children focus on how parental incarceration shapes the children's emotionality, psychological development and criminal trajectories. Some studies focus either on the psychological effects or the behavioral effects singularly; however, most of the studies examine the combination of these effects. A recent study using comprehensive meta-analysis found that parental incarceration increases the likelihood of psychological distress, antisocial behavior, and criminal offending. However, there while many studies show a unique effect of parental incarceration, there is not a consensus regarding these effects. Many of these studies further show that the children of incarcerated parents are more likely to experience emotional and behavioral problems. Researchers began to most more attention on the psychological and behavioral effects of parental incarceration in the early 2000s and this research has continued to expand.

Phillips et al. (2002) conducted one of the first studies by interviewing adolescents that were receiving mental health services. They compared the effects of parental incarceration on emotional and behavioral problems to the effects of other negative life experiences. In the study they compared adolescents who had experienced parental incarceration to those who had not. The number of adolescents that had experienced parental incarceration was over half of the sample and the adolescents were

more likely to have experienced physical and sexual abuse, neglect, poverty, parental substance abuse, had school suspension or expulsion, and had been involved in criminal behavior. These adolescents also experienced higher risk factors, witnessed more violence and experienced more family crises. In the area of emotional and behavioral problems, these adolescents were more likely to have been diagnosed with conduct disorders or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. These adolescents also experienced more social issues including functioning with other adolescents which suggests that parental incarceration may hinder social skills and functioning.

Kinner, Ataki, Najman, and Williams (2007) examined the effects of parental incarceration on internalizing behavior problems, externalizing behavior problems, and alcohol and tobacco use in a sample of adolescents. Using self-reported data, they examined the effects of parental arrest and parental incarceration. The results of the study found that parental incarceration had a significant relationship with all of the behavioral problems being examined. Further, it was found that boys were more likely to externalize problems while girls were more likely to internalize problems when experiencing parental incarceration.

Johnson (2009) used an intergenerational, nationally representative, and longitudinal data set from the Panel Study on Income Dynamics to examine the effects of parental incarceration on behavior and family economics. He used this data to examine the predictors of parental incarceration and the potential effects of parental incarceration on children. He found that black children were more at risk for experiencing parental incarceration over white children and that children of parents who had lower levels of

education were also more likely to experience parental incarceration. Paternal incarceration resulted in significant reductions in income and increased financial need and poverty. Parental incarceration of either parent was shown to significantly effect on internalizing problems, externalizing problems and increases school suspensions. The results of the study suggest that the effects of parental incarceration may influence intergenerational transmission of criminal behavior and economic inequality.

Murray and Farrington (2005) examined the effects of parental incarceration using data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development. They examined the overall effects of parental incarceration on different measures of antisocial behavior including self-reported violence and offending, poor life success, criminal convictions, and imprisonment. They also compared the effects of parental incarceration with other forms of parental separation and examined whether the effects varied by the timing of the incarceration. They found that parental incarceration was a strong indicator of antisocial behavior. The effects were shown to be stronger during adolescence; however, it also persisted in later life. Additionally, parental incarceration was found to be a stronger indicator of antisocial behavior over other forms of parental separation such as, hospitalization, death or divorce. Finally, children who experienced parental incarceration during adolescence were found to have higher levels of antisocial behavior than those children whose parents were incarcerated prior to their birth. This suggests that there is another intergenerational linkage to antisocial behavior other than genetics.

Murray and Farrington (2008) conducted a follow up examination of the effects of parental incarceration on internalizing problems and anti-social behavior. In this study

they examined the long-term effects of parental incarceration on the areas of anxiety, neuroticism, and antisocial personality. They found that boys who experienced parental incarceration during childhood were more likely to experience internalizing problems such as anxiety and neuroticism and were more likely to experience them throughout their life course compared to boys who had lost a parent in another manner such as divorce or death. They concluded that experiencing parental incarceration during childhood led to worse internalizing problems than other types of parental loss because it is more traumatic for the children. The results of the study suggest that parental incarceration during childhood increases the potential for internalizing problems and antisocial behavior due to the traumatic nature of this form of parent separation.

Wildeman (2010) also conducted a study to examine the effects of parental incarceration on antisocial behavior. He used data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study to examine whether the effects of parental incarceration varied by gender, offense type, and history of abuse and further examined the potential effects of strain stigma. He found that parental incarceration had a positive effect on physical aggression in males but a negative effect in females toward physical aggression. Additionally, he found that offense type appeared to moderate a relationship between parental incarceration and aggression. However, there did not appear that strain or social stigma mediated a relationship between parental incarceration and aggression. The results of this study suggest that the effects of parental incarceration on children may depend on certain characteristics of the parent.

Morgan et al (2014) conducted a study on the effects of parental incarceration and they found that children of incarcerated parents often receive less support than other children. These children often internalize their feelings and emotions which could be responsible for their mental and behavioral challenges. Internalizing these challenges could develop into disenfranchised grief which is described as emotional mourning because it is a loss that is not openly recognized or identified to be socially significant (Arditti, 2012). The physical absence of a parent to incarceration often leads to disenfranchised grief which can develop into various emotional complexities which places children at a higher risk of behavioral problems. This further supports that parental incarceration proliferates collateral damage of mental, physical and behavioral issues to the children.

Stress and Trauma

Children of incarcerated parents are disproportionately more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences which are potentially stressful and traumatic events (Turney 2018; Miller, 2006). Parental incarceration contributes to stressors and trauma already present in the lives of children and can be a vulnerability for adolescents (Smith & Young, 2017). Parental incarceration is a stressor and stressful life event that proliferates to the children and is accompanied by substantial trauma and stigma which can proliferate from adolescence into young adulthood (Turney & Lanuza, 2017). Additionally, Arditti (2016) found that parental incarceration is a conceptualized ongoing stressor for children and that contributes to psychological distress having lasting consequences into adulthood.

Parental incarceration has been found to be an adverse childhood experience that can have a negative impact and create challenges for children. Adverse Childhood Experiences is the term that is given to describe various types of abuse and neglect along with other traumatic experiences that occur for an individual under the age of 18 (What are ACEs, n.d., p.1.). Adverse childhood experiences have been linked to a number of adulthood problems including obesity, depression and suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, premature all-cause mortality, and chronic health problems (Balistreri & Alvira-Hammond, 2016). A study conducted by Balistreri and Alvira-Hammond (2016) found that adolescents who had not experienced the challenges of parental incarceration had better physical and emotional well-being than those children who had experienced the adversities of parental incarceration. They also found that adolescents who experiences less adverse childhood experiences were healthier physically and emotionally than those that had.

One of the categories of adverse childhood experiences is household challenges which includes intimate partner violence, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce, and incarcerated household member (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Therefore, those children who experience an incarcerated parent or other family member suffer adverse collateral consequences which can greatly impact their physically and emotional wellbeing which can extend into adulthood

Research suggests that loss and trauma are significant themes for children of incarcerated parents. Smith and Young (2017) suggest that the sudden loss of a parent to

incarceration has the same effect as losing a parent to divorce or death. Boss (2010) applied the concept of ambiguous loss to traumatic events such as losing a parent to incarceration which represents a “unique kind of loss that complicates grief, confuses relationships, and prevents closure” (p. 137). Additional research suggests that the ambiguous loss of losing a parent to incarceration has been link to post-traumatic stress disorders. Studies showed that bereaved children including those experiencing parental incarceration exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Bocknek & Sanderson, 2009). Post-traumatic stress disorder is diagnosed as having exposure to a traumatic event including divorce or death (bereavement) which causes symptoms of fear, helplessness, emotional detachment, distress, emotional distress, and shame. Additionally, Van der Kolk (2007) argued that childhood trauma creates levels of distress, shame and grief which creates difficulty in developing and maintaining social relationships.

Traumatic experiences during childhood and adolescence have been found to profoundly influence the well-being of children and next generations creating intergenerational stressors and traumas (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). Additionally, traumatic events have also been shown to have psychological ramifications that can be endured for decades for the victims and next generations (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009; Cohn & Morrison, 2018). A review of the literature on stressors and trauma have shown that there is a generational interchange especially where stressors and trauma can be passed to the next generations specially in the parent child relationship. This interchange is referred to as intergenerational, multigenerational, and

transgenerational (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). Cohn and Morrison (2018) examined how traumatic events impacting parents can also have a profound effect on the children and future generations. Research on the impact of the Holocaust on the survivors and the next generations was shown to provide comprehensive evidence of intergenerational transmission of trauma (Cohn & Morrison, 2018; Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). Research has shown that the trauma associated with the Holocaust has affected the psychological well-being of the children of survivors impacting next generations. Some of the psychological problems of these children include increased vulnerability to general psychological distress, individuation issues, aggression, impaired self-esteem, relationship issues, and diagnoses of post-traumatic stress disorder (Cohn & Morrison, 2018). Although parental incarceration is not comparable to the Holocaust as an event there is evidence that parental incarceration is a traumatic event and ambiguous loss in the lives of the child survivors that creates intergenerational psychological issues like those experienced by Holocaust child survivors.

Coping Strategies

Children of incarcerated parents have been found to use various coping strategies to deal with the effects and loss of a parent to incarceration. Coping or coping strategies refers to ways that an individual handle and adjusts to stressful events (Compas & Reeslund, 2009; Johnson & Easterling, 2015). Coping involves the efforts to regulate thoughts, feelings behaviors, physiological responses, and environmental circumstances (Johnson & Easterling, 2015). Johnson & Easterling (2015) conducted to study identify and examine the various coping strategies used by adolescents when dealing with

parental incarceration. One of the findings of the study was that children often use de-identification as a coping strategy where children distance themselves from their incarcerated parent which reduces stress and stigma stressors. Another coping strategy found in the study was desensitization which is the general psychological process by which a person's original emotive response becomes less intense over time or across repeated exposures (Johnson & Easterling, 2015, p.255). Desensitization was an attempt to control the negative responses to having an incarcerated parent by normalizing or minimizing the situation to others. Children also discussed other ways that they used to cope with the situation of having an incarcerated parent, such as, maintaining control over their lives, doing well in school, using relationships, helping others, and telling their individual stories. It is important to understand how children of incarcerated parents cope with the challenges, stresses and loss for this information can provide insight on the wellbeing and inform intervention efforts to better assist these children.

Policy & Intervention

Understanding parental incarceration and the negative consequences for the children is increasingly important to practitioners, policy makers, and scholars (Haskins & Turney, 2018). Research on the traumas associated with parental incarceration on children shed further attention to the need for early identification of children of incarcerated parents in order to better assist these children and reduce intergenerational incarceration (Van der Kolk, 2007). Therefore, it is suggested policy initiatives using sociological perspectives on trauma, stigma, and social exclusion could inform intervention that could reduce the traumatizing and stigmatizing effect of parental

incarceration on children and reduce intergenerational trauma (Haskins & Farrington, 2018). Other policy recommendations are to improve society's understanding of the effects of parental incarceration on the children, requiring of more accurate data collections on the number of children actually impacted, and for identification of the most effective programs to assist in lowering the risk for the children (Laakso & Nygaard, 2012; Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012). Additionally, scholars and researchers suggest the use of family impact assessments during sentencing of parents with children (Cyphert, 2018). Family impact statements focus on the children and could be beneficial in informing decisions for the needs of the children (Peterson, Fontaine, Kurs, & Cramer, 2015; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008).

Summary and Conclusions

Based on the empirical evidence presented in the literature, children who experience parental incarceration face numerous stressors and traumas that can lead to damaging economic, social and mental health issues during adolescence extending beyond into adulthood. The chapter highlighted the prevalence of parental incarceration along with a discussion on those most at risk including those children from poor, disadvantaged rural areas. The chapter covered the economic and social challenges experienced by children of incarcerated parents. Analysis of the various economic and social challenges were presented including disadvantage, poverty, strain, stigma, social exclusion and social mobility along with others that studies have found extending into young adulthood. The chapter further provided discussion on the educational outcomes for children of incarcerated parents. The stress proliferation theory was used in the

analysis and discussion of the challenges and stressors children of incarcerated parents experience and provided insight into the impact that these stressors have on children's health. The physical and mental health issues children experience from the effects of parental incarceration were also highlighted including psychological distress and behavioral issues. Additionally, the chapter provided discussion and analysis of the stressors and trauma that are already current in the lives of children of incarcerated parents along with the stress and trauma that parental incarceration imposes on children. Adverse childhood experiences including which includes the stressor of parental incarceration were discussed. Research and analysis were also provided that suggests a link between parental incarceration and post-traumatic stress disorders. Additional research and analysis were presented that suggest that stress and trauma of parental incarceration negatively impacts the well-being of children and can extend to next generations creating intergenerational stressors and traumas. Finally, search on the need for intervention and policy initiatives were presented. Researchers and scholars suggest that policy initiatives should focus more on the children of incarcerated parents and that advocacy programs are needed to better assist in reducing the traumatizing and stigmatizing effects of parental incarceration. It is further suggested that family impact statements be used in the sentencing of parents to collect an accurate measurement of the children impacted along with better assess their individual needs. However, research has also shown that there is very little information on the personal experiences of children of incarcerated parents; therefore, there needs to be research conducted on the lived

experiences of adult child survivors in order to establish policy initiatives the best practices for assisting this population.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of adults who as children experienced parental incarceration in rural areas, which can provide a better understanding of the challenges and traumas faced by these children. This chapter includes discussion on the methodology that was used to conduct this study. The first section describes the research design along with the rationale for its appropriateness. The next section presents the methodological procedures of the study. The third section is a discussion on issues of trustworthiness, which includes the ethical considerations that were relevant to this study. The chapter ends with a summary of the key elements and procedures of the methodology used in this study.

Research Design and Rationale

The main phenomenon that I explored in this study was the lived experiences of adults who experienced parental incarceration as children in rural areas to better understand their challenges and traumas. Based on the identified phenomenon and the purpose of the study, the following research questions were explored:

1. What are the perceived challenges facing adults who were children of parental incarceration in rural areas?
2. What policy intervention programs would be most effective at supporting children of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood?

To explore the phenomenon and examine the research questions, I used a qualitative phenomenological research design. Qualitative research methods involve exploring the subjective perceptions and experiences of a group of individuals who have experienced a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Qualitative research also provides an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of a group of individuals with data collection tools designed to gather rich and detailed information and then conducting data analysis of this information to develop patterns and themes (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Further, qualitative research is a systematic approach that relies on the constructive experiences of individuals to explore and examine a phenomenon (Silverman, 2013).

Additionally, phenomenological research involves exploring the lived experiences or lives of a group who share a similar phenomenon or experience (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology focuses on exploring the subjective experiences of individuals rather than focusing on broad generalizations (Moustakas, 1994). Although the information obtained from individuals in phenomenological studies cannot be generalized to individuals outside of the study, the research is considered to be truth (Moustakas, 1994).

A qualitative research approach was appropriate for the current study. This approach allowed me to explore the lived experiences of adults who experienced parental incarceration during their childhood through in-depth interviews. Thus, the principles of collecting in-depth data, subjectivity, and constructivism in this methodology aligned with the purpose and goal of this study (Marshall & Rossman,

2013). Additionally, qualitative research is used to guide studies when the researcher's goal is to better understand a phenomenon using tools that would elicit detailed information on the phenomenon (Ritchie et al., 2013), as the open-ended data collection tools used in qualitative research provides a range of answers and explanations (Silverman, 2013).

Further, the research design of phenomenology was appropriate for study because the emphasis was on exploring the lived experiences of adult survivors of parental incarceration through in-depth interviews. Phenomenology is described as the “reflective analyses of life-world experiences” (Moustakas, as cited in Lin, 2013, p. 478). Therefore, phenomenology was the appropriate design to gather the stories of the adult survivors of parental incarceration, which were gathered and analyzed to develop themes. Other research designs align with the purpose of this study but may not have provided the same detailed information illuminating the lived experiences of the participants. Further, this design provided rich, thick and meaningful descriptions of the phenomenon that other research designs would have lacked.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research the researcher plays a central role (Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). The researcher is considered to be the main instrument in a research study. As the researcher and main instrument of the study, I was responsible for the recruitment of participants for the study, interviewing the participants, data collection, data analysis and results, and the dissemination of the findings of the study.

Methodology

In this section I discuss the methodological procedures of the current study. The section includes several discussions involving the methodology that was used in the study. The section also includes the logic for the selection of participants; instrumentation; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; and the data analysis plan.

Participant Selection Logic

The population that I used in the study included adults living in a rural area in Southwest Virginia. The participants for this study included 6 adults who experienced parental incarceration during their adolescent years. The inclusion criteria of the study was based on the following: (a) adults who experienced parental incarceration during their childhood and (b) adults who resided in a rural community in Southwest Virginia during the time of the parental incarceration. Participants under the age of 18 were excluded from the study due to being a protected population. Adults who did not reside in a rural community during their parent's incarceration or who did not experience the parental incarceration during their childhood were also excluded from the study. To verify that each participant satisfied all the inclusion criteria, I confirmed with each potential participant during the recruitment period that all the criteria was adequately fulfilled.

I used purposeful and snowball sampling to gather the target sample of adult child survivors who experienced parental incarceration. Purposeful sampling is a nonprobability technique focusing on key characteristics of participants that need to be

satisfied to be eligible to participate in the study (Palinkas et al., 2013). Purposeful sampling ensures that the participants satisfy the criteria of the sample and provide an understanding of the problem and research questions (Creswell, 2009). Snowball sampling was used when the target sample size was not reached due to target participant samples not being easily accessible in the population. Snowball sampling involved asking participants being used in the study to refer other eligible individuals to be a part of the study (Goodman, 2011).

The sample size was based on saturation, which is essential to establishing credibility of the study. Data saturation is the point in which there is no addition or new information obtained or gained from additional participants. Further, the data becomes repetitive, which indicates that adding additional participants is no longer necessary to provide insight into the experience or perceptions of the sample (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is often reached at 12 participants; however, data saturation is unique in every study, which means that data saturation may occur with smaller sample sizes or in larger sample sizes (Fusch & Ness, 2015). If the sample of five to 10 participants had not provided saturation, additional participants would have been added to achieve data saturation from the target sample size. However, the sample size was determined by data saturation at six participants.

Instrumentation

In qualitative phenomenological research, the researcher is the most important instrument in the study (Walker et al., 2013). As the researcher in this study, I was involved in the entire research process including making important decisions related to

the study. I was also responsible for the recruiting participants, interviewing, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of the findings of the study.

To be an effective interviewer, I prepared an interview guide to use during the interviews that contained key questions that I would ask each participant. The interview guide was a flexible guide rather than a strict protocol that was used to assist me during the interview. However, I deviated from the interview guide when participants provided an answer that required further clarification or when asking follow-up questions.

To enhance the credibility of the interview guide as an instrument, I conducted an expert review to assess the appropriateness of the questions used in the interview guide. I asked experts who had experience in conducting interviews to review the interview guide and to provide feedback. I used their feedback to make appropriate changes to the interview questions in the interview.

Each of the participant interviews was audio-recorded using a digital recorder. After completing each interview, I transferred each audio recording file to my personal laptop used in the study. I assigned unique codes for every file, and a corresponding code was given to each participant.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The recruitment of potential participants was accomplished by posting a description of the research project and seeking volunteers on flyers that were placed throughout a rural community in Southwest Virginia. Online advertisements through Facebook and Twitter were also used. If there was a lack of response from individuals using these recruitment methods, I asked for referrals from individuals who did respond.

All participants who wanted to be part of the study were asked to provide verbal informed consent form at the start of data collection that was recorded. They were also asked to complete a demographics questionnaire prior to participating in the study (see Appendix A).

I used semi structured, face-to-face interviews for data collection. Most of the interviews were conducted in a building meeting area that was centrally located to the participants. The location provided privacy and a safe place for an interview. However, for availability and accessibility of the participants the interview location was flexible. I coordinated a preferred location and time for the interview with each participant and kept privacy and confidentiality in mind when determining interview locations.

During each interview I used the interview guide that I had designed using expert review and feedback to enhance the data collection process. The interview process consisted of an initial interview which lasted approximately 60 minutes. However, in cases where follow-up questions were necessary, a follow-up telephone interview was conducted for convenience purposes.

Interviews and data collection were recorded using a digital recorder. I informed each of the participants that the interviews would be recorded prior to the interview and explained that this was so the data could be analyzed in the succeeding stages of the study. The participants were informed that the interview recordings would not be accessible or available to anyone other than myself and would only be used for the data analysis. The participants were further advised that they could review the transcription of the interview recordings to assure accuracy.

I also took handwritten notes during the interviews in the event that the voice recording equipment failed during the interview process. Even when interviews are being recorded it is recommended that researchers take notes in the event that recording devices fail (Creswell, 2009). I transcribed each interview to ensure accuracy of the transcription and to further ensure privacy of the participants.

Although the target sample size was between 5 to 10 participants, the final sample was determined by data saturation. If data saturation had not reached with the initial target sample then additional participants would have been recruited to the study. Since data saturation was met prior to the sample of 10 participants the final sample size was 6 participants.

The interview process concluded with the debriefing of each participant. After conducting an interview, I explained to each participant that they would be contacted by me again through an email or by phone for a member checking during the data analysis phase of the study in order to increase the credibility of the findings of the study. The process of member checking involved requesting the participants to review the accuracy of the preliminary data through electronic email. I provided a summarized report before the formal analysis to each participant with the instruction for providing a short feedback concerning the accuracy of the summary of the data in capturing their individual lived experience. The feedback that was gained from the participants through email assisted in improving the credibility of the results of the study.

Data Analysis Plan

After transcribing all of the transcripts, I used NVivo software to store and organize the transcripts that are generated during the interview process for data analysis. NVivo software is a qualitative tool intended to store and organize large volumes of qualitative data for analysis (Azeem, Salif, & Dogar, 2012). Although the NVivo software was useful in the coding process, I was responsible for the actual data analysis.

Data analysis involved coding the data into themes for the two research questions used in the study. The analysis process was based on the five phases that Hycner (1999) developed to analyze data that is collected in phenomenological research. These five stages of phenomenological data analysis include: (a) bracketing and phenomenological reduction, (b) delineating units of meaning, (c) clustering of data into themes, (d) summarizing each interview, and (e) generating composite descriptions.

The first step of the phenomenological analysis involved the process of bracketing and reduction (Hycner, 1999). Bracketing is the process of the researcher working to set their personal biases and preconceived ideas about the topic to the side in the preparation for the analysis of the data. Data reduction is the process of reducing large portions of the data within a given text into a smaller unit of meaning such as codes. These codes then represent the smallest units of experience of the participants.

The second step in the data analysis process was the delineation of units of meaning from the data (Hycner, 1999). This is the process that involves assigning labels to the codes that were developed during the reduction stage of analysis. I assigned code

names and labels based on the prevailing meaning that were apparent from the section of the data coded.

The third step in the data analysis process involved clustering of the data into themes (Hycner, 1999). From the codes that I developed; I organized the data into clusters of themes based on their similarities with each other. I also developed several categories that represented the lived experiences of adult child survivors who experienced parental incarceration during their childhood.

The fourth step in the process involved summarizing the experiences of each participant in the study (Hycner, 1999). I developed a summarized narrative of the lived experiences of each participant based upon the analysis of the transcribed interviews. The summarized narrative contained direct quotes from each of the participants in order to strengthen the findings.

The fifth step of the phenomenological analysis process was the generation of composite descriptions, containing the general and unique themes that were developed from the data (Hycner, 1999). The composite description is a narrative of the experience of the entire sample of participants as a group. The composite description does not rely on the experiences on any on participants, but rather on the experiences that occur in several of the participants in the sample group.

Discrepant cases were handled by indicating the complete summary of the lived experience of each individual participant. In these summaries, the experiences that were not part of the core themes demonstrated the entire scope of the results. By including the discrepant cases this enhanced the credibility of the results in the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Researchers in qualitative research strive for trustworthiness in their research in place of validity and reliability. Researchers conducting qualitative research studies can enhance trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln, 1995). I worked to ensure that each of these were met.

Credibility or internal validity pertains to the accuracy of the results of a study which reflects to the true experiences or perceptions of the participants (Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013). To enhance credibility in this study I used the member checks and the process of reflexivity (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In this study I conducted member checking with each participant with a summarized data of their individual interviews through email in order to enhance the credibility of the findings. I also provided an individual summarized report during the analysis phase along with the instruction to provide feedback concerning the accuracy of the summary in capturing their individual lived experience. The feedback that was gained assisted in improving the credibility of the results of the study.

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the results of a study can be generalized to other settings (Lincoln, 1995). To enhance the transferability of the results of this study, I provided rich descriptions of the methodological procedures and the research context. The thick description provided will give future researchers sufficient information concerning the context in which the research was conducted which allows for more informed decisions regarding the possible relevance of the findings of this study to other related studies in the future (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

In qualitative research dependability is the extent to which the results of a study can be considered replicable and able to be repeated by other researchers (Houghton et al., 2013). To enhance dependability in this study I used audit trails. The audit trails used in this study contained specific information that details my actions at every stage of the data collection and data analysis process. Audit trails were used because dependability can be enhanced using audit trails by giving other researchers access to decisions that were made based on the actions that were taken during the study.

Confirmability in a qualitative research study refers to the extent to which the results of the study can be considered objective and that satisfy the standards of trustworthy research (Lincoln, 1995). I used reflexivity to enhance confirmability in this study (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Reflexivity is the process of acknowledging the researcher's professional background along with biases, opinions, and other personal relationships which could affect the objectivity of the study (Walker et al., 2013).

Ethical Procedures

To ensure that the research study was ethical there were measures and considerations taken in this study. I documented agreements that were used to gain access to participants to be used in the study through informed consent forms. The informed consent forms contained relevant information of the study such as purpose, nature of the data collection, and my contact information. Ethical research requires the use of informed consent forms for participants should be made aware of the nature of the study. Participants provided verbal consent that was recorded after reading the consent

forms which signified acknowledgement of the terms that were detailed in the informed consent forms.

Since the nature of the study is surviving parental incarceration in a rural community, the treatment of the participants in the study involved as little risk of emotional and psychological discomfort and harm as possible. Therefore, in the instances that a participant became emotionally overwhelmed or distressed during an interview, I stopped the interview process and ensured that proper mental health assistance was provided to the participant through referral to a licensed clinician.

Ethical issues pertaining to the recruitment of participants for this study were taken into consideration. In order to prevent inadvertent coercion, I did not recruit individuals who had personal relationships with me, such as colleagues, friends, family or members of the community that I can come into contact with during the course of my career in law enforcement. However, I did use personal contacts to assist in the recruitment of potential participants for the study. All of the individuals that participated in the study were volunteers.

Any participants that declined participation in the study or that requested early withdrawal from the study were immediately relieved from their participation in the study even if data collection had already been taken. Participants were informed from the start of the study that they were free to withdraw from participating during any time of the study without any penalty. All of the information and data collected from the participants that decide to withdraw from the study was removed in the data analysis process.

The data collection process from the participants was treated as confidential; however, it is not anonymous. The distinction between confidential and anonymous here means that I will know the identities of the participants participating in the study but their personal information such as names will be protected for confidentiality (den Hoonaard, Van den Hoonaard, den Hoonaard, & Van den Hoonaard, 2013). To protect this confidential data during the storage process I assigned unique names to the participants in order to hide their identities. Rather than using the participant's real names I assigned unique codes to conceal their identities during analysis and the presentation of the findings of the study.

In reference to dissemination of the results of the study, no third-party individuals have access to the raw data; however, the results of this study are presented in the dissertation and are accessible to the public for review. The results presented in the dissertation do not contain the real names of the participants or any other confidential information that could compromise the identities of the sample population as a group. After the dissertation has been approved and published the participants in the study will no longer be able to withdraw from the study.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of adult child survivors who experienced parental incarceration during their childhood in a rural community in Southwest Virginia. A qualitative research approach was appropriate in order to gain insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of the participants with depth and detail (Ritchie et al., 2013). The selection of using a

phenomenological research design was appropriate for the emphasis on exploring the lived experiences of adult child survivors who experienced parental incarceration during childhood (Moustakas, 1994).

The sample consisted of 6 adult child survivors who experienced parental incarceration during childhood. The rationale for the sample size was based on data saturation which was important in establishing credibility in a research study since data saturation can occur with smaller sample sizes. The data collection was collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews along with follow up telephone interviews when necessary. Data was loaded into NVivo software and then analyzed using the five phases that Hycner (1999) developed to analyze data collected in phenomenological research. The five stages of the phenomenological data analysis involved: (a) bracketing and phenomenological reduction, (b) delineating units of meaning, (c) clustering of data into themes, (d) summarizing each interview, and (e) generating composite descriptions. Trustworthiness in the study was enhanced through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln, 1995). The following chapter will include the presentation of the results of the data analysis and will include the coding summary which is supported by direct quotes from the participants in the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain a better understanding of the life challenges and traumas faced by adult survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. The aim of the study was to explore the impact of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood. There were two research questions used to guide the study:

1. What are the perceived challenges facing adult children of parental incarceration in rural areas?
2. What policy intervention programs would be most effective at supporting children of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood?

The following sections of this chapter include the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and results. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Setting

The interviews were conducted in a building meeting area that was centrally located to the participants. The location provided privacy and a safe place for an interview. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced participant participation or their lived experience at the time of the study in a way that may have influenced interpretation of the results.

Demographics

The sample included six adults who had a parent incarcerated at some point during their adolescence while residing in a rural community in Southwest Virginia. The participant ages ranged from 22 to 41. A summary of each participant and their experience is included in the following sections.

Participant 1

Participant 1 is a 41-year-old White female who is divorced and raising three children on her own. She dropped out of high school; however, she obtained her GED. She works at a small restaurant in the area. She was raised by her mother who was described as a heavy drinker and who had several boyfriends over the years. Her mother was arrested numerous times during her childhood, going to city jail for alcohol and drug offenses along with assaults involving various boyfriends. She was later arrested for a major drug offense involving opioids and was sentenced to 8-and-a-half years in a state prison. The participant voluntarily shared that she has a history of arrests for assaults and drug offenses and has been in both jail and prison for the drug offenses.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is a 32-year-old African American male who is married and has three children. He graduated high school and works for wages but he does not have consistent employment. Both of his parents were in and out of his life due to numerous drug offenses that led to them being incarcerated numerous times during his childhood and adolescence. He was raised by his grandparents and would see his parents when they were not in jail until his father was finally arrested and sent to a state prison for a long

incarceration period. The participant disclosed that he has been in and out of jail for assaults and drug related offenses but has not been to state prison or received long sentences.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is a 25-year-old African American male who is single. He has a bachelor's degree and is employed. He was raised by a single mother, and his parents were never married. His father was in and out of his life due to his father being arrested numerous times during his childhood and adolescence for drug offenses. He went to city jail for these up until the participant was beginning his senior year, at which point his father was arrested for a serious drug offense and was sentenced to 10 years in a state prison.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a 33-year-old White male who lives with the mother of his two children. He did not graduate high school. He does not have a steady job but will do odd jobs here and there. He relies on the mother of his children to work and support the family. He was raised by his mother, and his father was in and out of his life due to numerous arrests for alcohol and drug offenses along with larceny and assaults. His father was finally sent to a state prison for drug related offenses and remains in prison. The participant volunteered that he has been in jail numerous times for assaults along with alcohol and drug offenses.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is a 22-year-old White female who is married. She has an associate's degree and works at a local dental office. Her parents were divorced when she was a child, and she lived with each of her parents equally up until a year prior to her father being incarcerated. She described having loving and supportive parents during her early childhood and a close relationship with her father. She explained that her father had experienced a health issue that required going on disability and taking opioids to assist with pain, which developed an addiction. She further explained that a year prior to her father's incarceration she no longer resided at his residence due to not feeling safe. Her father was incarcerated the summer prior to her senior year in high school for a major drug offense where he received a 20-year sentence in a state prison.

Participant 6

Participant 6 is a 36-year-old White female who is not married and has two children. She did not complete high school. She does not work at this time. She resided with both of her parents during childhood although her mother was in and out of her life due to going to jail numerous times over drug offenses. Her mother continues to be in and out of jail for drug related offenses. The participant stated that she has been in jail for larceny and drug offenses.

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, there were three men and three women who participated. The participants either responded to the flyer or were advised of the study through snowball sampling by being invited to participate from another participant. Once

the criteria were met by each participant an interview was scheduled. Saturation was achieved after the six interviews were completed.

Data for the study were collected through in-depth, semi structured, face-to-face interviews along with telephone interviews with six participants (see Appendix B for the interview guide). I conducted a single interview with each participant in a reserved room at a local community center that had prior approval from the institutional review board (approval no. 03-11-20-0729520). For the telephone interviews, I conducted a single interview with participants over the telephone for their convenience and for follow-up purposes. The duration of each of the initial interviews was 60 minutes, and the duration of any follow up interviews was 10 to 15 minutes. All the interviews were audio-recorded, with the participants giving verbal consent, using a digital recorder. Each interview was transcribed by hand by me, which ensured accuracy and privacy along with providing an opportunity to observe patterns that may have developed in the interviews. The interviews were stored on a USB. This device along with the consent forms and questionnaires were all stored in a locked and protected file cabinet and will be stored and kept for a period of 5 years. There were no variations in data collection from the plan that was presented in Chapter 3, and no unusual circumstances were encountered during the data collection other than the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by me and then analyzed using NVivo 12 software. The analysis process was based on the five phases developed by Hycner (1999). The first step of bracketing was accomplished through working to set aside my

own personal biases and preconceived ideas about the issue in preparation for the analysis of the data. Data reduction was accomplished by reducing large chunks of the data from within the transcripts into smaller units of meaning or codes, with these codes representing the smallest units of experience of the participants.

In the second step of the analysis, I delineated the codes or units of meaning by assigning individual labels to them, which was based on the prevailing meaning of the section of data coded. The third step involved clustering the delineated units of meaning or codes into themes, which were based on the codes' similarities with each other. The resulting themes represented the core of the reported, lived experiences of adults who experienced parental incarceration during adolescence. The results of the fourth phase of the data analysis were reported in the demographic section of this chapter, which also consisted of a summary of each participant's lived experience. The fifth phase of the data analysis led to a composite description of the lived experience of all the participants, which is also presented in this chapter.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study's results, the research adhered to the procedures recommended by Thomas and Magilvy (2011). The credibility of the results was ensured through member-checking, which involved e-mailing each participant an individual summarized report of their own interview during the analysis phase with instructions for the participants to provide feedback about the accuracy of the summary in capturing their lived experience of parental incarceration. The participants recommended that no changes be made. To enhance the transferability of the results, the research

provided a rich description of the methodological procedures and the research context. I also used audit trails to enhance dependability. The audit trails include specific information about my actions at every stage of the data collection process and data analysis process. Finally, I enhanced the confirmability of the study's results by practicing reflexivity, which involved the researcher acknowledging elements of their professional background, biases and opinions, and personal relationships that might affect the objectivity of the study.

Results

After transcribing each interview codes were created from the participant perspective that was presented in each interview. While reviewing the transcripts, I also observed a pattern of recurring words and ideas or themes. Using NVivo 12 data analysis software assisted in establishing themes and codes for this study.

This qualitative phenomenological study was guided by two research questions: "What are the perceived challenges facing adults who experienced parental incarceration in rural areas?" and "What policy intervention programs would be most effective at supporting children of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood?" There were four themes that were discovered during the data collection along with subthemes within each primary theme.

Themes

After thoroughly reviewing the transcripts, recurring themes formed insights along with several subthemes that emerged. The first theme that emerged from the data was trauma. Two subthemes related to trauma included grief/loss and emotions. The

participants all described a sense of loss and grief over having a parent incarcerated. They described how difficult the loss of their parent was along with the many things that they and the parent missed or lost together. A couple of the participants even said how it felt like their parent had died and expressed how traumatic it was for them to lose their parent. Each of the participants also spoke about their emotions they felt during their adolescence and the emotions that they still have over experiencing a parent incarcerated, with some of the participants showing emotions as they described their experience. They spoke about how hard it was and how badly it hurt them. There was also anger and frustration over their situations. The participants each spoke about the emotional struggles they experienced and not knowing how to handle their emotions. They also shared that these emotional struggles are still present today extending the trauma beyond childhood into adulthood.

The second theme that emerged was social challenges. Three subthemes related to social challenges included stigma, embarrassment/shame, and isolation. The participants described the stigmatization that they felt over having a parent incarcerated. They shared how they had been talked about along with their incarcerated parent and how they had been judged and treated as though they had been incarcerated with their parent. There was also a feeling that this has extended beyond into their adult lives with several feeling as though they are still being labeled today over their parent's incarceration. There was also a common theme of embarrassment and shame over their parent's crime and incarceration. A few of the participants explained how their parent's incarceration had been on the news, which made the situation worse for them. None of the participants

wanted anyone to know about their parent's incarceration. Isolation was another common theme with the participants being isolated from participating in events or activities due to others knowing about their parent's incarceration along with the participants isolating themselves at times due to the stigma, shame, and embarrassment.

The third theme to emerge was stressors. The participants discussed how having a parent incarcerated created stressors in areas of their lives. Two subthemes to stressors included financial and educational. Many of the participants described the stresses of being poor and living in poverty during their adolescence due to their parent's incarceration. One of the participants did not suffer from poverty because her father did not go to prison until she was 17; however, she still explained that her financial position was affected by her father's incarceration. A few resided in public housing and several had to move a number of times during their adolescence. Some were evicted and homeless at times during their childhood and adolescence. Having to obtain a job and assist financially created stress for several participants. All the participants described stresses related to education and school. Most expressed obtaining poor grades throughout school due to their parent being in and out of their lives due to incarceration and not being around or caring. All the participants expressed stress concerning having to attend school due to others knowing about their situation and talking about it both during and after the incarcerations.

The fourth theme to emerge was coping. The participants discussed the various ways that they coped with having a parent incarcerated during their adolescence. There was some variance in this theme; however, the results are relevant to the study. Three

subthemes related to coping included withdrawal, substance, and other. All the participants described having trouble coping with their parent's incarceration and that they initially withdrew in order to cope. They expressed that they did not know how to handle their situation and that they did not want to be around others for they wanted to escape from their situation, so they withdrew from being around others and from participating in the things that they had participated in before. Four of the participants described how they turned to alcohol and drugs as a method of coping during their adolescence and explained that they still struggle with substance abuse issues in adulthood due to their experience. The other two participants had outside support systems that assisted in their coping. One participant's boyfriend and his family assisted her by being there and taking her to a Christian based class for diverse situations. The other participant had a male role model who stepped in as a father figure to support him. This participant also used sports as a method of coping. Both participants also explained how they had strong faith systems that was a key factor in helping them cope through their experience of having a parent incarcerated.

Theme 1: Trauma. The first theme that emerged from the data was trauma. The participants in this study described the effects of having a parent incarcerated during their adolescence. Two subthemes related trauma included grief/loss and emotions.

Grief/Loss. The participants expressed multiple reactions related to grief and loss, which are exemplified by the following statements:

Participant #1: The hardest part was not having my mom around...I didn't have a mom. I lost my mom.

Participant #2: I lost both of my parents so I didn't know what it was like to have mom and dad around. They missed everything I ever did. Them not being there was normal...it was all in knew. I felt like they died even though you know they didn't because I knew they were not coming back. I missed them a lot.

Participant #3: He was in and out of jail and prison so he was never around. I had lost my dad. The most challenging part was that he wasn't around for the big events like birthday, holidays, graduation...stuff like that. A part of me was missing.

Participant #4: My dad was never around because he was in jail so I don't know what it is like to have that father figure.... You know what I am saying? I lost my dad to the system. I felt like somebody...he had died.

Participant #5: I was so close to my dad before. I was a daddy's girl and then I lost him because he went to jail. It was very traumatic for me. He has and is going to miss out on so many things in my life and I will not have him here to share things with me. I had to get married without him and lost the chance to share that special experience with my dad on my special day.

Participant #6: My mom was always in and out of jail so we lost a lot of time with her. She was never there so it was hard. But absence and the loss become a way of life.

Emotions. The following statements from participants provide examples of the emotions that they felt:

Participant #1: I still get upset over it. Still. Like you just remember from yesterday. It is horrible.

Participant #2: It hurt but I tried not to show that it did...I mean I never let anyone see me cry. I was so upset and angry with them. I was frustrated over the situation and hurt. I never felt whole. But I didn't want to ever admit it to anyone...not even myself for it hurt too much.

Participant #3: It hurt that he was never around but the last time...I was shattered when he went to prison because I didn't know when I would see him again. And when people like my mom would say bad things about him or the situation it would make it worse because that was my dad. It broke my heart when he went to prison. I wanted him to know how badly he hurt me.

Participant #4: It was really tough...you know...emotionally not having my dad around. I had to be tough and not show it. You know I felt sad... very sad. And I was angry and upset too. I had a lot of emotional issues going on.

Participant #5: I would get so emotional and my emotions would hit and I didn't want to be upset in front of everyone because I didn't want them to know. People talking bad about him made it hurt worse too. It was a real struggle emotionally. I cried a lot and it is still a constant struggle for me to this day.

Participant #6: I cried a lot because she was always going to jail. And at any time, I still cry over it. It is still hard. I was sad and I felt frustrated and angry. It was too painful for me to deal with or handle. I didn't know how to deal with it.

Theme 2: Social Challenges. The second theme to emerge was social challenges. The participants described some to the social challenges they faced due to having a parent

incarcerated. Three subthemes related to social challenges included stigma, embarrassment/shame, and isolation.

Stigma. The following are participant statements that show the stigma that they felt as part of the social challenges of having an incarcerated parent.

Participant #1: There is definitely a stigma. My friends couldn't come to my house and the parents didn't want me at their house because of my mom. They would talk about it in front of the kids and then they would question me. I felt like and could tell I was being judged.

Participant #2: People were judging me. They talked about what they did and talked about me like I did it too just because he I was their son. Some made comments that I was going to be just like my mom and dad when I grew up...in jail or prison. People stereotyped me because of what my parents done...you know because they are in prison.

Participant #3: People even family would be like did you hear what he did or did you see him on the news. I would hear people talk about it like it was me that went to jail and prison. You are stigmatized for what your parents did...that is for sure.

Participant #4: People talked about my dad and me. They judged me and made comments that I was going to be just like him and end up in prison. They knew my whole family and judged us all the same. People stigmatized us like we are the one in jail or we are going to prison one day too.

Participant #5: It definitely sucked. I felt like people may be judged me because of what he did. I would hear people make comments and I was watched and treated differently by others. People don't want you around. People spreading rumors and whispering about it.

Participant #6: It is hard because people whisper and judge you even though it isn't your fault...I mean...you are a kid. You cannot help what your parents do. I couldn't help it that my mom was always going to jail and then went to prison. I was just a kid. I was labeled...I am still labeled today. I got treated badly because my mom went to jail so much and then to prison.

Embarrassment/Shame. The following are statements that participants expressed while describing their embarrassment.

Participant #1: Friends and neighbors would ask why are they taking your mom to jail again and that was embarrassing.

Participant #2: I was so embarrassed and it was so hard not having either of them with me. It was really embarrassing at school events when I didn't have a parent to show up for things. When the other kids asked why I didn't want to tell them because I was embarrassed.

Participant #3: I was like...to me it was embarrassing. His picture was posted on the news and everybody knowing it is embarrassing. I was ashamed of him and I didn't want for people to know that he was my dad.

Participant #4: I was kind of ashamed and I really didn't want people to know because I was embarrassed. It is just so embarrassing.

Participant #5: I tried to hide it a lot because I was so embarrassed. I was embarrassed and ashamed. I was ashamed that it was my dad on the news and ashamed of what he had done.

Participant #6: We didn't want people to know or to talk about it because it is so embarrassing and we felt so ashamed.

Isolation. The following statements show how participants felt isolated:

Participant #1: I got to where I tried to avoid people and everyone. I just stayed away from everyone.... they didn't want me around anyway. You could tell...I felt it. I wish someone would have told me that I wasn't alone in this.

Participant #2: I didn't have many close friends growing up and stayed to myself a lot. Other kid's parents didn't want them coming to my house and they didn't want their kids hanging out with me so I felt isolated from other kids. I felt left out.

Participant #3: I separated myself and closed off. I tried to isolate myself from the pain and from others. Feeling alone with the worse part...being closed off.

Participant #4: I didn't want to be around other people except my close friends that lived near me and had similar situations with their parents. I put myself in a box and closed myself off.

Participant #5: I didn't feel like I had a lot of people I could talk to so I kept to myself. I didn't go out with friends my senior year and pulled back due to feeling they were judging me. I felt alone.

Participant #6: We moved a lot so I just tried to stay to myself and I only had a couple of close friends. I thought I was on my own and like I didn't have nobody. I was isolated.

Theme 3: Stressors. The third theme to emerge was stressors. The participants discussed how having a parent incarcerated created stressors in areas of their lives. Two subthemes related to stressors included financial and educational.

Financial. Participants stated multiple ways that their parents' incarceration impacted them financially:

Participant #1: We lived in housing but ended up getting evicted from there. we got evicted from so many places. We never had any money because she was always in jail. If we had money it was from one of her many boyfriends. I had to give her money when I was old enough to get a job. I still struggle financially.

Participant #2: We were always poor and never had any money. My granddad tried to help out but we never had much as a kid. But I was poor growing up. we struggled financially. We didn't have money for food or rent a lot of the time.

Participant #3: We were poor and struggling and my dad didn't help much... you know because he was always going to jail. So, it was just up to my mom and being a single parent home, it was rough financially. I remember one time I gave him my socks off of my feet when I was a teenager because he needed socks.

Participant #4: I grew up poor. We never had any money. I had to give him money when he was out of jail to help him. I had to get a job early and keep working in

order to help out. I grew up in poverty and public housing my whole life. We were homeless a few times when I was growing up.

Participant #5: I didn't struggle badly financially but it did change in that I couldn't go to mom or dad for things anymore. He was gone and she had to pick up the slack so things got tight.

Participant #6: I do not ever remember having money. We always had money problems because she was never there to help out. We struggled a lot when I was growing up. I was poor and lived in a single parent household with a single parent income. We were homeless several times.

Educational. Participants' education was also impacted by their parents' incarceration:

Participant #1: I struggled in school. I had difficulty staying awake and paying attention due to my home life. Between the fights due to alcohol and drugs, mom going to jail and being absent and having to take care of the house and my brother school was a stressful place for me. I couldn't concentrate or function. I hated having to go and dropped out my senior year. No one cared about my grades or whether I went to school so why bother.

Participant #2: I never wanted to go to school. No one cared whether I made good grades or went anyway. I struggled to pay attention and to do the work. I would always be tired from the nights before. And I was jealous of the other kids especially since I didn't have either of my parents. School functions were really hard and stressful for me due to not having either one of them to come to functions.

Participant #3: I always got bad grades in elementary school and middle school. And when I first started high school my grades were bad but then I made a decision to get focused after he was sentenced to a long prison term my senior year for I decided I was not going to be like him and go down the road of drugs. He was never around to help me with my grades and my mom was too busy so it wasn't until I got older and decided to do it on my own that they came up. School was a difficult place for me and I struggled with grades and whether people knew about his being in and out of jail and then my senior year when it was on the news it was even more stressful because of all of my emotions and distractions

Participant #4: I hated school. I didn't like doing the work and struggled to keep up. It didn't help that the other kids knew about my dad. It is hard being so poor and having a parent incarcerated and going to school with other kids that have normal homes. It can be a stressful situation and hard. I hated it. I ended up quitting and not graduating.

Participant #5: My grades were good growing up because I had both of my parents in my life and they were involved. But then my senior year when my dad went to jail and it was all over the news my school life became stressful. He went to jail right before my senior year started and I remember just not wanting to go back because I knew everyone had to know and was afraid of what they would say. And then when it started back, I struggled with being able to pay attention due to the distractions of his trial and then his leaving me for so many years. My senior year was just stressful and hard.

Participant #6: I had difficulty concentrating in school. I didn't do well and didn't like going. We moved so much that it was hard to make friends and then not having my

mom around made it even more difficult and hard. It was not a good experience for me and I still have bad memories and get stressed just thinking about it.

Theme 4: Coping. The fourth theme to emerge was coping. The participants discussed the various ways that they coped with having a parent incarcerated during their adolescence. There was some variance in this theme; however, the results are relevant to the study. Three subthemes related to coping included withdrawal, substance, and other.

Withdrawal. Of the ways that participants coped, withdrawal was a method that was mentioned often.

Participant #1: I learned to stay to myself. I stopped hanging out with my friends so much and started staying to myself. I didn't know how to handle my mom going away for so long and didn't have anyone to help me with this. I just wanted to escape from it all and not have to face what was happening. Life was so hard and I was so mad and upset. I didn't want to face anyone.

Participant #2: I tried to escape it from my mind... you know. I just didn't want to deal with it. I didn't want to deal with these feelings so I withdrew and kept to myself. I pulled back and closed myself off from everyone.

Participant #3: At first, I withdrew and didn't want to talk to anyone or be around anyone. I was hurt, angry, frustrated and had all of these emotions I didn't know how to deal with them or the situation that I was in. I didn't know how to cope with losing my dad for so long and I didn't want to have to deal with it or all of the other negative things.

Participant #4: I covered it up to cope with it. I didn't know how to handle the loss or the anger that I had so I started acting like it was not real. I wasn't open to anyone... I

wanted to keep all of this to myself. So, I just kept to myself... I withdrew and kind of became a prisoner myself.

Participant #5: I struggled...I was trying to figure out why my dad did what he did and how am I supposed to move on. Like...how am I supposed to you know cope with it. At first, I just retreated and locked myself away from almost everyone. I didn't want to deal with this and the only way I knew how to cope was to close it away and not deal with it in the beginning.

Participant #6: I had trouble coping with her being gone all of the time. I just worked to stay by myself so I wouldn't have to deal with it or talk about it. I didn't go out much... I liked to stay in my room. I slept... a lot... I liked sleeping because I didn't have to deal with any of this when I was asleep. This helped for a while.

Substance. Substances were another way that participants coped with their parents' situation.

Participant #1: Eventually, I started hanging out with people again but not good influences. I also had a boyfriend. We all started running the streets for all hours. I started drinking and doing drugs... pills... I started doing pills... all day... every day. No one cared about what I was doing and this helped... or so I thought it was helping. But it is just a temporary fix. It helped numb the pain and sadness. It helped me escape and not have to deal with my everyday reality.

Participant #2: I got with the wrong people... the wrong crowd. I began running the streets... no one cared what I was doing. I began to do drugs and drink every day to

deal with the pain. I also got into fights... a lot of fights. The drugs and alcohol helped eased my pain and helped me not think about it.

Participant #4: I huge out with the wrong crowd...I got into drugs and drinking. I did a lot of drugs...because when you are high you do not have to think or deal with anything. You just do not care about anything when you are drunk or high. We have all followed in his steps with drugs and jail... it is like a chain effect... you know?

Participant #6: I started to drink and then got into drugs. I started hanging out with some bad people in order to have access to drugs and alcohol. I liked being high or drunk because I didn't have to think... you know... you can escape from all of the negative emotions and the pain...escape your life.

Other. Some participants also mentioned other ways that they coped.

Participant #3: I coped with the situation in a few ways. I had an outside role model...or father figure. A man in the community took me in as his own and filled that father role. I owe him a lot for he loved me and guided me and made me the man I am today. My faith... Christianity was a huge coping factor for me... I have a strong faith and I stayed close to this. I also played sports in school... like football so I just dedicated myself to the sport of football and took out my frustrations on the field by hitting other people. And I sang in church choirs which also kept my mind focused. So, for me staying busy with other things that kept my mind off of my dad and our problems and then having that one individual that invested a lot in me... these things all helped me to cope in a positive way. I just knew that I wasn't going to get into the drug thing and become

like my dad... I even cut friendships with people who were headed down that road. I just wanted better for myself... you know?

Participant #5: My boyfriend at the time and his family they helped me come out of my isolation. They were the ones that were there for me and assisted me in getting through this...they still are since I married him. Having them and their support helped me cope with my dad's situation at the time and have helped me to continue to cope with the loss and emotions that are still there. My mother-in-law also took me to some Christian classes that helped but they weren't designed for children of incarcerated parents.... they still helped a little though. And my faith was a huge factor in helping me cope once I got over the anger and frustration of why was this happening to me and my family.

Follow up Question 1 to Coping. As part of the theme of coping, participants were asked, "Do you have any advice for other adolescence facing the same issue of parental incarceration?"

Participant #1: I would definitely tell them to try to talk to somebody... a counselor, a school resource officer, someone. Don't keep this all cooped up inside of you for it will destroy you. And don't turn to drugs or alcohol because they seem like they help... and they do short term... but not long term. It is just a false sense of relief.

Participant #2: Do not go through this alone or go into denial. You have to have to find a way to deal with this and be around other people.

Participant #3: Get involved through something. Try to find people to support you and encourage you...positive people. Don't do the negative things that can lead you down the same road. Try to find a spiritual connection if you can or a connection to

something positive that will help you in a positive way and not a negative like drugs and alcohol do.

Participant #4: Do not cover it up in the same ways I did. Don't follow the same cycle of drugs and alcohol like your parents or I did... it is so easy to do but it will not get you anywhere but jail... and you will follow the same jail cycle as your parents.

Participant #5: I definitely think it is important not to isolate yourself because it would be easy to go to your room and cry your eyes out but honestly sometimes that helps but most of the time it doesn't for long. You definitely need people around you... positive people. You need to be able to talk about it to someone. I definitely think it is good to talk about it.

Participant #6: Do not isolate yourself or put yourself in a box like I did. You have to find something positive to help you and positive people to encourage you.

Follow up Question 2 to Coping. Participants were also asked, "What could have helped you better cope with having a parent incarcerated during your adolescence?"

Participant #1: I wish there had been a program or resource for kids like me... somewhere safe and sane for me to go to for a while. It was hard for me to trust anybody but maybe if somebody would have just pushed a little more, I may have opened up more. I think people need to ask kids more questions and try harder with kids that have a parent in jail... build that trust. Kids need to know that someone cares and will be there to help them.

Participant #2: I think that there needs to be people that work with kids whose parents are in jail. I wish people...someone would have tried harder to talk to me and

work with me. I wish I had someplace to go and someone to talk to. So, I think that having a place for kids to go and someone for them to talk to would greatly help other kids.

Participant #3: I 100 percent feel that there needs to be mentoring and other resources for kids that have a parent in jail because you need all of the support you can get. If there had been mentoring programs that I had known about as a child or adult, I would have done it asap because like you need as much support and love that you can get. To keep your mind off of all of that negative. Not having a father in your life is hard... not have a parent... any parent is hard. You need that nurturing and that nurturement and love.

Participant #4: There should be people who work with kids whose parent is in jail or prison. Kids needs someone to listen and to guide them. I wish someone would have been there for me... anyone because I needed to cope with this situation and I still need help today and there is no place to go... no one to turn to in our area.

Participant #5: I feel that there needs to be more resources to help kids like mentoring and programs to help kids. There needs to be programs designed for children of incarcerated parents along with other diverse situations. I definitely think that would be beneficial because everyone has their own situations and hurts in their own way. And I feel like that would be very beneficial if it is specifically for children whose parents are incarcerated like it is specific to that need.

Participant #6: We definitely need support groups because we are not recognized and it gets... we get pushed under the rug and no one cares about what we are going

through or what we need. So, having programs to help us and having people for us to talk to and turn to would greatly help. I wish I would have had someone or something like this.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain a better understanding of the life challenges and traumas faced by adult child survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 6 adult child survivors. There were two research questions used to guide this study. There were two research questions that guided this research study which were: What are the perceived challenges facing adult children of parental incarceration in rural areas? What policy intervention programs would be most effective at supporting children of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood? The research exposed four primary themes: trauma, social challenges, stressors, and coping. There were also several subthemes that emerged from the primary themes which were: grief/loss, emotions, stigma, embarrassment/shame, isolation, financial, educational, withdrawal, substance, and other.

Both of the research questions were answered through the participants sharing their lived experiences of parental incarceration. I found that parental incarceration has a profound and lasting effect on children. Parental incarceration creates traumas, challenges, and stressors for children during their adolescence that extends beyond into their adulthood. The participants openly shared and expressed their personal experiences and perspectives of having experienced parental incarceration. There showed true and

raw emotions during the interview process expressing the stressors, challenges and traumas that they experienced and still experience due to having a parent incarcerated. The participants shared the sense of loss and grief along with various other emotions that they experienced from having a parent incarcerated, for example, several mentioned how it felt like their parent had died and the sense of loss they felt. They also shared the embarrassment and shame associated with having a parent incarcerated along with the stigma and isolation they experienced. They all felt a sense of shame and embarrassment over having a parent in jail or prison, they felt judged and isolated by others for what their parents had done. The participants also described the financial and educational struggles they experienced, such as, poverty and low academic performance. They went on to discuss the various methods they each used to cope with the experience of having a parent incarcerated. All of the participants described how they withdrew as a coping method, four of the participants admitted that they coped with the use of drugs and alcohol, and two of the participants explained that they had outside support systems that assisted them, such as, individuals outside of their homes, activities, and faith. Finally, by answering two follow up questions the participants provided advice to other adolescence who are experiencing parental incarceration and provided suggestions for policy makers to better assist children who have a parent incarcerated. They suggested for other children to open up and seek out support, not to isolate themselves, stay away from drugs and alcohol, and not to repeat the same cycle as their parents. The participants also recommended that there be support groups, mentors and other resources specifically designed for the needs of children of incarcerated parents, and advised that they wish

there had been such resources available to them during their experience and even now during their adulthood since they are still struggling with the effects of parental incarceration in adulthood. In chapter 5, I discuss the interpretations of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications for possible social change and the conclusion to this study.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to gain a better understanding of the life challenges and traumas faced by adults who experienced parental incarceration in rural communities. The aim of the study was to explore the impact of parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into adulthood. This study enhances understanding and supports the need for continued research on the life challenges related to parental incarceration's effect on children in rural areas along with informing public policy on the need for intervention programs and resources to better assist these children and reducing intergenerational trauma and incarceration. In Chapter 5, I will discuss and clarify the findings. I will also discuss the limitations of this study, provide recommendations for further research, explain the implications for social change, and close with a summary.

Interpretation of the Findings

There has been a large amount of research conducted over the last several years on parental incarceration; however, there is a gap in the literature on adults' experiences regarding parental incarceration during their childhood in rural communities. As a result of parental incarceration, the participants in this study experienced several negative challenges and consequences. The participants suffered stressors including financial and educational stressors. The participants also experienced social challenges of stigma, embarrassment, and shame along with isolation. Finally, the participants expressed experiencing trauma as a result of their parent's incarceration including grief and loss

along with emotional distress. All the participants found varying methods of coping with the experience and challenges associated with parental incarceration, and when asked for suggestions, the participants shared what would have assisted them, which can help other children by directing public policy to better assist children of incarcerated parents.

Through examining the lived experiences of the participants, another common element was found in this study was that all the participants' parents had been jailed and incarcerated due to narcotic violations, primarily opioids. A few of the parents had both used and sold opioids; however, the primary incarcerations especially extended incarcerations were due to the selling of opioids. Some of the participants shared more information than others in this area; however, all the participants shared enough information to provide a common element concerning their parent's extended incarcerations.

To further interpret the findings, stress proliferation theory served as the theoretical framework for this study, because it suggests that stressful experiences can lead to additional stress in an individual's life, creating a chain of stressors. It further explains how stressors in other areas associated with one event or individual can lead to an accumulation of stressors in other areas of life for that individual or other individuals. This relates to participants' experiences with parental incarceration in this study, for parental incarceration triggered social, economic, and emotional stressors creating intergenerational stress proliferation. Further, parental incarceration was a source of stress proliferation because children experienced trauma as a result of the incarceration, which created stressors of social stigma, emotional distress and isolation, and economic

disadvantage that extended into the transition into adulthood increasing intergenerational incarceration (Van de Kolk, 2007). This framework was used for better understanding the lived experiences and challenges of children of incarcerated parents in rural areas. It was also useful for providing a better understanding of intergenerational trauma related to the stressors and negative impact of parental incarceration that proliferates from one generation to the other increasing intergenerational incarceration.

From analyzing the results, there were four major themes that emerged: trauma, social challenges, stressors, and coping. The theme of trauma supports and extends the central body of knowledge on traumas associated with parental incarceration. All the participants expressed a sense of loss and grief over having a parent incarcerated, feeling a sense of loss as though the parent had died and experiencing trauma. These findings support the literature on the loss and trauma of having a parent incarcerated. The sudden loss of a parent to incarceration has the same effect as losing a parent to divorce or death (Smith & Young, 2012). There were several emotions expressed by the participants, which included sadness, hurt, anger, and frustration consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder. Children who have experienced a parent incarcerated exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as, fear, helplessness, emotional detachment, distress, emotional distress and shame (Bocknek & Sanderson, 2009). Some of the participants' exhibited behaviors out of anger, which led some of the participants to follow in their parents' footsteps. Traumatic experiences during childhood and adolescence have been found to profoundly influence the well-being of children creating intergenerational stressors and traumas that extend into adulthood (Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, 2009).

Thus, having a parent incarcerated significantly impacts the children by creating emotional traumas that extend beyond childhood into adulthood. These findings further support the literature on the trauma associated with parental incarceration including ambiguous loss and grief along with the emotional distress that children experience from having a parent incarcerated.

The theme of social challenges further supports and extends on the literature surrounding the impact of parental incarceration on the social well-being of the children. The findings of the study also support the belief that parental incarceration creates negative social challenges for children. The participants described experiencing social challenges including stigmatization and isolation along with shame and embarrassment. They experienced being labeled, judged, and treated differently including being isolated and excluded from activities due to their parent's incarceration. This led to a sense of shame and embarrassment over their parent's incarceration and their situation. These findings support the literature that children of incarcerated parents are at risk for social risk factors including stigmatization, shame, lack of support, and ultimately social exclusion (Markson, Lamb, and Losel, 2016). The findings of the study support past findings concerning the social challenges that children of incarcerated parents face including shame, embarrassment, stigma, isolation and emotional detachment.

There were also stressors expressed by the participants including the financial and educational stressors of having a parent incarcerated. Several of the participants resided in public housing or low-income housing and endure eviction, moving around often, and the homelessness during their adolescence. Most were from low economic and

disadvantaged households and live in poverty. The findings support the literature that parental incarceration creates economic and social strain in many aspects of children's lives. Children of parental incarceration experience economic disadvantage, instability, and poverty and food insecurity (Schwartz-Soicher, Geller, & Garfinkel, 2011; Turney, 2015). Several of the participants also experienced educational stresses attending school. Several experienced issues with making passing grades, concentrating in class, and staying awake. Added to this stress was the social challenges in academics of peers and staff knowing about their parent's incarceration and home situation. These findings support the literature that parental incarceration has negative educational outcomes for the children including poor academic performance, absenteeism, and inability to concentrate (Hagan & Foster, 2012). Therefore, the findings of this study strongly support the belief that children of incarcerated parents face negative financial stressors of instability, poverty, and economic disadvantage. The findings also support past findings that parental incarceration creates educational stressors including academic performance, attendance, and concentration.

The final theme of coping provides support and extends on the body of knowledge concerning the various ways that children of incarcerated parents cope with their situation during adolescence. Children have been found to use various coping strategies to deal with the effects and loss of a parent to incarceration (Compas & Reeslund, 2009; Johnson & Easterling, 2015). The participants in the study used a variety of coping methods to deal with the issues surrounding having a parent incarcerated. The participants used withdrawal at some point as method of coping with

and handling their situation rather than attending the activities and interacting with others. A number of the participants resorted to substance abuse and aggression as coping methods, following in their parent's footsteps with these issues along with incarceration. The participants who had outside support systems such as friends or community members tended to explore and participate in more positive coping methods. These children turned to support groups, sports, activities, and even religion to cope with the challenges and stressors of having a parent incarcerated. These findings are consistent with prior findings that have shown that children use various coping strategies to deal with the effects and loss of a parent to incarceration.

In addition to these themes, participants offered suggestions for other children experiencing parental incarceration and public policy. The participants were first asked if they had any advice for other adolescents facing the same issue of parental incarceration. There were two common suggestions among the participants, which were to talk to someone about their feelings and to not isolate themselves. All the participants explained that they had not talked to anyone and that they had isolated themselves and feel that this is not the best choice. They discussed the importance of opening up about their experience along with the importance of being around other individuals. The participants were also asked what could have helped them to better cope with having a parent incarcerated during their adolescence. All the participants expressed that they wished there had been a program or resource in place to assist them. None of the participants knew of a program or resource available for children of incarcerated parents during their adolescence, and none of them knew of any such programs today in their area. The

participants expressed that they would like to see support groups, mentors, and other resources available for children to better assist them with the challenges and experience of having a parent incarcerated such as assisting them with their emotions and letting them know someone cares. These findings can provide recommendations for future research and establishing policy on intervention programs and resources for children experiencing parental incarceration.

Limitations of the Study

As noted in Chapter 1, there were limitations to this phenomenological qualitative study. Due to the small sample of six participants, racial diversity was a challenge. There were an even number of male and female participants that volunteered and participated in the study; however, there were four White participants and only two Black participants. All the female participants were White; therefore, obtaining lived experiences and insight from female African Americans on the issue of parental incarceration is lacking. Additionally, the COVID pandemic slowed the recruitment process in the beginning and could have limited other potential participants with varying experiences from volunteering prior to the participant sample being met.

In an effort to ensure trustworthiness and dependability in the study, the research used the members checks and the process of reflexivity recommended by Thomas and Magilvy (2011), to address the researcher's own professional and personal background. The participants were emailed an individual summarized report of their interview with the recommendation to provide feedback along with any changes that were required. No

changes were necessary. Additionally, all of the procedures in the study were reported for transparency and to ensure that the study was conducted properly and ethically.

Although the sample size is small it allowed for an in-depth phenomenological analysis using qualitative methodology which was appropriate for examining the lived experiences of adult child survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. However, care should be taken to not extrapolate the results too broadly to other populations experiencing parental incarceration for example in urban communities.

Recommendations

Research on the effects and impact of parental incarceration on children is growing; however, research on the lived experiences of children of incarcerated parents is limited as is evidenced through the comprehensive review of the current literature. The results of this study reveal some recommendations for future research. First, additional studies on the lived experiences of children of incarcerated parents should be conducted especially in rural communities for far less studies have focused on these populations of children. Another recommendation is conducting a study that focuses more on the effects of the opioid crisis along with parental incarceration on children of incarcerated parents in rural communities since this appears to be a growing issue in these areas. Also, additional research should be conducted on the stressors and trauma associated with parental incarceration to provide a more thorough understanding of these effects on children. Finally, a recommendation for future research would be to conduct additional larger scale phenomenological qualitative studies on the lived experiences of adult child

survivors in other rural communities which would allow for more thorough examination and understanding of the phenomenon.

There is currently no accurate measurement in place to accurately calculate how many children have a parent incarcerated or how many children are impacted by parental incarceration during their lifetimes. Researchers and policy makers can only make estimations on the number of children impacted each year. As a result of this study, it is recommended that members of the judicial system obtain more accurate data collections of the number of children actually impacted by parental incarceration. This information could be obtained during the sentencing phase, during probation and parole, along with other areas of the judicial process with adult offenders.

Additionally, policy makers need to implement policy initiatives and programs focusing on trauma, stigma, stressors, social exclusion and other challenges to better assist children experiencing the challenges of associated with parental incarceration especially in rural communities. The participants in this study through sharing their lived experiences explained that there were not resources and programs available to assist them and offered suggestions for assisting other children experiencing the challenges, stressors and trauma associated with parental incarceration. The findings of this study suggest that policy makers should develop programs, such as support groups and mentors, along with other resources to better assist children in coping with the challenges, stressors, emotional distress and trauma associated with experiencing a parent being incarcerated.

Additionally, these resources should be age appropriate. Programs and resources should be designed and established to assist children during adolescence with the issues and

challenges associated with parental incarceration during this time. Additionally, other programs and resources should be designed and established to assist those children who experienced parental incarceration with making the transition into young adulthood to reduce the likelihood that they follow in their parents' footsteps into intergenerational incarceration. The findings of this study not only reveal that children experiencing parental incarceration need assistance during their adolescence to handle and cope with their situation but that they also need assistance in the transition into adulthood as well especially in order to reduce their chances of following in their parents footsteps and into the criminal justice system.

Implications for Social Change

Parental incarceration is a growing problem in the United States creating various challenges, stressors and trauma for the children who experience having a parent incarcerated. This phenomenological study is distinctive because it is an in-depth qualitative study that focuses on the lived experiences of adult child survivors in a small rural community. The information from this study can lead to positive social change in a number of ways.

Individual

The participants in this study were adult child survivors who experienced stressors and traumas from having a parent incarcerated during their adolescence. These individuals shared their lived experiences of having a parent incarcerated and how they were impacted by the issue during their adolescence extending into adulthood. The majority of these individuals lacked assistance and guidance during this time and were

unable to avoid following in their parents' footsteps into intergenerational incarceration. There is a gap in the literature on parental incarceration regarding the lived experiences of the children who must experience this issue and the impact that parental incarceration has on these children. Implementing programs involving support groups, role models and mentors to provide assistance and guidance that these children desperately need along with show them someone cares will help them to be more successful and reduce intergenerational trauma and incarceration.

Organizational

The judicial system should implement a process for obtaining a more accurate measurement of the number of children impacted by parental incarceration. This could be achieved during arraignments, sentencing and probation/parole hearings of adults with children. Obtaining a more accurate measurement of the number of children experiencing parental incarceration would allow for assisting more of the children being impacted by the issue. Having this information would also better assist in establishing policy on implementing programs and resources for children impacted by parental incarceration again assisting in reducing the intergenerational incarceration rates.

Societal

The results of this study could lead to shedding additional light on the issue of parental incarceration and how the issue negatively impacts children to members of society which could lead to effective programs and policies being created aimed at better assisting children of incarcerated parents overcome the negative challenges, stressors and trauma. Programs providing support groups and mentors could provide these children

with more positive means of coping and show them that someone is there for them. These programs could assist these children in overcoming the negative impact of parental incarceration and reduce intergenerational incarceration rates among these children.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to gain a better understanding of the life challenges and traumas faced by adult child survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. The findings show that there is a significant impact on children of incarcerated parents including, trauma, social challenges, and stressors. The findings further show that children use various coping strategies to handle the negative challenges and consequences associated with parental incarceration. The findings also reveal that adult child survivors of parental incarceration are willing to discuss their lived experience of the issue along with share their suggestions to better assist other children. The study addresses the gap in the literature with regards to examining the lived experiences of adult child survivors of parental incarceration in rural areas.

Researchers have suggested a need for a more in-depth qualitative study on the lived experiences of children of parental incarceration. The present study provides a phenomenological approach to examine the lived experiences of adult child survivors of parental incarceration in rural communities. Therefore, this study is significant in that it used relied on in-depth in-person interviews of adult child survivors of parental incarceration from a rural community.

Based on the theoretical background of stress proliferation, it was expected that the present study would illustrate the stresses and trauma associated with parental

incarceration for children during adolescence and the transition into young adulthood. In sum, while describing their lived experience of parental incarceration during their adolescence, all of the participants spoke about the experience as if they were still living the trauma. The trauma and emotions were present during their description of their experiences of parental incarceration during their adolescence. Parental incarceration creates negative challenges, consequences, and stressors for children including, poverty, socioeconomic disadvantage, stigmatization and social exclusion. Parental incarceration is also traumatic for children in much the same manner as having a parent becoming deceased. The participants in this study spoke about the emotional trauma of having a parent incarcerated along with the sense of grief and loss they experienced. The participants also spoke about the social challenges of stigma, embarrassment, shame, and isolation they endured along with the financial and educational stressors of having a parent incarcerated during adolescence.

The findings shed light on coping mechanisms, for the participants explained various ways of coping with the challenges of having a parent incarcerated; however, for the most part these coping methods led the majority of the participants to follow similar routes as their parents into intergenerational incarceration. The participants discussed the lack of resources and programs available to them during their experience of parental incarceration during adolescence and adulthood. The participants were eager and willing to share suggestions for other adolescence experiencing parental incarceration along with suggestions for public policy on the issue based on their experiences, the challenges they faced, and the needs that they had during their adolescence and into adulthood.

Children of incarcerated parents are innocent hidden victims who are punished for their parent's crime and incarceration. Throughout this study, the true impact of trauma and loss that is felt when children lose their parents to incarceration became apparent. The judicial system needs to become more involved in accurately measuring the number of children experiencing parental incarceration and better assisting these children during the process. Society as a whole need to be more informed on the issue and work in the efforts to be positive influences in the lives of these children by providing support groups and mentoring programs in an effort to show these children that there are those who do care. With all of the stakeholders working together to better assist these children with the stressors and traumas associated with parental incarceration this could potentially make the experience less traumatic and reduce intergenerational trauma and incarceration.

This study expands and contributes to the existing literature on parental incarceration by providing a qualitative, phenomenological analysis of adult child survivors lived experiences of parental incarceration in rural communities. The results of the study provide a beneficial starting point for further research to examine in-depth individual insight on the challenges, stressors, and trauma associated with parental incarceration during adolescence and the transition into young adulthood through the lived experiences of adult child survivors.

References

- Anisman, H., & Merali, Z. (1999). Understanding stress: Characteristics and caveats. *Alcohol Research & Health, 23*(4), 241-249. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6760382/>
- Arditti, J. A. (2012). Child trauma within the context of parental incarceration: A family process perspective. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 4*(3), 181-219. doi:10.1111/j.1756-2589.2012.00128.x
- Babbie, E. (2010). *The practice of social research* (12th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage.
- Arditti, J. A. (2016). A family stress-proximal process model for understanding the effects of parental incarceration on children and their families. *American Psychological Association, 5*(2), 65-88. doi:10.1037/cfp0000058
- Balistreri, K. S., & Alvira-Hammond, M. (2016). Adverse childhood experiences, family functioning and adolescent health and environment well-being. *Public Health, 132*, 72-78. doi: 10.1016/j.puhe.2015.10.034
- Azeem, M., Salif, N. A., & Dogar, A. H. (2012). Usage of NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. *Academic Research International, 2*(1), 262-266. Retrieved from [https://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt.Vol.2\(1\)2012\(2.1-30\).pdf](https://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt.Vol.2(1)2012(2.1-30).pdf)
- Bocknek, E. L., Sanderson, J., & Britner, P. A. (2009). Ambiguous loss and post-traumatic stress in school-age children of prisoners. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 18*, 323-333. doi:10.1007/s10826-008-9233-y
- Bombay, A., Matheson, K., & Anisman, H. (2009). Intergenerational trauma: Con-

- vergence of multiple processes among First Nations peoples in Canada. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, 5(3), 6-47. doi:10.3138/iiih.v5i3.28987
- Borja, S., Nurius, P., & Eddy, J. (2015). Adversity across the life course of incarcerated parents: Gender differences. *Journal of Forensic Social Work*, 5(1), 167-185. doi:10.1080/1936928X.2015.1093992
- Boss, P. (2010). The trauma and complicated grief of ambiguous loss. *Pastoral Psychology*, 59(2), 137-145. doi:10.1007/s11089-009-0264-0
- Carlson, M., & Corcoran, M. (2001). Family structure and children's behavioral and cognitive outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63(3), 779-792. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00779.x.
- Carson, E. A. (2015). Prisoners in 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/914.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). *About the CDC – Kaiser ACE Study*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violencepreventing/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/about>
- Center on the Developing Child (2018). *What are ACE's*. Retrieved from <https://deveopingchild.harvard.edu/resources/aces-and-toxis-stress>
- Cho, R. M. (2009a). Impact of maternal imprisonment on children's probability of grade retention. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 65(1), 11-23. doi:10.1016.j.jue.2008.09.004
- Cho, R. M. (2009b). The impact of maternal imprisonment on children's educational achievement: Results from children in Chicago public schools. *Journal of Human*

Resources, 44(3), 772-797. doi:10.3368/jhr.44.3.722

Cohen, J., Deblinger, E., & Mannarion, A. (2018). Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy for children and families. *Psychotherapy Research*, 28(1), 47-57.

doi:10.1080/10503307.2016.1208375

Cohn, I. G., & Morrison, N. (2018). Echoes of transgenerational trauma in the lived experiences of Jewish Australian grandchildren of Holocaust survivors.

Australian Journal of Psychology, 70, 199-207. doi:10.1111/ajpy.12194

Compas, B. E., & Reeslund, K. L. (2009). Process of risk and resilience during adolescence. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinburg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 561-588). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Cramer, L., Peterson, B., Kurs, E., & Fontaine, J. (2015). Toolkit for developing family Impact statements. *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center Toolkit*, 1-15. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org>

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cyphert, A. (2018). Prisoners of fate: The challenges of creating change for children of incarcerated parents. *Maryland Law Review*, 77(2), 385-426. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3785&context=mlr>

Dawson, A., Jackson, D., & Nyamathi, A. (2012). Children of incarcerated parents: Insights to addressing a growing public health concern in Austria. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 2433-2441. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.09.003

Den Hoonarrd, V., Van den Hoonard, W. C., den Hoonard, V., & Van den Hoonarrd,

- D. K. (2013). *Essentials of thinking ethically in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Left Coast Press.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: Author.
- Figley, C. (1985). *Trauma and its wake*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.
- Foster H., & Hagan, J. (2007). Incarceration and intergenerational social exclusion. *Social Problems*, 54(4), 399-433. doi:10.1525/sp.2007.54.4.399
- Foster, H., & Hagan, J. (2016). Maternal and paternal imprisonment and children's social exclusion in young adulthood. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 105(2), 387-429. Retrieved from <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc/vol105/iss2/3>
- Fush, P. I., & Ness, L.R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9), 1408-1416. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss9/3>
- Geller, A., & Franklin, A. (2014). Parental incarceration and the housing security of urban mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(2), 411. doi:10.1111/jamf.12098
- Geller, A., Garfinkel, I., Cooper, C. E., & Mincy, R. B. (2009). Parental incarceration and child well-being: implications for urban families. *Social Science Quarterly*, 90(5), 186-1202. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00653.x
- Goodman, L. A. (2011). Comment: On respondent-driven sampling and snowball sampling in hard-to-reach populations and snowball sampling not in hard-to-reach

populations. *Sociological Methodology*, 41(1), 347-353. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9531.2011.01242.x

Gust, L. (2012). Can policy reduce the collateral damage caused by the criminal justice system? Strengthening social capital in families and communities. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 82(2), 174-180. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01156.x

Hagan, J., & Dinovitzer, R. (1999). Collateral consequences of imprisonment for children, communities, and prisoners. *Crime and Justice*, 26, 121-162. doi:10.1086/449296

Hagan, J., & Foster, H. (2012a). Children of the American prison generation: Student and school spillover effects of incarcerating mothers. *Law & Society Review*, 46(1), 37-69. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5893.2012.00472.x

Hagan, J., & Foster, H. (2012b). Intergenerational educational effects of mass imprisonment in America. *Sociology of Education*, 85(3), 259-286. doi:10.1177/0038040711431587

Haskins, A. (2011). *Unintended consequences of mass imprisonment: Effects of parental incarceration on child school readiness*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254446224_UNINTENDED_CONSEQUENCES_OF_MASS_IMPRISONMENT_EFFECTS_OF_PATERNAL_INCARCERATION_ON_CHILD_SCHOOL_READINESS

Haskins, A., & Turney, K. (2018). The demographic landscape and sociological perspectives on parental incarceration and childhood inequality. *American*

Psychological Association, 9-28. doi:10.137/0000062.002

- Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D.; & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigor in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(4), 12-17. doi: 10.7748/nr2013.03.20.4.12.e326
- Hycner, R. H. (1999). Some guidelines for the phenomenological analysis of interview data. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative Research* (Vol. 3, pp. 143-164). London, UK: Sage.
- Johnson, R. C. (2009). Ever-increasing levels of parental incarceration and the consequences for children. Pp. 177-206 in *Do prisons make us safer? The benefits and costs of the prison boom*, edited by Steven Raphael, Michael A. Stoll, and Shawn D. Bushway.
- Johnson, E. I., & Easterling, B. A. (2012). Understanding the unique effects of parental incarceration on children: Challenges, progress, and recommendations. *Journal of Marriage & Family*, 74(2), 342-356. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00957.x
- Johnson, E. I., & Easterling, B. A. (2015). Coping with confinement: Adolescent's experiences with parental incarceration. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 30(2), 244-267. doi: 10.1177/0743558414558593
- Kautz, S. (2017). Adolescent adaptation to parental incarceration. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 34, 557-572. doi:10.1007/s10560-017-0493-5
- Kinner, S. A., Alati, A., Najman, J. M.; & Williams, G. M. (2007). Do parental arrest and imprisonment lead to child behavior problems and substance use? A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 48(11), 1148-1156.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01785.x>

- Laakso, J., & Nygaard, J. (2012). Children of incarcerated parents: How a mentoring program can make a difference. *Social Work in Public Health, 27*(1), 12-28. doi: 10.1080/19371918.2012.629892
- Lee, R., Fang, X., & Luo, F. (2013). The impact of parental incarceration on the physical and mental health of young adults. *Pediatrics, 131*(4), 88-95.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1542%2Fpeds.2012-0627>
- Lin, C. (2013). Revealing the “essence” of things: Using phenomenology in LIS research. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries, 4*, 469-478.
<https://www.qqml.journalnet/index.php/ggm/article/view/123>
- Lincoln, Y.S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*, 275-289. doi: 10.1177/107780049500100301
- Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual Review & Sociology, 27*, 363-385. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363>
- Markson, L., Lamb, M., & Losel, F. (2015). The impact of contextual family risks on prisoners' childrens' behavioral outcomes and the potential protective role of family functioning moderators. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 13*(3), 35-340. doi:10.1080/17405629.2015.1050374
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mattingly, C., & Lawlor, M. (2000). Learning from Stories: Narrative interviewing in Cross-cultural research. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 7*(1), 4-14. doi: 10.1080/110381200443571

- Mears, D., & Siennick, S. (2016). Young adult outcomes and the life-course penalties of parental incarceration. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 53(1), 3-35. doi: 10.1177/0022427815592452
- Miller, K. (2006). The impact of parental incarceration on children: An emerging need for effective interventions. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 23(4), 472-486. doi: 10.1007/s10560-006-0065-6
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Murray, J., & Farrington, D. P. (2005). Parental imprisonment: Effects on boy's anti-social behavior and delinquency through the life-course. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 46(12), 1269-1278. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2005.01433.x
- Murray, J., & Farrington, D. P. (2006). Evidence-based programs for children of prisoners. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 5(4), 721-735. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-9133.2006.00412.x
- Murray, J., & Farrington, D. P. (2008). Parental imprisonment: Long-lasting effects on boy's internalizing problems through the life-course. *Journal of Development and Psychopathology*, 20, 273-290. doi: 10.1017/S0954579408000138
- Murray, J., Farrington, D., & Sekol, I. (2012). Children's antisocial behavior, mental health, drug use, and educational performance after parental incarceration: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(2), 175-210. doi: 10.103/a0026407
- Naser, R. L., & Visher, C.A. (2006). Family member's experiences with incarceration

- and reentry. *Western Criminology Review*, 7(2), 20-31. ISSN: 1096-4886
- Nesmith, A., & Ruhland, E. (2009). Children of incarcerated parents: Challenges and resiliency, in their own words. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30(10), 1119-1130. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.02.006
- Nichols, E. B., & Loper, A. B. (2012). Incarceration in the household: Academic outcomes of adolescents with an incarcerated household member. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41(11), 1455-1471. doi: 10.1207/s10964-012-9780.9
- Ng, I., Sarri, R., & Stoffregen, E. (2013). Intergenerational incarceration: Risk factors and social exclusion. *Journal of Poverty*, 17, 437-459. doi: 10.1080/10875549.2013.833161
- Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C.A., Wisdom, J. P.; Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2013). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 5, 1-12. doi: 10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y
- Parke, R. D., & Clarke-Stewart, K. (2003). *Effects of parental incarceration on young children*. The effects on incarceration and reentry on children, families and communities conference. (Prison to Home Conference). US Department of Health and Human Services, the Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/prison2home02/parke-stewart.htm>
- Pearlin, L. I. (1999). The stress process revisited. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 395-415. Boston, PA: Springer.
- Pearlin, L., & Bierman, A. (2013). *Current issues and future directions in research into*

the stress process. Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health. New York: Springer Science + Business Media. yw

Pearlin, L., Menaghan, E., & Mullan, J. (1981). The stress process. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 22, 337-356. doi: 10.2307/2136676

Peterson, B., Fontaine, J., Kurs, E.; & Cramer, L. (2015). Children of incarcerated parents framework document. *Urban Institute*. Retrieved from www.urban.org/sites/default/files/published/53721

Phillips, S., Burns, B., Wagner, R., Kramer, T., & Robbins, J. (2002). Parental incarceration among adolescents receiving mental health services. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 11, 385-399. ISSN: 1062-1024

Phillips, S. D., & Gates, T. (2011). A conceptual framework for understanding stigmatization of children of incarcerated parents. *Journal of Child & Family Studies*, 20, 286-294. doi: 10.1007/s10826-010-9391-6

Prison Policy Institute (2019). *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2019.htm>

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M.; & Ormston, R. (2013). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Thousand, Oaks, CA: Sage

Schwartz-Soicher, O., Geller, A., & Garfinkel, I. (2011). The effect of parental incarceration on material hardship. *The Social Service Review*, 85(3), 447-473. <https://doi.org/10.1086/661925>

Sentencing Project. (2019). *U.S. Prison Population Trends: Massive Buildup and Modest*

- Decline*. Retrieved from <https://www.sentencingproject.org>
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Thousand, Oaks, CA: Sage
- Smith, C., * Young, D. (2017). A retrospective look at the experience of parental incarceration and family reentry during adolescence. *Social Work in Public Health, 32*(8), 475-488. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2017.1360819>
- Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal of Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 16*(2), 151-155. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x
- Thurlstrup, S., & Karlsson, I. (2017). Children of imprisoned parents and their coping Strategies: A systematic Review. *Societies, 7*(15), 1-16. doi: 10.3390/soc7020015
- Turney, K. (2014). Stress proliferation across generations? Examining the relationship between parental incarceration and childhood health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 55*(3), 302-319. doi: 10.1177/0022146514544173
- Turney, K. (2016). The unequal consequences of mass incarceration for children. *Demography, 54*, 361-389. doi: 10.1007/s13524-016-0543-1
- Turney, K. (2017). Parental incarceration and the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 79*, 1314-1330. doi: 10.1111/jomf.12429
- Turney, K. (2018). Adverse childhood experiences among children of incarcerated parents. *Children and Youth Services Review, 80*, 218-225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.04.033>
- Turney, K., & Haskins, A. (2014). Falling behind? Children's early grade retention after

paternal incarceration. *Sociology of Education*. US, 87, 4, 241-258.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040714547086>

Uggen, C., & McElrath, S. (2014). Parental incarceration: What we know and where we need to go. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 104, 597. doi: 0091-4169/14/10403-0597

Van der Kolk, B. (2007). Development impact of childhood trauma. In L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, & M. Barad (Eds), *Understanding trauma: Integrating biological, clinical, and cultural perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Von Eckartsberg, R. (1986). *Life-World Experience: Existential-Phenomenological Research Approaches in Psychology*. Washington, DC. Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology & University Press of America

Walker, S., Read, S., & Priest, H. (2013). Use of reflexivity in a mixed-methods study. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(3), 38-43. doi: 10.7748/nr2013.01.20.3.38.c9496

Ward, B. (2014). Stress Proliferation. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior, and Society*, 2346-2348. Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118410868.wbehibs108>

Wildeman, C. (2009). Parental imprisonment, the prison boom, and the concentration of childhood disadvantage. *Demography*, 46(2), 265-280. doi: 10.1353/dem.0.0052

Wildeman, C. (2010). Parental incarceration and children's physically aggressive behaviors: Evidence from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. *Social Forces*, 89(1), 285-309. <https://doi.org/10.1353/Sof.2010.0055>

Wildeman, C. (2014). Parental incarceration, child homelessness, and the invisible

consequences of mass imprisonment. *Annals, AAPSS*, 651, 74-96.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716213502921>

Yehuda, R., & Bierer, L. M. (2008). Transgenerational transmission of cortisol and PTSD risk. *Progress in Brain Research*, 167, 121-135. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-6123\(7\)67009-S](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0079-6123(7)67009-S)

Appendix A: Demographics Questionnaire

1. Age _____
2. Sex/Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Transgender Male
 - d. Transgender Female
 - e. Other
3. Please specify your ethnicity or race
 - a. White or Caucasian
 - b. Hispanic or Latino
 - c. Black of African American
 - d. Native American or American Indian
 - e. Asian / Pacific Islander
 - f. Other
4. Relationship Status
 - a. Married
 - b. Partnered
 - c. Single, never been married
 - d. Divorced
 - e. Separated
 - f. Widowed
5. Level of education
 - a. No schooling completed
 - b. Elementary school, some high school, no diploma
 - c. High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
 - d. Some college credit, no degree
 - e. Trade/technical/vocational training
 - f. Associate degree
 - g. Bachelor's degree
 - h. Master's degree
 - i. Professional degree
 - j. Doctorate degree
6. Employment Status
 - a. Employed for wages
 - b. Self-employed
 - c. Out of work and looking for work
 - d. Out of work but not currently looking for work
 - e. A homemaker
 - f. A student

- g. Military
 - h. Retired
 - i. Unable to work
7. What type of caregiver did you have prior to your caregiver's incarceration?
- a. Single mother
 - b. Single father
 - c. Two-parent household (biological)
 - d. Multigenerational (i.e., grandparent or grandparents)
 - e. Adopted mother/father
 - f. Foster care system
8. Have you or any member of your family ever been diagnosed with or been treated for a mental health disorder?
- a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

Appendix B: Interview Questions Guide

Introductions: Background Data - “Breaking the Ice”

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
 - a. How old are you?
 - b. What do you do for fun?
 - c. Are you in school or working? Tell me a little more about that.
 - d. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?
 - e. Are you ready to begin?

Family Members

2. How many of your family members have ever been in jail or prison?
If the participant has had multiple incarcerated family members: For the next questions, I would like for you to focus on your parents (caregivers) including the one whose incarceration impacted you the most. If we have time, we can also talk about other relatives afterwards if you would like. For now, however, please focus on your parents (caregivers).
3. Which parent or caregiver is or has been in jail/prison?
 - a. Tell me a little about this person/these people?
4. How old were you when they were incarcerated?
5. Tell me a little about their incarceration?
 - a. How long were they in jail/prison? Are they still there?
 - b. Where they held locally (city, state, federal)?
6. Describe your relationship with this parent(s)/caregiver(s)? For example, were you close to them?
 - a. What was your relationship like before they were incarcerated? During? After?

Social

7. Who knew about your parent/caregiver’s incarceration?
 - a. Friends? Peers? Neighbors? Teachers? Community members? Other?
8. Did your close friends know about the incarceration?

Yes:

 - a. How did they know? Did you tell them?
 - b. How did they respond?
 - c. What was that like?

No:

 - a. Why didn’t they know?
 - b. Why didn’t you tell them?
 - c. What was that like?
9. What about your peers (other people your age) in general? Did anyone else know?
10. Did anyone else in neighborhood/community know? Who?

11. How was this time for you?
 - a. Were there any changes about you that others may have noticed?
 - i. Did you spend less time with others?
 - ii. Did you or others notice change in your mood?
12. Did you experience any difficulties in telling others about your parent/caregiver's incarceration? Tell me more.

Family/Finances

13. Tell me what your family was like during this time.
 - a. Did you notice any changes in particular family members?
14. Did your family change during this time?
 - a. Did you have to move?
 - b. Did other family members have to move in with you?
 - c. In terms of family responsibilities, how did your role in the family change, if at all? Taking care of household, working, etc.
15. Tell me about the financial situation during the incarceration period?
 - a. Did the finances change in the home due to the incarceration? Tell me more about this?
 - b. Who was the primary provider prior to incarceration? During? After?
 - c. Tell me about any financial struggles that were present during the incarceration?

Academics

16. How did you do in school? What were your grades like?
17. Do you think that your parent/caregiver's incarceration time affected your schooling? If so, how?
18. How do you think your teachers would have described your time (incarceration period)?
19. Did you have issues in school? Tell me more about this?
20. Did any of your teachers, guidance counselors, principals, or any other staff know about your parent/caregiver's incarceration?
 - Yes:**
 - a. How did they find out?
 - b. What was that like?
 - No:**
 - a. Why didn't they know?
 - b. What was that like?

Summation of Needs

21. We have gone over a lot. Of everything we have spoken about so far, what was the hardest part about their incarceration time for you? This could be from the time of their arrest until the time they were released, or even now, if they are still incarcerated.

Coping

22. At the time that your parent/caregiver was incarcerated, how did you cope with what you were going through?
- a. Did you talk to someone about it?
Who? Or Why not?
 - b. Did you know other kids your age who were going through the same thing? If so, did you talk to them about it?
 - c. Did you take up a new hobby or interest? Tell me about that.
23. What sorts of things were helpful for you?
- a. Of all of the things you have mentioned, can you tell me the top three or so things that helped you get by during this time?
24. What else would have helped you to cope better? In other words, what kinds of things do you wish you would have had, but didn't, in order to help you deal with your situation?
25. What sorts of things weren't helpful?
26. What advice would you give to kids and teenagers who are currently going through this?
27. Is there anything that I did not cover that you would like to talk about? Is there anything else that you think that I should know or that is important?
28. Do you know anyone else who would be interested in sharing their lived experience of parental incarceration during their childhood?
29. How was this process for you?

Debriefing

How do you feel about the interview?

Do you have any questions or concerns about the interview?

You can call or email me if have any questions or concerns later that you would like to speak with me about.