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Funding Impacts on Existing Social Workers Providing Services to African American Battered Women

Dalicia Victorica Watson
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Dalicia Watson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Funding Impacts on Existing Social Workers Providing Services
to African American Battered Women

by

Dalicia Watson

MSW, Walden University, 2018

BS, North Greenville University, 2014

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Social Work

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

Social workers who work in domestic violence shelters have many different impacts that can affect their ability to provide services to battered women. Research is lacking on how funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women who are at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. The purpose of this study was to examine how a lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers who work at domestic violence shelters to provide services to African American battered women. Conflict theory was used to gain an understanding of how funding issues impact existing social workers' ability to do their job. A basic qualitative approach was used with individual interviews with five social workers currently employed at domestic violence shelters. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Five themes emerged: (a) limited programmatic and therapeutic access, (b) inability to update training and tools to access current needs, (c) barriers to retaining experienced social workers, (d) insufficient number of social workers, and (e) limited access to services to meet the needs of battered African American women. The social workers who work in domestic violence shelters and shelter administrators may benefit by using the findings for positive social change to advocate for additional financial and training support at the local, state, and national levels.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to the battered women who do not have a voice, the warriors, survivors, those who did not make it out due to domestic violence, and for those who are still going through it. Columbia, South Carolina is home for me, and domestic violence is a major social issue that is overlooked in this city. My research is to help shed light on the resources that are available and are not available to African American battered women. I want battered women to know that you will always have POWER and to continue to take your POWER back even if it was taken from you. My research is not to judge anyone but to help bring awareness to this social issue. Working with the battered women population is my dream career, and this research is a big move to help my dream career come true. My goal is to be the voice for the warriors, survivors, those who did not make it out alive, and also for those who are still going through it.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study and Literature Review

Introduction

Fisher and Stylianou (2019) defined intimate partner violence as “physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression by a current or former intimate partner” (p. 786). The prevalence of women who are affected by intimate partner violence averages 10 million women annually (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence [NCADV], 2019). However, compared to women of other races, the population of African American women has a higher percentage being affected by intimate partner violence. Wilson and Laughon (2015) stated that high rates of intimate partner violence are associated with being a young Black woman, earning a lower income, and residing in an urban area. The prevalence of African American women in general who are affected by intimate partner violence and were killed by a firearm due to intimate partner violence is 45% and 54% higher than other ethnicities group (Hargrove, 2018).

Some women who are affected by intimate partner violence escape the abuse by seeking the safety of a domestic violence shelter (NCADV, 2019). Shelters are the primary place for women fleeing abusive relationships and help women to reconstruct their lives (Burnett et al., 2015). Fisher and Stylianou (2019) stated that domestic violence shelters are considered essential when it comes to protecting battered women from abuse. However, Fisher and Stylianou (2019) stated that many battered women have had negative experiences while being placed at a domestic violence shelter. One reason for negative experiences is the existence of outdated facilities and communal living with limited privacy (Fisher & Stylianou, 2019). Another reason for negative experiences is

insufficient funding; for instance, lack of funding may result in too few social workers being on staff to help provide resources and advocacy for the women (Fisher & Stylianou, 2019).

The remainder of Section 1 is structured as follows. After this introduction, I present the study's problem statement. The problem statement conveys the focus of this study, which was how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. The problem statement subsection gives a brief overview of the evidence that demonstrates the current social work problem and how relevant the social work problem is. The next major subsection contains the purpose statement and research question. The purpose statement helped in examining and exploring the social work practice problem. I also present definitions of key terms, concepts, and constructs that were used throughout this study. The nature of the study is the focus of the next major subsection after the purpose statement and research question. This subsection addresses the type of research method that I used in this study, which was the basic qualitative method. The source of data is presented in this section, which was semistructured individual interviews. After this section, I address the significance of the study and identify the potential contribution of this study to social work practice knowledge. Additionally, I consider the study's implications for positive social change. Next, I present the study's theoretical/conceptual framework. The framework of the study was conflict theory. I show how the social work practice problem is related to the theoretical concept that was used and how well it aligned with the study. Then, I present

the values and ethics subsection, in which I identify the values and principles of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics that are related to the social work practice problem. I describe in detail how the NASW Code of Ethics guides clinical social work practice in this area. The next major subsection contains a review of the professional and academic literature. At the beginning of this section, I discuss the steps that were taken to justify the selection of the database, search engines used, key terms, years searched, and types of literature. The literature review that follows is organized by themes, including African American battered women, revictimization, the importance of domestic violence shelters, resources/advocacy, counselors' experiences with battered women, limited resources in domestic violence shelters, and conflict theory. I conclude the literature review with a summary, in which I talk about the gaps and limited research that I found.

In Section 2 of this study, I analyze the research design and data collection in depth. In the introduction to Section 2, I restate the overall social work practice problem. I then address my reasoning in using a basic qualitative design. Next, I outline the study methodology. I discuss how many participants were used, strategies for recruiting participants, and how the participants aligned with the social work practice problem. In discussing instrumentation, I describe the different tools that I used to collect the data for the study. The next major subsection addresses data analysis. I then describe ethical procedures, including those pertaining to the protection of data and the confidentiality of the participants. The last major subsection of Section 2 contains a summary of Section 2.

Problem Statement

The social work practice problem that was the focus of this study was how lack of funding impacts the ability of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. Interviews with shelter directors (E. Figgures, personal communication, March 25, 2020; A. Whitehead, personal communication, April 20, 2020; G. Davis, personal communication, April 21, 2020) from different shelters in Columbia, South Carolina it was revealed that all of the shelters were experiencing a lack of funding that impacted the ability of social workers to do their jobs at the domestic violence shelters, this was expressed by all of the directors from each shelter. One major concern was not having enough funding to be able to employ additional needed social workers who had the knowledge, skills, and abilities to work with African American battered women and to decrease their risk of returning to a domestic violence shelter in the future (E. Figgures, personal communication, March 25, 2020). Another director felt that funding issues make it hard for social workers to meet all of the battered women's needs, and this can cause some women to leave the shelter and to return to their partners (A. Whitehead, personal communication, April 20, 2020). At this director's shelter, African American battered women were the largest population that stayed at and revisited the shelter (A. Whitehead, personal communication, April 20, 2020). Another concern was that lack of funding makes it hard for existing social workers to do their job effectively due to being overwhelmed, being overworked, and having high caseloads because there is a need for more social workers (G. Davis, personal communication, April 21, 2020). One director

also stated that due to lack of funding, “the existing social workers are not able to use up-to-date training and models to help provide updated services to this population” (G. Davis, personal communication, April 21, 2020).

Scholarly literature has focused on the importance of domestic violence shelters for women (e.g., Bergstrom-Lynch, 2018; Kulkarni et al., 2019; Sullivan et al., 2018), but very few pieces of scholarly literature have focused on how lack of funding has an effect on domestic violence shelters being able to employ sufficient numbers of social workers. While the directors shared some of the problems that they experienced at their shelters due to lack of funding, there had been no formal research conducted on how this affects the abilities of existing social workers at these shelters to provide services to battered African American women clients.

Domestic violence shelters provide support services that include safety planning, crisis intervention, individual and group therapy, advocacy, legal services, and employment assistance, with the provision of these services being based on the funding that is provided for the shelter (Kulkarni et al., 2019). Having sufficient training allows battered women to have success while being at a domestic violence shelter. Kulkarni et al. (2019) stated that the services implemented by social workers help battered women with problems resulting from abusive relationships.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers at domestic violence shelters to provide services to African American battered women. This study was needed to gain an understanding of

the resources and funding that are being used in domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina that have an impact on social workers' abilities to get their job done. This study represents an original contribution to the literature that advances professional social work practice by being one of the first formal research projects to look into how funding limitations affects the abilities of existing social workers at these shelters to provide services to a vulnerable population.

Research Question

RQ—Qualitative: How does the lack of funding impact the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina?

Definition of Terms

Battered woman syndrome: A psychological condition that can develop when a person experiences abuse, usually at the hands of an intimate partner (Villines, 2018).

Conflict theory: A theory whose proponents view social and economic institutions as tools of the struggle between groups or classes that are used to maintain inequality and the dominance of the ruling class. It is also used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including poverty, discrimination, and domestic violence (Barnier, 2020).

Vulnerable population: A disadvantaged subsegment of the community requiring utmost care, specific ancillary considerations and augmented protections in research. Vulnerable individuals' freedom and capability to protect themselves from intended or

inherent risks are variably abbreviated, from decreased free will to inability to make informed choices (Shivayogi, 2013).

Nature of the Doctoral Project

I adopted a basic qualitative approach for this study. The use of qualitative research allowed for an understanding of how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. Hughes (2017) stated that a qualitative approach is suitable for conducting research where there is little existing research so that initial common issues and experiences can be identified. This helped in gaining an understanding of the problem from social workers' experiences and perspectives. The data for the study included semistructured individual interviews with five social workers who worked at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. The individual interviews were recorded on the Zoom app so that I could code the data correctly from the interviews.

Significance of the Study

This study may help in gaining an understanding of how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. This study focused on funding issues having an impact on social workers' ability to provide services that battered women need. These funding issues can result in battered women leaving the shelter earlier. This study may foster an improved understanding of ways to better support existing social workers in the hope of more women remaining at the shelter and

getting the help that they need. The results of this study provide insight into how a limited amount of funds makes it hard to employ social workers who have the skills and knowledge to work with this vulnerable population, such as social workers who licensed, have a master's level of education, and have a background in social work. Another insight that this study provides relates to the training and services that are being used. Knowing what training and services that are needed and being used would allow the existing social workers that work at the domestic violence shelters to get training that meets their financial limitations or for the domestic violence shelter to hire social workers who are able to give resources and supportive services to this vulnerable population.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework that was used for this study was conflict theory. Conflict theory addresses tensions and conflicts that arise when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in society; such conflicts can become the engine for social change (Crossman, 2019). Conflict theory is normally used to understand how resources are allocated, such as funding. However, this theory helped me to identify the social work problem by gaining information on how a lack of funding impacts the ability of social workers to provide services to this vulnerable population at domestic violence shelters based on the limited funding that is obtained at the shelters.

Conflict theory also addresses how lack of resources and social structures can have an impact on an individual's life (Koop, 2019). Koop (2019) stated that conflict theory may be used to examine lack of resources and social structures by focusing on the cause and the consequences of a social issue for the social class or population that it is

currently impacting. For example, in this study, the social work practice problem was how funding issues have an impact on social workers being able to do their job in providing and giving sufficient services to battered women at domestic violence shelters, who represent a vulnerable population. However, the social phenomenon in this study was the social issue that the study focused, which was lack of funding having an impact on social workers being able to do their job. This theory helped in analyzing issues and problems based on the impact that lack of funding has on social workers' ability to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters.

Conflict theory can also be used to look at how resources are allocated. In this study, conflict theory was not used to allocate resources, but to gain an understanding of the distribution of funding by speaking with existing social workers who were working at the domestic violence shelters about the current funds that were being used and that were creating an impact (positive or negative) on service provision for a vulnerable population.

Normally, conflict theory is primarily a macrolevel theoretical framework, but for this study, it was also used from a microlevel perspective. Conflict theory was used at a micro level in this study as I interviewed existing social workers who worked for domestic violence shelters to gain an understanding of their institutional conflicts such as lack of funding that made it hard for them to do their job. At the micro level, I looked at the funding issues that had an impact on African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. I applied conflict theory at a micro level for this study in looking at the issue at a local level rather than over a large area. Moreover, in this study, only one vulnerable ethnic population was researched. Although

conflict theory is designed to be used at a macro level for some social issues, I adopted this framework at a micro level due to my focus on domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina in which a majority of clients are African American battered women and also due to the participants in the study being a small group, not a large group.

Hagan et al. (2005) used the micro approach with conflict theory in researching African American youth and Latino youth populations being more vulnerable to police contacts. Hagan et al. used microlevel hypotheses regarding African American and Latino adolescents' perceptions of criminal injustice relative to those of Whites and the role of police contacts for the microlevel gradient in race/ethnicity effects. Even though in the Hagan et al. study conflict theory was used at the micro level, the study was still being compared and used at the macro level due to expanding and comparing the social issue to other ethnicity groups instead of using just one ethnicity group. The micro level was also used to gain an understanding of criminal acts and police contacts by the ethnicity group either being African American or Latino, not both groups together. However, in the study, when both groups were used together, the approach became a macrolevel approach.

To expand the use of conflict theory to the macro level in my study involved connecting the funding issues with the programs and services that are limited or not sufficient due to the social work practice problem at the domestic violence shelters. The funding issues having an impact on the programs and services for battered women and the shelters make it difficult for the existing social workers to have the tools and the

materials to do their jobs. Addressing this issue at the macro level as well made it easier to expand improvement to other shelters outside of South Carolina regarding their programs and services that are also being impacted. However, using conflict theory at the micro level helped in addressing the social work practice issue based on the individuals (i.e., the existing social workers) being able to do their job; and then expanding the social work practice issue to programs and services helped conflict theory to be connected at the macro level. Using both the micro and macro levels for this study helped in understanding the social work practice problem by looking at all of the factors and resources that come with the use of the domestic violence shelters that can be impacted.

Values and Ethics

NASW (2021) has stated that

the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. (p. 1)

The NASW Code of Ethics primary mission statement was related to the current social work problem for this study, in that I sought to understand how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women, who constitute a vulnerable population. The NASW Code of Ethics was related to this social issue due to the study focusing on a vulnerable population. Examining this social work practice problem was a reflection of the NASW Code of Ethics by creating social change that will help to benefit the clients by bringing awareness and

understanding to this social issue. This will be done by bringing attention to the lack of funding issues regarding existing social workers being able to do their jobs. NASW stated that fundamental to social work is bringing attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute, and solve problems in living. This research reflected this statement by bringing attention to environmental issues that created this social issue. This study supported the values and principles of the NASW Code of Ethics by having the participants, who were social workers at domestic violence shelters to sign an informed consent before starting the study. This project also supported the values and principles of the NASW Code of Ethics in ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of clients by keeping their personal information anonymous. I did not solicit private information from clients unless it was essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research (NASW, 2021). If the participants shared private information, confidentiality was applied as well to protect the participants' information.

Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The articles that I selected for the literature review were related to domestic violence shelters and the resource issues that such shelters have. These articles also focused on the social work problem, which was how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. This social work problem is an issue that is currently taking place in Columbia, South Carolina domestic violence shelters with their existing social workers. No formal research had been done regarding this issue, but there were many research articles that were related to this social problem.

The purpose of this literature review is to show how these articles relate to the social problem, the conflicts that the studies have, the similarities among works in the literature, and the gaps in the literature as it relates to this study's social problem. Within this literature review, the articles are grouped into categories such as the importance of domestic violence shelters, revictimization, resources/advocacy, counselor experiences with battered women, limited resources in domestic violence shelters, and conflict theory. There were a couple of literature review articles that covered every category regarding issues that are going on in domestic violence shelters with social workers and battered women, which I address first. Most of the literature that I found was based on factors and issues that happened at a domestic violence shelter regarding meeting battered women's needs with services, but there was limited literature that addressed lack of funding being a major issue with the social workers being able to do their jobs.

Literature Search Strategy

A literature search was conducted using the Walden Library, Google Scholar, and SOCIndex. The search terms used to locate the articles were as follows: *African American battered women, battered women, domestic violence shelters, qualitative approach, conflict theory, revictimization, funding issues, shelter limitations, shelter social workers, support, and advocacy*. I initially limited the results to full-text, peer-reviewed articles from the last 5 years; however, I included a couple of articles that were older than 5 years due to a lack of updated research. Using a qualitative approach as one of my major search terms was a reason that many of the articles were found. There were 41 articles found for this study, and 40 articles met the criteria with the research method,

population, and domestic violence shelters that the study focused on. There was only one article that met the criteria for the theoretical framework that was found. Out of the 41 articles that were found, seven articles were duplicates of original articles that were used for this study. In this section of the literature review, articles are grouped into categories that are related to the research topic and issues. The categories' order is as follows:

African American battered women, revictimization, the importance of domestic violence shelters, resources/advocacy, counselors' experiences with battered women, limited resources in domestic violence shelters, and conflict theory.

Funding Challenges in Programs at Domestic Violence Shelters

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV, 2011), domestic violence programs and shelters across the country are operating with fewer funds and fewer resources for staff. The issue with funding can have an impact on the ability of the existing social workers at the domestic violence shelter to provide sufficient services and programs to the battered women who reach out to or visit the shelters. Stable funding in domestic violence shelters helps to ensure that the services and the programs that are being used in the shelters are essential to battered women (NNEDV, 2011). In a study by Chang et al. (2003), the focus was on battered women with disabilities being able to get services from domestic violence shelters. The study found that challenges to serving battered women with disabilities were lack of funding and structural limitations in the programs (Chang et al., 2003). The participants in the study were the service providers, who explained that "lack of funding made it difficult to ensure adequate staffing, provide sufficient training for staff, purchase equipment, and make the structural

changes in their shelters necessary to meet the needs of women with disabilities” (Chang et al., 2003, p. 704). In a study by Kay (2012), the focus was on a substantial decrease in shelter services when it came to funding sources and prevention efforts to assist battered women. Kay’s study found that there was an economic decline and that shelters had to reduce services; 47% decreased child care efforts, which meant that they were not able to help one in four children. Kay’s study also found that due to the economic decline, 92% of shelters had to end or scale back specific programs and services. Due to the devastating impact of the economic decline on domestic violence services and programs, many shelters had to reduce the number of clients that came or close their doors because there were not enough funds to help battered women (Kay, 2012). Based on funding issues having a major impact on shelters, more work needs to be done to improve this issue.

African American Battered Women

The African American population was used for this study due to African American battered women constituting the majority of those in the shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. Anyikwa (2015) stated that national and community studies report greater incidence and prevalence rates of intimate partner violence for African American women than for other racial groups. This may be due to not seeking help or not having help-seeking strategies. In the Anyikwa study, the participants were African American women who had experienced abuse; Anyikwa studied the ways that the women sought help or the barriers to help seeking. In this study, it was found that the women would get informal help that came from family members, friends, or people in the community

whom they felt comfortable with (Anyikwa, 2015). Anyikwa's study also found that barriers preventing African American women seeking help included the women feeling that they would not be treated fairly, concerns regarding their children, and fear of how the police would treat their partners.

Hodges and Cabanilla (2011) also stated that African American battered women consider family members, friends, and individuals from the community to be their social support. When African American women ask for help from social services, it may be considered disrespectful because African American families often like for their personal business, such as problems or abuse in the home, to remain private (Hodges & Cabanilla, 2011). Hodges and Cabanilla stated that "human services professionals working with Black victims must respect their cultural values and accept the role of support networks within the Black community" (p. 121). Failure of human services professionals to respect African American battered women can cause a barrier preventing African American battered women from wanting to seek help.

Grossman and Lundy (2011) found in their study that African American battered women were the largest minority group among those using services in domestic violence shelters, even though it was frowned upon by their families. Even though shelter services were frowned upon by some African American women's families, the battered women found the resources from the shelters useful because before they entered into the shelter, they had few resources (Grossman & Lundy, 2011).

When African American battered women decide to seek formal counseling, advocacy may be what is helpful for them (Weisz, 2005). Weisz (2005) conducted a

study to determine the effectiveness of advocacy for African American battered women as it dealt with women getting help with assessing their situations, provided information about legal processes, and provided referrals for additional resources. The Weisz study found that some African American battered women found such advocacy helpful and some did not, due to the advocate being unavailable, not understanding, being unsympathetic, or being ineffective in implementing legal sanctions against abusers. Wiesz recommended that in the future, there should be more training for effective advocacy and more help with safety planning.

Few (2005) stated that African American battered women did not use shelters due to lack of trust in social services. Shelters also were not used due to African American battered women not being aware of the shelters existing in their communities (Few, 2005). The Few study compared the experiences of White battered women and African American battered women who visited a shelter for help, safety, and assistance regarding their abuse. The Few study found that members of both racial groups felt safe and had good services while in the shelter; however, the African American women had some challenges. Few stated that there was an absence of staff being African American and that the African American women felt isolated and concerned about the racial attitudes that staff had against them. Overall, the African American battered women felt that the shelter services were very helpful (Few, 2005).

There have been issues because African American battered women have not been able to access a shelter or services due to not having any information regarding services to help them. Bent-Goodley (2004) conducted a study that focused on African American

battered women's perceptions of abuse and being able to find services. In the Bent-Goodley study, it was found that domestic violence shelters were perceived as not being accessible both physically and verbally. The women in the Bent-Goodley study were able to mention other services related to the needs of their community but none regarding domestic violence shelters. In those shelters that the African American women did have access to, there were structural issues hindering African American women from being able to participate successfully. Bent-Goodley's study also found that the shelters that were accessible did not provide the hours that the women needed, the cost was too high, and when women were referred to another agency or shelter, there were no open spots for new clients. When the shelters that are accessible are not able to meet some of their needs, African American battered women may quit using services or leave a shelter.

Dichter and Rhodes (2011) explored services that battered women used that helped meet their needs at a domestic violence shelter. In the Dichter and Rhodes study, it was found that many of the participants did not like the use of domestic violence shelters because they did not meet their needs, and the participants in the study were predominantly African American battered women from a single urban community. Research has suggested that African American women who have experienced intimate partner violence may have experienced childhood maltreatment, which is linked to African American women who have low income (Patel et al., 2012). Patel et al. (2012) found that African American women who have a history of childhood maltreatment as it relates to abuse or neglect endorse high levels of intimate partner violence.

Revictimization

Regarding the social issues of lack of funding having an impact on existing social workers being able to do their jobs in domestic violence shelters for African American battered women, there are concerns of revictimization of African American women who leave the shelter due to their needs not being met. Dinwiddie et al. (2019) conducted a study to assess the risk factors for revictimization for African American women who are using domestic violence shelters. The participants in this study were 57 women presently living in a domestic violence shelter that was located in a large Midwestern metropolitan area in the United States. The majority of the participants in this study were African American battered women. Dinwiddie et al. used a danger assessment and the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment to evaluate the abuse of the African American battered women that were currently at domestic violence shelters. These assessments help to indicate why battered women choose to leave an abusive relationship to go to a battered women's shelter. Domestic violence shelters have a role in supporting victims who are leaving abusive relationships to be able to gain their independence. Fisher and Stylianou (2019) conducted a study showing that there is more than one factor that plays a role in battered women staying in a shelter after leaving an abusive relationship, but one factor that is important is the shelter being able to meet the battered women's needs based on support from the staff and the services that are being provided. Based on these studies, not having certain needs met in the shelters for this vulnerable population can cause revictimization.

Importance of Domestic Violence Shelters

The use of domestic violence shelters is an important component of the effort to help battered women who leave an abusive relationship. Muftić et al. (2019) stated that the shelter movement was born out of a dire need for places of refuge for battered women. Ben-Porat and Srur-Bondarevksy (2018) stated that women's shelters are the most established services for women who are victims of intimate partner violence against women. Based on the findings in the Ben-Porat and Srur-Bondarevksy study, women who stay in domestic violence shelters longer have more positive outcomes, which are based on the women's needs and expectations being met. A domestic violence shelter tends to be a safe and secure environment for battered women that helps in giving them support. Baholo et al. (2015) found that the battered women in their study found the domestic violence shelter to be essential, especially in helping them to adhere to their decision to leave violent partners. Baholo et al. also found that the shelter was peaceful and safe for the battered women, and three women in the study felt that if they had known about the use of a domestic violence shelter earlier, they would have left their abusive relationships.

Domestic violence shelters, in addition to being safe and secure, are important due to the services that are provided, especially regarding self-empowerment. Sullivan et al. (2018) found that the use of services that promote self-empowerment makes a shelter stay for women successful and makes it easier for the women to stay longer. Sullivan and Viriden (2017) found that another reason that women stayed longer in a shelter was the emotional support/services that the women received. Sullivan and Viriden stated that the

emotional support helped the battered women to respond to their own wants and needs and to understand domestic violence, which is another important function of domestic violence shelters for battered women. This helps to prepare the women to be able to get back on their feet to live a normal life without abuse. Sullivan and Virden also found in their study that the ability of advocates to provide survivors with the type of support they need can increase their sense of hope for the future.

Allen et al. (2017) showed the importance of the impact of staying at and using a domestic violence shelter. Allen et al. found that a shelter does not just help battered women with the attainment of future goals, but also helps women experience a decrease in depression and anxiety as well as an increase in autonomy, ability to obtain resources, and overall well-being. Some women only receive effective services by going into a domestic violence shelter (Grossman et al., 2010). Grossman et al. (2010) conducted a study to explore whether battered women get more resources by using a shelter or other services rather than the use of a shelter. The study found that many of the participants only used resources that were available to them while in the shelter, rather than using outside public services that the shelter did not provide (Grossman et al., 2010). Grossman et al. also stated that their analysis “supports that shelters are an essential component of the service system for women who are victims of violence” (p. 2086).

Resources/Advocacy

Regarding the importance of domestic violence shelters, there are also factors such as resources and advocacy that play a major factor regarding the existing social workers that are working in the domestic violence shelters. The role of existing social

workers working in domestic violence shelters is to be able to provide sufficient resources and advocacy to this vulnerable population to help the women to have a successful outcome to be able to not go back to their abuser. Hughes's (2017) study found that the resources and advocacy that was being used in domestic violence shelters was very helpful to their wellbeing. This allows for the battered women to be very comfortable in the shelter due to the services being provided by the social workers. In the Hughes study, the researcher interviewed advocates from the shelter and found that it is the staff job to make the battered women feel comfortable when they first enter the shelter. This study also found that being provided sufficient services made it easier for the women to want to stay in the shelter because the environment made it feel like home, so that the battered women could have been able to meet their goals (Hughes, 2017). Being able to provide adequate resources and advocacy to the battered women helps the women to want to stay longer in the shelter (Perez -Trujillo & Quintane, 2017). Perez-Trujillo and Quintane (2017) found in their study that battered women tend to stay longer in shelters or continue to utilize shelters when their needs are being met. Wood (2015) found that there are several advocacy practices that are used at domestic violence shelters such as empowerment, feminism, and strength-based perspective. With these services and resources being put in place it allowed the battered women to make goals that mattered to them and to help them to be able to build a positive sense of self (Wood, 2015). There are other resources/advocacy services for the battered women such as safety planning, crisis intervention, individual and group therapy, legal services, and employment assistance (Kulkarni et al., 2019). For the domestic violence shelters to be able to provide these

resources and services, Kulkarni et al. (2019) found that team building with the staff to be able to provide supported culture and environmental services allows the battered women to feel comfortable while being in the shelter to help begin their healing process. Due to team building with the staff and social workers at the domestic violence shelter, this process helps the understanding of how important implements successful services and resources that are provided to the battered women. With implementing this approach there are educational resources to help with safety planning. Murray et al. (2015) study showed that safety planning allows the battered women at domestic violence shelters to feel safe and it allows clients to gain a clearer perspective of their situation. Also, with advocacy and resources in domestic violence shelters there are other factors such as interaction during advocacy, a safe base for support, access and connection, and collaboration with the client that make the voluntary services important to the battered women that are staying in the shelters. These factors were used in the Wood et al. (2020) study by interviewing the battered women using the voluntary services model. Wood et al. found that the use of a voluntary services model helps show that the advocacy services help with healing the women which brings a positive interaction between the advocate and the client which is the battered woman based off the guidance, empowerment, advocate skills, and the equitable treatment. In the Johnson and Zlotnick (2012) study, the researchers wanted to explore the remission of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after victims of domestic violence leave the shelter. Johnson's and Zlotnick's study also found that battered women who use shelters or revisit shelters have a greater chance of having PTSD due to the women being able to use shelter services. A limitation the

Johnson's and Zlotnick's study found is for the shelters to have more services to help work with the battered women who have PTSD. This continues to show the overall importance of having sufficient advocacy and resources being put in place in domestic violence shelters to meet the needs of the battered women.

Limitation of Resources/Barriers

Even though domestic violence shelters are an important component that comes with resources and advocacy to the battered women, there are also limitations that come along with it. There can be limitations regarding resources, housing, and funding in the domestic violence shelters, which can cause an impact on the existing social workers and staff being able to perform their job. Burnett et al. (2016) conducted a study that found that the battered women they were dealing with were from a poverty community and the workers felt that there was a poverty of resources to be able to support the women in the shelter. Due to the shelter being a poor shelter there are not enough resources that will be able to meet the battered women's needs. However, this is a day-to-day reality in many shelters in Columbia, South Carolina due to not having enough resources to meet the battered women's needs that go into the shelters because of limited funding. Burnett et al. also found that having limited resources can impact the staff being able to support the women and also being able to give the women great opportunities to be ready to step back in the world. Bergstorm-Lynch (2018) found that services regarding empowerment in the domestic violence shelter felt that the direct services workers were not following policies regarding services due to funding limitations at the shelter which had fewer paid staff members and other resources that were needed to serve residents that were not

available at the shelter. With funding being a limitation, there are other barriers that have taken place at domestic violence shelters that makes it hard for the staff to be able to provide sufficient services for the battered women. Brown et al. (2020) also found in their study that some challenges in the provision of services were noted by the shelter workers to be lack of funding and housing, and mental health and communal living. Bowstead (2015) found that funding is a limitation due to being cut by the government. Having the government cut funding for the domestic violence shelters makes it hard for the staff to effectively provide services and meet the needs for the battered women that go into the shelter for help and safety (Bowstead, 2015). With the limitation of funding there comes a lack of resources to be able to provide training for the staff to be able to meet the needs of the clients that stay at the shelter or to be able to hire staff as well (Brown et al., 2020). The lack of resources can result in the clients returning to unhealthy relationships. Brown et al. found that shelters are successful and will aid the women to become self-sufficient, but this can become a challenge with the staff not being able to provide services due to the limitations of funding and resources. Grubb et al. (2018) conducted a study regarding domestic violence services in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Texas to see if the services meet the needs of the clients that were in the shelter. Based on the Grubb et al. study there was more than one barrier that was found regarding both the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Texas community. The study found that there was a lack of transportation, lack of trust from the clients to the providers, and inconvenient hours maintained by services providers. These barriers were present in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Texas. Another barrier that has been found is dealing with the

policies that are being used in domestic violence shelters. Burnett et al. (2015) found that policy inadequacies actually perpetuated reliance on the system by limiting women's access to options and resources that could enhance self-reliance. Some of the policies in the domestic violence shelter can make it hard for the staff working in the shelter to be able to do their work without being burned out. Burnett et al. study also found that based on the staff members response, the staff members are overloaded with case work to the point that some clients have to wait awhile to get seen by the staff or to receive some services. Based on these limitations of staff workers being overloaded with work, there has been a high turnover rate for women that are willing to stay in the shelters no longer than six weeks. The social workers at the domestic violence shelter also face barriers when it comes down to being able to advocate successfully for the battered women.

Merchant and Whiting (2015) did a study where the participants were current and former shelter workers. They found that one major challenge was being able to balance advocacy roles, which is observed to be from the workers not being able to cope emotionally with client's stories and being able to manage the day-to-day chaos of shelter life. This can include the social workers having to be the kitchen staff, being security, a residential advocate, and a police advocate due to there being no one else to help with these roles; which made the staff become overwhelmed (Merchant & Whiting, 2015). It was also found that there are limitations and challenges that the battered women that lived in the shelters face for being able to gain access to legal services. Wright and Bertrand (2017) found using a client survey and a staff focus group that the barriers with accessing legal services due to lack of on-site legal resources through the shelter, long wait times for the

onsite legal clinics, and the clients not being able to have any access to a legal clinic or information. Another limitation regarding resources in domestic violence shelters can come from the staff not being properly trained. Clevenger and Roe-Sepowitz (2009) found in their study that a change in the shelters staff education and training could strengthen and improve the responses to the battered women's calls for assistance, and this can help the woman to develop a decision to utilize the shelter or not to utilize the shelter. Nnawulezi and Sullivan's (2014) study found that one limitation that has limited research regarding domestic violence shelters is the racism towards African American battered women. Nnawulezi and Sullivan stated that concerns have been raised that some shelter programs are not as welcoming or relevant to Black survivors as it is to White victims due to the lack of cultural competence. Since the lack of cultural competence is a barrier to African American battered women, the women find it hard for the staff to not be able to meet their needs because of the lack of sensitivity; this can make the women feel isolated (Nnawulezi & Sullivan, 2014). However, having these limitations from these above studies shows how this can cause a major impact on the existing social workers being able to provide services to their clients which are battered women.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will be used in this study will be conflict theory. The use of conflict theory being used in this study is to analyze the issues and problems based on the impact that the lack of funding has on the social worker's ability to be able to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters. Conflict theory was created by Marx to be able to be committed to changing social

structures by altering the course of social processes (Turner, 1975). Turner (1975) stated that Marx conflict theory “reflected political commitment to activating conflicts which would change the structure of society” (p. 619). Marx looked at conflict as a reflection of instinctual impulses and conflicts of interest as these are mitigated by other associative instincts and social processes (Turner, 1975). Conflict theory was developed to be used at the macro level. Onyesom and Igbesi (2015) stated that “changes in the social environment such as contestable access to new political positions or perceptions of new resources arising from development in the physical environment are fertile grounds for conflicts involving individuals and groups, who are interested in using the new resources to achieve their goals” (pg.1). The use of conflict theory being used in the macro setting helps to not exclude any groups when dealing with a social issue (Onyesom & Igbesi, 2015). The macro settings can include society, age group or age bracket, population groups, countries, economies, social class, etc. Macro level conflicts are expressions of existing adversaries' relationships through aggressive behaviors which is a result of unresolved incompatible interest in the social structure of the system or organization (Onyesom & Igbesi, 2015). Conflict theory being used at the macro level also helps to focus on the broader impacts or effects of conflict (Onyesom & Igbesi, 2015). Onyesom and Igbesi stated that “macro conflict goes beyond an individual or organization and conflict at the macro level changes social stratification, economic power and diplomatic stance of a society and thereby its future” (p. 3.1). Conflict theory also looks at the impact of resources at a macro level, since conflict can emerge due to resources (Onyesom & Igbesi, 2015). An example of conflict emerging due to resources is when

there are two or more groups that aspire for the same scarce resources and one of the aspiring parties has more advantage over the other parties to have access to the resources.

However, there is no current literature where conflict theory is used in studies that focus on funding and resources with the battered women population, but there is a study that used conflict theory to focus on the vulnerable population of those who were affected by disasters in their communities with resource issues. Lapsley (2019) used conflict theory to focus on the unequal resources available after a disaster in specific communities. Lapsley's study found that conflict theory aligns with the survey responses from participants who are economically disadvantaged that the lack of resources found it difficult to recover quickly after a disaster. This article helps show how conflict theory is used to be able to look into the lack of resources that seems to have an effect or impact on vulnerable populations.

Omer and Jabeen (2016) stated that "Karl Max conflict theory looks at the functions and role of social institutions to be best understood by its economic system" (p. 196). The Omer and Jabeen study used conflict theory to determine the difference between public and private school facilities that affect the quality of education. Omer and Jabeen found that public schools have fewer resources and things available for their students than private schools students. Based on these findings from Omer and Jabeen study, the private school students having more resources makes it easier for them to have more available life opportunities than the students in public school. Due to the use of conflict theory in the Omer and Jabeen study bringing the awareness of the outcomes of inequality and limited resources being an impact on public school students rather than

private school students, shows the reason for using conflict theory for this study to be able to explore and bring awareness on how funding issues impact existing social workers being able to provide services to African American battered women. Conflict theory can also bring awareness on how funding issues affect domestic violence programs which also makes it hard for the existing social workers at the shelters being able to do their jobs for this study.

Conflict theory is also used to help resolve issues that are being made in a workplace environment that can become an impact on the workplace. In the Dunbar (2018) study, the researcher used another form of conflict theory which is called the theory of realistic conflict. Dunbar used this type of conflict theory to help civilian small business managers working on a military base to help reduce issues and conflicts in the workplace by putting goals and strategies in place to improve the issue. Dunbar's study found that if the managers in the workplace were aware of the conflicts and issues that were going on, then strategies can be put into place to mitigate those factors. Therefore, this is a reason why conflict theory is being used for this study to be able to get the social workers that are working at the shelters to be able to come up with strategies based on their experience with the social work practice problem to be able to reduce the impact the funding issues have on the social workers being able to do their job. Dunbar stated that "recognizing opportunities for leaders to develop or expand their conflict resolution strategies could ultimately help to reduce conflict in the workplace" (p. 6). The use of conflict theory will help with the ultimate goal of this study which is to come up with strategies to reduce the impact of the funding issues in Columbia, South Carolina so that

the outcome of this study could be used to expand to other shelters outside of Columbia, South Carolina.

Literature Review Summary

Based on the literature that has been reviewed, a gap that has been observed is there is no formal research on this social issue with this vulnerable population in Columbia, South Carolina. Even with the battered women population there is limited research on how the lack of funding has an impact on existing social workers being able to provide services to African American battered women. There are more articles that only look at this issue from the battered women perspective rather than the existing social workers perspective. It was also found from the articles that most of the participants were staff such as either volunteers, directors, or other executives; but not many were social workers. Another gap from the articles was that there were no current articles that used conflict theory as the theoretical framework as it relates to this social issue and this vulnerable population. However, most of the literature used a qualitative study just like this study and also showed the use of how important it is to use this approach when working with this population.

Summary

In Section 1, I highlighted how battered women would leave their abusive relationship to go to a domestic violence shelter for resources and advocacy especially in the African American population. It was also highlighted on how the existing social workers have an impact with providing sufficient services to this vulnerable population due to limitations such as funding and resources. This section also shows how the use of

conflict theory will be used to help with gaining and understanding of the current social issue. I also included a significant amount of literature that showed the importance of domestic violence shelters, and the impact of having limited resources and funding.

Based on the literature review, there was a gap where there is no formal research of this social issue being done in Columbia, South Carolina, and also no current literature that used conflict theory as the theoretical framework. In Section 2, I will follow with a description of the research design, methodology, participants, instrumentation, data analysis, and ethical procedures.

Section 2: Research Design and Data Collection

Introduction

When I was in the master's program at Walden University, I had the opportunity to do my clinical internship at a domestic violence shelter in Columbia, South Carolina called Sister Care. While at Sister Care, I was able to spend time with the social workers and the battered women. In my observations, there were not as many social workers on the staff compared to staff members that were not social workers due to funding issues. Many of the staff at the domestic violence shelter told me that most of the battered women who come to the shelter have multiple stays and visits due to revictimization. After learning this information at Sister Care, I wanted to gain more information regarding the reason for battered women to have multiple visits and stays. However, once I became a doctoral student working on my prospectus, I found out that the issues that the domestic violence shelters were having in Columbia, South Carolina were due to funding issues. After speaking with the shelter directors, I learned that funding issues have an impact on the ability of the social workers to provide sufficient services to battered women, especially African American women, due to this group being the largest population that enters and visit the shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. I found that there were not enough articles on this topic, and that no formal research had been done on funding issues affecting social workers at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. This is why this study focused on the social work problem of how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina.

I used a basic qualitative design for this study to address the social work problem. This research design helped in gaining insight into the social work problem based on the existing social workers' experience at the domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. I conducted semistructured individual interviews with five existing social workers at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. The interviews were held virtually on a computer app called Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing requirements, to ensure that everyone was safe. While on the Zoom app, the participants answered questions regarding the social work issue to enable me to understand the funding issue's impact on existing social workers. For ethical reasons, there was a consent form that every participant had to sign before the start of the individual interviews, which let the participants know that the virtual meeting would be recorded. Recording the meetings made it easy to collect the data from the individual interviews for analysis.

Research Design

The research design of this study was a basic qualitative approach. The basic qualitative approach helped in exploring the social work issue of how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. Teherani et al. (2015) stated that the use of the basic qualitative approach can show how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships. To explore the impact

of funding issues, I had to gain an understanding of this social issue through the existing social workers who were currently working at the domestic violence shelters.

The research question for this study was the following: How does the lack of funding impact the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina? This research question was helpful in gaining an understanding of the study problem. I sought to explore the existing social workers' experiences with these social issues while currently working at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina. This aligned with the purpose of this study as I explored this social issue in depth by using semistructured individual interviews to be able to speak to and gather information from the participants.

Methodology

The method for collecting the data for this study was the use of semistructured individual interviews. Souza de Oliveira Lima and Pacheco (2016) stated that semistructured individual interviews allow researchers to obtain in-depth data involving open and flexible questions that allow more details. For this study, the semistructured individual interviews were used to help gain an understanding of the social work issue by having a discussion with the participants regarding their experiences with the issue. Another reason that semistructured interviewing was used was because it helped to make the participants feel comfortable when discussing the social work problem instead of making them feel on edge. The semistructured individual interviews were relatively unthreatening to the participants and allowed an open environment for the participants to

feel comfortable to discuss their thoughts, perceptions, and opinions on the social work practice issue. The use of semistructured individual interviews prompted discussions that helped in achieving a positive outcome from the information that was gained.

Participants

The original number of participants that I wanted for the study was six to eight. However, only five participants volunteered to be part of the study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that there is no certain number of participants required for qualitative research. The participants were social workers who were currently working at a domestic violence shelter in Columbia, South Carolina. The reason that the participants were existing social workers who were working at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina was that the social issue focused on how the funding issue impacts the existing social workers' abilities to do their job. Ravitch and Carl stated that participants in qualitative research are chosen to thoroughly answer the research question of the study. Using these participants aligned with the practice-focused question of this study because the existing social workers were the individuals that the study focused on, due to being impacted by the social issue. Additionally, a sample size of five existing social workers made it easy to have a small discussion and for every participant to have a chance to speak fairly regarding the social work issue of the study, due to being able to talk one on one with me.

Instruments

In this study, there were no instruments, but semistructured individual interviews were used to help gain an understanding of the practice problem based on the experience

and information that were taken from the existing social workers at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina (see Appendix A). The semistructured interviews allowed the participants to have an open discussion in which they shared their information comfortably. Due to the pandemic, the individual interviews were conducted on Zoom to ensure that everyone was safe and continued to practice social distancing. During the individual interviews, I asked open-ended questions regarding the funding issues that were occurring, the impact of the social issue, and how the funding issues were impacting the existing social workers' ability to provide sufficient services to African American battered women. I developed the open-ended questions for the individual interviews with assistance from my committee. The use of the open-ended questions in the individual interviews allowed the participants to give detailed responses to the questions to help with the discussion in the interviews.

Data Analysis

Before data collection began, I obtained approval for the interview questions from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). After getting approval from the IRB for the questions, I reached out to domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina to get participants for the study. I reached out to the shelters by calling to speak to the shelter directors about recruiting social workers at the shelter, as well as about any paperwork that would need to be filled out to use the social workers as participants. However, I had already made some shelter directors aware of the study when I was interviewing the directors before the research began to get their input on the social work practice problem.

The criteria that the participants had to meet were (a) having a degree in social work (either a bachelor's or master's degree) and (b) currently working at a domestic violence shelter. The criterion of possessing a bachelor's or master's degree was applied because a lot of shelters in Columbia, South Carolina do not have enough funds to hire master's degree social workers. Many of the shelters have social workers who only have bachelor's degrees.

Once the participants were chosen, they received an informed consent to sign, which contained a summary of what the study was about. After the informed consent was signed, the participants met on Zoom to complete the individual interview process regarding the social work practice problem. Each Zoom meeting was audio recorded to help me with coding. The use of qualitative coding helped in finding themes and patterns in the data that were collected from the individual interviews and put in transcript form. Coding the data helps with seeing the credibility and validity of the study from the use of the themes and patterns that were analyzed from the interviews. The coding helped with credibility and validity by showing the themes and patterns that stood out most based on the responses from the participants in the study.

Ethical Procedures

I took many steps to ensure that the participants were protected and that information was kept confidential. The first step that was taken to ensure the confidentiality and safety of the participants was informed consent. The informed consent document had an outline of what the participants would be doing in the study. The informed consent also informed the participants that at any time during the study, if the

they wanted to withdraw or leave the study, they could. Further, the informed consent document indicated that during the study, the participants' names would not be released or used. The participants' names were replaced with numbers (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2). The only thing that was shared about the participants was that they were existing social workers at the domestic violence agencies used in the study. The reason why the participants' names have not been released is because I needed to ensure that each participant could speak freely about the social issues of interest. Having their names remain confidential allowed for the participants to feel comfortable when speaking and discussing the social work practice problem, which helped in gathering a lot of data and information from the individual interviews. The individuals who had access to the data were me and the members of the Walden committee who were supervising and guiding me. The IRB approval number is 07-14-21-0640219.

When the individual interviews were conducted on Zoom, participants who had signed the consent form were the only individuals who received the passcode to get onto the Zoom app for an individual interview. To continue to keep the participants' information confidential, I informed them that when the Zoom meeting was audio recorded, they could turn their cameras off during the interview. The data will be kept for at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Summary

In Section 2, I highlighted data collection and analysis procedures. I collected data for this study by using semistructured individual interviews with existing social workers from the domestic violence shelters, which I conducted using Zoom. Having the data

collection be done using individual interviews made it easier for me to use a qualitative coding method to analyze patterns and themes in the data that were gathered from the individual interviews. The findings are discussed in the next section.

Section 3: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers at domestic violence shelters to provide services to African American battered women. To examine how lack of funding has an impact on existing social workers doing their job, I used semistructured individual interviews with social workers who were currently working at a domestic violence shelter in Columbia, South Carolina.

This section is broken down into two major subsections. The first major subsection addresses the data analysis techniques. In the data analysis technique section, I explain how the data collection process started and how the recruitment of the participants occurred. I also focus on the procedures that were used to collect the data and present a summary of the validation procedures. The limitation of problems that were encountered during data collection is also discussed. The second major subsection contains the study's findings. The findings section focuses on the descriptive statistics from the basic qualitative research method that was used for the study. The findings section also gives information regarding how the data answered the research question, including a table that illustrates results from the findings of the study, presented as major themes, categories, subcategories, and codes.

Data Analysis Techniques

Time Frame of Data Collection

I received IRB approval on July 14, 2021 (IRB #07-14-21-0640219), and I started my recruitment process on July 20, 2021. The data collection for the study started with phone calls in which I reached out to domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina to see if any social workers were interested in participating in the study. I sent out a recruitment letter through my Walden email to the potential participants' email addresses. Once the recruitment letters were sent out, the participants responded to me via email or telephone regarding their interest in the study. Once I knew which social workers were interested in the study, I sent out the consent form via email. The participants sent an email back stating, "I consent." I sent out recruitment letters to eight participants, but only five participants were interested and met all the requirements to be participants in the study. It took 3 weeks to perform the individual interviews on the Zoom app with each participant. Each participant was only interviewed one time. The first interview that I had with a participant was on July 28, 2021, and the last interview with the last participant was on August 11, 2021.

Data Analysis Procedures

Semistructured individual interviews were held. After all the participants were interviewed, I used Rev.com to get each interview transcribed. After each interview was

transcribed, I manually coded the data from the study using qualitative analysis. Before I started coding, I listened to the Zoom recordings from the interviews to ensure that all the information that was transcribed from Rev.com was correct. I used a whiteboard to help determine codes from each of the interviews. The coding methods that were used to code were descriptive coding and in vivo coding. In descriptive coding, the researcher is able to analyze data by describing what was found in the interviews by summarizing what the participants stated to be able to categorize the data in codes (Saldana, 2021). In vivo coding involves taking the participants' exact words (verbatim) from the data to put them into codes and categories (Saldana, 2021). Due to manually coding, the coding process took me 2 weeks to complete. I took 2 days to perform descriptive coding and 2 days to do in vivo coding. I read through every interview multiple times to find patterns with codes. Due to coding manually, I used a whiteboard to be able to see the codes visually. I did descriptive coding first, and my second round of coding was in vivo. There were a total of 64 codes from descriptive coding and a total of 32 codes from in-vivo coding. Before categorizing the codes, I combined both codes and went through the interviews one more time to ensure that there were no other codes missing. Once the descriptive and in vivo codes were combined, I looked for patterns to help put the codes into categories. A total of 29 codes were broken up into categories with both descriptive and in vivo coding combined. Before the major categories were formed, subcategories helped in

identifying major categories. Five themes were ultimately developed to answer the research question.

Validation Procedures

During the data collection, I used reflexive journaling to help identify and address any biases that came up during the interview process. Journaling allowed me to keep an open mind and perspective during each participant interview. During data analysis, I used different techniques to ensure that the data collection would be valid. I did use two forms of qualitative coding to make sure that the coding from the data collection was reliable. Coding the data twice allowed me to see the codes that were repeated and to uncover new codes that were overlooked during the first coding process.

Limitations

There were a couple of problems encountered when conducting the study related to getting participants. I had a challenging time getting six or more participants due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many of the social workers were no longer working at the domestic violence shelters. Another limitation was that there were not as many social workers working in domestic violence shelters; most of the workers were staff members or volunteers who helped with the shelter but were not social workers.

Findings

Characteristics of the Participants

Recruitment for this study focused on social workers with either a bachelor's in social work or a master's in social work degree. Participants had to be currently employed at a domestic violence shelter in Columbia, South Carolina. Five participants were recruited and interviewed via Zoom. All interviews were audio-recorded. Participants' demographics were documented regarding race, gender identity, and college degree. The domestic violence shelter that the participants worked in were not disclosed to help maintain the participants' confidentiality.

Of the five participants, there were four females and one male. There was no specific age range required to participate in this study. The average number of years worked at the domestic violence shelter ranged from 2 to 17. There were four African American participants and one White participant. Four of the participants had a master's in social work degree, and one participant had a bachelor's in social work degree.

Research Question Findings

Social workers who are currently working in domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina have come into conflict with funding limitations that have impacted the way in which they are able to provide services to their clients. After I manually coded the data, five themes emerged to answer the research question: How does the lack of funding impact the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina? The themes were (a) limited programmatic and therapeutic access, (b) inability

to update training and tools to access current needs, (c) barriers to retaining experienced social workers, (d) insufficient number of social workers, and (e) limited access to services to meet the needs of battered African American women. Under the five major themes, there was one major category for each; two major categories had two subcategories. Table 1 outlines the major theme, categories, subcategories, and codes.

Table 1

Major Themes, Categories, Subcategories, and Codes

Major themes	Categories	Subcategories	Codes
1. Limited programmatic and therapeutic access	Resources	Counseling	Individual counseling Group counseling Onsite counseling Offsite counseling
		Program services	Residential housing Legal advocacy Shelter housing Outside programs
2. Inability to update trainings and tools to access current needs	Training and modules	Limited access to training	No updated skills More education In-depth training
		Revamp modules	Up-to-date modules New programs Updated with the population of today
3. Barriers to retaining experienced social workers	Employee retention		Payment rate low Salaries No experienced social workers Not getting paid
4. Insufficient amount of social workers	Workplace availability		Burned out Frustrated Too many clients Not enough social workers Lack of support
5. Limited access to services to meet the needs of battered African American women	Lack of knowledge and services		Trust Not feeling comfortable Useless services Criteria unmet

Theme 1: Limited Programmatic and Therapeutic Access

The first primary theme that helped in answering the research question regarding how the lack of funding impacted the existing social workers' ability to provide services to their clients was the impact of limited programs and therapeutic access that the social workers did not have based on the limitation of funding. Every participant agreed that due to the funding limitation, there was an impact on resources that the social workers used to provide services to the battered women at the shelter. The definition of this theme is that the lack of funds made it difficult for the existing social workers to provide counseling and program services to their clients.

Participants described resources that were limited based on the funding issues. Limited resources included onsite counseling, individual counseling, and onsite programs. Participant 4 stated, "there are not enough programs and services available onsite due to not having the proper funds available to have services for the clients." Participant 4 also stated, "there is more of treatment plans and assessment than counseling services for their participants due to being a nonprofit shelter." Participant 5 identified that a lack of onsite counseling due to the funding not being provided, noting that the shelter would have to send clients to an outside program if there was any availability. Participant 2 stated that "due to funding coming mainly from donations there is limited access to services that can be used." Participant 4 also mentioned "barriers with getting services and getting the help the clients need; depend upon the resources that are available." Participant 1 further stated, "we're always struggling to have more resources for our clients; therefore, we could certainly do with some more money, in terms of the

kinds of things that we do.” Based on the participants’ responses, not having the resources that are needed creates a barrier hindering them from doing their jobs.

Theme 2: Inability to Update Training and Tools to Access Current Needs

This theme was defined as funding putting a limitation on the existing social workers being able to have updates to training, experiences, education, and current modules to meet clients’ needs. All participants agreed that there was limited access to training; three participants felt that an option could be to revamp current training modules to meet the expanded content. Due to the lack of funds, the social workers were not able to get the training that was needed to help provide sufficient services to the battered women and to be able to use modules that work with the battered women of today.

Participants described the challenge for the social workers to be able to update training and modules that would help the clients who visit the shelters. Participant 3 summarized this issue as follows:

I think as with anything when change happens, you have to move with the changes that are currently going on. So, I think in some aspects of the programs, there needs to be revamped in order to work with the population that is up to date, versus the population of yesteryears, because there are a lot more factors that come into play.

Participant 2 stated that “we all need improvements of renewal valuations that are consistent with the clients that we are currently working with.” Participant 1 further stated,

We are really working in an environment that is changing and there are new programs out there and there are new things that we haven't dealt with or we haven't dealt with at the level that some other people have would be good for us to have training for that. The only thing that I see that causes some problems is that one of the things is that the staff doesn't have access to more training that we had. Therefore, there's a lot that goes on training-wise that we could be getting that we're not getting. I think that's one area that really needs to be looked at.

Participant 4 stated that "more education is needed for the social workers because experience is very limited." Participant 5 summarized, "we need more ongoing training to help serve this population. In order for us to best serve these populations, we would need more in-depth training and more cultural competency." Having more training would be beneficial not only to the social workers, but also to the clients because more training would help the social workers better address client needs.

Theme 3: Barriers to Retaining Experienced Social Workers

Theme 3 emerged due to the social workers' experience issues with salaries or not getting paid based on funding limitations. The definition of this theme was that domestic violence shelters cannot retain social workers due to social workers not getting paid enough or the social workers not getting paid at all due to the lack of funding. Only four participants agreed with this theme.

Employee retention was identified as one of the major impacts that had been caused by lack of funding. The lack of employee retention resulted from payment rates

being low, salary issues, lack of experienced social workers, or social workers not getting paid to provide services. Participant 1 stated,

One thing that really restricts us is our salaries. Therefore, as far as you get people that are master's level, all of that, we do get those people, but then they're looking for other jobs too, that are going to pay more. I think the payment rate is really low and that's a major factor in keeping staff.

Participant 2 noted that "every social worker is a volunteer, including the director, and no one is getting paid. Since no one is getting paid, it is hard to retain case managers that are willing to do their jobs for free." Participant 4 also noted,

They are having a hard time getting people to come in due to the volunteers making more than the social worker. Due to being a private nonprofit, salaries are just diving. Retention rate plays a big role here in the lack of resources that the shelter has.

Participant 5 further noted,

If a social worker is just starting in the shelter [and] does not have a good salary as those that have been in the shelter for a while, this issue causes social workers to not want to stay. If the money isn't there, there is no point in staying.

Difficulties with employees impact battered women in domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina, in that there are not enough experienced social workers who are able to provide the level of services that battered women need.

Theme 4: Insufficient Number of Social Workers

Major theme 4 is defined as a lack of social work staff because existing social workers have too many clients, no support from administrations, and being burned out makes it hard for the social workers to provide services to their clients. Every participant agreed on this category being an issue due to lack of funding. Due to the lack of funding to be able to hire experienced social workers, existing social workers are becoming frustrated and burned out, which makes it hard for the social workers to be available to their clients.

Workplace availability is another major impact that makes it hard for battered women to be able to get sufficient services that are needed. Even though there is COVID-19 going on, having available social workers has been an issue before COVID-19 began. Participant 5 stated that “the social worker caseloads are like 50 clients or more which makes the social worker super busy and people get burned out quickly.” Participant 3 summarized “that things can get very frustrating with the population.” Participant 4 stated that “we are short staff and for so many reasons around this time. Being short-staffed there is only sometimes the director, which causes most of the clients to not being able to get past the interview and assessment stage. Participant 2 further noted that “due to being volunteers there are not enough volunteers or enough case managers to be able to give the right advocacy to our clients.” Participant 1 stated that “more support is needed from the administration regarding the social workers in the shelter or out in the community.” Participant 5 also stated that “social workers need more support from administration and supervisor due to the social workers being burned out.”

Theme 5: Limited Access to Services to Meet the Needs of battered African American Women

This theme emerges due to the lack of funding makes it a challenge for the existing social workers to provide sufficient services that meet the needs for African American battered women. The theme is defined from the lack of funding having an impact on the services that the existing social workers are using not being sufficient enough to meet the needs of African American battered women; due to the services not relating to the African American women backgrounds or services that the African American battered women feel comfortable with. Four participants agreed with this theme. Every participant agreed that African American battered women are the majority of the population that visit the domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina.

A lack of knowledge and service were identified as two factors that the social workers have when having the access to be able to provide sufficient services to African American battered women that go into the shelter. This includes trust, not feeling comfortable, useless services, and criteria not being met to help meet the needs of the African American battered women. Participant 1 noted,

There are negative experiences working with the African American population due to not wanting to receive the services and not having services that the women want to have that benefits them. Social workers are willing to serve people but the social workers are showing that they are not comfortable with the clients.

Participant 2 further noted that “whereas you have women of different backgrounds; they may not be able to use their background to cope with each other.” Participant 4 also noted

that “working with black females there are some disparities and other barriers to getting services that they need to help them.” Participant 3 stated that “dealing with the population can be frustrated due to the African American women not wanting to do differently for themselves.” Participant 1 also stated that “we have a therapy bill to do it in a way that is most beneficial to them which means they’re going to be there. One problem is that the clients have access to the therapies that they want.”

Unexpected Finding

While reviewing the data collected from the participants, an unexpected was the restrictions on the time length that the women could stay at the shelter. Even though the focus of this study is to gain experience on how funding limitation has an impact on the existing social workers being able to do their job, four participants continued to bring up the restrictions and shelter length of stay as a conflict as well in regards to the resources. Participant 1 stated,

Due to the clients having restrictions, living in the shelter makes it hard to have the women participate in group counseling or individual counseling. One problem with the shelter is in the terms of success due to the women staying for only two months, and the women come in traumatized and they are not immediately ready to go and do things.

Participant 3 stated,

I think if we look at different ways to help them work with their anger and work with their codependent behaviors, as well as their low self-esteem. I think

implementing modules to help with that problem would help them be able to matriculate better once they are on their own again.

Participant 4 stated,

Needs more long term facilities and more education because people still do not understand the substance abuse effects. There are not many programs overall in South Carolina and services to treat and deal with women. There is a need for more therapeutic staff.

Participant 4 also stated, “that there is a need for a full-time clinical therapist on the team that is on-site rather than having to continue to send the client off-site for their mental health needs.” This is an unexpected finding because due to resources being an issue with lack of funding, I never thought that the mental health of the battered women was not being services sufficiently while being at the domestic violence shelter.

Summary

Section 3 discussed the overview of the findings from the study. Section 3 included data analysis techniques that discussed the time frame of the data collection, data analysis procedures, validation procedures, and the research findings that answer the research question. The summary of the findings answered how the lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina? The study explored how the existing social workers at the domestic violence shelter have been impacted with funding limitations when trying to provide services to battered women based on their experience, while still being employed at the shelter. Each participant gave

detailed information regarding the social issue as it was related to the shelter they were working in. The data analysis resulted in five major themes. The major themes are (a) limited programmatic and therapeutic access, (b) inability to update training and tools to access current needs, (c) barriers to retaining experienced social workers, (d) insufficient amount of social workers, and (e) limited access to services to meet the needs of battered African American women.

There was one unexpected finding in the study; it related to the lack of resources to help the women with their mental issues and substance abuse. Data analysis revealed 4 participants felt for more clinical staff were needed on-site or available to the battered women to help provide resources regarding the battered women's mental issues and substance abuse. Each of the four participants agreed that even though there is a lack of access to resources regarding funding, the resources for mental health and substance abuse still get overlooked, which results in the battered women revisiting the shelter more often than normal because there are still no resources available to help the battered women overcome all of their issues. One participant stressed that if there is never a resource available for the battered women's mental health or substance abuse issues, the battered women will never be who they were before the abuse occurred.

Every participant highlighted how much the lack of funding has impacted how they are able to provide sufficient services to the battered women based on the resources that they have access to. Every participant felt that more needs to be done to help with getting more funding by either having more come from the administration, organizing a meeting, or having more grant writers.

The focus of this study was to examine how the lack of funding impacts the existing social workers to provide services to African American battered women in Columbia, South Carolina based on the social workers experience. Section 3 summarized the findings and unexpected findings of the study. Section 4 will summarize the application to professional practice and implications for social change, recommendations for social work practice, and implications for social change found in the study.

Section 4: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Social Change

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how lack of funding impacts the abilities of existing social workers at domestic violence shelters to provide services to African American battered women. This study was conducted to gain an understanding of what resources and services were being used by the existing social workers at the shelter to provide services to battered women based on funding limitations. With the services and resources that were being used by the social workers, I was able to use the participants' experiences to gain an understanding of the impact of the funding limitations. For the study, the participants were five social workers who currently worked at a domestic violence shelter in Columbia, South Carolina. The participants had either a bachelor's in social work degree or a master's in social work degree. The five themes emerged were (a) limited programmatic and therapeutic access, (b) inability to update training and tools to access current needs, (c) barriers to retaining experienced social workers, (d) insufficient number of social workers, and (e) limited access to services to meet the needs of battered African American women. The themes answered the research question for the study based on the social worker's experience of what resources and services are impacted by the lack of funding provided to the shelters to help battered women.

Due to the lack of funding, it was found that services are insufficient due to existing social workers not having access to the proper resources that will help African American battered women while in the shelter. There was an unexpected finding during

the data collection. The unexpected finding related to there not being any resources that help women with their mental issues and substance abuse. This unexpected finding helped extend knowledge for this study. I found that even though domestic violence shelters help battered women with abuse, whether physical, mental, or financial, there is still a lack of services regarding other problems or issues that the battered women have while in the shelter. This unexpected finding also helped show how important it is to have resources that meet all of the battered women's needs while they are in the shelter. Participants felt that mental health resources were overlooked but were much needed to help the social workers to provide sufficient services to the battered women.

Section 4 addresses the study's application to professional ethics in social work practice. Section 4 also contains an explanation of how the findings of the study will impact social work practice in relation to the area of professional ethics. The recommendations for social work practice will be explained in Section 4, including action steps that can be taken, the impact of the findings, the usefulness of the findings, limitations, recommendations for further research, and ways to disseminate the information from the study. Lastly, I describe the potential impact for positive social change at the appropriate levels, including micro, mezzo, macro, and/or practice, research, and policy.

Application to Professional Ethics in Social Work Practice

NASW (2021) stated that there are six core values that have been embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history and are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective. The six core values are service, social justice, dignity

and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These six core practices are being used by social workers when working in a domestic violence shelter. The two core values that relate to the social work practice problem for this study are service and competence. NASW stated that service value is used when social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Competence value is described as social workers working in their area of expertise but still striving to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice (NASW, 2021).

The NASW Code of Ethics service value is related to this social work issue due to services being the major resource impacted by limited funding that goes to the domestic violence shelter. The findings show that every participant experienced issues with having access to sufficient services to provide to the battered women in the shelter. Providing services and resources to battered women is an important aspect of existing social workers' jobs at domestic violence shelters. NASW (2021) stated that a social worker's primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems. This is a mission and value that the existing social workers stand by while helping the battered, but funding limitations make it a challenge for the social workers to provide the services that battered women need to address their problems.

The social work value of competence is related to the social work practice problem due to existing social workers having problems getting access to the services that meet the needs of the African American battered women population. Every participant agreed that African American battered women are the majority of the

population that visits the shelter at which the social workers were currently working. Participants also agreed that there are services that the shelter has that do not meet the needs of African American battered women and that the social workers do not understand how to meet African American battered women's needs. The core value of competence is related to Theme 5 from the findings, which is limited access to services to meet the needs of battered African American women.

However, the findings of this study show how lack of funding is making it an issue for existing social workers to be able to meet the needs of their clients. Based on the findings, the existing social workers have a lack in both the services and competence value of social work. The findings may help guide the existing social workers and directors/administration to find ways to help improve services and competence to meet the needs of the clients that visit the shelter. According to the findings, there is a major impact from the social work practice problem regarding the core values of services and competence. The findings also inform a need for a change in the limited services in the shelters as related to the professional ethics revolving services and competence. This will help reinforce some actions for the social workers to take to help with the social work problem to improve the core social work values of service and competence.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice

Based on the findings of this study, one action step that can be taken for clinical social work practitioners who work in this area of focus is to have training on grant writing for more funding. Due to the social work practice problem focusing on limited funding that has an impact on the social workers being able to provide services to

battered women, having more training on grant writing may help with the funding issue, especially because the majority of the shelter's money may come from government funding. Another action step is finding affordable training, education, and modules to use to help the clients whom the social workers serve. This will help with the policy regarding proper advocacy for the social workers to use with battered women. Every participant in the study agreed that there is a need for better training and newer modules to help meet the needs of today's populations. Finding training and modules that are either free or affordable can help reduce the issue of having limited resources and services to be able to provide to the clients.

How These Findings Will Impact the Researcher's Social Work Practice

As I have advanced as a practitioner in my own social work practice, my plan is to advocate for this population regarding the social work practice issue. Even though I do not work with this population currently, my goal is to eventually work with battered women. Based on the findings from the study, advocating for more funding to address the needs of battered women is critical. The impact of the study shows how hard I will have to advocate for this population. Due to most of the shelters being nonprofit, I will have to get out and get the public involved as well. It will be necessary to educate the public on the need for donations to help battered women in the shelter. I volunteered and did an internship at a shelter in Columbia, South Carolina that helped spark my interest in this social issue. The study findings show how lack of funding not only has an impact on the clients, but also a major impact on the social workers working at the shelter in terms of their ability to perform their job sufficiently. As an advocate, I will reach out to other

funding organizations that could be helpful in making funding available for services, resources, and training for social workers. Building relationships with other organizations that are nonprofits or are funded by the government to address the same social issue may help with raising awareness and networking. Networking will allow for all the organizations to get together to see the various funding opportunities that are out there in the community or within the government that are being overlooked. This will help give existing social workers the resources and support that are needed for them to be able to provide services to the battered women who come into the shelters.

Transferability

The Usefulness of the Findings From the Study

Ravitch and Carl (2016) defined transferability as the way in which qualitative studies can be applicable, or transferable, to broader contexts while still maintaining their context-specific richness. Transferability means that the results of a research study can be applied to similar situations or individuals. This study was focused on existing social workers at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina who were being impacted by a lack of funding to provide services to their clients. Because funding is an important aspect of the social work field, the findings/context of this study may be useful to the broader field of social work practice. The findings of this study may be used by agencies and organizations that have funding issues, which may include those serving the child population (e.g., Department of Social Services) or with vulnerable adults (e.g., aging agencies). This study can also be used by those planning improvements for other

shelters that have existing social workers, such as homeless shelters, family shelters, and substance and alcohol abuse shelters in Columbia, South Carolina.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that methods for achieving transferability include having detailed descriptions of the data as well the context. One description of transferability that can be used from the results of this study is for existing social workers who work at shelters that are not domestic violence shelters is where the data collected for this study indicated that funding makes employee retention difficult. Existing social workers from shelters other than domestic violence shelters may compare the results of this study with their experience with funding issues. Another description of transferability from this study that can be used for existing social workers in other non-domestic-violence shelters involves services and resources that are not available or are impacted due to funding. These two descriptions were two of the important factors of the five themes that emerged that showed how funding limitations had an impact on existing social workers at domestic violence shelters.

Funding is an important factor in each of the shelters and agencies listed. If the social workers in these shelters are having issues with providing services due to lack of funding, the results and findings of this study may allow other researchers, stakeholders, and participants to start transferring aspects of the study design and findings by taking into consideration different contextual factors instead of attempting to replicate this study design and findings. Due to other shelters not being domestic violence shelters but having existing social workers at those shelters dependent on funding to help provide services, shows the different contextual factors from this study being used in other shelters that are

not domestic violence shelters. This can help show the transferability of the results to other contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Moreover, because many of the shelters in Columbia, South Carolina use the same funding resources as the domestic violence shelters (e.g., community sources, grants, government sources, or donations), the study findings may be applicable to shelters serving other populations. The use of other contextual factors received from this study may allow the audiences of the research to grasp the study findings and apply them to other populations outside of the domestic violence population to help bring improvement to their agency to ensure that their clients' needs are being met. The findings from this study may help in finding alternatives to help existing social workers at non-domestic-violence shelters where similar social issues are affecting social workers' ability to do their job.

Limitations That May Impact the Usefulness of the Findings

When one is using a qualitative research method, there is no required number of participants. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated, "there are no set rules in qualitative research when it comes to having a certain number of participants" (p. 138). Due to only having five participants, the findings of this study are not generalizable. In that the findings relate to funding impacting domestic violence shelters, the findings may only apply to a narrow population. Even though this may be a limitation, the study findings do offer increased understanding of this social work practice issue that can be used for another study or population.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings, one recommendation is to use more clinical counselors and staff as participants to help gain an understanding of this social work practice problem in this area. I had a difficult time getting participants who were just social workers due to many workers at the shelters not being social workers.

Another recommendation for further research is to add more questions regarding funding. For example, in what ways are shelters trying to fix the lack of funding? Are shelter social workers taught how to find funding such as grants, funds, stipends, and so forth?

Finally, to understand African American battered women, it could be helpful to apply critical racial theory as a framework along with conflict theory. Poole et al. (2021) defined critical racial theory as “a praxis-oriented framework that recognizes that racism is ingrained in the fabric of global society yet may manifest differently across geocultural contexts” (p. 2). Critical race theory could be used to gain an understanding of the inequality of services that are available to African American battered women compared to battered women of other ethnicities who receive services at domestic violence shelters, while conflict theory may be applied in looking at the limitation of the funding. Since critical race theory is a suggestion, using only conflict theory for further research is also recommended as well.

Ways to Disseminate the Research Information

Disseminating the information from this research may help to improve the funding issues that are present in domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina.

The goal of this study was to bring awareness to how funding limitations have affected social workers' ability to provide services to their clients. One way to disseminate the information from the research is to give the information to the participants and shelters in Columbia, South Carolina.

The participants will receive this study via email as a digital copy. The participants will be able to see what they contributed to the study as well as what other participants contributed. The participants will be allowed to share the study with anyone whom they feel would benefit from it. I will also disseminate the study to shelters in Columbia, South Carolina, by giving out one copy to each shelter to bring awareness to shelters whose staff might feel that they are the only ones going through this issue.

Implications for Social Change

Williams (2016) stated that the social work profession uses knowledge from other helping professions. A generalist approach that involves the use of relevant knowledge from multiple disciplines allows social workers flexibility in helping to resolve diverse potential issues at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Regarding the findings of this study, the next section addresses potential impacts for positive change at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Micro

Tan (2009) stated that micro-level is done where the social workers have direct contact with their clients to address individual problems. The problem that is being addressed in this study is how the funding has an impact on the social workers being able to provide services to battered women. The positive impact that can happen at the micro-

level is working with the social workers at the domestic violence shelter individually to come up with different ideas and plans to help with coming up with ways to improve the social work practice issue. Speaking with the social workers individually will not only help with gaining an understanding of the situation but help the change to start with the social workers that work more with this social work practice issues to come up with ways to improve the funding, especially since most of the domestic violence shelters are non-profits. Having the social workers come up with different ways to improve this impact within the different shelters, the next step will extend beyond the social workers but to other leaders and groups; which starts the process with the positive social change at the mezzo level.

Mezzo

Mezzo level is used to solve problems in families and groups/organization (Tan, 2009). Due to the social work practice issue focusing on the funding limitation regarding resources and service; this still creates an impact on how successful the organization which is the domestic violence shelter is. To make a positive impact on this social issue is by expanding this information to those who are involved with the shelters which can include the administrators, directors, and staff members from the domestic violence shelter. Reaching out to the administrators, directors, and staff members will help bring more ideas and opinions on this issue to help bring positive social change to practice problems. At the mezzo level, another potential positive impact is by having the administrators, directors, and the staff members get together to help educate the others in the community. Having this group of individuals educate others on how important it is to

have sufficient funding; will help bring more funding from the donors and getting the administrators and directors to come up with a plan for grant writing to help the social work issue be a potential impact at the macro level.

Macro

The macro-level of social work involves interventions and advocacy with institutions, communities, and society at-large (Tan, 2009). The macro-level also looks at issues by developing laws or petitioning local, state, or even federal governments for funds to help communities but indirectly. The potential positive impact regarding this social work practice problem to help create a social change is by having the social workers be able to petition the government in regards to getting funds to help with providing services. The social worker at this level working at a non profit organization which is a domestic violence shelter could implement targeted campaigns against the large-scale social issue of the funding limitation. Since many of the domestic violence shelters get their funding from grants by the government this study findings will help get campaigns together to get more funding for the domestic violence shelters.

However, each level help brings awareness and positive change to this population. Utilizing these levels allows for the social work practice problem to be worked at by individuals that can cause major improvement to shelters to ensure that the social workers have the resources and services that are needed to be able to get their job done sufficiently. Each level will help in different stages to help finds ways to decrease this social work practice issue.

Summary

Social workers that work at domestic violence shelters are an essential aspect to the shelter. The social workers are the individuals that help the shelters to run smoothly with the services and resources that the social workers give to each client. However, the use of funding is what helps provide the resources and services that the social workers need to be able to get their job done. Many years in the news the government has decreased the human services funding for domestic violence shelters; which causes an effect on the social workers and the battered women population. This study helps to capture the good, bad, and ugly of how the funding limitations make it hard for the social workers to provide the services that are needed for the clients. This study gaining the information based on the social work experiences help shows the impact from those who have to deal with this issue daily. This issue is a hindrance that can make the social worker feel useless to their clients because of this limitation making it hard for the social workers to live up to the NASW Codes of Ethics core values. This social work practice issue has been overlooked for years and bringing awareness from this study will help to bring improvement of this issue through domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina; with the vision to expand to help other cities and states that have the same issue. Social workers that are working at domestic violence shelters in Columbia, South Carolina will never be able to fully provide sufficient services to the battered women population if the funding limitation does not improve.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working at the domestic violence shelter?
2. What programs and services are available to battered women?
3. For the programs and services that are available, what social or economic impact has occurred to make the programs and services sufficient or not sufficient for the battered women.
4. At the shelter you are employed at, are African American women a majority or minority when visiting or entering the shelter?
 - a. In your words, what positive or negative experiences or interactions have you had with this population?
5. Identify the assessments or standardized tools used at the shelter you are employed with?
 - a. Based on your experiences, explain how the assessments or standardized tools are sufficient or insufficient when it comes to providing services to battered women?
 - b. Identify any areas that need improvement?
6. Identify key reasons why battered women leave a domestic violence shelter?
7. Identify critical resources used to help meet the needs of battered women?
8. At the shelter that you are currently employed at, what are the significant resources missing that you believe are needed?
9. How has funding impacted, workplace availability, employee retention, and turnover rates?
 - a. and if so, what do you think is the cause of (workplace availability, employee retention, and turnover rates) plugin, whichever one applies here.
 - b. What are the action steps you would take as a social worker to improve(workplace availability, employee retention, and turnover rates) - plugin, whichever one applies here.
10. How does funding impact the level of resources that your shelter provides for their clients?