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Grandparent Support and Juvenile Delinquent Youth

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Walden University

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Anita Taboh

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Walden University

2016

Grandparent Support and Juvenile Delinquent Youth

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MA, State University of New York, 1995

BS, King's College, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Walden University

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Abstract

Juvenile delinquency is a social issue which has been shown to have a significant cost to society in a variety of ways which include community safety, the cost of arrest, charges, and court processes, as well as the damage done in families and to the youth through the label of juvenile delinquent or Person in Need of Supervision (PINs). One important area in treatment and discharge planning for youth designated as either juvenile delinquent or Persons in Need of Supervision is the inclusion of supports to help youth change the trajectory from these behaviors into more socially acceptable activities and actions. The research problem addressed in this study is that the supports utilized at this time are insufficient and ineffective, as evidenced by rates of recidivism. The purpose of this study was to explore whether the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning as a support system is of value to the youth and their parents. Using a grounded theory methodology, professional staff from Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) programs, now known as Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO), which work with these youths and their families and was developed based on social learning theory, participated in interviews to obtain data regarding the use of non-custodial grandparents and whether they were found to be of value. The results of the study support the use of grandparents under specific conditions, such as when they have positive relationships with parents and when they are positive role models themselves. NVivo 11 software was used to assist in the process of analyzing the data collected from these professionals. The implications for social change remain that the process of assisting youth to make these changes could create safer communities with lower crime rates, and decreases in the costs associated with the legal process, and these savings can then be passed on to communities and to the taxpayer.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, my daughter Tamara, my granddaughter Victoria, and my grandson, Robert. Without their love, support, and most importantly, their belief in me, this would not have become a reality. They made sure I had time, space, and quiet in which to do the work that this required. For that, and so much more, I am grateful and blessed to have them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background of the Study

Studying juvenile delinquency is important from a number of perspectives. One is the cost to society of the criminal behavior, another is the difficulty of treating delinquent behavior, and then of course, there is the issue of safety in communities (Shaw, Hyde, & Brennan, 2012). Juvenile delinquency is defined by the government as the act of any person under 18 years old who violates United States laws that would have been defined as a crime if that person was an adult (Criminal Resource Manual 38, 1998). In other words, juvenile delinquency includes only those crimes that, if the youth were over 18 would be considered a criminal offense and therefore, prosecutable as an adult. This does not include status offenses that would be an offense only if the person was under 18 years old. The National Institute of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2014) cited five theoretical perspectives that predict offending: static theories, dynamic or life-course developmental models, social psychological theories, the developmental psycho-pathological perspective, and the bio-psychosocial perspective. Each of these theories were developed to explain the transition to criminal behavior in a different manner. The overall finding was that individuals who begin their criminal careers during childhood or adolescence may escalate, continue offending, and increase these criminal activities into very serious deviant behaviors, or the propensity for criminal involvement diminishes and the individual ceases these activities (National Institute of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014).

Until the 1700's, children were seen as non-persons (Rice, 1995). During the period known as "The Enlightenment" in the 18th century, toward the end of the 1700's, children began

to be perceived differently, as individuals who needed nurturing in order to thrive (Rice, 1995). This was referred to as the invention of childhood, and the belief that children needed love and nurturing developed in society in opposition to the idea that they needed constant discipline, which at that time was in the form of beatings and other harsh punishments (Rice, 1995). Delinquency had been an issue throughout known history, although not labeled as such, which was evidenced by the lack of treatment prior to The Enlightenment during which children as young as seven years old were tried, convicted, and punished as adults in Britain (Rice, 1995). As far back as the civilizations of ancient Sumeria and Hammurabi, juvenile crime was referred to and the first laws concerning juvenile offenders were put into written form (Rice, 1995).

Currently, statistics gathered in 2013 indicated that approximately 9.8% of homicides were committed by adolescents annually (Zagar, Grove, & Busch, 2013). In 2014, the number of homicides by juveniles had dropped to 7% (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2016). Other concerns for the nation included the increasing numbers of prisoners requiring incarceration, as well as parolees and probationers requiring supervision (Zagar, et al., 2013). At that time, the costs of incarcerated and supervised individuals, juveniles and adults, was approximately \$30 million annually, and then there is the issue of needing additional jails and prisons, as well as the maintenance of current facilities (Zagar et al., 2013).

Current Predictors of Juvenile Delinquency

There are numerous theories on the causes of juvenile delinquency. Family is considered to be the primary socialization institution for youth, and is therefore considered a principal predictor of delinquency (Gault-Sherman, 2012). An additional predictor of delinquency is the power of the link between peer delinquency and a child's propensity toward delinquent behavior,

which can be dependent on individual factors such as impulsivity (Vitulano, Fite, & Rathert, 2010a). Research has indicated that developmental periods are associated with the development of delinquent behaviors.

Developmental periods have been defined by various researchers, including Erik Erickson (Davis & Clifton, 1995) who explained development through a series of stages during which humans face different crises, such as trust versus mistrust for infants and identity versus identity diffusion for adolescents. Different definitions were provided by Piaget, who discussed genetic epistemology, the study of the development of knowledge (Boeree, 2006). Piaget introduced stages that included the sensorimotor stage of infancy and the formal operations stage of adolescence. Each stage included differing ways in which humans learn, through assimilation or adaptation. More recent research examined biological transformations in both cognitive and physical functioning that has the potential to impact socio-emotional functioning and present challenges to the ability for parents to cope with the child's newfound status as they move from one developmental phase to another (Shaw, Hyde, & Brenna, 2012). Steinberg (2007) posited that it was the temporal gap between puberty and adulthood that impels adolescents to thrill seek, and it was the slow maturation of the cognitive control system, responsible for regulating impulses, that caused this period to be a time of greater vulnerability toward risky behavior.

There has been a lack of data gathered on a national level which reports on rates of recidivism by juvenile delinquents. The reason for this deficiency is due to the inconsistencies between states in the juvenile justice systems (Office of Justice Programs, 2013). For example, states determine the ages under which juvenile courts have jurisdiction (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In North Carolina youth as young as 6 years old can be brought into juvenile court for

offenses, where Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, and Wisconsin place the youngest age at 10 years old. (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). In Alaska, Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, the oldest a youth can be presided over by juvenile court is 18 years old, where in California, Montana, Oregon, and Wisconsin it can be as old as 24 years, depending on the offense (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). These statistics represent only one area in which states differ in their treatment of juvenile offenders.

When specifically examining statistics from the year 2008 in New York State alone, findings demonstrated that 49% of those youth deemed to be juvenile delinquents or offenders were arrested at least once within a year of the first conviction, with 66% arrested again in the two years following the first conviction (Office of Children and Family Services, 2011). Research that has focused on services for juvenile offenders consider the significance of family and community to support behavioral change in delinquent or antisocial actions by youth (Caldwell & Van Rybroek, 2013; Contreras, Molina, & del Carmen Cano, 2011; Hannon & Defina, 2012; Rhoades, Chamberlain, Roberts, & Leve, 2013).

One study that reflected this included a group of adolescents from methamphetamine involved families who were surveyed regarding the identified supports in their lives, and grandparents were most frequently cited as a principal support after the youth's parents (Sheridan, Haight, & Cleeland, 2011). The same study found that the youth that identified having adult resources tested lower in the areas of social problems, externalizing, and aggression when the Child Behavior Check List scales were used (Sheridan, et al., 2011). Despite this example, the topic of grandparent/grandchild relationships not related to custodial issues or the impact of

grandparent as a resource for behavioral change has remained an understudied topic (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012).

Treatment and Discharge Planning

Treatment is a common and necessary component to address juvenile delinquency. A quantitative study by Stambaugh, Southerland, Mustillo, and Burns (2010) examined the delinquency correlates of 2,554 youth who presented for community care and indicated that stealing and vandalism are the most common offenses for both early and late adolescents, with early/middle adolescence defined as ages 11 to 15 and late adolescence defined as ages 16 to 18 years (Stambaugh, Southerland, Mustillo, & Burns, 2010). Interventions for these two groups have been found to differ in types and avenues, due to the difference in risk areas across stages (Stambaugh, et al., 2010). Wilson and Tully (2009) performed a literature review and found that there was a correlation between physical and mental health, as well as social, economic, and familial factors, concluding that each adolescent has unique and personal needs. This was a clear indicator that the need for each youth is that they have an individualized plan from day one of identification, and especially upon placement.

Social Supports

Martinez and Abrams (2013) examined 13 qualitative articles and dissertations using a metasynthesis methodology and concluded that informal supports, family, friends, neighborhood social networks, offer valuable benefits for juvenile offenders. Family support was identified as crucial to returning offenders in the form of material support, motivation, and emotional support, and this included extended family members (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). It is important to note,

however, that the potential for these relationships to create pressure and overwhelming expectations that can lead to a return to antisocial behaviors (Martinez & Abrams, 2013).

Grandparent Involvement and Support

Emotional involvement by grandparents has been shown to improve school engagement as well as pro-social behaviors in longitudinal studies (Yorgason, Padilla-Walker, & Jackson, 2011). This may be related to having frequent contact with an adult who is not a member of the immediate, or nuclear, family and therefore can assist in the development of important socio-emotional skills fundamental to pro-social development (Yorgason et al., 2011). At the very least, evidence exists that positive relationships with grandparents can have a helpful impact on grandchildren. Additional research on the impact of these family members for youth designated as juvenile delinquent or offender has the potential to be useful in treatment and discharge planning.

Background of the Problem

Existing literature which examined grandparents as guardians for children when parents were unable to fulfill this responsibility revealed that outcomes for these youth are poor (Bailey, Letiecq, & Porterfield, 2009; Park, 2009; Baker & Mutchler, 2010; Day & Bazemore, 2011). While custodial grandparents have exhibited a dedication to the well-being of their grandchildren, often providing support even when they receive no financial or social support, the evidence indicated that they reported decreased pleasure in life and greater rates of separation from friends (Williams, 2011; Backhouse & Graham, 2012).

A quantitative study that examined the efficacy of a family preservation program in a large metropolitan area of a large southern state found no correlation between the therapy and

other services provided to the family and success in the utilization of extended family as resources for change (Diamond, Morris, & Caudill, 2011). Another study by Calley (2012) indicated that there was no evidence that family involvement was instrumental in behavioral change or reduction of recidivism rates. One needs to note that the need for future research was expressed by both studies in the limitations section. Both studies expressed the need for further study on family support as a means of behavioral change (Diamond, et al., 2011; Calley, 2012).

Different findings suggested grandmothers who took on caregiving roles for grandchildren indicated that the intimacy of the relationship with the grandchild during their childhood related to increased life satisfaction for the grandmother (Goodman, 2012). If the relationship remained close into the teens and adulthood of the youth, the grandmother's mental well-being appeared to improve and behavioral change in grandchild(ren) who had displayed undesirable behaviors related to neglect from parents was promoted (Goodman, 2012). Substantial research around the grandparent-grandchild relationship has been done, but few of the studies adopted delinquency as a variable of the study (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, & Buchanan, 2009; Coall & Hertwig, 2011; Sawchuk & Crow, 2012).

The intent of this study is to begin to fill an existing gap in current research of the value in involving non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge plans to provide support to parents and youth in the process of changing behaviors that have led to, or even possibly will lead to, involvement with the juvenile justice system. Non-custodial grandparents could be prospective supports to both the youth and the parents, decreasing stress and providing alternatives to current efforts. High recidivism rates, as noted in New York State statistics, indicated that these efforts appear to have been ineffectual, creating concern for both families and

for community safety (Office of Justice Programs, 2013). If findings indicate that there is no value in this addition to treatment or discharge plans, there would still be of value by providing programs with this information and subsequently allow them to save time and effort when working to develop support systems. If value is found to exist in the addition of these family members as supports, the potential exists for decreasing both initial juvenile justice involvement and recidivism rates, creating positive social change in the arena of community safety.

Problem Statement

Current practice for behavioral change in treatment and discharge plans for youth involved in, or at-risk for involvement in, the juvenile justice system has been insufficient, as evidenced by the rates of recidivism among adolescents (Office of Children and Family Services, 2011). During development of treatment and discharge plans for youth, informal supports other than the nuclear family have rarely been included, and if they have, extended family sometimes could be excluded in favor of using more established sources such as services and community resources (Barth, Greeson, Zlotnik, & Chintapalli, 2011; Caldwell & Van Rybroek, 2013). Failing to include these supports has been a shortcoming in the planning process.

Supporting Research. Previous research has shown that for many youth, delinquent behaviors are a temporary phase and many youth will age out as they mature (Holman & Zeidenberg, 2010; Massoglia & Uggen, 2010). When the process of aging out is more difficult, evidence has demonstrated that the development of a relationship with a mentor has been of value, along with obtaining employment (Holman & Zeidenberg, 2010). Exposing youth to settings that mirror or are similar to jail and prison provides opportunities for learning additional negative actions, and have been found to be less effective than community and family-based

interventions in changing behaviors (Holman & Zeidenberg, 2010). Other studies have found that the programs that are effective in change are those that facilitate improvements in family functioning and create interventions in the youth's natural environment (Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Childs & Sullivan, 2013).

Numerous studies exist that have shown the necessity of including family and community in the process of behavioral change (Greenwood, 2008; Nellis, 2009; Holman & Zeidenberg, 2010; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011). Research specifically on the subject of nonresidential grandparents and the influence they had on grandchildren indicated that emotional involvement by grandparents was positively linked to both school engagement and prosocial behavior (Yorgason Padilla-Walker, & Jackson, 2011). Another study on involvement of grandparents and well-being of grandchildren revealed that youth who were close to their grandparents verbalized feeling more comfortable going to them when things were difficult or during a crisis, and that grandparents were extra supports when needed (Griggs, Tan, Buchanan, Attar-Schwartz, & Flouri, 2010a).

Current research showed, as in the studies discussed above, that the relationship between a grandparent and grandchild can have a positive impact and meaningful purpose for both parties. The gap that has remained was in knowledge regarding the use of these potential supports as a means of behavioral change for children already involved in the juvenile justice system. There are studies which refer to grandparent-grandchild relationships as associated with positive educational goal achievement and prosocial behavioral choices, however, little is known about the impact on outcomes when grandparents are intentionally included in treatment and discharge plans for youth designated as delinquent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study was to explore the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for adolescents designated by authority figures to be juvenile delinquents. The literature that exists provided examples of the research that has been done on grandparent/grandchild relationships, with specific focus on whether the relationship is a support, for both the youth and the parent(s).

Research paradigm. Grounded theory methodology seems most appropriate for this study because the use of this methodology makes it possible to study the action/process of including in treatment and discharge plans for juvenile offenders the non-custodial grandparents to determine if this particular support is of value. In the collection and analysis of the data, the study will be able to draw together the findings to explain whether value was found, as evidenced by decreases in antisocial or criminal behaviors and increases in prosocial activities by youth, as reported by the professionals working with the youth and family in the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care programs in place around the United States.

Research Questions

1. What is the value in the grandparent becoming a confidant and problem solver for the youth in an effort to avoid or decrease antisocial or criminal activities?
2. What action by the grandparent has the professional determined to provide the most support for parents?
3. In what way does the youth's perception of the grandparent affect their ability to be a positive resource?

Theoretical Framework

Social learning theory provided the background for this study. According to Bandura (1971), behaviors are learned through direct experience or the observation of others. Direct experience is influenced to a great extent by rewards and consequences, where observation, the more common way to learn behaviors, tends to teach by example (Bandura, 1971). Akers (1985) supported this contention in his theory on deviant behavior, stating that both deviant and conforming behaviors are learned but the substance and direction of the learning are different. Individuals who display deviant behavior, according to the theory, do so because they have learned to react to the environment and human behaviors in ways that are defined as deviant by others (Akers, 1985). He further posits that violent or very aggressive behaviors are learned, reinforced, and imitated when they observe others, often important others, as obtaining rewards from such behaviors (Akers, 1985). Additional detail as it relates to social learning theory and the role it plays in this grounded theory study will be presented in Chapter 2.

In this study on delinquency and use of non-custodial grandparents as supports, it was necessary to delineate those grandparents who had played a role in the teaching of behaviors, and what type of behaviors they modeled. Grandparents who model behaviors that support antisocial behaviors were clearly not appropriate as sources of support, and therefore, are excluded from the study. Since the research questions are focused on non-custodial grandparents as supports, it was necessary to utilize those grandparents who had demonstrated that they were able to model and teach appropriate and acceptable forms of behavior, as opposed to those who passed on behaviors that can be considered as antisocial or deviant, in direct opposition to the use of these individuals as supports for behavioral change. Supervision by a grandparent who models or teaches deviant

behaviors works against behavioral change and that was contradictory to them as supports for parents invested in helping their child to conform to appropriate and prosocial behaviors.

Conceptual Framework

In this study on the use of non-custodial grandparents as supports for juvenile offenders, social learning theory provided a background for the process of deviant behaviors already learned by the youth. This study looked at whether providing youth involved in the juvenile justice system with a specific support, the grandparent(s), would assist in the process of change from antisocial or criminal behaviors to more socially acceptable ones. As noted in the research questions, the information that was sought from professionals working with youth in the Treatment Foster Care (TFCO) programs was whether or not value in including these individuals in the treatment and discharge plans for these adolescents was found, and if it was, in what way did they provide the most support; was it by being a resource for the parent in providing supervision, or was being a confidant and mentor the most effective use of these individuals? Although looking at the data through the lens of social learning theory, it was necessary to understand that there was data that did not fit within this framework. Since a conceptual framework in a qualitative study provides an informational approach to social experience, it can be developed and structured through the activity of analysis (Jabareen, 2009).

This means that the data must be analyzed, utilizing a qualitative software package as well as hand coding, with the understanding that important information could be found that did not fit neatly with social learning theory but had value nonetheless. Chapter 2 provides a more concise analysis of the information already gathered around the subject of grandparent/grandchild

relationships, with references to grandparents as supports and a review of research which conflicts with the idea that these individuals play a role in the lives of their grandchildren.

Nature of the Study

This study used a qualitative grounded theory approach to obtain and analyze data as it related to the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for juvenile offenders. Utilizing this methodology provided not only structure on the process, but the opportunity to analyze the action/process of intentional inclusion of these individuals as supports in behavioral change. Purposeful sampling was used through the interview and survey processes with program supervisors and therapists in programs across the country using the Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) programs contracted through the Oregon Social Learning Center in Oregon, which developed and marketed this program. TFCO is based on social learning theory and works with youth deemed juvenile delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS) that require out of home placement (TFC Consultants, Inc., 2013). The program is used as an alternative to residential placement and is provided in specifically licensed and trained foster homes (TFC Consultants, Inc., 2013).

Qualitative studies are deductive in nature, and the use of grounded theory allows for an opportunity to build theory on the results of the data collection and analysis. A qualitative software program, NVivo 11, was used for analysis of data, as well as hand coding.

Definitions of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO): a program used in several countries, developed and marketed by the Oregon Social Learning Center, which works with youth designated by juvenile justice or family courts to be in need of placement away from home.

Value: Value is defined as actions which successfully promote behavioral change as indicated by successful promotion through the program to the point of graduation and reunification with family.

Juvenile Delinquents or Offenders or Persons In Need of Supervision: Juvenile delinquents or offenders or Persons In Need of Supervision was defined in this study as adolescents between 12 and 17 years of age who had been identified by the juvenile justice system as participating in actions which led to involvement by police, family court, or the Persons in Need of Supervision diversion or formal processes. Juvenile delinquency was defined by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (n.d.) as an act that, if committed by an adult, could be prosecuted in criminal court. Persons In Need of Supervision, or PINS, are defined by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (n.d.) as those acts that are considered to be illegal for underage persons but not for adults, i.e., truancy or curfew violation.

Non-Custodial Grandparents: For the purposes of this study, non-custodial grandparents were defined as grandparents not legally responsible for children who are included in the study. Non-custodial grandparents are defined in most, if not many, states as those that have no legal obligation or rights to interaction with the grandchild (McElroy, 2004).

Program Supervisors: Program supervisors are those individuals who are responsible for all aspects of the TFCO programs, from supervision of staff, assessment and intake of prospective clients, treatment and discharge planning, to hiring of staff and observing sessions between

family, client, and therapists as well as ongoing observation of data collection and a 24 hour on-call system (TFC Consultants, Inc., 2013).

Therapists: Therapists include both family and individual therapists who work with either (but never both) the family or the individual client. Family therapists work primarily on assisting the parent(s) to learn the model of reward and consequences; individual therapists work with the youth to provide them with both an advocate in the process and someone to work through any issues necessary that would aid in the process of behavioral change (TFC Consultants, Inc., 2013). Licensing requirements differ in different jurisdictions, so the requirements of the TFC Consultants, Inc. for the TFCO programs does not require specific education levels for TFCO staff, but the county or state that oversees the agency usually sets the requirements, (G. Bouwman, personal communication, August 11, 2014). According to G. Bouwman, the President of TFC Consultants, Inc., part of the oversight and marketing agency which developed, marketed, and certifies the TFCO programs worldwide, the criteria for the different roles within an TFCO program are that the program supervisor is a Masters level clinician with several years of experience. This individual must be the most senior clinician on the team. The two therapists must also be Masters level, but can be early in their career.

Assumptions

1. The information gathered in this qualitative study was accurate and current.
2. The program supervisors and therapists participating in this study provided accurate information honestly, without reservation, and within the scope of their experience.

Given the use of third parties as a means of gathering data on a protected population, it is necessary to make assumptions about the efficacy and trustworthiness of the information provided.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, the relationship with a non-custodial grandparent was explored to determine if these relationships had value in helping grandchildren with behavioral problems make changes toward more socially acceptable actions. Juvenile offenders were chosen for this study because it is this segment of the juvenile population that has demonstrated the need for support and assistance beyond the normal nuclear family dynamic in order to make the necessary changes to become happy, functioning members of society. Non-custodial grandparents were chosen to provide the support because family supports have demonstrated the most efficacy in promoting behavioral change, as indicated by the Program Supervisors and Individual and Family Therapists in the Treatment Foster Care Oregon program.

Youth of both genders between the ages of 12 and 17 were the focus of the population because it is these adolescents who are eligible for admission to the Treatment Foster Care (TFCO) program. Use of the TFCO programs was due to the convenience and time management advantages that existed. Issues of researcher bias and efforts to address these issues were focused on in the next section. Youth with no living grandparents were excluded from this study because there was no need for a comparison group in this particular research. Further studies on the use of other non-professional supports would be advantageous, and can be addressed in later research. In this study, the interactions which take place between researcher and subjects was limited to

professionals and not clients, therefore, transferability was addressed by a lack of involvement with clients.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Data collection was limited to a specific program (TFCO), albeit one which is contracted by different agencies in different states with different regulations regarding treatment and discharge planning. It was limited to a specific evidence-based model, one which was developed with social learning theory as the framework. Data was collected from professionals who worked with the youth and their families, as opposed to collecting data directly from the clientele. Additionally, I was the Program Supervisor of a TFCO program at a local child and family services agency for two periods of time, being the first supervisor to bring the program to the Capital District in Upstate New York. This bias was addressed by my having the transcripts of the interviews professionally typed, allowing me to assure the answers were those of the interviewee, and not my own interpretation.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was in the exploration of the potential value in utilizing non-custodial grandparents in the process of decreasing antisocial behaviors among identified juvenile delinquents and offenders. Supports for the juvenile offender that are not professional have been limited in the past, and non-custodial grandparents could be prospective supports to both the youth and the parents, decreasing stress and providing alternatives to current efforts. High recidivism rates as noted in New York State statistics suggest that these efforts appear to have been ineffectual, creating concern for families as well as for community safety (Office of Justice Programs, 2013). The potential for findings to indicate that there is no value in this

addition to treatment or discharge plans was considered, and found that there would still value in the study by providing programs with this information and subsequently allow them to save time and effort when working to develop support systems. If there the value exists in the addition of these family members as supports, the potential for decreasing initial juvenile justice involvement and recidivism rates would be helpful.

Discovering ways to add supports and enhance behavioral change could assist in decreasing juvenile crime and promote contributing adults to the greater society population. Families who do not have to continuously deal with the issues related to youth who exhibit antisocial behaviors would be less stressed and more functional in their communities. The costs of juvenile detention, supervision, and courts could be decreased in these communities. Finally, this would aid in creating positive social change in the arena of community safety, an area which impacts all of our communities.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided a background on issues involved in juvenile delinquency in the United States. It addressed the gap involved in providing youth with non-professional supports in treatment and discharge planning. The purpose of the study was discussed, as well as the research questions to be explored in the execution of the study. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks were explained, and the nature of the study was described. Definitions of terms was provided, and the assumptions inherent in the design were identified. Chapter 1 also discusses the scope and delimitations involved, the limitations of the study, and the significance of performing the research.

Chapter 2 examined the current literature on juvenile delinquency, focusing on family involvement and the process of treatment and discharge planning. Evidence-based programming was explored to establish whether the structure utilized exhibited efficacy in programming. A qualitative perspective was used to understand the life experiences of sample participants as they work with the youth in the TFCO programs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

Juvenile delinquency has been widely studied, and the causes of this deviation from accepted behavioral norms has been attributed to a number of factors (Vitulano, Fite, & Rathert, 2010b; Rees & Pogarsky, 2011a; Turner & Macdonald, 2011 Henggeler & Sheidow, 2012). Treatment and discharge planning for these youth has not led to successful outcomes historically, and the process of adding in supports to help adolescents make behavioral changes remains a difficult and tricky process (Nellis, 2009; Ramchand, Morral, & Becker, 2009) . The purpose of this study was to explore whether including non-custodial grandparents in planning could be an effective means of providing youth with support persons that they will turn to when making choices about their actions.

In researching the literature for this study, the most evident issues that were found were that grandparent/grandchild relationships have not been examined in the context of the issue of grandchild delinquent behavior and grandparent support for behavioral change. I utilized Academic Search Complete, Proquest Central, and Google Scholar, as well as websites for Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO), to find information related to these topics. Using the website for TFCO led to articles that I was able to confirm came from scholarly journals. The other three databases contain access to multiple databases that provide articles that are peer reviewed.

The intent of the literature review was twofold: to confirm that there was a gap in the literature regarding whether value existed in the use of noncustodial grandparents as resources for

behavioral change in juveniles, and to review and analyze the research on the subject. The literature review was instrumental in the development of interview questions.

This chapter was divided into several sections. The literature search strategy showed the terminology used to find information, the theoretical foundation of social learning theory, along with the major propositions of the theory, and the framework of grounded theory, along with the reason for the use of this framework. Those terms that have * at the end of a portion of the word indicated a search strategy that allows the researcher to put in part of a word and the library searched based on the different possible endings, i.e., delinquen* to indicate delinquency, delinquent, delinquents, as search terms. A comprehensive literature review and synthesis have been provided.

Literary Search Strategy

Conducting the literature search for this study, the researcher used the following databases in the Walden library:

- Academic Search Complete
- ProQuest Central
- Google Scholar.
- In addition, sources outside of the library were used that utilized specifically had scholarly journal resources.
- Governmental websites

Search terms included the following:

- placement
- foster care

- evidence-based programs
- delinquency
- youth
- adolescent
- teen
- parents
- bonding
- attachment
- household
- relationships
- grandparents
- grandchildren
- mentor programs
- non-relative relationships
- grandparent*
- household
- delinquent*
- services
- support
- program

For the purposes of theory, the following terms were used:

- grounded theory

- social learning theory
- labeling

In both ProQuest Central and Academic Search Complete, the terms bonding or attachment and parent were searched, delinquency was added and a further search performed. In Google Scholar, evidence-based, program, grandparent, support, change, and behavior* were used to find additional information on the nationwide dissemination of these programs, and material on predictors of use of evidence-based programs and barriers to use of these programs. Grandparent, change, and support were additional terms utilized in the Google Scholar database. The use of governmental databases was confined to statistics and numbers as support to the need for additional research and on how the numbers collected or missing were identified. Outside sources of websites for evidence-based programming included publications which were verified by the journals in which these studies were published; inclusion was only done if they were scholarly journals that could be confirmed as such.

Theoretical Foundation

For the purpose of this study, social learning theory was the foundation, while grounded theory was the framework in which the data gathered and analyzed provided an opportunity for the development of new theory regarding supports for juvenile delinquents. Social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura (1971) and discusses the various ways that behavior is learned. Social learning theory suggests that behavior is obtained in different manners, such as being learned through the observation and imitation of significant others (Bandura, 1971). Behavior can also be learned by direct experience, which is most highly influenced by either the reward or punishment the behavior afforded (Bandura, 1971). In either type of learning, the

perception of reward or gain, what the individual gets from the behavior learned or what they lose by exhibiting the behavior, plays a role in whether the behavior is repeated, and when learned through observation, imitated (Bandura, 1971).

Ronald L Akers (1985) examined deviant behavior according to a social learning perspective, based on the differential association theory of Edwin H. Sutherland, with some modifications of his concepts. Akers (1985) concurred with Bandura's (1971) concepts that behavior is learned through either instrumental or operant conditioning, where instrumental conditioning is the process of reinforcement or punishment of a behavior, and operant conditioning, the process of learning and reinforcement of that which is learned (Akers, 1985). Both researchers discussed the use of negative or deviant behaviors to obtain desired responses when other actions have been unsuccessful (Bandura, 1971; Akers 1985).

Major propositions of social learning theory. Bandura (1971) discussed various types of reinforcement of learned behavior in social learning theory. Informative reinforcement bases learning on both observation of behavior and on the consequences of the action, leading to decision making about what type of behavior would be successful to meet their ends. Motivational reinforcement bases decision making about actions on what the perceived outcome would be according to prior experiences; and cognitive mediation posits that decisions are made according to the value placed on the outcome the response elicits.

Akers and Burgess (1985) took Sutherland and Cressey's (as cited by Akers, 1971) nine statements on differential association theory and modified them to seven they believed to be more consistent with the principles of modern behavior. These became:

1. Deviant behavior is learned according to the principals of operant conditioning.

2. Deviant behavior is learned both in nonsocial situations that are reinforcing or discriminating and through that social interaction in which the behavior of other persons is reinforcing or discriminating for such behavior.
3. The principal part of the learning of deviant behavior occurs in those groups which comprise or control the individual's major source of reinforcements.
4. The learning of deviant behavior, including specific techniques, attitudes, and avoidance procedures, is a function of the effective and available reinforcers and the existing reinforcement contingencies.
5. The specific class of behavior learned, and its frequency of occurrence are a function of the effective and available reinforcers, and the deviant or non-deviant direction of the norms, rules, and definitions which in the past have accompanied the reinforcement.
6. The probability that a person will commit deviant behavior is increased in the presence of normative statements, definitions, and verbalizations, which, in the process of differential reinforcement of such behavior over conforming behavior, have acquired discriminative value.
7. The strength of deviant behavior is a direct function of the amount, frequency, and probability of its reinforcement. The modalities of association with deviant patterns are important insofar as they affect the source, amount, and scheduling of reinforcement. (Akers, 1971, p.41).

The use of social learning theory as a basis for this study related directly to the concept that if behaviors are learned, and deviance is a behavior and can thus be reinforced in the same

way as any other behavior, then the use of appropriate supports may help to change the youth's trajectory toward more acceptable choices and actions.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a research approach which uses a systematic process to build theory through data collection and analysis (Engward, 2013). Barney G. Glaser (1998) formulated grounded theory in 1967 while writing a book on the topic of awareness of dying. It is a cohesive set of conceptual hypotheses, rather than findings (Glaser, 1998). It is through the process of constant coding and analyzing of data, modifying as one progresses while being completely honest about the findings in order to not misrepresent them is of supreme importance (Glaser, 1998). Through an inductive approach, which is one where conclusions are based upon the facts gathered by the research, the research allows for the building of theory, as stated above (Engward, 2013).

Literature and Research Based Analysis

Social learning theory is the model which guides Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO, 2014). The model maintains that it is the daily interactions between family members which influence and shape prosocial and antisocial patterns of behavior, guiding these behaviors to occur outside the family as well (Treatment Foster Care of Oregon, 2014). Reinforcement of behaviors which are negative by parents, as well as responses to the coercive tactics learned, creates and supports the behaviors considered antisocial and creates risk for the child to develop in the behaviors considered delinquent (Treatment Foster Care Oregon, 2014). A guiding central principle of the use of social learning theory in the program is that intervention development is advised by empirically grounded theory (Leve, Fisher, & Chamberlain, 2009). Of importance

was that the use of social learning theory as a framework along with the use of grounded theory to develop new concepts and theories allowed this research to break new ground in the concept of supports for juveniles. This study was intended to be the beginning of further in-depth explorations of supports which help to change behaviors for youth away from delinquency and antisocial actions.

Alignment of research questions. Social learning theory posits that learning is obtained from important others (Bandura, 1971). Therefore, the question of value in grandparents becoming confidants and problem solvers for youth asks if this action would help youth to learn from these important others different ways to make choices about activities and actions which are socially acceptable rather than deviant behaviors (Bandura, 1971). Provision of supports to parents will be answered as to whether the grandparents were a helpful resource or if they got in the way of what the parents are trying to teach their children. Also addressed was whether they provided a support which helped to reduce the stress of parenting. Using a grounded theory method, the data analysis would help to answer the question of whether the youth's perception of their grandparents predicts the ability of the youth to use them as a positive resource, since this was not an area found in current research with delinquency as a variable. Answering this research question could add to the current research on grandparent/grandchild relationships.

Literature Review

Predictors of Delinquent Behaviors

Peer relationships are an area which have been identified as a predictor for participation in antisocial behaviors, leading to designation of youth as delinquent. One quantitative study, which utilized secondary data from The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and

identified 6,927 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years old, examined variables that compared the influence of the best friend against the remaining group of friends (Rees & Pogarsky, 2011b). Findings of the study indicated that the larger the group of friends, the less influence the best friend had, especially when the behavior of the best friend varied from that of the larger group (Rees & Pogarsky, 2011b). Alternatively, McGloin's (2009) quantitative study which used data from the same larger national study and a sample of 2,728 participants from the original research, posited that adolescents were more likely to change their behaviors toward or away from delinquency in reaction to the behaviors and actions of the best friend.

When the impact of peer relationships was considered, research reported that factors existed beyond the relationship that impacted the youth's potential to engage in antisocial behaviors. One study which surveyed 89 youth between the ages of 9 and 12 to identify the link between impulsivity and delinquency found that those children who had higher levels of impulsivity were less influenced by delinquent peers than those with lower levels of impulsivity (Vitulano, Fite, & Rathert, 2010). Youth with greater self-control were found to be less susceptible to the effect of friends behaviors by research which used the Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development performed by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development using items from the Child Behavior Checklist (Meldrum, Miller, & Flexon, 2013). Another consideration found was that of unstructured time spent with peers, how youth spent their time with friends had an impact on delinquency, both pro- and anti-social (McGloin, 2012).

The act of involving youth in the juvenile justice process, labeling them as delinquent, has the potential to be in itself a precursor to further delinquent behaviors (Henggelaer & Schoenwald, 2011). In a study which contrasted programs that demonstrate efficacy in providing

juvenile justice interventions with those that have not, one finding across the effective programs was that youth who were diverted to community programs demonstrated fewer ongoing delinquent actions than those who were processed within the system (Henggelaer & Schoenwald, 2011). However, as stated by Christopher Slobogin (2011) in his commentary on the article discussing evidence-based interventions written by Henggelaer and Schoenwald (2011), there are at least two reasons that the use of community based interventions has been resisted by policy-makers and the legal system: they did not represent a punishment-oriented disposition, and they allowed the youth who committed the offense to be in the community where they could represent at least the appearance of risk to community safety.

When community-based interventions were not determined to be the appropriate course of action, the use of evidence-based programming showed higher efficacy than the prior mentioned treatment-as-usual formats. Many youth have begun the placement process in foster care, where a lack of understanding of the complicated, multi-faceted needs of youth and their families or caregivers led to multiple, and at times, increasingly restrictive, placements for the child (Turner & Macdonald, 2011). Placement in evidence-based foster care programming has demonstrated the advantage of placing youth in homes where foster parents were specially trained to work with the population, received additional support compared to other foster care programs, and the biological or family of origin were included in the treatment process to learn the skills and actions necessary to support and maintain behavioral change (Henggeler & Sheidow, 2012).

It has become clear that the causes of delinquency are varied; when reviewing the literature, predictors of delinquency have been attributed to many factors beyond that of peer influence, including poverty, neglect, abuse, neighborhood influence, socio-economic status,

labeling, and learned behaviors (Murray & Farrington, 2010; Stambaugh, Southerland, Mustillo, & Burns 2010; Henggelaer & Schoenwald, 2011). As important as it is to address the issues that lead to youth participating in antisocial behaviors, the mere statistics, the numbers, of youth already involved in the juvenile justice system demonstrated the need to find ways to incorporate supports into the lives of these children so that they are able to change these behaviors and lead full, productive, and satisfying lives. This study explores one specific source of support, the use on non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for juvenile delinquent identified youth.

Treatment and Discharge Planning

Treatment and discharge planning for youth in any type of juvenile justice-related level of care is a complex process. Youth are often discharged back into families where abuse, domestic violence, untreated mental health issues, poverty, and drug use are the norm (Nellis, 2009). Research on adolescents discharged from residential programs indicated a need to address family issues and provide interventions for these clients to be able to succeed in academic, family, and behavioral goals (Trout et al., 2010). In an examination of youth seven years after adjudication and placement in group home settings in Los Angeles, researchers found that the outcomes were bleak, with most of the sample continuing to participate in criminal activity, three percent of the sample population had died between ages 15 and 22, and almost half having been incarcerated prior to the assessment at the 87 month post-placement mark (Ramchand et al., 2009). The settings in which these youth were placed included a variety of services, including schooling, family therapy, vocational counseling, and substance abuse education or treatment (Ramchand et al., 2009).

Programming which contains components to address family-related issues and relationships have shown more efficacy than the “treatment as usual” approach, which in and of itself, is difficult to assess because of the limited information available on what type of treatment is included in it, in other words, what “treatment as usual” actually means (Garland, Bickman, & Chorpita, 2010). Research that studied the impact of additional training and consultation for program supervisors and treatment foster parents found that those who were in the group that received these additional services showed more success in outcomes than the control group that did not receive these services (Farmer, Burns, Wagner, Murray, & Southerland, 2010). A public health model of prevention presented by Jeffrey M. Jensen (2010) reported that key protective traits such as supportive adult mentors were lacking in the lives of at-risk children.

The purpose of discussing the additional supports in programs which demonstrated increased efficacy was to show that when these supports were added, there was greater success for the youth involved. Making the short leap to the idea that adding increased supports outside of programming and in the youth’s daily life has the potential to assist the child in making and maintaining behavioral change in their daily lives is reasonable. Support for this idea is provided by the research conducted on mentor programs and the effectiveness demonstrated by that addition to the lives of young people (Kolar & McBride, 2011; Haddad, Chen, & Greenberger, 2011; Johnson, Pryce, & Martinovich, 2011; Gordon, Downey, & Bangert, 2013). The additional step that this study addresses was whether the use of non-custodial grandparents are of value or not.

Family Supports

Most treatment planning, including the aforementioned and difficult to define treatment-as-usual, includes family in some manner in the process. What the involvement may be varies according to the type of treatment focus. Several studies over the last decade and a half have suggested that there is no real definition of treatment-as-usual, making it difficult to determine what services, therapeutic frameworks, and interventions are utilized and to what extent they have been effective (Chamberlain & Rosicky, 1995; Santa Ana et al., 2008; Farmer et al., 2010).

Parent/child relationships. Research has shown that when youth have strong bonds to parents, other factors such as high crime or gang-involved neighborhoods can be mitigated by these relationships (Tiet, Huizinga, & Byrnes, 2010). A correlation between a strong bond and increased ease in parental supervision has also been found (Childs, Sullivan, & Gullledge, 2011). Poor bond with parents was been found to be related to increased delinquency in youth (Hoeve et al., 2012). Behaviors by the youth, such as lying, sneaking out, concealing where they go, can negatively impact the relationship between youth and parent, which in turn can increase delinquent behaviors (Warr, 2007).

Grandparent/grandchild relationships. Much of the current literature on the relationship between grandparent and grandchild was found to be focused on custodial grandparents who step in to provide homes for grandchildren when parents are unavailable to meet this responsibility for differing reasons, including incarceration, mental health issues, and substance abuse. Of interest was that the outcomes for both youth and grandparent in these situations has been found to be poor, due to a variety of causes including stress, poor coping skills, financial strain, and isolation

from supportive peers for the grandparents (Bailey, Letiecq, & Porterfield, 2009; Day & Bazemore, 2011; Williams, 2011; Backhouse & Graham, 2012; Van Etten & Gautam, 2012).

Predictors of close relationships between a grandparent and grandchild have been found to be impacted by parental perception of the quality of grand parenting, although the father's perception of quality was not found to be significant during adolescence (Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013). Influence on parental behaviors through advice and emotional support to parents, support of norms, and assistance with supervisory tasks all demonstrated the ability to assist in positive behaviors by the youth (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012). The main findings of one study indicated that increased involvement by grandparent's was associated with decreased emotional problems among youth, as well as additional prosocial behaviors in the entire sample used, although there were differences in the area of reduced adjustment difficulties for those youth from single or step-families than from two parent families (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, Buchanan, Flouri, & Griggs, 2009). The study utilized a sample of adolescents which represented equal percentages of males and females, family composition (intact, stepfamilies, and single parent families), other family compositions such as living with a grandparent, older sibling, or another relative, and broadly represented age, ethnic origin, and socio-economic background (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, & Buchanan, 2009).

Research on non-custodial grandparent/grandchild relationships focuses primarily on the relationship, and less on the use of the grandparent as resources for change. Findings have indicated that these relationships have value for the youth according to information obtained through interviews with the adolescents in the study, especially when the parent/grandparent relationship was positive (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, & Buchanan, 2009). However, other research

indicated a null relationship between grandparent/grandchild relationships and youth well-being, indicating that these supports did not impact functioning in an optimistic manner, and one study found evidence that a close relationship with a grandparent led to lower grades in school (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012). It is important to note that the researchers of this study state that too much should not be made of this finding since only one participant, making up 8% of the sample population, led to this finding (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012).

It is important to note that these relationships do not develop in isolation but rather are connected as part of the social matrix of the family (Mueller & Elder, 2003). To take this point further, grandparent/grandchild relationships are as complex as any other type of relationship, and can range from detached to ambivalent to close, with one study reporting that the more support provided by the grandparent, the more ambivalent the relationship tended to be, due to issues of perceived constraints on objectives of autonomy by the grandchild (Michels, Albert, & Ferring, 2011). Cultural messages, as well as meanings and contexts along both cultural and gendered factors, influenced how members of the family learned about rules and expectations in family and society (Stelle, Fruhauf, Orel, & Landry-Meyer, 2010).

Synthesizing Perspectives in the Literature

Many of the studies on grandparent/grandchild relationships are quantitative or mixed methods studies, examining data from a statistical perspective, with some use of case study or interviews to support the statistics obtained. The qualitative studies that exist on these relationships use a variety of methodology. Cross-sectional studies, such as the one performed by Griggs, Buchanan, Attar-Schwartz, & Flouri (2010), indicated that the difficulty with the findings was in the directions of associations between variables. The study evaluated these variables from

the perspective of the youth, through surveys of 1,569 young people and also in-depth interviews of 40 of these children. Findings supported the concept that involvement by grandparents promoted the well-being of the children, through participation with them in developing pro-social hobbies, involvement in educational settings with decreased incidents of difficulties in these venues, fewer peer problems, less emotional problems, and the resource of someone to discuss the youth's future plans.

A quantitative study by Hakoyama & Malonbeach (2013) examined relationships between grandparents and grandchildren from an ecological perspective. Demographic, personal, and environmental factors were considered as they relate to the closeness of these relationships, and a retrospective examination of three stages, childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, was performed. Findings indicated support for the author's hypothesis regarding a pattern related to the above mentioned variables. Reports by young adults between ages 18 and 27 found that being close with a grandparent decreased as the youth aged from childhood to young adulthood. Factors such as the parent's perception of grandparenting quality (mother's perception being more influential than the perceptions of the father), personality match between grandchild/grandparent, and the education level of the grandparent were closely associated with the closeness between grandparent and grandchild.

Breheeny, Stephens, & Spilsbury (2013) performed a qualitative study which used secondary data from a longitudinal mixed methods project. The purpose of the study was to analyze how grandparents described the experience of grandparenthood, in an effort to divulge the greater social foundation of personal relationships. Discourse analysis was used to analyze interview transcripts. The analysis centered on how grandparents in general described the

experience of grandparenthood, with the purpose of identifying patterns on how these individuals conveyed their conduct, as well as how they judged the conduct of others. Grandparents in this study were not identified by any specific variables concerning their grandchildren, such as involvement in juvenile justice programs.

The research studies reviewed explored the importance of the grandparent/grandchild relationship, with each study defining various components involved in the meaning of support to the subjects who participated (Griggs, Tan, Buchanan, Attar-Schwartz, & Flouri, 2010; Breheny, Stephens, & Spilsbury, 2013; Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013). Perspectives of the grandchildren provided information on the manner in which the relationships changed as the grandchild ages and the ways in which grandchildren see the grandparent as supports (Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013). Grandparents were asked to provide information on how they comprehend these relationships and what their role in them is, with a focus on how they support grandchildren without interfering in the parenting of these children (Breheny, Stephens, & Spilsbury, 2013). An ecological perspective was utilized in one study to examine patterns within the relationships, with a focus on how the issue of closeness changes as the grandchild ages to young adulthood (Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013).

In a study on the use or value of non-custodial grandparents in supporting behavioral change in youth identified as juvenile delinquents or offenders, the concepts of closeness and support that the grandparent could provide was significant to determining if these relationships are able to be useful in the process of change. Each of these studies indicated that the relationships between grandparent and grandchild had merit in providing support, companionship, and usefulness as confidants and problem solvers (Griggs, Tan, Buchanan, Attar-Schwartz, &

Flouri, 2010; Breheny, Stephens, & Spilsbury, 2013; Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013).

Additionally, the joy that these relationships gave to grandparents demonstrated reasoning for the commitment that they made to the well-being of the youth (Breheny, Stephens, & Spilsbury, 2013). Involvement in important aspects of the grandchild's life such as educational and recreational arena's allowed the grandparent to provide the youth with a resource and support that may have been lacking with parents in two parent working households, single parent households, and step parent households (Griggs, Tan, Buchanan, Attar-Schwartz, & Flouri, 2010).

One area that has been determined to be of importance to the relationship between grandparent and grandchild is the perspective of the parents, particularly the mother (Griggs et al., 2010b). The view point of the parents has the ability to influence the amount of contact between child and grandparent, thus impacting the ability of the relationship to provide support to the youth (Griggs, Tan, Buchanan, Attar-Schwartz, & Flouri, 2010). Other issues involved in the level of support provided by grandparents include the economic status of the grandparent, education level of the grandparent, and the personality match between grandparent and grandchild (Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013). Contact frequency and the health of the grandparent were found to be outcomes of closeness rather than predictors of the closeness of the relationship (Hakoyama & MaloneBeach, 2013). Frequency could be related back to the perspective of the parent, where health issues could impact the ability of the grandparent to be a resource for the youth.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature found in the research of current literature conducted by this writer provided support for the importance of the grandparent/grandchild relationship, although there are a few

studies which indicate findings in opposition to this concept. One area of importance discovered in the research was that the relationship between parent and grandparent had the ability to determine whether the grandparent and grandchild have the opportunity to be close. Other findings demonstrated the difficulties for custodial grandparents, and the ways in which this dedication and responsibility can lead to poor outcomes for both grandparent and grandchild. Given that the findings are primarily in favor of the usefulness of the grandparent/grandchild relationship, there was support for new research which explores the value of these relationships in promoting behavioral change for youth deemed to be delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS).

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for adolescents who had been designated by authority figures such as family court or criminal court to be juvenile delinquents. Grounded theory was used as the methodology. The chapter includes a restatement of the research questions, definitions of the central concepts of the study, identification of the research tradition and the rationale for that choice.

The role of the researcher in the study was discussed, with definitions and explanations of my role, which is that of observer from a distance. I was the original program supervisor who brought the Treatment Foster Care Oregon program to the Capital District of Upstate New York, so I have a professional relationship with the administrators of the TFC, Inc., who developed, markets, and provides supervision and certification of these programs around the world. The plan was for the administrators to introduce me to program supervisors around the United States to solicit participation in the study. Participation was completely up to these program supervisors and their staff, administration from the TFC, Inc. will not pressure any one to participate. I had no supervisory or instructor relationships involving power over the participants. As a former Program Supervisor of a Treatment Foster Care of Oregon program, there was the potential for bias because of both familiarity with the model, and experience in working with these youths. This potential bias was addressed through the use of a transcription program that transcribed each interview word for word.

Research Questions

1. What is the value in the grandparent becoming a confidant and problem solver for the youth in an effort to avoid or decrease antisocial or criminal activities?
2. What action by the grandparent has the professional determined to provide the most support for parents?
3. In what way does the youth's perception of the grandparent affect their ability to be a positive resource?

Major sections of the chapter. In this chapter, the research questions are restated, the central concepts are reviewed, and the research tradition discussed. Researcher role, along with any bias and ethical issues, was reviewed. Methodology, including sampling procedures, recruitment, and data collection were explained. Data analysis, ethical procedures, and trustworthiness were explained. A summary of all components are provided at the end of the chapter.

Central Concepts

For the purposes of this study, the central and primary concept was that youth identified by the juvenile justice system as delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision need additional supports to be successful in changing the behavioral trajectory in the direction of more socially acceptable actions and activities. A second concept was that familial resources may be of use in the process. Finally, the third concept was that non-custodial grandparents may be a valuable resource because of their relationship to the youth.

Research tradition. Qualitative methodology has been the research tradition used for this study. Qualitative research explores the life experiences of the sample population, with the intent of studying these experiences and developing conclusions about the concepts under study. The

use of qualitative methodology goes beyond the scientific endeavor to find truth, and incorporates an aesthetic and ethical purpose in the research (Holloway & Todres, 2007). Grounded theory was the design utilized to build theory on whether the use of non-custodial grandparents would be of value in the process of changing antisocial or criminal behaviors toward more socially acceptable behaviors. Social learning theory provided a basis regarding the manner in which behaviors are incorporated into the youth's activities and actions, and is the foundation upon which grounded theory was used to develop assumptions and conclusions regarding the value of use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for youth identified as juvenile delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision.

The Role of the Researcher

The role of researcher in this study was one of observer, albeit from a distance. Data was collected from Program Supervisors, Individual and Family Therapists in various Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) programs across the United States through interviews via phone. As a former Program Supervisor of one of these programs, I have a professional relationship with the administrators of the TFC, Inc., which developed, markets, supervises, and certifies these programs for agencies that contract with the center. Because of this professional relationship, these administrators agreed to provide contact information and introductions via phone or email to Program Supervisors in the United States per my request, allowing me to solicit my sample from different types of geographic constituencies; from rural, urban, and suburban areas. In this manner, I was able to obtain a sample population which provided services to juvenile delinquent or Person In Need of Supervision that was diversified.

I have no personal relationships with any of the sample participants with no issues of power related to the interactions. Research bias would be based on my own experience as a former Program Supervisor, and was addressed, as previously mentioned, by having all interviews transcribed word for word, thus avoiding misinterpretation. Since all information was collected directly from program staff via phone and included no identifying information on the subjects, there was no need for concerns around a protected population.

Methodology

Study participants were solicited through introductions by the TFC, Inc. Youth and families were not the identified participants of the study. To obtain the necessary data to answer the research questions being asked, Program Supervisors, Individual and Family Therapists were the research participants in this study.

Program Supervisors, Individual or Family Therapists were interviewed in the data collection, by phone. All staff members involved in the services of the Treatment Foster Care Oregon program provided data on relationships and familial closeness. Due to transcription, second interviews were unnecessary.

The plan was to identify between 10 and 20 Program Supervisors willing to participate in the study. However, only two programs agreed to participate. Each program works with 10 to 12 youth at a time. Since the criteria for inclusion in the study as it applied to the youth was that they have at least one living non-custodial grandparent that could be, or has been, a resource and support for the youth, the number of programs and supervisors used was based on the need to collect sufficient data to be able to develop theory about the value of these relationships. Programs were asked to include only those youths who are between 12 and 17 years of age with

at least one living non-custodial grandparent. Grandparents must not have any type of custodial relationship to the youth, formal or informal. Providing supervision for the youth is acceptable.

Using programs from different geographic areas and varied geographic types (rural, urban, or suburban), the expectation was that the youth population would be of differing genders, ethnicities, and family compositions. This provided the opportunity for data that met both diversity considerations as well as saturation as they relate to the concepts.

Instrumentation. In the interviews with Program Supervisors, a standardized, open-ended approach was used. No current instruments met this study's need, so interview questions were developed by this researcher. Interviews will be conducted via phone. Had the program been located within driving distance of 100 miles or less, I intended to do the interview in person. Unfortunately, both programs were in other states nowhere near this researcher's home. No identifying information was requested of any professional regarding the youth and their families.

Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) was recruited until they had no further programs that had been in place long enough to provide saturation of data. All data was collected by this researcher. Data was recorded on a digital recorder and uploaded to TranscribeMe.

Research participants did not require any exit procedures, because the professionals involved in these programs were used. Any questions they had about the study or use of information was provided during the interview process. A synopsis of the study will be sent to the programs once the study is approved.

Data Analysis Plan. Instrumentation was developed to connect instrument questions to specific research questions. Both hand coding and software analysis was used to find themes as they relate to these questions. NVivo 11 is the software program that was identified to perform

the analysis. Deviant cases, where the information obtained does not appear to align with the majority of the data from other cases was intended to be further analyzed to identify the causes or reasons these cases are different. However, this was not necessary due to no information that did not align with other data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Through this method of recruitment, adequacy and appropriateness of the data was met, and the use of transcription was used to assure that this researchers interpretations were correct. Triangulation was used by interviews of the individual and family therapists to determine if their perspectives of the usefulness of non-custodial grandparents aligned with those of the program supervisors.

Transferability was addressed by the use of program supervisors, individual therapists, and family therapists in an effort to determine themes which appeared in the cases discussed. Dependability was also met through the use of program supervisors, individual therapists, and family therapists to cross check information provided. Confirmability will be addressed through the use of researcher self-reflection. Journaling documented researcher self-reflection, and any issues that came about in this process has been documented in the limitations section of the final research study.

Ethical Concerns

Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO), which developed, markets, and certifies TFCO programs, agreed to provide this researcher with introductions to Program Supervisors within the United States for the purpose of data collection. Upon these introductions, any confidentiality agreements required by these various agencies were signed by the researcher and copies were

included in the IRB application. In addition, this researcher did not ask for identifying information from participants on the cases discussed. No cases were solicited for participation and there was no need for interventions with cases since the study was based on the perceptions of the professional participants.

Data has been password protected on the researcher's computer, hard copies of any documents was, and still is, kept in a locked file cabinet. The flash drive related to the data analysis was and is also kept in the locked file cabinet. Only this researcher has access.

The primary ethical issue in this study was researcher bias, since this researcher has been program supervisor for TFCO on two occasions in the past. Given the focused and limited information being collected on cases, the youth and families involved in the various programs participating were protected by anonymity. All staff of each program were asked not to use names or other identifying information on the youth,

Summary

Chapter 3 provides information on the researcher role within this study, restates the research questions, and details information on how participants will be solicited. Central concepts of the study are explained. An explanation of the research tradition is provided. The development of instruments and the experience of the researcher within the MTFC program are discussed as they relate to instrumentation. Data collection and analysis procedures are outlined, along with the means being used to assure trustworthiness and identification of researcher bias in order to minimize the impact of the researcher's experience with the program on the study so that the data analysis is not influenced negatively by researcher bias. The software program that was

utilized to analyze data was identified. Finally, ethical concerns as they relate to participants, confidentiality, and protection of data collected are detailed.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

Introduction

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to examine the perceptions and beliefs of the professional staff of Treatment Foster Care Programs of Oregon in California and Colorado as they relate to the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for youth designated as juvenile delinquent or Persons in Need of Supervision. This chapter provides information obtained from interviews of staff regarding their experiences with the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for the youth placed in these foster care programs, which are alternative programs to residential, group, or placements in juvenile secure facilities. Information on how data was collected and analyzed is included in this chapter.

Research Questions

The following questions were the focus of the interviews conducted with the two Treatment Foster Care of Oregon programs. The answers to these questions were intended to discover whether or not programs should spend time and effort to involve non-custodial parents in the treatment and discharge plans for the youth in these foster homes. This information could inform treatment and improve outcomes for youth identified by the system as Juvenile Delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision.

1. What is the value in the grandparent becoming a confidant and problem solver for the youth in an effort to avoid or decrease antisocial or criminal activities?
2. What action by the grandparent has the professional determined to provide the most support for parents?

3. In what way does the youth's perception of the grandparent affect their ability to be a positive resource?

Setting

All interviews were performed by telephone, at the convenience of the participant. Interviews were recorded on a digital recording device, with the participant consenting to the recording and on speaker phone. Evernote was used to download these interviews, with transcription by Transcribe Me. These transcripts were then downloaded into NVivo 11 Pro, where data analysis was organized.

Demographics

The table below provides limited demographic information on the roles of the participants. No further demographic information has been entered, including the geographic area in which the program is performed, to avoid the potential that these programs and the responding participants might be identified.

Table 1

Demographics of Sample Participants

Title of Participants	Number of Participants by job title	Gender of Participants
Program Supervisors	2 – PS1 and PS2	1 female 1 male
Family Therapists	2 – FT1 and FT2	1 female 1 male
Individual Therapists	2 – IT1 and IT2	2 females
Totals	6	6

Interviews

All interviews, as previously stated, were conducted by telephone and recorded on a digital recorder. All sample participants signed consent forms prior to being interviewed. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. These interviews lasted from twenty minutes to one hour, depending on the role of the participant. Program Supervisor interviews were lengthier than Individual or Family Therapists, primarily due to their oversight of the entire program as opposed to working in one specific area. For the purposes of the remainder of this study, Program Supervisors are to be referred to as PS1 and PS2, Family Therapists as FT1 and FT2, and Individual Therapists as IT1 and IT2.

One issue that could have influenced the results of the study was that these programs often have a high staff turnover rate and one of the programs included in the study had changed the Program Supervisor (PS2) since I initially contacted them to participate. PS2 was willing to be included in the study and had done some research into the history of the program in order to be able to fully answer the questions that might be presented with during interview. The data he provided demonstrated less frequent use, or even exploration of possible use, of non-custodial grandparents by that program than the other program involved. The impact of this information was that there was a reduced amount of available data regarding the efficacy of using family, in particular non-custodial grandparents, as resources for the population the programs work with to assist in the process of change. The change from having multiple agencies from which to gather data to having two, and one with a fairly new Program Supervisor, provided less saturation of data than originally intended.

Data Collection

There were two programs involved, providing this researcher with two Program Supervisors (PS1 and PS2), two Family Therapists (FT1 and FT2), and two Individual Therapists (IT1 and IT2). One interview was conducted with each participant. In order to ensure that the researcher had a clear understanding of the answers, they were repeated back to the participant, for any corrections of misunderstandings of the information.

Data Analysis

Data was transcribed using TranscribeMe, after being uploaded into Evernote. This served to avoid the potential for the researcher to misunderstand or reword questions and/or answers unintentionally. Once these transcriptions were done and returned to this researcher, NVivo 11 Pro was used for the purpose of coding and analyzing data.

In performing the analysis, I first coded the interviews by research question. Once this was accomplished, I looked for themes within the categories of each research question. The following table is a representation of the themes that emerged related to each research question.

Table 2

Research Questions and Themes

RQ1: What is the value in the grandparent becoming a confidant and problem solver for the youth in an effort to avoid or decrease antisocial or criminal activities?	Choosing resources Family resources Grandparents
RQ2: What action by the grandparent has the professional determined to provide the most support for parents?	Types of support by the Grandparents Portions and involvement of the Treatment Foster Care Oregon evidence-based model
RQ3: In what way does the youth's perception of the grandparent affect their ability to be a positive resource?	Type of support by the Grandparents

Choosing resources. PS1 and PS2 reported the use of psychological evaluations, psychological history, and any collateral data was reported to be of importance in choosing appropriate resources for the youth in the program. The Treatment of Foster Care of Oregon (TFCO) programs included involvement and support from probation officers and Guardians Ad Litum in treatment planning. The TFCO Program Supervisors (PS1 and PS2) reported that the programs also offered aftercare to the families once the youth returned home, the time frame of which varied from two to six months depending on family need. Community resources were the first to be explored and were utilized the most - places such as recreation centers or school programming for example. Peer relationships were explored, in an effort to enhance positive relationships in the youth's community and help them to join in pro-social activities with a peer. Family, including grandparents, have been utilized as a support for both the youth and the parents when the relative is a positive resource.

Family resources. Family was identified by Treatment of Foster Care Oregon staff as a support system for both youth and parents with all of the youth they had worked with whose families remained involved with these youths. For some of the teens, families were no longer part of their plans and outside resources had to be explored, such as foster parents becoming permanent resources through adoption or simply by staying involved with the youth after the program was no longer in place. Aunts, grandparents, and other extended family were included in treatment planning when they were available, willing, and appropriate resources. FT1 and FT2 stated that it was necessary to make sure there is unity in the beliefs of the parents and other family members or this could become a problem in that the youth will triangulate between family members to obtain whatever goal they are seeking.

Types of support by the grandparents. In discussing support by the grandparents as it relates to parents, supervision while parents worked or were out was identified as the most important support for parents, with the understanding that this worked best when parents and grandparents agreed on rules and expectations. PS2 said that when grandparents are “bonding to the goals of the youth and family” it is important that they “don't... work against maybe what the parents or guardians are looking for and what the youth is looking for, and kind of maybe sabotaging that.”

When asked about the kind of support grandparents provide, PS2 stated, “just participation or interest in their activities and their daily lives, so like asking them questions about what they're doing, showing some interest in their activities, maybe attending events, those sorts of things. So just showing that really vested interest in them.” FT1 verbalized that when grandparents were considered a support, youth described them as “Most of them...in pretty loving and caring terms.” IT2 stated the youth see “the grandparents seem like they're the cheerleaders. They're the ones that are always rooting for them”. Support for the youth was recognized by all sample participants to be time spent with the adolescent. In addition, PS1 reported that grandparents were important to the youth, “because it gives them a sense of family”. Safety was another theme that was found to be of value. PS2 said that it was key when grandparents are “kind of integrated into maybe the possible safety planning, or just kind of implementation of daily expectations.” At times, grandparents were talked about as being more loving than parents. PS1 also stated, “sometimes for the kid it's a biological thing - like their biology” and continued to report “sometimes it's that they have memories of good times and love and all that. They can provide a sense of history... culturally, they can give a huge amount” and that this was deemed important to the youth.

Ways in which the grandparents were found to be non-supportive were when they would work against the structure and rules that the parent(s) are trying to put into place. FT2 reported that, “In my experience, a lot of times there have been very different, if you will, parenting approaches or just supervision approaches, between the parents and the grandparents that ultimately result in conflict. “differences in parenting style and a lack of cohesion in expectations” which led to conflict between parents and grandparents In addition, FT1 expressed that youth reported not believing the grandparents to be a support when, “a grandparent maybe is not agreeing with something, whether it's a lifestyle decision or maybe just differences in generational things”. FT1 went on to verbalize that “they may not particularly welcome someone that's not feeling supportive about something they might want to do or what they might think”.

Portions of the model and involvement of the model. The Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) is a program based on social learning theory. As described on the TFCO website, “There are three versions of TFCO, each serving specific age groups. Each version has been subjected to rigorous scientific evaluations and found to be efficacious. The programs are:

- [*TFCO-A*](#) for adolescents (12-17 years)
- [*TFCO-C*](#) for middle childhood (7-11 years)
- [*TFCO-P*](#) for preschool-aged children (3-6 years)” (TFCO Consultants, Inc., 2013.)

Research for this study specifically utilized TFCO-A programs due to the data collected referring specifically to adolescents. In these programs, both youth and parents are educated in ways to change negative behaviors and support or participate in prosocial activities. TFCO is a point and level system provided in a foster home by specially trained foster parents. Foster parents do not

make decisions about privileges the youth have, this is done by the Program Supervisor who is on call 24/7. Youth have to ask the Program Supervisor for any privileges, such as spending money, going to activities, or participating in activities. All privileges are based on points for the day, and points are only good for that day. There are three levels and once the youth obtains level three, their graduation from the program is arranged with the discharge resource, whether this is parents, relatives, or others (TFCO Consultants Inc., 2013).

Aftercare is provided when youth return home. PS2 explained that, “typically we do what’s called aftercare once they discharge from our program, so they actually continue to see our family and individual therapists for two to three months, depending on success”. Outside programs that work with very specific issues, i.e., sexual trauma, drug abuse, are referred to and put into place. PS2 expressed that when the original assessment is done, “it also does direct some of the discharge information as far as what services maybe they need following [discharge] to be sustainable.” Ongoing contact with the Program Supervisor, Individual Therapist, and Family Therapist is provided if and when needed. At times, it will be only the Program Supervisor, who is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week (TFCO Consultants Inc., 2013).

Trustworthiness

Adjustments had to be made to the study due to the limited pool of sample participants. The original expectation was that a minimum of five to ten programs would be utilized for this study. However, due to the limited number of active programs and agreements to participate, only two programs were available for use in collecting data. Therefore, rather than analyzing by program, this researcher broke down the sample population by role in each program, which provided more data than anticipated. There were no issues with researcher bias toward one

program or staff person over another because the researcher never met the sample participants and had no relationship with them. Consistency issues were met by using the same interview protocols and questions, with no deviation from the subject matter. Confirmability was handled by this researcher repeating back to the participant what they had said in her own words, to ensure that the data was clearly understood by the researcher from what the participant reported. No second interviews or review of transcripts was performed.

Results

The results of this study is organized by research question.

RQ1: What is the value in the grandparent becoming a confidant and problem solver for the youth in an effort to avoid or decrease antisocial or criminal activities?

Each Program Supervisor, Family Therapist, and one Individual Therapist agreed with the importance of grandparent involvement when possible and safe. The remaining Individual Therapist explained that the only involvement she had seen by grandparents was custodial and could not speak to the use of non-custodial grandparents. IT1 reported that there is value in use of grandparents as supports to provide supervision and safety for the youth.

All Program Supervisors, Individual Therapists, and Family therapist spoke about using the grandparents as a source of support for both parents and youth. The youth will use the grandparents' home as a safe haven when they need to get away from their home or another situation. Every sample participant discussed the importance of safety with all family members, including grandparents. These two program looks into all involved family members to determine safety for the youth.

Many of the adolescents described their grandparents to their therapists as taking interest in their activities. IT2 described grandparents reported by youth as “cheerleaders” for them when they achieved goals or made good choices, support that was important to them. Having the grandparent as someone to talk to that is not a parent was discussed by several staff members, with PS1 stating, “it gives them a sense of family... for this grandmother, she worked mostly from home, so she was extremely accessible to this youth in particular. Pretty much anytime she needed somebody else, it was a grandmother.” The PS2 commented that, “a lot of the kids in our program, they may have spent significant time with grandparents either as a caregiver or just as a natural family support, so I think it's a really good resource to utilize.”

RQ2: What action by the grandparent has the professional determined to provide the most support for parents?

As briefly mentioned earlier, the primary action described by PS1 and PS2 provided by grandparents that the parents find most helpful is providing supervision while parents work or have other tasks to do, as well as when they simply need a break. PS2 said that, “I think it can be helpful as far as providing respite care for the families; they can have a little break.” No staff members of program one or program two discussed any other actions in which the grandparents could be supportive to the parents.

It is important to note that the Program Supervisors and Family Therapists talked about the difficulty in these relationships when the parents and grandparents have different parenting styles, as noted in the section on types of support by grandparents. If or when parents and grandparents disagree on privileges, or the grandparent responds to triangulation by the youth and gives permission when the parent has said no, this could undermine the parent's authority. FT2 talked

specifically about the conflict that can occur between parents and grandparents when there are different supervision styles involved.

RQ3: In what way does the youth's perception of the grandparent affect their ability to be a positive resource?

Five out of six sample participants reported that youth discussed warmth, interest in activities, someone who listens to them, being a cheerleader for them, and the acknowledgment of accomplishments by grandparents as the key activities that make them a positive resource, leading to connection and caring on both sides of the relationship. The ability to provide the youth with some of the family history as it related to both parents and other family members was considered as another way that grandparents provided a connection to the youth. PS2 mentioned his belief that when the relationship is good, both youth and grandparents benefit on a personal basis.

On the other end of this research question, the actions that create a sense of disconnection between youth and grandparents are important to note. IT1 stated, "The only thing that I have seen is grandparents, obviously, tend to be a little bit older, so sometimes I think when kids try to do the traditional things today like use phones and internet and things like that, I think sometimes they feel that grandparents can't relate to that." PS2 stated, "I think some stuff maybe like superficial if they're unhappy with what the grandparents are deciding. So if they're of implementing rules that they're unhappy with, or they may express that they're dissatisfied with..." PS1, who had the most experience running a TFCO program, indicated that issues such as use of drugs and/or alcohol by the grandparents also interferes in their ability to be a support.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I described the analysis of the findings of my study by research question. The data was collected, via recorded interviews with permission from each participant, through telephone calls between the sample participants and myself. The results of the analysis demonstrated that non-custodial grandparents are utilized when available and willing. In speaking about the issue of use of grandparents, FT2 stated that grandparents “may not be able or willing to provide the structure and/or support that a kid coming out of TFCO needs in that transition phase”. PS2 discussed that “a lot of the kids in our program, they come from untraditional households, as far as single parents, or kind of dealing with substance abuse or criminal behavior. So I think it's just extra support for them when they need that time or childcare.”

Additional findings were that if there are conflicts between parents and grandparents, then there is a decreased opportunity for grandparents to support grandchildren. When there are concerns about safety in the grandparent's presence, use of drugs or alcohol as example, then these relationships are of little value in treatment and discharge planning in the arena of behavioral change for youth designated Juvenile Delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision.

In Chapter 5, I will provide an interpretation of the findings of the study, discuss limitations, and make recommendations for further research. Potential implications of social change will be discussed. Finally, I will discuss the theory resulting from this research in an effort to explain whether there is value in the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for youth in the juvenile justice system.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This research study was conducted to obtain data regarding the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for youth designated as Juvenile Delinquents and Persons In Need of Supervision from the perspective of the professionals who work in a program that is specifically for those youth. The source of data was interviews with program staff of TFCO, an evidence-based practice providing alternatives to residential or secure detention placement known as Treatment Foster Care Oregon (Greenwood, 2008).

Key findings. Recent research has indicated that grandparents are more likely to describe closer relationships with supportive grandparents than with those who appear detached (Mueller & Elder, 2003). While interviewing sample participants, findings from five out of six participants indicated that the issues of warmth, interest in activities, and ability to talk to the grandparent as

related to the concept of support. Alternatively, IT1 spoke about grandchildren feeling that grandparents did not relate to the activities that youth find normal in their lives, things like internet use and cell phone use.

Also described as important to the youth was the sense of history that the grandparent could provide, information on their parents as children and of other family members and events within the family. As noted earlier, PS1 discussed that the biological connection has been indicated by the adolescents in her program as valuable to these youth, in terms of the connection by blood. PS1 went on to explain that this association appears to be related to trust issues.

Interpretation of Findings

Data on the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning is found to be very limited, both in the literature as noted in Chapter Two, and in the interviews with the staff of the two evidence-based programs providing data. The program staff included in this study were from California and Colorado. The staff in California were PS1, FT1, and IT1, and the staff from the Colorado program were PS2, FT2, and IT2. Staff in the Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) programs that were interviewed noted that grandparents can have issues which have been passed down through the generations, making them poor supports for the youth. Another reason provided by FT2 was that there can be conflict between the parents and the grandparents, creating a rift that causes a lack of interaction between grandparent and grandchild.

Alternatively, as stated in Chapter Two, a study discussed the finding that increased involvement by grandparents was found to be associated with decreased emotional problems

among youth, as well as increased prosocial behaviors in the entire sample, but there were differences in reduced adjustment problems for those youth from single or step-families rather than from two parent families (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, Buchanan, et al., 2009). This provides information for research question one, supporting the idea that there is value in involvement by non-custodial grandparents. However, the authors of this research study state that there were limitations of being “based on a cross-sectional design and therefore the direction of associations between variables cannot be determined” (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, Buchanan, et al., 2009, p. 1064).

Every staff person from both programs that were interviewed indicated that the most important support grandparents can provide to parents is supervision, due to most parents working when youth get out of school. Research also indicates that the effect on parental behaviors related to advice and emotional support given to parents, support of norms, and assistance with supervisory tasks all have the ability to assist in positive behaviors by the youth (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012). Greenwood (2008) discussed the importance of additional supports and therapy for both youth and family during the time the youth is in placement (Greenwood, 2008). In relation to research question 2, the data collected indicates that assistance with supervision is an important support for parents.

Data which either supports or does not support research question three in the literature is limited. One study, discussing the relationships in step-families indicates that grandparents influence can be significant, especially considering that the generation of baby boomers who are the grandparents of today are living longer than those generations before them (Gibson, 2013). Another study indicated that relationships with grandparents are often close with grandchildren (Tamm, Kasearu, & Tulviste, 2014). Data collected from interviews stated that these

relationships are described by the youth as warm, loving, and supportive when they exist. One limitation of these relationships is when the youth perceives the grandparent(s) as not accepting of lifestyle choices, and another is that they are often not tech savvy, which could create a barrier between grandchild and grandparent(s).

Discussion

As stated earlier in this study, grounded theory is a research methodology which uses a systematic procedure to build theory through data collection and analysis (Engward, 2013). Treatment Foster Care of Oregon is based on social learning theory, which states that intervention advancement is directed by empirically grounded theory (Leve, Fisher, & Chamberlain, 2009). Of importance was that the use of social learning theory as a framework along with the use of grounded theory to develop new concepts and theories allowed this research to break new ground in the concept of supports for juveniles. The interviews of professionals who work within Treatment Foster Care Oregon programs indicated a number of areas in which the data was grounded in the theory that there can be value in the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for youth designated as Juvenile Delinquents or Person In Need of Supervision. FT2 talked about how integration of non-custodial grandparents into safety planning, or implementation of daily expectations provided assistance to parent's. FT1 reported that the grandparents may know a lot about the family history and they know a lot about the children.

FT1 also stated that grandparents may be aware of possible weaknesses or possible ways that they could support the youth and parents, and that this support may be acceptable by the parent. All staff agreed that when there is a positive relationship between adolescents and

grandparents, and a positive relationship between parents and grandparents, the grandparents can provide a safe place for the youth to go when they need to; that the feelings of warmth, love, and support are important to the youth in decision-making, and that there is a positive perception of grandparents. However, when there is conflict between parents and grandparents, the relationships with grandchildren are often constrained. During interviews, PS1, PS2, FT1 and IT2 discussed the value of caregiving support by grandparents as significant to the relationship between parents and grandparents.

When grandparents are perceived as cheerleaders, interested in and caring about the youth's achievements and goals, then they become increasingly valuable in the process of decision-making by the adolescent. Detached grandparents do not appear to have this influence on grandchildren. The assumption here is that the closer the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, the more influential they can be in the process of changing behaviors by being available and listening to these youths. Willingness to listen to the grandchild has been identified by the professionals as a very important element in the relationship. FT2 talked about looking at family first when building a support system for the youth. The findings of the data indicate that grandparents who are involved, have positive relationships with the parents, and can provide support, caregiving, and a safe place for the youth to go when they need to, all support the theory that there is value in the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning for youth designated as juvenile delinquents or Persons in Need of Supervision.

What is concerning that was revealed in the interviews is that grandparents are not often considered for use as a support system. Community supports and professionals are more likely to be used than family resources. FT1 stated that the program he is family therapist in works first to

find support in the community, if possible. Perhaps the Boys & Girls Club or other organizations. When there is no involvement in outside programming, the staff work to help them with finding resources when there aren't resources currently being utilized. IT1 said that the staff tries to connect the youth with a lot of resources while they're in the program. They use volunteering or attempt to engage them in sports or some kind of program. FT2 explained that utilizing non-custodial grandparents can be challenging, FT2 explained that, "In my experience, a lot of times there have been very different, if you will, parenting approaches or just supervision approaches, between the parents and the grandparents that ultimately result in conflict."

To some extent, this is due to grandparents being inappropriate resources at times, due to various reasons such as histories of abuse of parents or drug and alcohol use, either past or present. Even when these are not present, grandparents are often overlooked as a resource for the child in exchange for the use of more professional means of supports.

Limitations

As stated in Chapter 1, and again in the discussion, community supports are more likely to be considered than extended family as resources for youth. Therefore, data collection on the use of non-custodial grandparents as resources is limited and requires further study. Another limitation of this study is the small sample participant pool that was available to this researcher. Only two programs in two different areas of the country, Colorado and California, were used to obtain data. Researcher bias, which was a concern at the beginning of the study, has turned out to be less problematic than initially believed, as the interviews were transcribed word for word and all results were based on these interviews and not the researcher's experience as a Program Supervisor. An additional limitation is that the levels of experience in the program varied among

participants. For example, one Program Supervisor (P1) had been in that role for eight years, where the other Program Supervisor (P2) had only four months in his role.

Recommendations

The primary recommendation resulting from this study is that further research into the use of family as resources for youth in the juvenile justice system be conducted, possibly with the sample participants the families and youth involved. Another recommendation is that programs, evidence-based or not, look closely into family resources for the youth they are working with to determine if there are supports otherwise overlooked. Finally, I would recommend conducting similar studies with other evidence-based programs, such as Functional Family Therapy (FFT) or Multisystemic Therapy (MST) in order to determine if these programs rely more on family resources than Treatment Foster Care Oregon.

Implications

There are a number of implications that result from this study. In terms of social change, learning more about involving non-custodial grandparents or other extended family in the treatment and discharge planning for youth designated as Juvenile Delinquent or Persons In Need of Supervision has the potential to provide helpful information for professionals when building a support system for the youth as a resource for behavioral change. In cases where the non-custodial grandparent is determined to be as positive source of support, adding them into the system on a planned basis can assist the youth in making more prosocial choices as opposed to antisocial choices. On an individual level, the youth then has the resources to become a functioning and happy person. This can also lead to less stress on the family system, which can help the unit to be a positive part of their community.

As this relates to community, the fewer issues of delinquency within means less tax money spent on adjudicating, supervising, incarcerating or treating youth. There is also the issue of safer communities when juvenile delinquency is decreased. Safety in communities also means less tax money going toward the same issues but also suggests that fewer individuals come to harm.

Conclusion

The use of grounded theory to perform this study has led to this researcher concluding that utilization of non-custodial grandparents, as well as other extended family, has potential as a source for support to both the youths and to the parents. However, it has also led to many more questions than answers, indicating the need for additional research on the topic. The framework of social learning theory for behavioral change is supported in the data collected, but the fact that the program in use for sample participants is based on this theory leads to the supposition that this was likely to be an outcome of the work.

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Appendix A: Level of Coding

This researcher had the interviews with participants professionally transcribed and read through them several times. In doing so, I was able to develop categories that related to the research questions and code these according to the research questions. During the process of coding, several themes emerged. Use of programs, family conflict as it relates to use of non-custodial grandparents as supports, and manners in which these grandparents are most useful as supports became clear.

Research Questions:

1. What is the value in the grandparent becoming a confidant and problem solver for the youth in an effort to avoid or decrease antisocial or criminal activities?
2. What action by the grandparent has the professional determined to provide the most support for parents?
3. In what way does the youth's perception of the grandparent affect their ability to be a positive resource?

Appendix B: IRB Consent to Collect Data

Confirmation of Receipt of Community Partner Approval - Anita Taboh

9/9/15

IRB <IRB@waldenu.edu>

to me, Scott, Pamela

Dear Ms. Taboh,

This email confirms receipt of the letters of cooperation for Redwood Community Services, Inc., Alexander Youth Network, and Savio House. As such, you are hereby approved to conduct research with these organizations. Please note, if you obtain any additional letters of cooperation, those documents will need to be submitted to and confirmed by the Walden IRB before you may conduct your research with additional sites.

Congratulations!

Libby Munson

Research Ethics Support Specialist, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Leilani Endicott

IRB Chair, Walden University

Appendix C: Letters of Invitation to Participate

Date

Dear (Program Supervisor);

It was my pleasure to speak with you recently. As we discussed, I am implementing a study on the use of non-custodial grandparents in treatment and discharge planning when developing treatment and discharge plans for youth identified as juvenile delinquents or Persons In Need of Supervision. The purpose of this study is to complete the dissertation for a Ph.D. in

Human Services, as well as to better understand the use of these individuals in the lives of youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system. In order to obtain the appropriate data for this study, I am asking for your assistance in compiling the experiences you and your staff have had in working with these youth and their families.

The title of my study is, “Non-custodial Grandparents as Supports for Juvenile Delinquent and Persons in Need of Supervision Identified Youth”. To obtain the data to complete this study, I would like to interview you and your Individual Therapists and Family Therapists. I am not asking for any information on the youth and their families that would lead to identifying who the family and youth are, but will ask for age, gender, family composition, matriarchal or patriarchal grandparents, and geographic location (urban, rural, or suburban). In addition, I am also not asking to speak with the youth or their families because the study I am conducting is based on the perspective of the professionals working with these families.

During the data collection period, I am asking to interview you and your staff, and then contact each of you at least once more, to check that my perception of the information provided is accurate. I will be happy to provide you with the results of my study when it is completed.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions about the study, its use or any other issues, please feel free to contact me via phone at 518-526-1205 or email anita.taboh@waldenu.edu. Again, thank you and I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Anita M Taboh

Appendix D: Interview Questions

1. With each youth that is accepted into your program, you develop a treatment and discharge plan. What information do you use to make decisions about the resources you will put in place for the teen?
2. Where do you look for resources to use as supports for the youth once they have completed your program and returned home?

3. Is the parent or discharge resource consulted about who you bring in as support persons for the youth? How do you consult with them?
4. Do you use non-custodial grandparents as supports for the youth, the parent(s), or both?
5. For those youth whose grandparents are involved in a non-custodial manner, in your professional opinion, do they function as a resource in the youth's support system? Why or Why not?
6. What are the most important elements in the relationship between the youth and grandparent?
7. How do the youth with involved grandparents describe their grandparents?
8. Do these youth identify any specific action or actions by the grandparent that is important to them? What is/are the action(s)?
9. Do these youth identify any action or actions by the grandparent that makes them feel the grandparent is not a support? What is/are the action(s)?
10. What action or actions by the grandparent provides the most support to the parent?

Appendix E: Letter of Cooperation from Community Research Partners

Address of participating agencies.

3/8/2015

Dear Anita M Taboh,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Non-custodial Grandparents as Supports for Juvenile Delinquent and Persons in Need of Supervision Identified Youth within the Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Programs with

the program staff from our agency. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview program supervisors, individual and family therapists, contact these individuals for the purposes of checking the data collected to ensure that you have correctly understood the information they provide, and make available to them the results of the study when completed. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include providing you as researcher with contact information and ability to schedule appointments with program staff for interview. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).