VOLUME 8 · ISSUE 1

JUSWR

A JOURNAL OF UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH, POLICY REVIEWS, & OTHER CREATIVE WORKS

PERSON-CENTERED · TRANSFORMING · HUMANITY FIRST · BREAKING BARRIERS

JUSWR. Volume 8. Issue 1. September 2024

School of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Table of Contents

About the Journal i
Acknowledgements i
Staff i
Letter. ..... ……ii-iii

Literature Reviews

Why Immigrants Face Increased Levels of Domestic Violence Risk
Wyatt Beal……..……..……..2-16

A Narrated Review on the Prevalence of Police Violence in the Disability Community
Riley Murphy, BSW…….…… ……..……17-33

Policy Analysis/Review

Enhancing the Transition into Adulthood for Foster Youth: Analysis of Illinois House Bill 1293
Jocelyn Fetting, BSW……..…….. .35-45

Research Based Poster Presentation

How Many School Social Workers Are in the United States?
Brandon Seidensticker, Arielle Britten, and Tracy Mason…….…….47-51

Research Study

What is "Having Sex?" An Exploratory Investigation into Sexual Communication and Sexual Education Experiences
Kristen Gatesa, Emily Mendelson, MA……..53-67

Editors note: To be accepted for publication, the primary author of all submissions must be an undergraduate student at UIUC. Those authors and peer editors listed as having a bachelor's degree earned it after JUSWR's submission deadline. Congratulations to them.

About the Journal

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Dean Benjamin Lough for supporting our efforts to continue publishing undergraduate student's original work in the Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR): A Journal of Undergraduate Research, Policy Reviews, and Other Creative Works. We also thank the School of Social Work faculty for the encouragement they extended to the authors of the JUSWR 8th issue. We further wish to acknowledge and extend a very special thanks to the faculty and PhD student advisors for their extraordinary mentoring, guidance, and support on behalf of the student authors.

Dr. Rachel Garthe is our Undergraduate Research Coordinator. She brings her enthusiasm and her extensive knowledge of research to our advisory board. We are grateful for her expertise, guidance, and steady support.

Last, but far from least, the JUSWR Advisory Board and Senior Editor wish to express our pride in and gratitude for our peer editors. These stellar students understood they were making a commitment: to participate in mandatory training, to review materials, and to offer viable, supportive recommendations to the student authors. We especially are grateful for their flexibility and dedication. Well done!

Staff

Dear Reader:

Welcome to the eighth volume of the Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research (JUSWR): A Journal of Undergraduate Research, Policy Reviews, and Other Creative Works. This journal is a result of a highly collaborative effort between students, faculty, and staff. Undergraduate peer editors were instrumental in the selecting, editing, and submitting recommendations for research pieces to be accepted for publication. These undergraduate peer editors worked closely with the Senior Editor, Rebecca Dohleman Hawley, who did an outstanding job providing feedback, guidance, and prowess throughout the entire publication process. Faculty members also generously mentored their students in the writing and publication processes, of which we are grateful for their time and energy. Fellow Advisory Board Member, Dr. Jan Carter-Black, provided the team with exceptional guidance and feedback. As the Undergraduate Research Coordinator for the School of Social Work and Advisory Board Member of the JUSWR, I approached my role with commitment and enthusiasm, assisting with the peer editor training and editing process. Together, this collaborative team proudly brings you the eighth volume of JUSWR.

This year, Volume 8 is split into two issues to accommodate the number of excellent pieces submitted. This year's volume includes pieces from students majoring in Social Work, Psychology, Communication, Brain and Cognitive Science, and Gender and Women's Studies. Issue one includes literature reviews (e.g., prevalence of police violence in the disability community; domestic violence risk within immigrant populations), policy analyses (e.g., analysis of a bill enhancing the transition into adulthood for foster youth), and research studies (e.g., sexual communication in sexual education; understanding the number of school social workers in the United States). Issue two includes research studies (e.g., an examination of bullying in Central Illinois; recruitment and engagement strategies for equitable maternal health and child development), policy analyses (e.g., Supplemental Security Income eligibility), a review (e.g., gender inclusion in research within National Institutes of Health policies), and a case study (e.g., examination of a local Gender and Sexuality Alliance).

As you flip through the current and previous issues of this journal, you will see a glimpse into the knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, and thoughtfulness of the authors across these diverse platforms. Students make contributions that advance social and economic justice, further enhancing their own and their readers' appreciation toward our diverse and constantly evolving social world.

As the Undergraduate Research Coordinator for the School of Social Work, I am honored to join such a remarkable editorial team and direct undergraduate research efforts. The journal originated with the aim of supporting undergraduate research and scholarly work, becoming a platform for students to disseminate their findings and work. Some of the ways students can become involved in research at the School of Social Work include: 1) participating as a Research Assistant to a faculty-directed research project, or 2) leading their own area of research with an Independent Study or Project.

Students can find more information about these opportunities in the Course Catalog (SOCW 310, 418, and 480). It is from these projects that many students submit posters and papers to this journal or present at the University of Illinois Undergraduate Research Symposium. Other research opportunities include authoring or co-authoring research papers and presentations for peer- reviewed journals and academic conferences, serving as a peer editor for the journal, or pursuing the Undergraduate Research Certificate Program offered by the Office of Undergraduate Research.

I am pleased to announce the eighth volume of JUSWR. This publication provides clear and compelling evidence of the high quality of undergraduate social work research and creative works that contribute to knowledge permeating the School of Social Work and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Sincerely,

Rachel Garthe, PhD
Associate Professor & Undergraduate Research Coordinator
School of Social Work

Literature Review

Why Immigrants Face Increased Levels of Domestic Violence Risk

Wyatt Beal

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

To understand why domestic violence among immigrant populations in Western cultures occurs at a higher prevalence rate, a literature review was conducted to identify unique challenges that increase vulnerability to abuse. Unique challenges were defined as risks in addition to common domestic violence risk factors such as low income, high stress, inadequate support systems, and living in crime-ridden communities. This literature review of 13 peer-reviewed articles (based on interviews, focus groups, literature reviews, client records, and protection orders) written between 2018 and 2024 on immigrants (including refugees) in Western countries revealed three themes: 1) immigrants face barriers to accessing help, 2) patriarchal beliefs facilitate domestic violence, and 3) the Western system for supporting survivors of domestic violence can appear culturally insensitive. Awareness of challenges enhances cultural humility and assists social workers in meeting the needs of domestic violence survivors from diverse cultures. Further research on diverse immigrant populations could enhance understanding and identify strategies to reduce the gap between Western support and collective cultural needs.

Keywords: domestic violence, immigrant, collective culture, cultural humility

About the Author: *Wyatt is a junior BSW student. He is interested in researching the needs of diverse populations.*

Introduction

The United Nations defines domestic violence "as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner" (n.d., p. 1). Domestic violence, also called domestic abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV), happens across the globe to people of all genders (United Nations, n.d.). In the United States, one in four women and one in 10 men have experienced domestic violence (CDC, 2020). Prevalence is higher for immigrant populations, which consist of "naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, people on certain temporary visas, and unauthorized immigrants," who have lifetime domestic violence rates estimated between 13.9% and 93% (Batalova, 2024, p. 2; Morrison et al., 2024). This increase in prevalence correlates with an increased presence of domestic violence risk factors such as low income, high stress, inadequate support systems, and living in crime-ridden communities (Morrison et al., 2024; Sabri et al., 2018a). This literature review aims to further explore why immigrants face increased levels of domestic violence risk based on research published in the past six years.

Method

Searches in EBSCOhost and Google Scholar resulted in peer-reviewed articles that referenced domestic violence in immigrant populations. Key search terms included ('immigrant' or 'refugee'), ('domestic violence,' 'abuse,' 'survivor,' 'victim'), and ('risk factor'). Articles on immigrant and/or refugee populations experiencing domestic violence were reviewed and included if they were published between 2018 and 2024. Of the 13 articles selected for inclusion in this literature review, eight contained information on immigrants in the United States, of which six were based on focus group and interview findings (Messing et al., 2022; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018; Wachter et al., 2019, 2021). The others were a

literature review (Morrison et al., 2024) and a review of protection orders (Alsinai et al., 2023). Of the remaining five articles, one was a focus group on immigrants in Italy (Gillespie et al., 2022), one was a review of Canadian client records (Park et al., 2021), and three were global literature reviews that included immigrants in the United States (El-Moslemany et al., 2022; Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023). Three themes emerged in the examination of the 13 articles: 1) immigrants face barriers to accessing help, 2) patriarchal beliefs facilitate domestic violence, and 3) the Western system for supporting survivors of domestic violence can appear culturally insensitive. Implications from this research are discussed, including areas for future research.

Results

Theme 1: Barriers to Accessing Help

Barriers to accessing help increase the risk of domestic violence in immigrant populations because they limit the survivor's power to end the abuse. Many of these barriers are not unique to immigrants (Hulley et al., 2023; Morrison et al., 2024; Sabri et al., 2018a). Likewise, not all immigrants experience these barriers, but those who do are at increased risk of domestic violence. Additionally, many of the barriers are linked and exacerbate each other. Across articles reviewed, barriers included fear of deportation, lack of language and financial resources, and education and acculturation barriers.

Fear of Deportation

Survivors of domestic violence may face an increased risk of continued abuse for fear of being deported. Additionally, if a survivor has children, there is fear of being separated from one's children because of deportation (Alsinai et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Messing et al., 2022; Morrison et al., 2024; Sabri et al., 2018a; Wachter et al., 2021). Both fears increase when

the abuser is a citizen or controls the victim's documentation (Messing et al., 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a). As a citizen, the abuser has the advantage of knowing the laws and having protection for their parental rights (Alsinai et al., 2023; Njie-Carr et al., 2021). Fear increases the risk of domestic violence because it may compel the victim to endure the abuse. Similar barriers have been noted in other domestic violence situations where the abuser uses fear tactics, control, and power to threaten the survivor; such as threatening to harm pets or threatening to have the survivor arrested (Robinson & Clausen, 2021; Tolmie et al., 2024). Specific to immigrant populations, abusers may use deportation as another fear tactic to exercise control.

Language and Financial Resources

Language becomes a structural barrier that increases the risk of domestic violence when low skill levels isolate immigrants, limit their job options, or exacerbate their unfamiliarity with protective laws and services (Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Morrison et al., 2024; Njie-Carr et al., 2021). Just as fear of deportation can deter a victim from seeking help from formal systems of care, an inability to communicate conditions and know one's rights and available resources prevents victims from accessing available help. Likewise, poor language skills limit an individual's employment opportunities, directly impacting their financial resources. Without adequate financial resources, a victim may become dependent upon their abuser for survival (Goliaei et al., 2023; Morrison et al., 2024; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021). This dependency increases when the victim has children because, with limited job options and language skills, they cannot afford to leave and support their children (Sabri et al., 2018a; Wachter et al., 2021). Additionally, their citizenship status intensifies their financial needs by creating barriers to their gaining employment and making them ineligible for welfare programs (Alsinai et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Messing et al., 2022; Morrison et al., 2024; Njie-Carr et

al., 2021; Park et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2018a; Wachter et al., 2021). Financial abuse is seen in many domestic violence situations (Johnson et al., 2022). However, utilizing language and finances as an abuse tactic may be exacerbated within relationships where the survivor is an immigrant. While sources concurred on the negative impact of a language barrier and financial constraints, there was disagreement on the impact of education.

Education and Acculturation

Education can be a risk or protective factor against domestic violence. A higher level of education implies enhanced language capabilities and job opportunities, which can be interpreted as threats to control by abusers (Morrison et al., 2024; Park et al., 2021; Wachter et al., 2019). The difference in the impact of education on domestic violence risk appears to correlate with a culture's norms on violence. In cultures where wife or spousal abuse is normative, education was "more strongly associated with reduced risk of IPV" (Sabri et al., 2018a, p. 350). As education broadens a victim's perspective, the victim becomes less accepting of abuse (Goliaei et al., 2023). However, a less accepting victim can be a threat to the abuser's control because knowledge encourages individuals to question abuse and take steps to leave.

A global literature review based on 23 studies found that 10 of the studies addressed the association between lower levels of education and higher risks of IPV. However, only five found a significant association between low education levels and high victimization (El-Moslemany et al., 2022). An explanation of the inconsistent results was not given in the literature review. However, Rai & Choi found through a cross-sectional study of 468 South Asians (primarily Indian) living across the United States that individuals with a high school, vocational, or undergraduate degree experienced the highest risk of domestic violence (2022). Their results mirrored a 2002 study that found a curvilinear relationship between education and domestic

violence; the risk of IPV in response to education level increases before it decreases (Jewkes). As women become educated, they challenge gender norms, but without adequate domestic violence support, they increase their risk of being abused by someone desperate to retain control.

A curvilinear risk relationship is not unique to education. Acculturation, "the process by which a culture adopts the customs and ideas of another culture," can also be a risk or protective factor (Nickerson, 2024, p. 1). A cross-sectional survey of 468 South Asian immigrants did not confirm a 2018 study of 16 South Asian immigrants, which found acculturation becomes a risk factor as women assert their power (Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018b). However, literature reviews found acculturation represents a risk to women before it empowers them to navigate available resources (Goliaei et al., 2023). Likewise, 84 in-depth interviews with women from Africa, Asia, and Latin America who survived domestic violence in the United States found women had to move through the acculturation process to become emotionally prepared to utilize safety planning and social support strategies (Njie-Carr et al., 2021). Emotional preparedness is critical because gender norms are at the heart of why immigrant victims of domestic violence are at higher risk and choose to respond differently to assistance.

Acculturation increases emotional preparedness because, during the process, individuals replace beliefs that condone violence with ones that reject abuse (Njie-Carr et al., 2021). For example, in many highly patriarchal cultures, people believe sexual violence within marriage is acceptable (Morrison et al., 2024). This belief does not support the emotional readiness to seek Western domestic violence support. Additionally, it enforces gender norms such as machismo, "a social construction of masculinity common across Latin American and Spanish culture that maps out how men should engage with their gender based on virility, courage, strength, and power" (Hulley et al., 2023; Morrison et al., 2024; Sabri et al., 2018a; Sotelo, 2023, p. 1). Before seeking

support, individuals must believe they are worthy of help and be ready to put themselves before the group.

Theme 2: Patriarchal Beliefs Facilitate Domestic Violence

Cultural norms vary, but when patriarchal beliefs permeate a culture, women and gender-minoritized individuals are at higher risk of domestic violence. When the underlying belief is men are superior to other gender identities, a man's right to dominate is established through traditions and gender norms (Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Morrison et al., 2024; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a). Therefore, oppression may appear in different forms, but the result is the normalization of violence against women (within heterosexual relationships).

Fear of Ostracization

Gender norms based on patriarchal beliefs lead to gendered roles where women are viewed as responsible for serving their male partners and maintaining family harmony (Hulley et al., 2023; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021; Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a). This type of gendered role leaves women powerless and subject to societal expectations. Therefore, if a woman complains about abuse, she is likely to be met with scorn. Rather than being offered protection, victims of domestic violence are often ostracized by their families and communities for failing to obey their husbands (Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Sabri et al., 2018a). The majority of research has focused on domestic violence within heterosexual relationships; significantly less research has examined the role of patriarchal beliefs within lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other sexually minoritized relationships or among partners who identify as transgender or gender nonbinary. Societal expectations are reinforced by religious beliefs that promote patriarchal beliefs.

Religious Support

Five of the articles reviewed found religion increases the risk of domestic violence when it promotes patriarchal gender roles (Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a). Additionally, 13 of the papers reviewed by Hulley et al. highlighted religion impedes help-seeking by victims of domestic violence (2023). Religion is used as a tool through scripture and when religious officials prioritize church and community over a woman's safety (Hulley et al., 2023; Sabri et al., 2018a). When divorce is viewed as a failure, and women are shamed and humiliated for not saving their marriage, victims of domestic abuse feel pressure to accept the abuse.

Theme 3: Culturally Insensitive Support

The Western model of addressing domestic violence is punitive, as the pervading goal of most domestic violence programs in Western countries is to remove the victim and punish the abuser (Wachter et al., 2019). This model supports the wants of individualistic cultures, which emphasize personal liberty within a loosely knit social framework (Rajkumar, 2023). However, in collectivist cultures, which operate in a tightly knit social framework, a punitive model risks alienating individuals who value the well-being of the social structure over the self (Rajkumar, 2023). Therefore, domestic violence support that fails to honor the wants of collectivist cultures increases the risk of domestic violence among immigrant populations.

Marriage is viewed differently in collectivist versus individualistic cultures (Sorokowski et al., 2023). Collectivist cultures are more likely to have arranged marriages that operate at a family, not individual, level (Goliaei et al., 2023; Sorokowski et al., 2023). Therefore, when an individual leaves a marriage, they leave the family and risk dishonoring themselves and their family (Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Messing et al., 2022; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Rai

& Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a; Wachter et al., 2019). Often, religious beliefs add to the pressure of maintaining the marriage regardless of the personal cost. For example, "in Islam, the family forms the basic building block of society," and "Latina women's religious beliefs most often hindered help-seeking, as their predominantly Catholic faith advocates tended to side with the abusers" (Goliaei et al., 2023, p. 4; Hulley et al., 2023, p. 1007; Sabri et al., 2018a). This pressure can lead individuals only to seek aid that allows them to remain in the marriage; their goal is to change their husband's behavior (Wachter et al., 2019). While the other sources did not address clients wanting to change their husbands, most called upon agencies to improve their cultural appreciation of marriages (Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Messing et al., 2022; Morrison et al., 2024; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021; Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a; Wachter et al., 2019). These articles were based on heterosexual couples where the male partner was the abuser.

Reasons for feeling compelled to stay in an abusive marriage vary. In the Ethiopian culture, divorce "is considered disrespectful and a violation of cultural norms," and in Somali and Congolese cultures, wives are expected to obey their husbands or be shunned by social networks (Njie-Carr et al., 2021, p. 8). Others stay because they fear being unsuitable for marriage. In cultures that value virginity, women can fear divorce because they would be "unlikely to find another husband" (Hulley et al., 2023, p. 1005). Still others, such as the Hmong, fear being cursed if they divorce (Sabri et al., 2018a). Regardless of the underlying fears, the commonality is a disconnect from the Western model, which supports the idea of leaving the marriage.

Fears increase when the marriage involves family members. Western societies value individualism and view marriage as a union between individuals, but collective cultures view

marriage as a “social and financial contract between two families” (Goliaei et al., 2023, p. 4; Rai & Choi, 2022). This difference in perspective puts immense pressure on partners to stay in the marriage. The pressure could be financial. For example, when marriages involve families, they are more likely to be arranged and include dowries that obligate the wife to stay regardless of abuse (Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a). Furthermore, if a woman leaves her marriage, she risks the future of her children and sisters because other families will not want to marry into a “bad” family (Hulley et al., 2023; Sabri et al., 2018a). Likewise, when providers fail to offer language support and options honoring religious practices, they increase the risk that people stay in abusive relationships (Alsinai et al., 2023; Gillespie et al., 2022; Goliaei et al., 2023; Hulley et al., 2023; Messing et al., 2022; Njie-Carr et al., 2021; Rai & Choi, 2022; Sabri et al., 2018a). A failure to provide culturally sensitive support increases the risk of domestic violence in immigrant populations because it deters individuals from leaving abusive circumstances. Individuals may only seek and commit to formal support if they trust the source.

Conclusion

This literature review illuminates the complex interplay of factors contributing to the heightened risk of domestic violence among immigrant populations. By examining barriers to accessing help, probing the impact of patriarchal beliefs, and scrutinizing the cultural insensitivity of support systems, it becomes evident that vulnerability to domestic violence in immigrant populations increases exponentially because of the interplay between risk factors.

One key implication of this review is the potential to mitigate vulnerability by implementing structural improvements in accessing support services. Providing language support, paths to employment, housing, and family unification with children can empower individuals to regain their power. However, it is critical to realize the influence of Western

culture on these interventions. Therefore, a second implication is the need to address individuals holistically by developing interventions that minimize the risk of ostracization from family and community in collective cultures with patriarchal beliefs.

Furthermore, gaps exist in how protective factors that challenge patriarchal gender norms, such as education, can be leveraged to minimize vulnerability. Likewise, religion, in societies where violence against women is not normalized, can provide community support to survivors of domestic violence. Research on more extensive and more diverse immigrant populations could explore these gaps and identify strategies to minimize ostracization from family and community as survivors of domestic violence leave abusive relationships.

By reframing these challenges as opportunities, researchers, social workers, and policymakers can work toward creating safer environments that respect cultural beliefs and values while protecting survivors of domestic violence. By addressing diverse needs and wants through culturally competent support systems and interventions, individuals are empowered to create healthy, safe, and fulfilling lives.

References

Alsinai, A., Reygers, M., DiMascolo, L., Kafka, J., Rowhani-Rahbar, A., Adhia, A., Bowen, D., Shanahan, S., Dalve, K., & Ellyson, A. M. (2023). Use of immigration status for coercive control in domestic violence protection orders. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *8*, 1146102. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1146102

Batalova, J. (2024, March 13). *Article: Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigr.*. Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states

CDC. (2020, April 30). *Violence Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/communicationresources/infographics/ipv.html

El-Moslemany, R., Mellon, L., Tully, L., & McConkey, S. J. (2022). Factors Associated With Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration and Victimization in Asylum Seeking and Refugee Populations: A Systematic Review. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, *23*(3), 827–839. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838020977147

Gillespie, A., Seff, I., Caron, C., Maglietti, M. M., Erskine, D., Poulton, C., & Stark, L. (2022). "The pandemic made us stop and think about who we are and what we want:" using intersectionality to understand migrant and refugee women's experiences of gender-based violence during covid-19. *BMC Public Health*, *22*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13866-7

Goliaei, Z., Chaban, Z., Amrei, S. A., Pashmineh Azar, Y., Afzal, L., Hakim, R., Al-Ani, H. A., Koga, P. M., & Guggenbickler, A. M. (2023). Post-resettlement Intimate Partner Domestic Violence in Afghan and Arab Refugees: A Scoping Review. *Social Sciences*, *12*(12), 651. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12120651

Hulley, J., Bailey, L., Kirkman, G., Gibbs, G. R., Gomersall, T., Latif, A., & Jones, A. (2023). Intimate Partner Violence and Barriers to Help-Seeking Among Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Immigrant Women: A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Global Research. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, *24*(2), 1001–1015. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211050590

Jewkes R., (2002). Intimate partner violence: Causes and prevention. *The Lancet*, 359(9315), 1423-1429. https://doi-org.prox.miracosta.edu/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)08357-5

Johnson, L., Chen, Y., Stylianou, A., & Arnold, A. (2022). Examining the impact of economic abuse on survivors of intimate partner violence: a scoping review. *BMC Public Health*, *22*(1), 1014. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13297-4

Messing, J., Wachter, K., AbiNader, M., Ward-Lasher, A., Njie-Carr, V., Sabri, B., Murray, S., Noor-Oshiro, A., & Campbell, J. (2022). "We Have to Build Trust": Intimate partner violence risk assessment with immigrant and refugee survivors. *Social Work Research*, *46*(1), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svab030

Morrison, A. M., Campbell, J. K., Sharpless, L., & Martin, S. L. (2024). Intimate Partner Violence and Immigration in the United States: A Systematic Review. *Trauma, violence & abuse*, *25*(1), 846–861. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231165690

Nickerson, C. (2024, February 13). *What Is Acculturation and Why It Happens*. Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/acculturation-definition.html

Njie-Carr, V. P. S., Sabri, B., Messing, J. T., Suarez, C., Ward-Lasher, A., Wachter, K., Marea, C. X., & Campbell, J. (2021). Understanding Intimate Partner Violence among Immigrant and Refugee Women: A Grounded Theory Analysis. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *30*(6), 792–810. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2020.1796870

Park, T., Mullins, A., Zahir, N., Salami, B., Lasiuk, G., & Hegadoren, K. (2021). Domestic Violence and Immigrant Women: A Glimpse Behind a Veiled Door. *Violence against women*, *27*(15-16), 2910–2926. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220984174

Rai, A., & Choi, Y. J. (2022). Domestic Violence Victimization among South Asian Immigrant Men and Women in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(17-18), NP15532–NP15567. https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211015262

Rajkumar R. P. (2023). Cultural collectivism, intimate partner violence, and women's mental health: An analysis of data from 151 countries. *Frontiers in sociology*, *8*, 1125771. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2023.1125771

Robinson, C., & Clausen, V. (2021, August 10). *The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence | FBI: Law Enforcement Bulletin*. LEB. https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/the-link-between-animal-cruelty-and-human-violence

Sabri, B., Nnawulezi, N., Njie-Carr, V. P. S., Messing, J., Ward-Lasher, A., Alvarez, C., & Campbell, J. C. (2018). Multilevel Risk and Protective Factors for Intimate Partner Violence Among African, Asian, and Latina Immigrant and Refugee Women: Perceptions of Effective Safety Planning Interventions. *Race and Social Problems*, *10*(4), 348–365. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-018-9247-z

Sabri B., Simonet M., & Campbell J. C. (2018). Risk and protective factors of intimate partner violence among South Asian immigrant women and perceived need for services. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 24*(3), 442-452. https://doi-org.prox.miracosta.edu/10.1037/cdp0000189

Sorokowski, P., Kowal, M., Sternberg, R. J., Aavik, T., Akello, G., Alhabahba, M. M., Alm, C., Amjad, N., Anjum, A., Asao, K., Atama, C. S., Atamtürk Duyar, D., Ayebare, R., Conroy-Beam, D., Bendixen, M., Bensafia, A., Bizumic, B., Boussena, M., Buss, D. M., … Sorokowska, A. (2023). Modernization, collectivism, and gender equality predict love experiences in 45 countries. *Scientific Reports*, *13*(1). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-26663-4

Sotelo, I. (2023, November 21). *Machismo: Definition, History, Traits, Impact*. Verywell Mind. https://www.verywellmind.com/what-does-the-term-machismo-mean-6748458

Tolmie, J., Smith, R., & Wilson, D. (2024). Understanding Intimate Partner Violence: Why Coercive Control Requires a Social and Systemic Entrapment Framework. *Violence Against Women*, *30*(1), 54-74. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231205585

United Nations. (n.d.). *What Is Domestic Abuse?* Retrieved April 5, 2024, from https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse

Wachter, K., Cook Heffron, L., & Dalpe, J. (2021). "We Weren't Ready": Provider perspectives on addressing intimate partner violence among refugees and immigrants in the United States. *Journal of Family Violence*, *37*(2), 235–246. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00285-2

Wachter, K., Dalpe, J., & Heffron, L. C. (2019). Conceptualizations of domestic violence–related needs among women who resettled to the United States as refugees. *Social Work Research*, *43*(4), 207–219. https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svz008

A Narrated Review on the Prevalence of Police Violence in the Disability Community

Riley Murphy, BSW

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Abstract

It was September 10, 2011 when Gilberto Powell was beaten within an inch of his life by police officers in Richmond Heights, Florida. Just 22 years old, Powell had Down Syndrome and was utilizing a medical colostomy bag. As he was walking, police stopped him under the suspicion the bulge from his colostomy bag was a gun. Startled and confused, Powell resisted the officers' pat down and was then beaten severely before his father was able to intervene. The police officers later revealed they were "unaware" that Powell even had Down Syndrome ("Michelle Cusseaux", n.d.). Gilberto Powell is just one of many individuals who identify with the Disability community and whose life has been dramatically changed due to police violence. In reality, there are countless stories very similar to Powell's. A recent study found that up to half of those killed through acts of police violence identify with the Disability community. In addition, many well-known cases of police brutality involved a member of the Disability community (Perry & Carter-Long, 2016 as cited in Mueller et al., 2019). Many law enforcement agencies are ill-equipped and not fully educated on how to interact with those in the Disability community during high-stress scenarios (Engelman & Deardorff, 2016 and Salerno-Ferraro & Schuller, 2020). In combination, these topics bring up a much-needed conversation regarding how police violence disproportionately affects the Disability community. The purpose of this literature review is to: 1) recount experiences of police violence from those in the Disability community, 2) investigate what type of disability-related educational services or programs are offered or required in law enforcement agencies, and 3) discuss the implications of these findings. The overall goal of this review is to promote general disability visibility while also emphasizing the need for new and improved police training and programing on the Disability community in order to ensure the safety and well-being of those within it.

Keywords: disability, police violence, community, CIT training

About the author: *Riley graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work degree from UIUC in May 2024. This fall, she began her course work in the Master of Social Work clinical mental health program at Illinois.*

Introduction

Unbeknownst by some, the Disability community makes up one of the largest minoritized populations in the United States. From the years 2011 to 2015, around 14% of the United States population ages 12 and over, and not confined to an institution, identified as having a disability (Harrell, 2017 as cited in U.S Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics). This diverse community includes educators, advocates, and change makers. Yet more importantly, it is a community deserving of equal access and equitable rights. Unfortunately, many instances exist in which members of this community are confronted with disrespect, hate, and negligence. In recent years, one disparity that has caught the public's attention is the brutal and inhumane way in which some law enforcement officers and agencies have been interacting with those who identify as having a disability -- either invisible or visible. When discussing the different types of disabilities, there are two main categories the disability may fall under. One category is visible disabilities which usually refers to a disability that can be visibly seen, such as someone who uses a wheelchair. The second category is invisible disabilities which are disabilities not obvious to the naked eye, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia. In this literature review, the topic of police brutality within the Disability community will be assessed and discussed in accordance with the current educational programming that exists for law enforcement agencies on the Disability community. In addition, narratives on those in the Disability community who were victims of police violence have been interwoven in order to pay tribute to their story and amplify the voices of others. The ultimate goal is to promote the social movement of disability visibility and share the stories of the meaningful lives that were taken from us too soon.

ETHAN SAYLOR: A Tragic Trip to the Movies

On January 12th, 2013, Ethan Saylor, a 26-year-old man with Down Syndrome, drove with his caregiver to a Maryland movie theater in order to see the movie, *Zero Dark Thirty*. As Ethan sat in the theater and watched the action unfold on the screen in front of him, none of his loved ones knew this would be their last day with him.

After the movie ended and the lights began to flicker on, Ethan and his caregiver left the theater. While Ethan's caregiver returned to the parking lot to pull the car up to the theater entrance, Ethan re-entered the theater hoping to see the movie he loved again. The manager saw this and approached Ethan to explain that if he hadn't paid for another ticket, he wouldn't be allowed to see the movie again. Since Ethan's caregiver usually handled the money for him when they went on outings, he became confused and frazzled resulting in some raised voices and cuss words.

As Ethan sat in the theater, the manager proceeded to call security in order to remove him. At this point, the security officers attempted to forcibly remove Ethan as his caregiver made desperate pleas for them to stop.

As quoted in WUSA9, Ethan's aide shared, "I kept telling them why don't you just let me go in there, give me like a few minutes with him, I'd just give him a big hug and he'd be right out, but they wouldn't listen. All of a sudden, I hear kicking and screaming and 'ouch, Mary, mom, that hurts, don't touch me, get off,' and so I run in and I'm crying hysterically, I don't know what to do. I see him jumping up in the air and screaming, so I turn around, because I was scared, and I turn back around, and all of a sudden, they're on the floor. and all the noise, it's just completely silent" (Alfarone, 2018).

Ethan died eight hours later due to a fractured larynx. The security team had forced him to the ground and their use of brute force broke his larynx and he died by asphyxiation. So, I wonder, was Ethan's life equivalent to the worth of a single movie ticket?

Narratives written based on information found in David M. Perry, 2013; A Brief Summary of the Story; Debra Alfarone, 2018.

Literature Review

Prevalence of Violence and Police Brutality in the Disability Community

In recent years, acts of violence against the Disability community, such as those caused by police officers and law enforcement agencies, have steadily increased. However, there is little media attention and data about these instances and their colossal impacts on the well-being of the Disability community. Or, on the other hand, news media sources do not mention the fact that the victim of violence identified as being a member of the Disability community (Perry & Carter-Long, 2016). Therefore, any current data we have may be skewed by this inattention to

detail or just general lack of coverage and attention. As authors David M. Perry and Lawrence Carter-Long (2016) explain, “When we leave disability out of the conversation or only consider it as an individual medical problem, we miss the ways in which disability intersects with other factors that often lead to police violence” (p. 1). Hence, it is important to note that identifying as a member of the Disability community not only results in challenges related to accessibility, but combined with other intersecting identities, results in an individual becoming more vulnerable to acts of violence and general systematic oppression.

Even though there is not much data on this topic, there are some studies that have been observant and vigilant in their research and data recording. For instance, Perry and Carter-Long (2016) conducted a media study to more closely examine the gap between general acts of violence, as well as police violence against the Disability community, and the lack of media coverage. They discovered that, compared to other minority groups within the United States, those who identify as being disabled make up one-third to one-half of those killed in instances of police brutality with law enforcement (Perry & Carter-Long, 2016 as cited in Mueller et al., 2019). In addition to Perry and Carter-Long’s study, there have been numerous reports published on the pervasiveness of violence within the Disability community. In a statistical report published by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, it was explained that in 2015 around 29.5 per 1,000 persons aged 12 or older who identified as a part of the Disability community were victims of violence. Compared to the victimization rate of those not a part of the Disability community (11.8 per 1,000 individuals), this victimization rate was 2.5 times higher than average (U.S Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017). Even though this data was collected from 2009 to 2015, the sentiment still rings true: our current educational programming and form of policing may not consider those within the Disability community.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training

One of the newer and more popular forms of training programs that has been adopted by many law enforcement agencies is the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training (CIT International, n.d.). While CIT programs can look different based on an agency's time, access to resources, and funding, the general goal stays the same: to form a community-based partnership with law enforcement officials, mental or behavioral health professionals, and individuals who live with mental illness or disorders. So in this sense, CIT Training is used as an umbrella term many states, cities, and counties use to describe their program. The goal is by creating and facilitating these partnerships, a more compassionate and empathetic crisis response team can provide treatment rather than place an individual in the criminal legal system due to their invisible disability (CIT International, n.d.).

Generally speaking, there have been many success stories that have emerged from the implementation of CIT Training (e.g. Engelman & Deardorff, 2016; Kelly & Hassett-Walker, 2016; Paraniuk-Talesnick, 2019; Salerno-Ferraro & Schuller, 2020;). For instance in Eugene, Oregon, the founders of the White Bird Clinic have been seeing progress with their mobile crisis response program called Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS). Similar to the general intention behind CIT Training, the goal of CAHOOTS is to provide a "unique response to non-violent situations…in order to assess, aid, and make a plan to help" (Parafiniuk-Talesnick, 2019, p. 2). Due to their knowledgeable and apt team, in 2014 CAHOOTS responded to 9,662 emergency calls. In 2018, they responded to 17,440 calls. Even though creating a mobile crisis response team was daunting to members of the White Bird Clinic, it ended up being greatly beneficial to members of the community and supported many other emergency services in the area. The combination of CIT Training and their mobile unit has been able to benefit the

community of Eugene by providing emergency services that are more holistic and take into account many invisible disabilities related to mental health. Their program has become so successful it has led to other states initiating similar programs and reaching out for their expertise (Parafiniuk-Talesnick, 2019).

Representation of Disability Community

Though many CIT Trainings and programs have been embraced by communities and have been rewarding, there are still many disparities within these trainings and other various educational services geared toward law enforcement agencies. The main disparity is many educational programs do not include insight or opinions from those in the Disability community which can lead to a lack of representation. This sentiment was evidenced in a study conducted by researchers Alisha C. Salerno-Ferraro and Regina A. Schuller where they distributed an online survey to 35 adults who identified as having autism spectrum disorder (ASD). When completing this survey, participants were asked to share their lived experiences with ASD and provide recommendations on how to improve interactions based on those lived experiences. In the responses, many participants described how there are a variety of communication differences between someone with ASD and someone without. For example, when overstimulated or overwhelmed, someone with ASD may resort to “selective mutism” or “shutting down” rather than choose to verbally communicate (Slaerno-Ferraro & Schuller, 2020). When this happens, as some participants mentioned, those with ASD are afraid their silence could be interpreted as refusal to engage rather than attributed to their anxiety or ASD.

Moreover, many individuals with ASD who responded to the survey had a variety of suggestions on how to improve current tactics between police officers and those with ASD. One of them being those with ASD should be involved in the creation and implementation of training

programs for police officers. When asked whether or not it is important for police officers to be trained and knowledgeable on ASD one respondent stressed, “Yes. But only if this includes interactions with adult autistics ourselves, not advocates speaking for and about us who are non-autistics” (Slaerno-Ferraro & Schuller, 2020, pg. 6). Even though consultations from experts or advocates are useful and helpful, it can be more valuable to learn from those who are invested stakeholders (i.e. in the case of this study, those with ASD). Furthermore, some survey respondents provided tangible ways in which those with ASD can be involved and represented. In this situation, participants proposed police officers could hold meetings with neurodiverse individuals or receive training based on suggestions from neurodiverse individuals. If these suggestions were implemented, it could allow those with ASD to have a seat at the table when designing educational programming as it relates to their own lived experiences.

Intersection of Race and Disability Status

When discussing the pervasiveness of those with disabilities becoming victims of police violence, it would be remiss to not discuss the intersection of race and how it presents itself within this topic. While some studies include the intersection of race and disability, these studies are still far and few between. Furthermore, some conclusions drawn from existing studies on this topic are contradictory and need further examination. In Perry and Carter-Long’s paper (2016), it was argued that race and disability come together to increase the risk level of violence (as cited in Mueller et al., 2019). On the other hand, the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics (2017) found in their report although those who identified as being multiracial and part of the Disability community had the highest rates of violent victimization, there was no significant difference in these victimization rates as compared to other racial and ethnic minorities (as cited in Mueller et al., 2019). Since these two reports found contrary conclusions,

more efforts should be made in current research in order to distinctly and separately analyze this intersection of identity.

Even though there is little research specifically studying the intersection of race and disability, that has not stopped many advocates and members of these communities from making their voices heard. In fact, some Black activists in the Disability community have critiqued the Back Lives Matter movement for not including them in their liberation. In the year of 2017, an organization called the Harriet Tubman Collective, which consists of many Black disabled allies and advocates, released a statement where they claimed, “Ableism and audism are present in every institution named by the Movement as a perpetrator of violence against Black bodies and communities. That a movement whose primary focus is ending police brutality ignored the violence experienced by Black Disabled and Deaf people is problematic…” (Harriet Tubman Collective, 2017). By not addressing the influence race has in this problem, researchers are leaving out important pieces of this discussion and excluding the voices of those who have been impacted. Therefore, research that has addressed race in their studies of this topic should be critically analyzed to serve as an example for future research endeavors.

Implications

This literature review suggests further exploration of police violence in the Disability community is critically needed and highlights a number of follow-up actions. For example, law enforcement agencies and police officers should be interviewed to gauge how they perceive their current educational programming on the Disability community or if there are any programs or policies in their departments. Some literature reviewed in this search began with approaching local law enforcement agencies to inquire what they felt should be added or fixed about the educational materials they receive on those with disabilities. For instance, authors Alina

Engelman and Julianna Deardorff published the results they discovered during their mixed-methods evaluation on cultural competence training given to law enforcement personnel on responding to instances of domestic violence (DV) with the deaf and hard of hearing (HH). In their published results they conclude, “understanding and responding to the needs of law enforcement with some of the 36 million Deaf/HH Americans can significantly advance culturally competent DV response for all populations” (Engelman & Deardorff, 2016, p. 184). So, by gathering a consensus on the attitudes toward the Disability community and the educational programming provided, changes can be implemented when creating new and improved programs.

From there, researchers, advocates, and other stakeholders will be better able to determine what type of educational services or materials would deliver optimal results for their local law enforcement agencies. One program that has been previously discussed and has been found effective, is the CIT Training program (e.g. Engelman & Deardorff, 2016; Kelly & Hassett-Walker, 2016; Paraniuk-Talesnick, 2019; Salerno-Ferraro & Schuller, 2020). Inspired by the success of the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, many other cities such as Austin, Chicago, Oakland, Denver, New York City, and Portland, have begun to fund similar programs in their communities. The hope is by funding and supporting CIT Training programs, these cities can replicate similar success. However, it is important communities go beyond the routine CIT Training and cater to the populations and communities they aim to serve. An article published by authors Henry J. Steadman and David Morrissette, discussed the ideal framework of a CIT Training and stressed the overall goal should be emphasizing the importance of collaboration between police officers and behavioral health specialists (2016). They conclude, “it is time to go beyond CIT training as the sole law enforcement response. Behavioral health and law

enforcement personnel need to be engaged jointly in designing, implementing, and operating all phases of our evolving crisis response and crisis continuum" (Steadman & Morrissette, 2016, p. 1056). To go beyond the basics of these trainings, there needs to be a partnership between behavioral health experts and leaders of law enforcement. Furthermore, as discussed previously, these programs need to consider inviting members of the Disability community to be involved and ensure there is an emphasis on the intersection of race and disability. By prioritizing collaboration, community-specific training, and inclusion of diverse voices, communities can ensure their CIT programs not only replicate existing successes but also pave the way for a more equitable and effective future of crisis response.

KAJIEME POWELL: Twelve Shots Later

In St. Louis, Missouri, a local shop owner called the police after 25-year-old Kajieme Powell had allegedly stolen some donuts and soft drinks from his store. Witnesses of the situation noted Kajieme's behavior was erratic and slightly uncontrolled leading many to believe he was experiencing symptoms of mental illness. Furthermore, he was walking around armed with a knife.

On August 19th, 2014, Kajieme was shot 12 times within 15 seconds of the police officers arriving at the scene.

Sent to control and de-escalate the situation, the officers arrived at the scene and pulled their squad car up to where he was pacing back and forth on the sidewalk. As they emerged from their vehicle, they shouted at Kajieme to get down. Kajieme turned away from the officers and stepped onto a raised car park before turning back toward the officers and taking a step.

Twelve shots later and it was over.

As Kajieme's story gained media attention, many people commented on the officers' excessive use of force. Why didn't the officers reach for their taser instead? Or, if they truly felt the need to use a gun, why not shoot him once in the foot? Why did he have to die?

Narratives written based on information found in McGreal, 2014 and Lipman, 2015.

DISABILITY SOLIDARITY: Completing the "Vision for Black Lives"

We are not an afterthought.
We are here.
We are fighting for all of our lives.
We are Black. We are Disabled. We are Deaf.
We are Black.
Our Black Disabled Lives Matter.
Our Black Deaf Lives Matter.

Excerpt from The Harriet Tubman Collective.

Conclusion

This literature review has explored the complex and extensive issue of police violence within the Disability community. The stark contrast between the vibrant lives of individuals with disabilities and the brutal reality of their interactions with law enforcement highlights the urgent need for change. Moving forward, research and reform efforts must prioritize collaboration with disability rights advocates and individuals within the Disability community. These diverse perspectives are crucial for creating a more comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and empowering approach to law enforcement education and programming. Moreover, the narratives included throughout this review serve as a powerful testament to the lives lost and the voices silenced. Through continued sharing of these stories and advocacy for change, the social movement of disability visibility can continue to evolve. Finally, further research is critical to fully understand the scope of police violence within the Disability community and develop effective solutions such as culturally competent CIT Training models. By actively pursuing these research avenues and implementing effective solutions, we can begin to dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuate police brutality against the Disability community.

MICHELLE CUSSEAUX: More than a Statistic

It was a hot and dry August in Phoenix, Arizona, when 50-year-old Michelle Cusseaux was shot point blank in the chest outside of her own apartment by the hands of local Phoenix police officers. Even though the sun was shining, the day quickly turned dark for Michelle's family members and loved ones.

Diagnosed with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, Michelle struggled with mental health and suffered from frequent manic episodes throughout her life. On this day, Michelle had called a local behavioral and mental health center and began to yell and threaten the individual who picked up the phone. Upon hearing about this via Michelle's caseworker, Michelle's mother Francis Garret decided it would be best to have her daughter picked up and taken to an inpatient mental health facility since she was in California and physically unable to.

When the officers arrived on the scene, Michelle had explained she was "ok" and that they should "just go away" (as quoted by Francis Garret in Democracy Now!, n.d.). At this point, Michelle was at the front door of her apartment talking to the officers through her screen door, which was locked. Yet, one officer ignored Michelle's responses and decided to pry open her locked screen door, invading her home. Alarmed, Michelle grabbed a hammer in self-defense, resulting in the officers immediately identifying her as an imminent threat and shooting her in the chest.

Afterwards, one of Michelle's neighbors called Francis and explained the situation as best she could. Francis requested to speak with one of the officers but was instead met with the sounds of her daughter being loaded onto a gurney and driven to the hospital.

This is what Francis had to say regarding the actions of the Phoenix police officers: "This was the result. I didn't phone them and ask for my daughter to be killed. I did not ask for Michelle to be another statistic here, another homicide. I did not call them for that reason" (Green, 2014).

Acting out of nothing but love and concern for her daughter, Francis did not even consider her call could have led to her daughter's death. And how could she? Michelle's life didn't deserve to end like this, and neither should anyone else's.

Narratives written based on information found in Crip Justice; Stanford University, 2020; Diana Green, 2014; Police Killing of Michelle Cusseaux Raises Questions of Wrongful Death & Handling of Mentally Ill, 2015.

Acknowledgments

As I began to write this paper, I knew I wanted to include a narrative aspect to share the stories of those whose lives have been taken from us too soon because of police violence. Therefore, I want to emphasize the narratives that have been included in this paper are important, and as allies and advocates we need to ensure their memories live on. Another purpose of including these narratives is to serve as a reminder to those on the forefront of social justice and

social science research: research is more than just numbers and statistics. Each number calculated, graph created, and statistic sourced is a human being with a meaningful life. As we continue our work in these spaces and with these communities, I would encourage you to amplify the voices of those who have been minoritized and spread that message through your work.

References

A brief summary of the story – the road we've shared. (n.d.). Retrieved March 2, 2023, from https://theroadweveshared.com/justice-for-ethan/a-brief-summary-of-the-story

An alternative to police: Mental health team responds to emergencies in Oregon. (2019, October 23). https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mental-health-team-responds-to-emergencies-oregon-alternative-to-police-2019-10-23/

CNN, D. M. P., Special to. (2013, August 29). Justice for Down syndrome man who died in movie theater. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2013/08/29/opinion/perry-down-syndrome-death/index.html

Collective, H. T. (2017). Disability Solidarity: Completing the" Vision for Black Lives". Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, 69-72.

Cit international—Home. (n.d.). Retrieved June 30, 2024, from https://www.citinternational.org/

Engelman, A., & Deardorff, J. (2016). Cultural competence training for law enforcement responding to domestic violence emergencies with the deaf and hard of hearing: A mixed-methods evaluation. Health promotion practice, 17(2), 177-185.

Finally, justice for Ethan, man with Down Syndrome who died at hands of movie theater security. (n.d.). Wusa9.Com. Retrieved March 2, 2023, from https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/maryland/finally-justice-for-ethan-man-with-down-syndrome-who-died-at-hands-of-movie-theater-security/65-551770226

Harrell, E. (2017). Crime against persons with disabilities, 2009-2015-Statistical tables. Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved July 13, 2017.

Kelly, E., & Hassett-Walker, C. (2016). The training of New Jersey emergency service first responders in autism awareness. Police Practice and Research, 17(6), 543-554.

Kubiak, S., Comartin, E., Milanovic, E., Bybee, D., Tillander, E., Rabaut, C., ... & Schneider, S. (2017). Countywide implementation of crisis intervention teams: Multiple methods, measures and sustained outcomes. Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 35(5-6), 456-469.

McGreal, C. (2014, August 21). Police release video of fatal Kajieme Powell shooting in St. Louis. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/21/police-release-video-of-kajieme-powell-shooting-in-st-louis

Meny, E. (2016, February 5). CAHOOTS an alternative to traditional police, ambulance response. KVAL. https://kval.com/news/local/theres-a-growing-awareness-that-alternatives-to-law-enforcement-are-needed

Michelle cusseaux – cripjustice. Org. (n.d.). Retrieved March 23, 2023, from https://cripjustice.org/michelle-cusseaux/

Morabito, M. S., Socia, K., Wik, A., & Fisher, W. H. (2017). The nature and extent of police use of force in encounters with people with behavioral health disorders. International journal of Law and psychiatry, 50, 31-37.

Morgan, J. N. (2021). Policing under disability law. Stan. L. Rev., 73, 1401.

Mueller, C. O., Forber-Pratt, A. J., & Sriken, J. (2019). Disability: Missing from the conversation of violence. Journal of Social Issues, 75(3), 707-725.

Myers, C. A. (2017). Police Violence against People with Mental Disabilities: The Immutable Duty under the ADA to Reasonable Accommodate during Arrest. Vand. L. Rev., 70, 1393.

Nelson, C. A. (2016). Frontlines: Policing at the nexus of race and mental health. Fordham Urb. LJ, 43, 615.

Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in state and local government. (n.d.). Retrieved February 18, 2023, from https://archive.ada.gov/reg2.html

Officers will not face charges in August 2014 shooting death of Kajieme Powell. (2015, November 3). STLPR. https://news.stlpublicradio.org/government-politics-issues/2015-11-03/officers-will-not-face-charges-in-august-2014-shooting-death-of-kajieme-powell

O'Hara, M. (2016, March 29). Up to half of people killed by US police are disabled. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/mar/29/media-must-report-police-violence-towards-disabled-people

Parafiniuk-Talesnick, T. (2019). In cahoots: How the unlikely pairing of cops and hippies became a national model. The Register-Guard.

Phoenix police shoot 50-year-old woman during mental health call. (2014, August 29). World Socialist Web Site. https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2014/08/29/phoe-a29.html

Police killing of Michelle Cusseaux raises questions of wrongful death & handling of mentally ill. (n.d.). Democracy Now! Retrieved March 23, 2023, from http://www.democracynow.org/2015/5/20/police_killing_of_michelle_cusseaux_raises

Pugliese, T. (2017). Dangerous intersection: Protecting people with mental disabilities from police brutality during arrests using the Americans with Disabilities Act. Hofstra L. Rev., 46, 765.

Saleh, A. Z., Appelbaum, P. S., Liu, X., Stroup, T. S., & Wall, M. (2018). Deaths of people with mental illness during interactions with law enforcement. International journal of law and psychiatry, 58, 110-116.

Salerno-Ferraro, A. C., & Schuller, R. A. (2020). Perspectives from the ASD community on police interactions: Challenges & recommendations. Research in developmental disabilities, 105, 103732.

Sanyaolu, O., Olaniyan, A., Naa Akuyea Addy, T. et al. A Scoping Review of Research to Assist Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Interactions with Police. Adv Neurodev Disord 6, 119–135 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s41252-022-00240-2

Steadman, H. J., & Morrissette, D. (2016). Police responses to persons with mental illness: Going beyond CIT training. Psychiatric services, 67(10), 1054-1056.

University, © Stanford, Stanford, & California 94305. (2020, August 5). Michelle Cusseaux. Say Their Names - Spotlight at Stanford. https://exhibits.stanford.edu/saytheirnames/feature/michelle-cusseaux

Wiener, J. (n.d.). Rethinking 911: New California efforts seek to shift mental health calls away from police. The Stockton Record. Retrieved February 23, 2023, from https://www.recordnet.com/story/news/state/2020/07/05/rethinking-911-new-california-efforts-seek-to-shift-mental-health-calls-away-from-police/112692152/

Wright, A. (2016). Police interactions with individuals with developmental disabilities: Use of force, training, and implicit bias. Training, and Implicit Bias (May 18, 2016).

JUSWR

Policy Analysis and Review

Enhancing the Transition into Adulthood for Foster Youth:

Analysis of Illinois House Bill 1293

Jocelyn Fetting, BSW

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

This paper explores the transition of foster youth into adulthood, focusing specifically on the challenges during the "aging out" process. Illinois House Bill 1293 extends foster care services until age 23, aiming to improve outcomes. However, the policy lacks clarity on self-sufficiency criteria, hindering effective implementation. Recommendations include comprehensively defining self-sufficiency and empowering youth to advocate for extended support– if desired or necessary. Tailored service planning is essential to address individual needs and prevent adverse outcomes. While Illinois House Bill 1293 is a step forward, clarity, accountability, and targeted support are crucial for successful transitions into adulthood for foster youth.

Keywords: foster youth, aging out, Illinois House Bill 1293, extended foster care

About the Author: *Jocelyn earned her Bachelor's in Social Work in August, 2024 from UIUC. After spending nearly a decade within the Illinois child welfare system, she is interested in examining strengths and weaknesses of policies and practices that influence the success outcomes of former and current foster youth..*

Social Issue

When does an individual become solely responsible for their own wellbeing? For most, this starts at age 18– when one is considered a legal adult; however, this age can fluctuate due to individual circumstances. As it pertains to youth in the American child welfare system, this commencement can happen at 18, 21, or 23 years old depending on the state and their governing laws through a process called "aging out." "Aging out" is a general term used for when a youth in care becomes ineligible to receive further benefits because of their emancipation from the child welfare system. This can happen in situations where biological parents remain a risk or adoptive homes are unavailable, consequently making permanency through reunification and adoption unachievable. According to the National Foster Youth Institute (2017), "children with a diagnosed disability of any kind, including a learning disability, are twice as likely to age out of the foster care system." Additionally, youth who enter the foster system after the age of 12 have a 40% chance of aging out (NFYI, 2017). Nationally, 23,000 children will age out of the U.S. foster system every year (NFYI, 2017). Emancipation is always acknowledged by the youth in care and their support system, as such, anticipation for this commencement can often be mind-consuming.

Due to the circumstances that justified their removal from their home as well as their experiences within foster care, foster youth who age out are more likely to undergo an extremely adverse transition into adulthood. These young adults experience post-traumatic stress disorder at a rate nearly five times higher than the general early adult population (Key Facts and Statistics, 2023). Because youth in care rely heavily on the resources they receive from their child welfare agency, 20 percent of foster youth will become homeless the day they age out (Finally Family Homes, 2022). Also, less than 3% of youth who age out of care will receive a post-secondary

degree (NFYI, 2017). Additionally, 25% are incarcerated within 2 years of aging out and 70% of young women will become pregnant by the age of 21 (Balistreri, 2023). The micro-level systems impacting youth in care ineffectively prepare these individuals to age out of the system, and, in turn, they have fewer opportunities for success. If this issue goes unaddressed and youth aging out of care remain unsupported, under-resourced, and inopportune, then rates of incarceration, teen-pregnancy, and homelessness will continue to increase for this population.

Current Policy Provisions

The transition to adulthood after aging out is difficult for foster youth all over the country, including Illinois. According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2021), of the estimated 248,669 youth who exited foster care in Illinois during the 2019 federal fiscal year, "8 percent were emancipated" (aged out). With the goal of increasing overall well-being and success rates of youth who age out of foster care, Illinois House Bill 1293 was amended to the Children and Family Services Act. This bill redefines "children" who are wards of the state to include individuals under the age of 23, an increase from the current age of 21. Thus, while a youth in care can formally age out at 21 in Illinois, there can be a formal request made by their caseworker for an extension of services which would continue until the age of 23. To be eligible for this formal request, a youth in care must be deemed incompetent to care for themself. For example, if a youth living in a residential home was at risk for homelessness following discontinued services, a formal request could be made to extend services until said youth reaches 23 years old.

Simply put, Illinois House Bill 1293 provides a potential continuation of services to youth currently in care until the age of 23. These services include case management, homemakers, counseling, parent education, day care, and emergency assistance and advocacy

(HB 1293, 2023). To assess and meet the needs of children and families, comprehensive family-based services, assessments, respite care, in-home health services, and transportation to such services may be available through the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Currently, other than potential homelessness following the discontinuation of services, it is unclear under which circumstances deem a youth in care as incompetent; however, these benefits are only available to youth who have not reached self-sufficiency, as written in HB 1293.

A crucial part of extending these resources is funding. During the 2020 fiscal year, Illinois spent $1,238,584,971 on child welfare services (Rosinsky, Fischer & Haas, 2023). This money is sourced from federal, state, and local funds. Federal funding for youth transitioning from foster care is allocated through sources such as the Title IV-E Foster Care Program and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. Total expenditures toward child welfare services are distributed into six categories: preventative services, child protective services, out-of-home placements, adoption and guardianship, services and assistance for older youth, and other. According to information from Child Welfare Financing SFY 2020 (2023), Illinois focused 4% of its total expenditures toward services and assistance for older youth. Because of the extension of services for older youth it can be hypothesized that this percentage will increase.

Analysis

Illinois House Bill 1293 was amended in 2023; therefore, the impact of extending foster care to the age of 23 is currently unknown. However, in 2008, congress passed the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, providing federal funding to states who decided to extend foster care from 18 to 21 years old. Illinois was among many states that extended foster care and received additional federal support to serve older youth in care. With

this being considered, presumed strengths and weaknesses of HB 1293 will be primarily drawn from data comparing youth who age out of foster care at 18 and 21, both in Illinois and nationally, to other states that extended foster care until the age of 23.

Strengths of Policy

Youth who are provided with an extension of child welfare services are seen to have a more opportune transition into adulthood. California was one of the first states in the United States to extend foster care until a youth reaches 21 years old. A study examining the impact of extended foster care on California's youth found that every additional year a youth spends receiving services greatly impacts an opportune transition into adulthood. The study found each year increases the probability of the youth completing high school by 8% and has a 5-12% increase in the probability of enrolling in college. Additionally, each year the number of quarters the youth was employed between their 21st and 23rd birthdays increased, which then increased the amount of money they had in their bank accounts by $650. The final point made by the study was that each year increased the odds of youth feeling supported socially (Courtney, Okpych & Park, 2021). Furthermore, there were significant decreases in the odds of being food insecure, homeless or couch-surfing, and being arrested (Courtney, Okpych & Park, 2021). Under the assumption that Illinois has similar efficiency in their support of older youth in care as in California, it can be inferred HB 1293 will increase educational fulfillment, rates of employment, social support and decrease homelessness, food insecurity, and incarceration among youth who age out of care.

Weaknesses of Policy (Including Distributive Justice)

While this bill aims to support greater opportunities for youth who age out, there are significant hypothesized weaknesses as it pertains to the bill's efficacy. Focusing specifically on

the conditions of the Illinois house bill, the extension of child welfare services is only made available to youth in care who have not reached a state of *self-sufficiency*. Self-sufficiency is not clearly defined in HB 1293 and thus creates an issue of who is eligible for these continued services. Additionally, as it seems equitable to extend services to those in need (although *who* needs them is undefined), the adequacy of this assistance remains lacking. Results of the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (otherwise known as the Midwest Study) showed allowing individuals to remain in foster care delays the onset of homelessness but does not prevent it (Dworsky & Courtney, 2010). In addition to delaying, instead of preventing the onset of homelessness, extended care does not appear to positively influence other outcomes, including youths' physical and behavioral health and their likelihood of experiencing victimization (Courtney, Okpych & Park, 2021). Furthermore, the equality of the services being distributed remains of great concern. The extension of care is seen to benefit males more than females in regards to homelessness, but females more than males in regards to earnings between the ages of 21 and 23. However, overall the extension of foster care is seen to reap better consequences for youth who identify as White than their counterparts as it pertains to completing high school and college enrollment, food insecurity, and homelessness– especially African-American youth in care who benefit less than all other racial and ethnic groups (Courtney, Okpych & Park, 2021).

Policy Recommendations

Through trends and statistics of the previous extension of foster care and the basis of HB 1293, there are two primary recommendations that can be used to enhance the overall transition into adulthood for youth who age out of foster care.

Define Self-Sufficiency

Because self-sufficiency is not clearly defined in Illinois House Bill 1293, it is unclear who receives services through this extension of foster care. To improve the bill's efficacy, the self-sufficiency of older youth in care should be defined using multiple categories including but not limited to secure housing, mental and physical health, and job and/or educational security. The evaluation of these requirements should refer to the youth's current circumstances and the inferred outcomes of the youth after no longer receiving services. All should be outlined in the bill to create clear jurisdiction for those eligible for support until the age of 23. Additionally, instead of authorized personnel being solely in charge of the decision to extend services, it should be outlined in the bill that if a youth in care does not feel adequately prepared to transition into adulthood at the age of 21, they, themselves, can advocate for an extension of services.

Adjusting Service Planning for Youth in Care

To best support the transition into adulthood, there needs to be improved services accessible to all youth in care. Services that do not just delay the onset of adverse situations but prevent them altogether. If a youth is deemed eligible to receive an extension of services, those services should specifically target the categories the youth is insufficient in. For example, a youth who aspires to attend a university but is not on the "college track" should be networked with university and college resources to aid them in their endeavors. Moreso, a youth at risk of homelessness upon the discontinuation of services should receive support in creating a plan for when they officially age out, information regarding affordable housing locations, and assistance networking with those who can provide temporary housing relief if/when necessary. Finally, all individuals overseeing the cases of older youth in care should make *all* resources available regardless of the probability of an opportune outcome.

Conclusion

Youth in the child welfare system are more likely to experience an adverse transition into adulthood than youth in the general population. Without intentionality regarding the additional services, the extension of foster care will not be enough to counteract this reality. Currently, services are not meeting the needs of youth, making them feel lost, alone, and unimportant. To disrupt this and assure a healthier transition, there must be more guidance regarding expectations tied to this bill. The additional time will only be beneficial if there are effective services to complement it. For older youth, foster care services should prepare youth for a healthy and stable adjustment instead of maintaining them where they are. These recommendations will create more access, usage, and a stronger definition of those eligible for such resources.

References

Balistreri, E. (2023, March 3). What happens to kids who age out of foster care? https://www.hopearmy.org/articles/what-happens-to-kids-who-age-out-of-foster-care

Courtney, M. E., Okpych, N. J., & Park S. (Ethan). (2021). *Report from CalYOUTH: Findings on the relationships between extended foster care and youths' outcomes at age 23*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Dworsky, A. & Courtney, M. E. (2010). Assessing the Impact of Extending Care beyond Age 18 on Homelessness: Emerging Findings from the Midwest Study. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Foster Care Statistics 2019 - Child Welfare information gateway. Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021, March). https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/foster.pdf

Illinois's Children 2022. Child Welfare League of America. (2022). https://www.cwla.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Illinois-Fact-Sheet-2022.pdf

Key facts and statistics. National Foster Care Month - Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2023, May). https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/awareness/facts/#top

Rosinsky, K., Fischer, M., & Haas, M. (2023). *Child Welfare Financing SFY 2020: A Survey of Federal, State, and Local Expenditures*. https://doi.org/10.56417/669l9085q

Smith, M. (2023, February 15). *Budget proposal overview - Illinois*. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

https://dcfs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dcfs/documents/about-us/documents/budget-proposal-overview-fy2024.pdf

42 aging out of foster care statistics. Finally Family Homes. (2022, October 17). https://finallyfamilyhomes.org/the-problem/

51 useful aging out of foster care statistics: Social Race Media. NFYI. (2017, May 26). https://nfyi.org/51-useful-aging-out-of-foster-care-statistics-social-race-media/#:~:text=Children%20with%20a%20diagnosed%20disability,of%2018%20from%20the%20system

Appendix

Introduction to HB 1293

Amends the Children and Family Services Act. Redefines the term "children" to include persons under the age of 23 (rather than 21) who were committed to the Department of Children and Family Services pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act or the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 and who continue under the jurisdiction of the court. Requires the Department to provide or authorize child welfare services, aimed at assisting minors to achieve sustainable self-sufficiency as independent adults, for any minor eligible for the reinstatement to wardship pursuant to the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, whether or not such reinstatement is sought or allowed, provided that the minor consents to such services and has not yet attained the age of 23 (rather than 21). Makes conforming changes in the Juvenile Court Act of 1987, the Illinois Identification Card Act, and the Medical Assistance Article of the Illinois Public Aid Code.

Research Based Poster Presentation

How Many School Social Workers are in the United States?

Brandon Seidensticker, Tracy Mason, Arielle Britten

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

This research project aimed to compile data on the total number of school social workers in the United States. Dr. Brenda Lindsey and a team of eight research students led the project on behalf of the National School Social Work Census project. Research can be unpredictable, and the process of determining the number of school social workers in each state varies. Numerous methods were employed to gather information, such as making phone calls, sending emails, submitting Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, utilizing LinkedIn, and extracting data from each state's Department of Education website. Our team faced numerous challenges and needed to think creatively to gain access to the information and assistance we needed. The goal was to showcase our progress and shed light on the lack of organization and accountability surrounding the number of school social workers in each state.

Keywords: Department of Education, student services, school counselors, school social workers.

About the Authors*: Brandon is a junior BSW student. He is interested in examining substance abuse and suicide rates in the veteran population and evaluating the resources available to veterans and their families while undergoing the military-to-civilian transition.*

Tracy is a junior BSW student. She is interested in research projects examining policy reform, and practices surrounding harm reduction within the veteran population, and those experiencing substance use disorder.

Arielle is a junior BSW student. She is interested in examining infant and early childhood mental health, facilitation with parent-child interactions, and pediatric social work.

Introduction

The objective of this research initiative was to comprehensively assess and analyze the presence of school social workers in schools across the United States. Every state has specific policies and regulations for determining and keeping track of school social workers. These policies differ in terms of the education, certification, and credentials required to be considered a school social worker. By collecting data on the number of school social workers in the United States, we can gain insight into each state's standards for maintaining records and the requirements for holding this position. Our goal was to compile a census of U.S. school social workers to better understand the challenges involved in obtaining this data. We hope to address the gap of understanding and knowledge that lies between how school social workers are distributed and what their responsibilities are. This data is intended to guide future policy and educational practices.

Methods

We utilized various methods to obtain the number of school social workers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. We accessed each state’s Department of Education to gather important contact information such as phone numbers, emails, and LinkedIn profiles, as well as research data entries if the website provided it. We used the contact information to get in touch with state employees who might know the headcount of school social workers in their state, or if they could connect us with someone who did possess that number. For some states, we needed to submit FOIA requests or other forms of data requests. Other potential sources of information included contacting school districts, the Department of Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other government agencies to gather the headcount of school social workers for each state.

Results

In total, we found 49,135.10 school social workers in the United States. Mississippi was the only state where we were not able to obtain a valid number. Our final total is an estimate based on what our research team was able to gather through the various methods we used.

Discussion

Gathering information on the number of school social workers in the United States proved to be a complex task. Although the project itself had a clear goal, obtaining the data was anything but straightforward. The challenges arose from the fact that different states use vastly different reporting systems and record-keeping methods. Complicating matters further, some states overlap the roles of school social workers, therapists, and counselors, making it difficult to obtain accurate numbers. To navigate this, we found that the most reliable method was to request FOIA reports from the state's Department of Education website and search for any available data entry reports. However, some states were hesitant to provide information over the phone, posing a significant obstacle. Despite our efforts, many of our emails, phone calls, and voicemails went unanswered, which was disheartening. Fortunately, some states were cooperative and guided us toward the right channels to obtain the necessary information. After exhausting all available avenues, it became clear that some states lacked a clear-cut way of separating the data to accurately define the number of school social workers.

The data implies that if states are unaware of the number of school social workers in their respective state, there may be a shortage of these professionals in school districts where their expertise is crucial. School social workers play a vital role in providing emotional and mental support to students, staff, teachers, families, and communities. They serve as intermediaries between students, parents, and teachers, provide assistance to students with physical or learning

disabilities, intervene in student conflicts and misconduct, advocate for student rights, and evaluate school-related policies. A shortage of school social workers means students may lack access to these essential services and resources, which are crucial for academic readiness. Policies and adequate funding can help bridge the gap between the recording of school social workers and the specific credentials and education required for this role in a school setting. Furthermore, there is a growing need for a national database to consistently assess the demand for school social workers in underserved school districts.

Acknowledgments

Dr. Brenda Lindsey, Zane Schneider, Janna Kravac, Ethan Kye, Kassidy Mcguire-Olsen, Zane Schneider, Cassandra Coplea-Seidensticker

References

Data collection was obtained through the various Department of Education websites and other government-related websites tasked with keeping records and data on state employees. In some cases, email and phone calls were utilized to navigate the Department of Education to locate the proper contact needed to obtain the data for various individual states. At times, a FOIA request was required. In the case of Illinois, the list of school social workers was provided to Dr. Lindsey directly from the state.

How Many School Social Workers Are There In The United States?

National School Social Workers Census Project
Undergraduate Research Team: Brandon Seidensticker, Tracy Mason, Arielle Britten, Zane Schneider, Janna Kravac, Ethan Kye, Kassidy Mcguire-Olsen, Cassandra Coplea-Seidensticker
School of Social Work, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of this semester, Dr. Brenda Lindsey, with the UIUC's School of Social Work, led a team of eight undergraduate research assistants who set out to find the total number of school social workers in the United States.

Each student was assigned individual states, with the hope of obtaining the number of school social workers. While working as a team, the students learned how to gather data by calling representatives of various school districts, analyzing data, generating reports, and creating presentations. Additionally, the team attended weekly meetings to review findings and collaborate on any bottlenecks and issues that might have arisen.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How many school social workers are there in the United States?

AIM

The original goal of this research project was to comprehensively quantify and analyze the prevalence of school social workers across schools in the United States.

This project, a collaboration between Dr. Lindsey from the School of Social Work, the School Social Work Association of America, and the research students involved, sought to fill a critical gap in the current understanding of the distribution and roles of school social workers, thereby informing future policy and educational practices.

By the end of the project, the aim shifted to also incorporating the methods that states and school districts use to keep count of the official social workers in their respective areas.

Total number of School Social Workers in the United States:

49,135.10

This is an estimated number, based off our findings.

METHOD

Who was counted?

K-12 educational employees in the United States with the title of School Social Worker or similar (e.g. Student Services Coordinator).

To acquire this count, we...

- Accessed public staff records when available
- Contacted Department of Education officials via
  - Email
  - Phone
  - LinkedIn
- Submitted data requests to state Departments of Education
- Submitted Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to state Departments of Education
- Contacted individual school districts
- Contacted state Departments of Health
- Sought out 3rd-party counts of school social workers

RESULTS

The team found many of the states were happy to cooperate and were helped point us in the right direction to try to find answers. However, once we exhausted the available avenues, there simply did not seem to be a clear-cut way for many of the agencies to separate data in a way that clearly defined the number of school social workers.

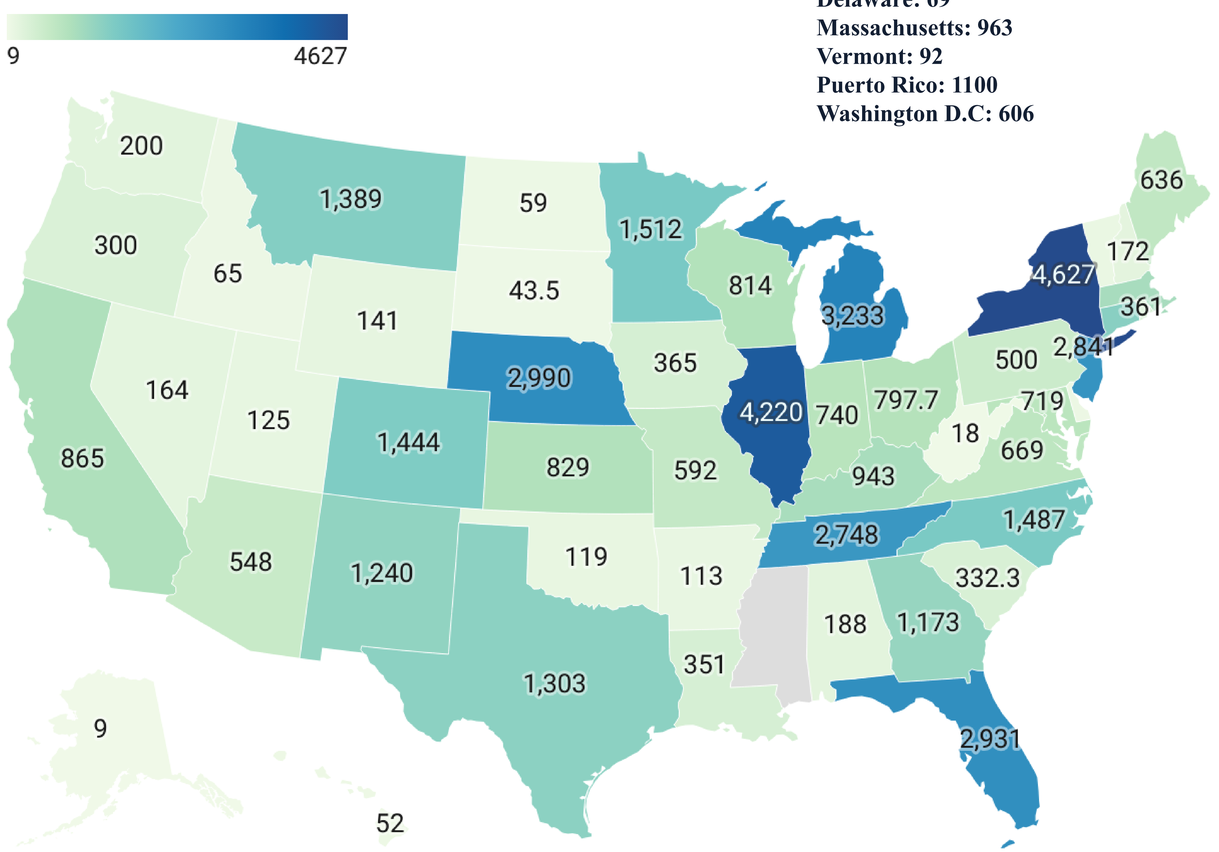
STATES UNABLE TO PROVIDE DATA

- Mississippi

STATES ABLE TO PROVIDE DATA

- The map below will illustrate the data for the states we were able to obtain the information from.

School Social Workers by State



Connecticut: 1336.6
Delaware: 69
Massachusetts: 963
Vermont: 92
Puerto Rico: 1100
Washington D.C: 606

CONCLUSION

The road to obtaining information regarding the number of school social workers in the United States was complex. Many of the states use drastically different reporting systems and record keeping methods. This project was straightforward in terms of what we were doing; counting the number of school social workers in the United States. However, the path to finding this data wasn't linear.

MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD

- The most accurate and effective pathway to receiving the information was through requesting FOIA reports via the different governmental websites.

LEAST EFFECTIVE METHOD

- It seems most of the agencies are quite hesitant to give this information over the phone, which proved to be a hurdle to overcome throughout the project. Many of our emails, phone calls and voicemails went unanswered, which was discouraging.

TAKEAWAYS

- "Research is messy" -Dr. Brenda Lindsey
- Some states are more organized and have a headcount of school social workers readily available. Other states required us to do more research and were more difficult to obtain information from.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Brenda Lindsey, Teaching Professor
Chair-Professional Educator License,
School Social Work Program

National School Social Workers Census Project

Data Map created with Datawrapper

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Research Study

What is "Having Sex?" An Exploratory Investigation into Sexual Communication and Sexual Education Experiences

Kristen Gates and Emily A. Mendelson, MA

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract

Although engaging in sexual activity is a common activity for many, research suggests the sexual communication skills of individuals are lacking. This may be due to a lack of knowledge about sexual communication, as well as an individual's own disposition toward sexual openness. Using survey data collected online via Qualtrics, this project explores the relationship between sexual education experiences in high school and how the big five personality traits are related to the perception of sex and sexual communication. The goal of this research is to subsequently identify the areas where sexual education can be improved based upon individuals' gaps in knowledge about sexual health and sexual communication.

Keywords: sexual communication, personality, mixed-methods, sexual education

About the Authors: *Kristen is a senior graduating with a degree in psychology. She has spent the spring 2024 semester studying the complexities of human sexual communication through the Mentoring through Research in Progress program.*

Emily is a doctoral student in communication who studies sexual communication and interpersonal relationships. She served as Kristen's research mentor for this work as part of the Mentoring through Research in Progress program.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank Dr. John Caughlin for his support throughout this research project. We would also like to thank Lindsay Kelpinski for her work in coordinating the Mentoring through Research in Progress program.

Introduction

Comprehensive sexual education (CSE) seeks to equip young people with "the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to determine and enjoy their sexuality—physically and emotionally, individually and in relationships" (Panchaud & Anderson, 2016, p. 1). CSE covers topics including sexual and reproductive rights, sexual health, interpersonal violence, gender expression, and sexual pleasure so that individuals are prepared navigate their own sexuality as well as intimate relationships with others (Panchaud & Anderson, 2016). Although a comprehensive sexual education is a crucial element for one's overall wellbeing, the curriculum in the United States is varied in terms of its content, heath-focus, and inclusivity (Guttmacher Institute, 2022). Given these differences, and the decrease in sexual education since 1995 (Lindberg & Kantor, 2021), it is likely there are also significant disparities in how individuals understand what constitutes sexual activity, practices of sexual communication, and the content that was covered during sex education, if at all. For example, despite the existence of pornography since the early 1500's, research suggests the accessibility of pornography is taking an increased role in sexual education in recent years (Crabbe & Corlett, 2011). In a study containing 140 high school students, participants indicated in the absence of a comprehensive sexual education, pornography acted as a stand-in for learning about sex, with the average age of first watching pornography at 11 years old (Crabbe & Corelett, 2011). Given that 88% of pornographic materials contain some aspect of physical aggression, typically toward a female participant, students were rating these behaviors as being a part of normal sexual relationships (Crabbe & Corlett, 2011). With this research, there is an apparent need for comprehensive sexual education and students' needs for learning about these important topics. Subsequently, an

understanding of how adults operationalize various sexual concepts (e.g., “having sex,” expressing desire to a partner) is crucial to accurately portraying the sexual experiences of adults.

Abstinence-based sexual education programs are one of the top approaches to sexual education in the United States. An abstinence-based sexual education focuses on teaching students to refrain from any sexual behaviors with others, especially penetration. In 2009, a study was done with 298 university students examining their definitions of abstinence (Byers et al., 2009). In this study, participants were given a list of 17 sexual behaviors and asked which behaviors fell within their own definition of abstinence and “having sex.” While defining sexual abstinence, participants recorded activities that excluded genital stimulation but included behaviors such as making out and foreplay (which excluded any behaviors involving the genitals in participants’ definitions). Subsequently, participants excluded sexual behaviors from their definitions of having sex due to sex being defined as needing penetration (Byers et al., 2009). The results also indicated participants who reported practicing abstinence did not include sexual behaviors such as genital stimulation, but their definitions of having sex did include genital penetration as well (Byers et al., 2009). Additionally, although participants were mixed on behaviors involving unidirectional genital stimulation such as oral sex and genital fondling, these activities were still mostly understood as acceptable under the practice of sexual abstinence. Finally, the results also indicated males with a conservative, religious, and less sexually experienced background were more likely than other groups to consider bidirectional genital stimulation, sexual acts such as reciprocal oral sex and mutual masturbation, as behaviors constituting abstinence (Byers et al., 2009).

The quality of sexual education that individuals receive also makes a difference in the sexual behaviors people partake in both during early adulthood and adulthood. A study done

from 2011 to 2019 examined the number of adolescents who received formal sexual education that included topics on sexually transmitted diseases and birth control. Through the course of this study, the rates of formal sexual education decreased among individuals, and there were large discrepancies between sexual education among race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. Overall, however, adolescents who received more quality sexual education were more likely to use contraception and engage in sexual abstinence (Lindberg & Kantor, 2021). With this research, it is apparent students are receiving varying levels of sexual education and the sexual health precautions individuals undergo also varies depending on the quality of their sexual education.

Sexual communication involving sexual behaviors is an area that is lacking in the sexual education curriculum. In formal sexual education, sexual communication is rarely discussed beyond the provision of a legal definition of affirmative consent that constitutes “yes means yes.” This leaves students to learn about nonverbal and verbal sexual communication on their own (Hayes et al., 2022). In a study done by Babin (2013), researchers examined the predictors of communication, pleasure, and sexual encounters. The researchers first looked at nonverbal communication during sex itself and found nonverbal sexual communication was the biggest predictor of sexual self-esteem and sexual satisfaction (Babin, 2013). This shows participants who displayed more engaging and confident sexual behaviors also displayed higher rates of sexual satisfaction. Surprisingly, verbal communication about sexual activities itself did not predict positive sexual satisfaction (Babin, 2013). The lack of sexual communication taught in sexual education can be seen in both verbal and nonverbal sexual communication as it is displayed in sexual experiences in participants who lack experience and comfort in both verbal and nonverbal sexual communication.

With the rise of technology, relationships and communication are also moving to the digital world. Young adults are utilizing accessibility to maintain relationships online without having to leave the comfort of their own homes in almost all of their relationships, including sexual ones. In a study evaluating the extent to which young adults use technology in sexual relationships, it was found that 25% of 12–17 year olds have sent a "sext," or sexually explicit text, and 25% of 12-17 year olds have been sent a sext (Widman et al., 2021). However, these young adults also reported not receiving sexual education in regard to sexually explicit content using technology (Widman et al., 2021). A comprehensive sexual education would include aspects of sending sexually explicit content as well as prepare students for the risks associated with engaging in such behaviors.

Lastly, personality traits are also significant in predicting sexual behaviors. The big five personality traits play a role in how individuals approach and experience the world around them and can be tied to sexual interactions (Caprara et al., 1993). The big five personality traits include openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism. Openness reflects the extent to which a person is open to new ideas, experiences, and ways of thinking. Conscientiousness refers to the degree of organization, responsibility, and dependability a person has. Extraversion relates to how outgoing, sociable, and energetic a person is. Agreeableness reflects how cooperative, compassionate, and considerate a person is in their interactions with others. Neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and insecurity. Together, these traits may predict sexual behaviors. For example, someone high in extraversion might be more open to new experiences and seek out social interactions, which could influence their willingness to engage in sexual activities and explore different aspects of their sexuality. Conscientiousness could affect how responsible and careful

someone is in their sexual encounters, while openness to experience might influence their willingness to try new things sexually. Agreeableness could impact how considerate and empathetic a person is toward a sexual partner's needs and neuroticism might affect a person's level of anxiety and insecurity in intimate situations. These traits can shape how individuals communicate, connect, and behave in sexual experiences.

Given the disparities in sexual education and different factors that may affect sexual communication, the following research questions are forwarded:

RQ1: *How do individuals define "having sex"?*

RQ2: *To what extent do the big five personality traits predict openness to sexual communication?*

RQ3: *What are some of the most commonly covered topics in high school sexual education?*

Methods

Participants

Participants' (N =89) ages ranged from 19 to 73 years old (Mage = 24.06, SD = 11.45). The majority of respondents were women (57.8%), followed by men (30.1%), non-binary individuals (8.4%), genderfluid individuals (1.2%), and 2.4% of individuals preferred to self-describe (e.g., agender). A little less than half the sample identified as heterosexual or straight (49.4%), but the majority of participants identified with a sexuality under the LGBTQ+ umbrella, including bisexual (20.5%), queer (10.8%), lesbian (7.2%), and pansexual (4.8%) as the largest non-heterosexual identifications. Additionally, 41.6% of participants were in a committed relationship of more than 6 months, 36.0% were single, and 12.0% were casually dating. When participants described their own relationship status, 4.8% of participants noted that they were

married or in a polyamorous relationship with multiple partners. Lastly, the majority of participants were White (76.5%), followed by Hispanic and/or Latino (14.8%), then Asian (2.5%), Black (2.5%), and 3.7% of participants self-described as mixed-race.

Procedure

Participants completed the survey through the online survey distribution service Qualtrics. Individuals completed basic demographic information, followed by a series of questions regarding their own sexual experiences within the past six months, preferred sexual communication styles, personality-related questions, and content covered during grade-school sexual education. The majority of the items on the survey were assessed through Likert-style items (e.g., rating agreement with a statement on a scale from one to five), followed by open-response formats. This procedure was approved by the IRB office of the authors' institution.

Measures and Analysis

Definitions

Participants were asked to define, in their own words, what behaviors constitute "having sex" with another person. Based on these open-ended responses, a codebook was generated and refined to categorize responses in the context of the behavior listed. For example, "penetrative intercourse" indicated participants described some form of penetrative sex. Codes were aggregated in the context of overall response percentage.

Big Five Inventory

Personality was assessed using a short form of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-20; Tucaković & Nedeljković, 2022). The BFI-20 uses 20 items to assess all extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Four items are used to assess each trait, through which participants are asked the extent to which a statement is reflective of them

and rate their agreement on a one to five scale where one = *strongly disagree* and five = *strongly agree*. Items were reverse-coded as appropriate in accordance with the BFI-20 rating instructions (Tucaković &Nedeljković, 2022).

Sexual Communication Scale

The Sexual Communication Scale (SeCS; Moazami et al., 2022) assesses various aspects of sexual communication, such as the ability to initiate discussions about sexual desires or preferences, the comfort level in sharing sexual needs, and how well partners feel they understand each other's sexual wishes. The scale contains a series of statements or questions that participants answer and rate their agreement on a one to five scale where one = *strongly disagree* and five = *strongly agree*. Two of the three factors within the scale, ease of own communication and ease of partner's communication, are comprised of items that indicate hypothetical communication patterns during sexual activity. The third factor, frequency of bidirectional communication, asks individuals to rate the extent to which certain behaviors occur while engaging in sexual activity with a certain partner. Only individuals who indicated engaging in previous sexual activity were presented with the entire scale.

Sexual Education Experiences

Sexual education experiences were assessed with a variety of self-report measures and asked participants to recall their sexual education received during grade school. Participants were asked whether sexual education was mandatory at their high school, to indicate whether their sexual education covered a list of various topics, and alternative sources of sexual education.

Results

RQ1: Definitions of "Having Sex"

A graph depicting the percentage of each definition of "having sex" is presented in Table 1. There were eight distinct definitional components that participants indicated; penetrative intercourse, any activity involving genitals/sex organs, sexual pleasure, oral sex, anal sex, activity with the potential for sexually transmitted infection (STI), and the phrase "having sex" itself. The most popular definition of "having sex" involved penetrative intercourse, with 33% of responses indicating some form of penetrative sexual activity in their responses. Penetrative intercourse was the most prevalent response (33% of responses), followed by genital/sex organ activity (25%), and any kind of sexual pleasure (17%).

RQ2: Personality and Sexual Communication

A multiple linear regression was used to predict overall sexual communication (all items on the SeCS) with each of the big five personality traits. Table 1 provides the standardized loadings for each of the big five traits, with extraversion as the only significant predictor at the .05 level with a loading of .266. For the overall regression equation, adjusted R-squared = .018, and the F-statistic (5,75) = 1.39. In this case, individuals who are more extraverted are more open with their sexual communication behaviors.

RQ3: Sexual Education Experiences

Sexual education was mandatory for 67.5% of participants (n = 56), it was not mandatory for 14.6.7% of participants (n = 13), and 15.7% of participants (n = 14) were unsure as to whether their sexual education was mandatory. When rating sources of sexual education from which participants learned the most, both friends and sexual partners were rated most highly with 13 participants each ranking them first, followed by high school sexual education with 12 first-

place ranks. Friends were also rated as the second-most important source of sexual education with 33 second place ranks, with 16 second place ranks for sexual partners and only four for high school sexual education. Other sources of sexual education, such as parents and guardians, medical professionals, and TV and movies were ranked much lower, while social media and porn were more likely to be ranked as fourth and fifth-most important.

Figure 2 provides the responses to various topics within sexual education curriculum that may or may not have been taught to participants. Abstinence was the most commonly covered subject (84.1% of participants learned about the topic), followed by STI symptoms (80.5%), and reproductive anatomy (79.3%). The least covered topics were various sexual orientations, with only 15.9% of individuals recalling learning about the topic during grade school sexual education, followed by masturbation (17.1%). Overall, these results demonstrate although many individuals were taught about abstinence, a more comprehensive sexual education curriculum is lacking on a broader scale.

Discussion

The current literature demonstrates sexual education plays a key role in the sexual development of individuals. It also shows there is a need for a comprehensive sexual education that includes all areas of sexual communication, including the use of pornography and interpersonal relationships revolving around potentially sexual behaviors. It is apparent where people are learning the most about sexual education is playing a part in their sexual development as a whole. A better understanding of the role these outside sexual education sources are playing on sexual development is needed to better understand how the current sexual education curriculum can change to decrease negative sexual behaviors, such as domestic violence and sexual assault, and increase a better understanding of sexual communication in interpersonal

relationships. Overall, from the data it is apparent participants are defining having sex from a heterosexual perspective (i.e., focus on vaginal-penile penetrative intercourse), despite the prevalence of LGBTQ+ identities in the sample. Personality traits did not significantly predict sexual communication comfort. This analysis would benefit from a larger sample for a more accurate representation of personalities. A further evaluation can be done to determine what effects sexual education may have on later adult sexual experiences such as motivations behind STI testing, the rate unplanned pregnancies and abortions, and overall sexual behaviors.

References

Babin, E.A. (2013). An examination of predictors of nonverbal and verbal communication of pleasure during sex and sexual satisfaction. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 30, 270–292. doi:10.1177/0265407512454523

Bates, S. (2017). Revenge porn and mental health: A qualitative analysis of the mental health effects of revenge porn on female survivors. *Feminist Criminology*, *12*(1), 22–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085116654565

Byers, E.S., Henderson, J., & Hobson, K.M. (2009). University students' definitions of sexual abstinence and having sex. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 38,* 665–674. doi:10.1007/s10508-007- 9289-6

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Borgogni, L., & Perugini, M. (1993). *Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ)* [Database record]. PsycTESTS

Crabbe, M., & Corlett, D. (2011). Eroticising inequality: Technology, pornography and young people. *Redress, 20*(1), 11–15. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.132445715718161

Guttmacher Institute. (2022, February 15). *US adolescents' receipt of formal sex education*. https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/adolescents-teens-receipt-sex-education-united-states

Hayes, H. M. R., Burns, K., & Egan, S. (2022). Becoming 'good men': Teaching consent and masculinity in a single-sex boys' school. *Sex Education*, *0*(0), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2022.2140133

Jarke, H. (2022). What do we know about the mental health of porn performers? A systematic literature review. *Journal of Public Mental Health, 21*(2), 119-127.

Lindberg, L. D., & Kantor, L. M. (2021). Adolescents' receipt of sex education in a nationally representative sample, 2011–2019. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 70*(2). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.08.027

Litam, S. D. A., Speciale, M., & Balkin, R. S. (2022). Sexual attitudes and characteristics of OnlyFans users. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 51*(6). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-022-02329-0

Moazami, S., Ashley, M., Czechowski, K., Courtice, E. L., & Shaughnessy, K. (2022). The sexual communication scale (SeCS). *The Journal of Sex Research*, *60*(1), 71–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2022.2129558

Panchaud, C., & Anderson, R. (2016). *Demystifying data: Using evidence to improve young people's sexual health and rights—workshop toolkit*. https://www.guttmacher.org/report/demystifying-data-workshop-toolkit

Rostad, W. L., Gittins-Stone, D., Huntington, C., Rizzo, C. J., Pearlman, D., & Orchowski, L. (2019). The association between exposure to violent pornography and teen dating violence in grade 10 high school students. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 48*(7), 2137–2147. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-1435-4

Tucaković, L., & Nedeljković, B. (2023). From the BFI-44 to BFI-20: Psychometric properties of the short form of the big five inventory. *Psychological Reports*, 00332941231161754. https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941231161754

Widman, L., Javidi, H., Maheux, A. J., Evans, R., Nesi, J., & Choukas-Bradley, S. (2021). Sexual communication in the digital age: Adolescent sexual communication with parents and friends about sexting, pornography, and starting relationships online. *Sexuality & Culture*, *25*(6), 2092–2109. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09866-1

Tables and Figures

Figure 1

Definitions of "Having Sex"

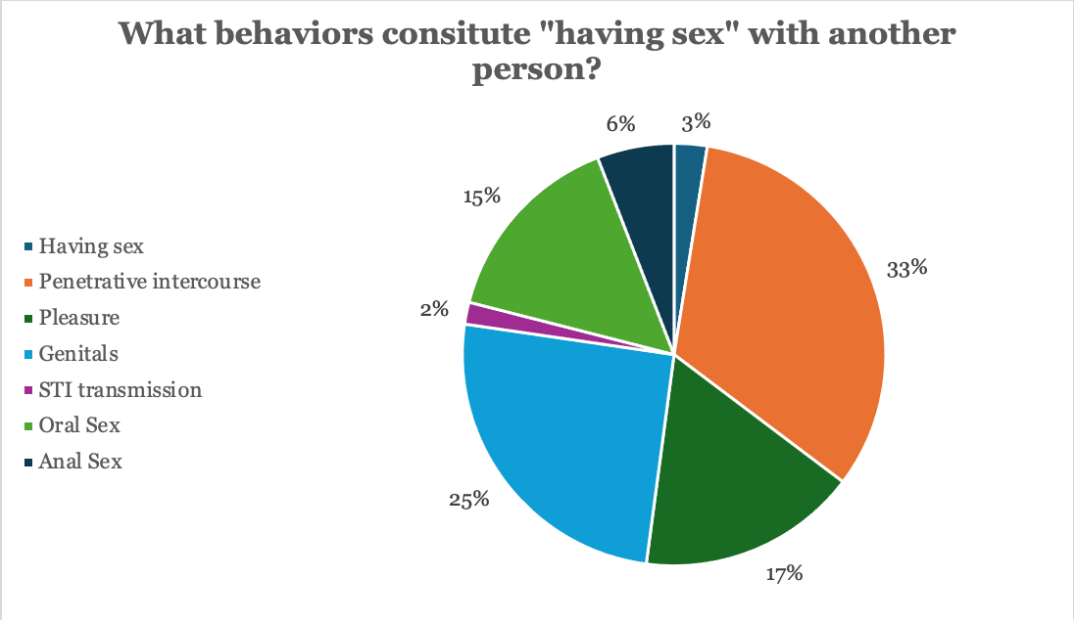


Table 1

Standardized Loadings for Big-5 Personality Traits to Predict Sexual Communication

Trait	Standardized Beta
Extraversion	.266*
Neuroticism	-.126
Openness	.126
Conscientiousness	-.105
Agreeableness	.054

*alpha level significant at the .05 level

Figure 2

Topics Covered in High School Sexual Education