African American females in the juvenile system and exposure to domestic violence

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL WORK

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B.S.W. UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS, 1995

AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALES IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

AND EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Advisor: Dr. Karen Starks Canada

Thesis dated May 2001

This study is an effort to show an association between African American females exposed to familial domestic violence and recidivism. The antisocial behaviors exhibited that lead to incarceration are running away, prostitution, and physical assault. The results of this study can help social workers implement and/or improve effective treatment programs and services for this particular population.

The study utilized a multi-group post test only design. The sample and setting consisted of 29 African American females at Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls. Interval/ratio data were collected to measure the percentage of antisocial behaviors exhibited by this population. The results indicated that 96.6 percent of the participants were exposed to familial verbal abuse and 62.1 percent were exposed to familial physical assault. As a result of witnessing abuse 37.9 percent stated that it made them run away from home, 17.2 percent engaged in prostitution, 37.9 percent had physically assaulted someone, and 58.6 percent were repeat offenders. A Chi-Square Test of Association was employed to test the statistical significance of the hypothesis. The values .389 (exposure to familial physical assault cross tabulated with
number of times incarcerated) and .174 (exposure to familial verbal abuse cross tabulated with number of times incarcerated) exceeded the p< .05 level of significance. Thus, concluding a statistically significant association between African American female’s exposure to familial domestic violence and repeat offending.
AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALES IN THE JUVENILE SYSTEM AND EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA
MAY 2001
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First, I would like to thank God from whom all blessings flow. Secondly, I would like to thank my Mother for her spiritual guidance, friendship, and support. Thirdly, I would like to thank my Father for his never-ending financial support and encouragement. A very special thanks to my family, friends and professors. I also would like to thank Dr. Canada, whom supervision helped make this possible. Lastly, I would like to thank Jill VanLeesten, Marcel Lue, the staff, and participants of Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. ii

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................. vi

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................. vii

CHAPTER PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1
   Statement of the Problem ..................................................... 1
   Rationale ........................................................................... 3
   Purpose of the Study ............................................................ 3
   Scope ............................................................................... 5
   Hypothesis ....................................................................... 6
   Research Questions ............................................................. 6
   Concepts Defined ............................................................... 7

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ....................................................... 8
   Thesis Statement ................................................................. 8
   Historical Overview ............................................................ 8
      General History ............................................................... 8
      Specific History ................................................................ 11
      Females in the Juvenile Justice System ................................. 11
      African American Females in the Juvenile Justice System ....... 12
      Georgia Juvenile Justice System and African American Females . . . . 14
Table of Contents Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Learning Theory, Children and the Effects of Domestic Violence</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression-Learned Behavior in Child Witnesses of Domestic Violence</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence and the Reciprocal Relationship with Run Away Behavior and Prostitution</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. METHODOLOGY | 23 |
| Setting | 23 |
| Sample | 23 |
| Instrument/Measures | 24 |
| Design | 26 |
| Procedures | 26 |
| Data Analysis | 27 |

IV. FINDINGS | 28 |
| Demographics | 28 |
| Hypothesis | 36 |
Table of Contents Continued

V. CONCLUSION .................................................. 37
   Limitations of the Study .................................. 39

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE .......... 41

APPENDIX A ..................................................... 44
APPENDIX B ..................................................... 48
APPENDIX C ..................................................... 50
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 52
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of Times Participants Have Run Away</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. People Whom Participants Live with While on the Run</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Times Participants Had Sex for Money</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of Times Participants Have Been Incarcerated</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of Times Participants Have Been Involved in the Juvenile Justice System</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demographics</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exposure to Physical and Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

African American adolescent females in the juvenile justice system with previous exposure to familial domestic violence tend to exhibit antisocial behavior such as running away, prostitution, and physical assault. The domestic violent acts witnessed range from psychological abuse to homicide. Studies have concluded that witnessing domestic violence is an overwhelming stressor for adolescents that have the potential to induce catastrophic and long-term trauma in child witnesses. Sturge and Glaser (2000) stated that when children are exposed to domestic violence, persecutory fears are deep seated and persistent, indicating that even when children do not continue in violent situations, emotional trauma continues to be experienced and the memories of the violence continue as persecutory images (i.e., mental picture of something or someone that persistently bothers that person) (Figelman & Sidd, 1985). It has been estimated that 3.3 million to 10 million children in the U.S. annually witness familial domestic violence (Edleson, in press).

Ideally, during incarceration, African American female adolescents should be provided treatment for behavior resulting from exposure of domestic violence. However, the juvenile justice system, since its inception, has continuously failed to the meet the
specific needs of this population in this regard. Increases in youth violence, as well as changes in juvenile justice policy nationally and for the state of Georgia, have led to a reduction in treatment-oriented policies and services. Without effective intervention services and therapeutic treatment, this population is at risk of becoming repeat offenders.

Chesney-Lind, a leading theorist in issues concerning women, girls and violence, has written several articles and books on females involved in the juvenile justice system. For her outstanding contribution to criminology she received the American Society of Criminology’s Michael J. Hindelang Award for the book *Girls, Delinquency and Juvenile Justice*. Females involved in the juvenile justice system, according to Chesney-Lind (1999), have been known as “invisible” due to the lack of gender specific programs and are almost always forgotten when juvenile justice issues are discussed. As a result, females continue to exhibit antisocial behavior.

Originally, adolescent females involved in the juvenile justice system were primarily convicted of incorrigible crimes. Separate facilities for girl’s date back to the early 1900s (Sarri, 1987). Like males, they were sentenced to Houses of Refuge to reform their immoral behavior (Chesney-Lind, 1998). Even though females have been involved in the juvenile justice system as long as males, most policies and treatment services have focused on violent males. However, every year, female juveniles account for one of four arrests of young people in America (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997).

In 1974, the Juvenile Justice Department Prevention Act allowed states to de-institutionalize and divert status offenders from secure facilities. This had a greater
affect on girls than boys since girls were primarily status offenders. Alternative placements included mental health institutions, private facilities, and chemical dependency programs. After the implementation of this Act, girl's institutionalization rates for status offenses fell by 44 percent and between 1979 and 1982 female status offenders leveled off (Kristberg & Schwartz, 1983). However, from 1983 to 1986, the number of female arrests for running away increased (Chesney-Lind, 1988). These results reflect a system that has failed to develop programs shaped by girls' unique situations and failed to address the special problems girls have in a gender society (Chesney-Lind, 1999).

Rationale

Although, domestic violence is not a new problem, there is limited research on African American female adolescents in the juvenile justice system that has been adversely effected by exposure to domestic violence. With the lack of research, these females are at risk to become victims, repeat offenders, and/or perpetrators of violence. Because of the detrimental effects of domestic violence, direct services must be provided to the clients as well as advocacy at the micro, mezzo and macro levels in order to be beneficial. This study is an effort to contribute to the existing literature and to fill the void of research on African American females in the juvenile justice system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore whether African American female
adolescents' exposure to familial domestic violence and resulting anti-social behavior increases their risk for becoming repeat offenders. The information gained from this study will increase the knowledge base of African American female adolescents in the juvenile justice system. The results from the study can help social workers implement, improve, and/or create effective treatment programs and services for this population.

Previous research has been completed on the impact of domestic violence on children, adolescents and teenagers (Fantuzzo, Depaola, Lambert, Martino, Anderson, & Sutton, 1991; Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990; Kearney, 1999). This study will complement previous research specifically looking at African American female juveniles and exposure to domestic violence as it relates to running away, prostitution and physical assault in the state of Georgia. This study will focus on Georgia because the state is currently experiencing a crisis due to an increase in the number of female adolescent runaways who are engaging in prostitution. According to Judge Hickson (2000), Fulton County Juvenile Court Judge, “girls are experiencing a trickle down effect – things are wrong at home so they run away, but services are not in place to keep them safe. As a result men are pimping these girls.” This study, through the collection and analysis of current data, will hopefully assist social workers, as well as all professionals working with this population to implement and improve needed therapeutic treatment and services. It will also provide current statistical information that can be generalized to specific populations.
Scope

The scope of this study will include African American female adolescents, between the ages of 12 to 17, adjudicated to Father Flannagen's Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls. The mission statement for Boys Town shows a commitment to at risk youth: "since first opening our doors in 1917, Boys Town’s mission has been to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, spiritual guidance and medical care. Today, challenged by new problems facing youth and families, our work stretches far beyond the village of Boys Town located in Nebraska. We are committed to the goal of changing the way America cares for its at-risk children in the 1990s. All services are provided regardless of race, color, creed, gender, national origin, or inability to pay. Our children come to us from every state in the Union and several foreign countries" (Boys Town, 1995). Nationally, in 1996, Boys Town housed more than 29,000 children, directly assisted 377,00 children and families through the Boys Town National Hot-line and indirectly assisted more than 750,000 children and families through other outreach and training programs.

As of December 1999, Boys Town of Georgia opened its Community-Based Program for Girls. The program is an alternative to incarceration. Residents are from the Atlanta Metropolitan area and are between the ages of 12 to 18. The females are transferred from Metro Regional Youth Detention Center, located in Dekalb County. The females are required to participate in the program for twenty days. The program consists of individual counseling sessions, therapeutic groups, and family counseling sessions. Upon completion of the program, the Program Director recommends to the
court whether the juvenile’s next placement should be home, detention, or another therapeutic placement.

Every year, girls account for one of four arrests of young people in America (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997). In 1997, the state of Georgia had an estimated 610 adolescent females involved in the juvenile justice system. Of this total, there were estimated 300 adolescent females involved in Georgia’s juvenile justice community programs. The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice has collaborated with Father Flannagen's Boys Town of Georgia community-based program to provide treatment services for adolescent females in the juvenile justice system.

Hypothesis

African American adolescent females who have been exposed to familial violence become repeat offenders in the juvenile justice system.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study include:

1. What percent of African American adolescent females in Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia are repeat offenders?
2. What types of familial violence have these African Americans females been exposed to?
3. What percent of these African American females exhibit runaway behavior?
4. What percent of these African American females engage in prostitution?

5. What percentage of these African American females have physically assaulted an individual?

Concepts Defined

Domestic Violence – The systematic abuse by one person in an intimate relationship in order to control and dominate the partner. The abusive behavior can be physical, emotional, mental and sexual (Kearney, 1999 p. 290).

Prostitute – One who solicits and accepts payment for sexual intercourse (Figelman & Sidd, 1985, p. 995).

Running Away – A minor who has departed the home of his or her parents or legal guardians contrary to their wishes and who intends to remain independent of their control (Barker, 1991, p. 205).

Assault – An attempt or threat to physically harm or intimidate an individual through the use of unlawful force (Barker, 1991, p. 17).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thesis Statement

African American females, in the juvenile justice system, with previous exposure to familial domestic violence, tend to exhibit antisocial behavior such as running away, prostitution, and physical assault. As a result of exhibiting such behaviors, which are criminal offenses, this population becomes involved in the juvenile justice system. But with effective treatment and programming, the risk of them becoming repeat offenders may be decreased.

Unfortunately, this is not a new problem. This chapter will give a general historical overview of the juvenile justice system and its effort to combat status offenses. Secondly, the chapter will give an overview of females and African American females in the juvenile justice system, followed by historical and current information on the Georgia juvenile justice system. Lastly, the conceptual framework, social learning theory, will be discussed as it relates to the variables (running away, prostitution, and physical assault).

Historical Review

General History

Historically, the juvenile justice system has not been able to effectively combat youth crime. In 1825, the New York House of Refuge was founded to reform juveniles.
The facilities goal was to teach juveniles morals and a good work ethic. However, youth crime continued to rise. By the end of the 1890s institutions resembled adult prisons and rehabilitation policies began to decline (Bernard, 1992).

During the early 1900s, the U.S. Congress had become very interested in the increase of youth crime. As a result, congress implemented an investigation to reduce youth crime. In 1925, Congress passed the Standard Juvenile Court Act that recommended juveniles be tried in a separate court from adult criminals. A separate legal process for juveniles led professionals to consider these youth as malleable individuals needing different services than adults (Jenson & Howard, 1998). However, by 1952, juvenile arrests began to rise and continued to peak until 1974, when juveniles accounted for 45 percent of all arrests (Bernard, 1992). Also, during this time, social workers began to use social casework as a more effective technique to helping youth in the juvenile justice system adjust to their environment (Abrams & Curan, 2000).

In the 1960s, under the leadership of President John F. Kennedy, congressional support grew for prevention programs. During this time, state training schools for delinquents had become large, inefficient and costly (Kristberg & Austin, 1993), and several investigators found institutions ineffective in reducing recidivism rates (Martison, 1974). In 1961, President Kennedy signed the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act, authorizing $30 million to be spent over the course of three years on prevention programs and research (Donegan, 1996).

As a result, seven years later, the Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act (1961) emphasized integrated prevention approaches, including community-
based programs. Community based programs were non-secured treatment oriented programs for juveniles. Several studies found that community-based treatment programs were effective in reducing the recidivism rate and did not pose a threat to public safety (Coates, Miller, & Ohlin, 1982; Kristberg, Austin, Joe, & Steele, 1988).

Ironically, community-based programs were short lived, due to the changes of youth crime and the political climate. An increase in violent juvenile crime and highly publicized incidences during the 1980s, led to the reduction in treatment oriented and prevention policies to punishment oriented policies. According to the Juvenile Justice Department, the arrest rate for children ages 10-17, who committed crimes, doubled from 1983 to 1993 and is estimated to double again by 2010. By the end of the 1980s, community based programs were de-emphasized in favor of strict sanctions (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996) and detention centers began to house together juveniles convicted of various crimes.

By 1994, juvenile court caseloads and admissions to juvenile detention and correctional facilities reached record highs (Synder & Sickmund, 1995). Policies were implemented for violent offenders, but, often ignored the needs of most adolescents referred to the juvenile justice system for less violent crimes. In order for the juvenile justice system to effectively combat youth crime, its strength will lie in the ability to balance policies that include prevention, rehabilitation, and punishment. Historically, policy reform based on the individual approach of prevention, rehabilitation, or punishment has been ineffective but combined, may be effective in combating youth crime (Jenson & Howard, 1998).
Specific History

Females in the Juvenile Justice System

Historically, girls of all races have been arrested for status offenses more often than males. Status offenses are crimes, which would not be a crime if committed by an adult. Status offenses include truancy, running away from home, curfew violations, incorrigibility, being beyond control of their parent(s), using alcohol and drugs, and unruly behavior (Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, 1997; Zaplin, 1998). A study on family court records found that while boys received harsher dispositions than girls for felony and misdemeanor criminal offenses, girls received harsher dispositions for status offenses (Datesman & Scarpitti, 1980). For example, Webb (1989), documented that in England and Wales, girls continue to be punished more severely than boys for at-risk sexual behavior (status offense), although boys engage in these activities at least as often as girls do. In 1985, females represented 52 percent of all status offenders (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1986). In 1989, 22 percent of girls and 3 percent of boys in U.S. public juvenile detention facilities were incarcerated for non-delinquent reasons (U.S. Department of Justice, 1991). These findings, as stated by other researchers, supports the double standard in the U.S. processing of males and females in the juvenile justice system that has been seen throughout history.

A study by the U.S. General Accounting Office, of services to status offenders, had as a major goal the exploration of the availability of facilities and services for female and male status offenders. Most of the juvenile justice officials and service providers felt that status offenders did not need gender-specific treatment or services except for
gynecological services and prenatal care for females (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). Incarcerated adolescent females are subjected to rule rigidity and offered fewer vocational, educational and athletic programs than incarcerated adolescent males (Kerten 1989; Mann 1984).

In 1992, at a hearing held to discuss the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice Department Prevention Act (JJDP), congress made provisions for the Act to include an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency (Publication L. 102-586). At this meeting, it was decided that additional money would be given to states to develop programs for treatment services that ensure girls equal access. Currently, congress is evaluating the JJDP Act and virtually all of the initiatives being considered are unfavorable for girls (Chesney-Lind, 1999).

Wells (1994) found that downsizing of the juvenile justice system has not been gender-mutual. Downsizing often means collapsing and reducing services to those delinquents who pose the least threat of harm to the community, which generally have been girls. Wells stated that the reason that girls’ programs are often “the last funded and the first cut is because they have no one advocating on their behalf, creating the phenomena of throwaway services and throwaway girls” (Wells, 1994, p. 5).

**African American Females in the Juvenile Justice System**

Until recently, there has been a lack of information on adolescent females, especially African American females, in the juvenile justice system. Prior to 1865, African American youth were not involved in the juvenile justice system because they were controlled by the institution of slavery. African American youth remained in the
adult penal system after slavery, in contrast to Caucasian youth who remained in the juvenile justice system. African American females also remained in the adult penal system and were sent to different states if it was not practical or fiscally prohibited (Young, 1994).

Between 1920 and 1950, juvenile court reported that female juveniles were predominantly Caucasian (73.5 percent). The number of African American females rose from 5 percent to 9 percent during this time (Chesney-Lind, 1998). African American girls in northern industrial cities came before juvenile court far less frequently than immigrant girls, primarily because the newly institutionalized social welfare and juvenile justice system tended to ignore the needs of African American females (Gordon, 1994; Odem, 1995).

Some studies have indicated that the African American female rate of involvement in the juvenile system is very close to that for Caucasian males. For example, Traci, Wolfgang, and Figlio (1985) found that 18.5 percent of African American females, 22.7 percent of Caucasian males, and 9 percent of Caucasian females had at least one arrest. Federsle and Chesney-Lind (1992), found that African American youth in the juvenile justice system have been warehoused in the public system of juvenile institutions. According to this study, Caucasian females are more likely to be sentenced to private facilities and African American females to detention centers for committing status offenses. However, as noted by Chesney-Lind (1989), there is less support for the idea that African American girls are markedly more delinquent than their Caucasian counterparts. In official statistics, Caucasian girls are slightly more delinquent than non-
Caucasian females, although there are differences in the types of delinquency that the two
groups commit.

Georgia Juvenile Justice System and African American Females

Originally, juvenile cases were committed to the Georgia Department of Family
and Children Services. The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice was created, by law,
in the 1992 session of the General Assembly (H.B. 1549). The purpose of this legislation
was to create a separate department to provide supervision, detention, and rehabilitation
of juvenile delinquents committed to the states' custody; to operate and provide
assistance for programs; to provide treatment of juvenile offenders with specialized
needs; and to define policies, duties, and functions of the Department and Board of
Officials. The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice is divided into three divisions:
campus operations, detention services, and community programs (GA DJJ Annual
Report, 1997).

Between 1992 and 1997, Georgia made changes to the sentencing, jurisdiction,
and confidentiality provisions of the juvenile justice system, following a nationwide trend
toward making juvenile justice more punitive (Synder & Sickmund, 1999). As of 1998,
in the state of Georgia, violent crime was down, however, overall arrests were up 123
percent. Also, during 1998, 7 out of every 10 juvenile arrests were for status offenses
(Meredith & Speir, 2000).

In 1997, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice served 26,679 juveniles.
Minority children accounted for 40 percent of the total juvenile population, 70 percent of
the juveniles committed to public placement, 68 percent of those committed to private
placement, and 70 percent of the juveniles detained in 1997 (Synder & Sickmund, 1999). Georgia's admissions to the Regional Youth Detention Centers, over the past ten years have increased 102 percent (Meredith & Speir, 2000). There were 626 African American females held for 90 days in the Georgia juvenile justice system in 1998 (Georgia Department Juvenile Justice Official Web Site). Meredith and Speir (2000), project that female incarceration, in the Georgia juvenile justice system, will increase by 30 percent between 2000 and 2005 due to current trends.

Conceptual Framework

Social Learning Theory, Children and the Effects of Domestic Violence

According to social learning theory, the antisocial behavior exhibited is learned and modeled from the family (Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, & Radosevich, 1979). For example, there is an association between marital abuse and child/adolescent adjustment problems, which indicates that aggressive family models tend to elicit aggressive behavior in those who are exposed to them (Carlson, 1990). In addition to social learning theory, attention must be given to the exclusion of girls in the construction of most theories applied to delinquent behavior.

The origin of social learning theory lies in classical behaviorism created by John B. Watson and later refined by B.F. Skinner. The many variants of social learning theory can be divided into two categories (1) those based on social reinforcement, derived from principles articulated by B.F. Skinner, and (2) those based on social imitation (Bartol & Bartol, 1998). In 1961, Gerwitz, Bijou, and Baer adapted B.F. Skinner's classical
behaviorism to emphasize the influence of social reinforcement in child development. In 1963, Albert Bandura and Richard Walters led the social imitation school of thought which emphasized the important element of modeling the behavior of significant others in the social environment (Bartol & Bartol, 1998).

In the 1960's and 1970's, Robert L. Burgess and Ronald Akers expanded social learning theory to include differential association reinforcement theory. This theory posits that:

the principal behavioral effects come from interaction or influence of those groups, which control individual major sources of reinforcement, punishment, and expose them to behavioral models and normative definitions. Behavior is strengthened through reward (positive reinforcement) and avoidance of punishment (negative reinforcement), or weakened by aversive stimuli (positive punishment). Normative definitions are norms, attitudes and orientations. The more an individual defines the behavior as good (positive definition), or least justified (neutralizing definitions), rather than as undesirable (negative definition), the more likely they are to engage in it. The normative definitions are conducive to deviant behavior when the positive and neutralizing definition of the behavior offset negative definitions of it. Therefore, deviant behavior can be expected to the extent that it has been differentially reinforced over alternative behavior and defined as desirable or justified (Akers et al., 1979).

One of most important groups with which one is in differential association is the family (Akers et al., 1979). For example, Emery's (1982) study on inter-parental conflict, children of discord and divorce, concluded that adults involved in highly conflictual spousal relationships are less likely to be effective parents because they are less effective role models. They may also use more inconsistent or harsh discipline, and may be preoccupied with their own problems (Carlson, 1990).

Additional contributions to social learning theory have been created by Edwin
Sutherland, known by many scholars as the great master of theory in American Sociology. His contribution to the theory include that juvenile and adult criminal behavior is learned by exposure to events and persons conducive to the development of antisocial action. The theory explains that adolescents become delinquents, or adults become criminals, because associations with criminal behavior patterns outnumber associations with anti-criminal patterns (Bartol & Bartol, 1998). Sutherland's nine propositions are:

1. Criminal behavior is learned.
2. Criminal behavior is learned interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
3. The principle part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.
4. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes (a) techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes very simple, and (b) the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law.
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanism that is involved in any other learning.
9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, those general needs and values do not explain it, since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values (Bartol & Bartol, 1998).
Sutherland's theory as well as social learning theory has been criticized. Criminologists felt that Sutherland's theory was vague and impossible to submit to empirical investigation (Glueck, 1962; Radzinowicz, 1966; Sutherland & Cresey, 1979). Even Akers et al. (1979) stated that a longitudinal research was needed to test the theory. Additionally, social learning theory, along with most theories, has been attacked by feminists for their exclusion of females, or lack of concern for gender stratification, in theory research and development. A feminist approach to delinquency allows for construction of explanations of female behavior that are sensitive to patriarchal context. Failure to consider the existing empirical evidence on girls lives and behavior can quickly lead to stereotypical thinking and theoretical dead ends (Chesney-Lind, 1989).
Variables

Aggression-Learned Behavior in Child Witnesses of Domestic Violence

Several factors, such as a difficult home life and exposure to crime, can predict certain types of future behavior (Corbitt, 2000). There is some evidence that one of the most significant long-term effects of exposure to family violence may be the intergenerational transmission of violence (Forstrom-Cohen & Rosenbaum, 1985). This evidence was supported at the Fall 2000, Georgia School Social Work Conference, that children growing up in violent homes are as much as 75 percent more likely to commit violent criminal acts than other children. In the study, “The Home Environment and Delinquency: A Study of African American Adolescents Families in Society,” results showed that a higher proportion of females than males started physical fights, used weapons to harm, and ran away from home due to violent home environments (Rodney, Tachia, & Rodney, 1999).

As a result of physical assault, some adolescents have been arrested. Consequentially, such violence leads to physical injury. For example, although most attacks result in minor injuries to victims, nearly 20 percent of the injuries among older teenagers (16 to 19 years of age) are serious. The injuries include broken bones, internal injuries, loss of consciousness, and injuries requiring hospital stays of up to three days (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991).

Aggression is the most commonly reported behavioral and emotional correlate of marital discord/violence (Davidson, 1978). In 1994, over four million American children lived in severely distressed homes or neighborhoods that contributed to violent tendencies
among troubled juveniles (Corbitt, 2000). Direct observation in the home reveals that aggressive behavior in children is influenced by the way parents behave. Scott (1998) indicated that families with problem children do little to encourage polite or considerate behavior by the child – such behavior is often ignored and rendered ineffective. When the child yells, or becomes aggressive, she or he receives attention. The parent gives into the negative behavior, so the child soon learns to adapt accordingly. The coexistent unresponsiveness of communication and emotional needs contribute further to the child’s disturbance. By middle childhood, aggressive children are quick to construe neutral overtures by others as hostile and have difficulty judging other people’s feelings. They are poor at generating constructive solutions to conflicts, believing instead that aggression will be effective (Scott, 1998). Even more telling, is the fact that research has shown that parental criminal activity predicts juvenile recidivism (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984; Knight & West, 1975; Osborne & West, 1979; Robins, West, & Herjanic, 1975).

Domestic Violence and the Reciprocal Relationship with Run Away Behavior and Prostitution

The total number of child prostitutes in the United States has yet to be determined. In 1981, the General Accounting Office estimated 600,000 children under the age of 16 were working as prostitutes in the United States. It is also estimated that one and one half million children run away from home each year. It is safe to estimate about one-third of these children have some type of involvement with prostitution (Children of the Night, 2000).
Recently, there has been growing concern for the number of teenage prostitutes. A range of 64 percent to 100 percent of participants in studies related to prostitutes reported being runaways prior to prostituting (Badgley, 1984; Mathew, 1987; Silbert, 1980). Adolescents often turn to prostitution as a means of survival after running away from home (Mathew, 1987). Research suggests that juvenile prostitution is not a voluntary activity, but one that more realistically involves young people running from abusive, rejecting, and violent homes (Bagley & Young, 1987; Silbert, 1980).

There have been several studies that found high proportions of child witnesses of domestic violence in their prostitute samples (Bagley & Young, 1987; Nadon & Schludermann, 1998; Newman & Chaplin, 1982). Fifty percent of the prostitutes in Silbert's (1980) study reported witnessing inter-parental violence prior to running away. A study conducted by Whitbeck and Hoyt (1999), on homeless and runaway youth in the Midwest, concluded that prior to running away 69.4 percent of the female runaway’s caretaker threw something at them in anger; 84 percent were pushed; 77 percent were slapped; 21.7 percent were threatened with a knife or gun; and 39.8 percent were beaten up.

Due to runaway behavior there is an increase in the likelihood of deviant subsistence strategies, such as prostitution, which in turn increases the likelihood of victimization (Whitbeck & Simons, 1993). The psychological consequence of continual vulnerability to physical harm, exhaustion, poor nutrition, and the stress of living in public places, serve to create psychological distress or exacerbate existing psychological problems (Simons, Whitbeck, & Bales, 1989).
Summary

By applying social learning theory to the status offenses committed by African American females, one can make a strong case for the relationship to familial domestic violence and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Historically, the juvenile justice system has not been able to meet the needs of this population. Therefore, adolescent African American females have become repeat offenders. The intent of this study is to increase the knowledge base of social workers working with African American females in the juvenile justice system, who in turn will use this knowledge to implement and improve therapeutic treatment and intervention services for this group.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Setting

The setting for this research was Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community Based program for Girls in the Atlanta, Georgia. The Community Based Program for Girls houses 15 residents, who were residents throughout the Atlanta metro area. This program is an alternative to incarceration. The residents are required to stay in the program for 20 days, and participate in individual counseling sessions, therapeutic groups, and family counseling sessions. Additional activities such as, recreation, religious services, and medical services, are also offered.

Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls was chosen to give a representative sample of the Atlanta Metropolitan area. The residents’ races included African American, Caucasian and Hispanic. They were 10 to 18 years old. Their offenses included prostitution, alcohol and drug offenses, stealing offenses, running away from home, curfew violations, assault charges, unruly behavior and truancy.

Sample

The sample consists of 29 African American females, between the ages of 10 to 18, involved in the juvenile justice system with previous exposure to familial domestic
violence. This is a pilot study and includes the African American female residents at Father Flannagen's Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls from December 2000 to February 2001.

To get a representative sampling frame, the instrument was given to all African American females. Limitations cited in other studies state that random samples are not effective in the percentage of return/completed questionnaires. At the request of the Site Director of Father Flannagen's Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls, all females, regardless of race, were given the questionnaire to minimize risks that may create psychological, social and physical harm.

Although the participants are unique individuals, they have similar characteristics. All participants belong to the same race and gender and have attended school, some as high as the 12th grade. All have been exposed to some form of familial domestic violence. Each participant has committed a crime that has her involved in the juvenile justice system. However, some of the participants are from different counties (i.e. Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett, etc.) and were raised by different caretakers (e.g. mother, aunt, adopted parents) therefore, threats to external validity are decreased.

Instrument/Measures

The instrument used for this research was a questionnaire (Appendix A). An anonymous questionnaire was chosen because previous research designs in this area and with this population have used a similar type of instrument (Fantuzzo et al., 1991; Forstrom-Cohen et al., 1985). The advantage of an anonymous research is the protection
of self-disclosure, which allows more accurate reporting with juvenile populations (Eigenberg, 1994).

The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions. The first section covers general demographic information. The answers are primarily of nominal level measurement. Section Two discusses the effects of domestic violence, domestic violence acts witnessed, and behaviors of the participant and uses the “yes” or “no” format. Section Three questions relate to exposure to domestic violence. These questions are answered by checking all answers that apply. In section four, participants rank information regarding involvement in the juvenile justice system, running away and prostitution.

The questionnaire is deemed reliable because the same investigator administered the questionnaire to all participants which increased reliability. Social internal validity threats may have occurred due to the sensitive nature of the topic of prostitution. Content validity was measured by Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Site Director, the Program Director, and by Dr. Starks Canada, Thesis Advisor. The questionnaire appears to have adequately translated the constructs, which increases face validity. There are limitations when using questionnaires and it has been shown that participants may answer research questions incorrectly for the following reasons: to protect caretaker from legal issues, fear that if answered correctly they will not be allowed to go home, denial and embarrassment.
Design

The research will require a multi-group post-test only design (X -> O)

X representing females in the juvenile justice system with familial exposure to domestic violence

O representing questionnaire outcomes

Procedures

The questionnaire was given to all females at Father Flannagen's Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls. Prior to administering the questionnaire, meetings were held with the Site Director and Program Coordinator. The questionnaire was administered between December 2000 and February 2001. The dates and times that the questionnaire was administered varied based upon the scheduled activities of the participants. The majority of questionnaires were completed during free time, which was after school or after dinner.

Prior to answering the questionnaire, individual sessions were held with each participants to explain "domestic violence," "exposure," "anonymous," as well as the reason for conducting the research. An informed consent form was enclosed describing anonymity and risks of participation and the purpose of the research. The participants read and signed the consent form (See Appendix B). Before signing, the participants were asked if they understood the form and if they had any questions. Since the students are under the custody of Father Flannagen's program parental consent was not needed.
After signing the informed consent form, the participants completed the questionnaire. Participants were allowed to ask questions throughout the process. The average time to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes. The same investigator was used to complete all questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The hypothesis, African American adolescent females who have been exposed to familial violence become repeat offenders in the juvenile justice system, will be tested using a one tailed Chi-Square Test of Association. This test was chosen because chi square analyses appear frequently in social work literature (Weinbach & Grinnell, 1998). This test will show the association between the dependent variables (African American females involved in the juvenile justice system with familial exposure to domestic violence) and the independent variables (prostitution, running away, and aggravated assault). This association will determine if there are relationship patterns between the variables within the sample and if the data is strong and consistent enough to rule out chance or sampling error as an inadequate explanation. However, due to the sample size conclusion validity and Type II error is increased.

In regard to the research questions, with the exception of exposure to domestic violence witnessed, interval/ratio data will be collected. The percentages will be displayed in a bar graph. The bar graph will give a graphical representation of the frequency distribution in which each measurement category is represented.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

A total of twenty-nine African American females residing in Father Flannagen's Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls completed the study questionnaire. The 30-item questionnaire measured general demographics, domestic violent acts witnessed, involvement in juvenile justice system, and antisocial behaviors such as running away, aggravated assault, and prostitution. The research questions will be listed under the variables. Descriptive frequencies were used to analyze the data. A statistical description of every answer is included in Appendix C.

Demographics

The participants age was between 10 to 18 years. The majority of the participants were between 13 to 15 years of age. Thirteen were in the 7th to 8th grade, 13 in the 9th to 10th grade, and 3 in the 11th to 12th grade. The reported that 44.8 percent lived with their biological mother. Several lived with either their biological grandmother or biological parents. Although 44.8 percent of the participants lived with their biological mother only, 58.6 percent reported that their caretaker was married followed by 20.7 percent with single caretakers. Before incarceration 48.3 percent of the participants lived with their caretakers in Fulton County. The next largest county reported was Dekalb County. Table 1 gives a detailed description of the demographic results.
Table 1

Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th-8th</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th-10th</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th-12th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caretaker</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Mother</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Father</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Parents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dekalb</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwinnett</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobb</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exposure to Domestic Violence

Research question: What type of familial violence have these African American females been exposed to?

Exposure to domestic violence consisted of physical and verbal abuse. Of the 29 participants, 96.6 percent were exposed to verbal abuse and 62.1 percent were exposed to physical assault (refer to Table 2). When asked “how they feel about witnessing violence,” 3.4 percent felt anxious, 41.4 percent felt nervous, 24.1 percent felt unloved, 20.7 percent felt unwanted, 48.3 percent felt unhappy, 48.3 percent felt scared, 69.0 percent felt angry, and 3.4 percent felt unsafe. Overall, 55.2 percent of the participants “believe that the violence that occurs in their home happens in other families.”

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witness Physical Abuse</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness Verbal Abuse</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aggravated Assault

Research question: What percent of these African American females have physically assaulted an individual?

Of the 29 participants, 37.9 percent had physically assaulted someone. As stated
above, 62.1 percent had been exposed to domestic violence where the caretaker had been physically assaulted. Some of the participant’s responses to the most memorable incident of physical assault witnessed consisted of:

“When my mom was pregnant with my little sister and her boyfriend hit her in the back with his fist.”

“Mom and dad having a fist fight over very stupid stuff.”

“Fighting and throwing things at each other.”

“When my mother came home late from work and my dad hit her in the face because dinner was not ready.”

“When my father choked my mom.”

“When my grandmother got so mad at my grandfather and hit his head against the door then pushed him outside in the cold.”

“When my brothers’ girlfriend’s ex-boyfriend killed my 5 month old nephew.”

“When my father slapped my mother on Thanksgiving in 1998.”

“My father having sex with me and my mom.”

“When my stepfather kicked in the door and hit my mother.”

“When my grandfather tries to take up for me and she hits him and me.”

“When I saw my mother, father and half sister fighting each other.”

It was also reported that family members had physically assaulted 44.8 percent of the participants and family members sexually abused 17.2 percent.

**Runaways**

Research question: What percent of these African American females’ exhibit run away
behavior?

As result of witnessing abuse, 37.9 percent stated that “it makes them run away from home.” Of the total participants, 27.6 percent stated that “they had never ran away,” 6.9 percent “ran away once,” 34.5 percent “ran away two to five times,” 24.1 percent “ran away six to ten times,” and 6.9 percent “ran away eleven or more times” (refer to Figure 1). The results also found that 27.6 percent of the participant’s caretakers leave home to avoid being abused. While on the run, 34.5 percent reported that they lived with a relative, 3.4 percent lived with their godmothers, 31 percent lived with an adult male friend, 6.9 percent lived with a pimp, 3.4 percent lived with boyfriends, 13.8 percent lived with teenage friends, 10.3 percent lived with other runaways, and none reported living in an abandoned house (refer to Figure 2). The results also found that 6.9 percent were physically abused while on the run and 13.8 percent were sexually abused while on the run.

![Number of Times Participants Have Run Away](image)
Prostitution

Research question: What percent of these African American females engage in prostitution?

The results concluded that 17.2 percent of the participants had sex for money.

When asked “if they would rather stay with a pimp instead of at home with their caretaker,” 17.2 percent answered “yes.” The majority of the participants stated that “they had never had sex for money.” Only 10.3 percent stated that “they had had sex for money eleven or more times,” which may infer prostitution. (refer to Figure 3). While
incarcerated, 17.2 percent stated "that they learned reasons to stop prostituting."

![Number of Times Participants Had Sex For Money](image)

**Figure 3**

**Juvenile Justice System**

Research question: What percent of these African American females are repeat offenders?

Of the 29 participants, 31 percent had been incarcerated once, 17.2 percent had been incarcerated at least twice, and 41.4 percent had been incarcerated three or more times (refer to Figure 4). A majority of the participants had been involved in the juvenile justice system less than three years, however, 6.9 percent had been involved in the juvenile justice system for four or more years (refer to Figure 5). In regard to treatment while incarcerated, 34.5 percent stated that "they learned coping skills" and 51.7 percent "learned anger management skills." In comparison, the participants stated that while at Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community Based Program for Girls, 65.5
percent “learned anger management skills,” and 51.7 percent “learned coping skills.”

Figure 4

Number of Times Participants Have Been Incarcerated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5

Number of Times Participants Have Been Involved in the Juvenile Justice System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a month</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month to a year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to three years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis

African American adolescent females who have been exposed to familial violence become repeat offenders in the juvenile justice system.

As mentioned above, of the 29 participants 31 percent had been incarcerated once, 17.2 percent had been incarcerated at least twice and 41.4 percent had been incarcerated three or more times. It was also reported that 96.6 percent were exposed to verbal abuse and 62.1 percent were exposed to physical assault. When cross tabulated, using the Chi Square Statistical Test, the probability of an association value is .389 (exposure to familial physical assault cross tabulated with number of times incarcerated) and .174 (exposure to familial verbal abuse cross tabulated with number of times incarcerated). The value .389 and .174 exceed the level of significance, which is p < .05. Thus, there is a statistically significant association between exposure to familial physical assault and verbal abuse and the number of times incarcerated.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Based on this pilot effort, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant association between familial exposure to domestic violence and participants recidivism. However, there are limitations to the study such as the number of participants. Therefore, the generalizability is decreased.

Social Learning theory posits that behavior is learned through modeling family behavior. It was reported that 27.6 percent of caretakers left from home to avoid being abused. Observation of this behavior would explain why 37.9 percent of the participants stated that they ran away from home. In a study conducted by Silbert (1980), 51 percent of the participants reported witnessing inter-parental violence prior to running away.

Currently, in the Atlanta metropolitan area there has been an influx in the number of juvenile prostitute court cases. The results of Nadon and Schluderman (1998) study found that 87 percent of prostitutes reported being runaways. Ironically, only 17.2 percent of the participants in this study stated that they have had sex for money. Yet, 31 percent stated that they lived with an adult male while on the run, 6.9 percent lived with a pimp, and 3.4 percent lived with a boyfriend. Further research is needed to determine if the participants refer to the pimps as pimps, boyfriends or adult male friends. Due to the sensitive nature, embarrassment, sexual and physical abuse while prostituting, and negative media depiction of child prostitution it is presumed that the participants would answer “no” to
prostituting even if the answer was “yes.”

In addition, Social Learning theory would also help to explain why 44.8 percent reported witnessing their caretakers being physically assaulted and why 37.9 percent stated that they had physically assaulted someone. In a study conducted by Davidson (1978), it was found that aggression was the most frequently identified correlates of witnessing martial violence among school age children. Although, 37.9 percent of the participants stated that they had physically assaulted someone, a large percentage, 62.1 percent, did not physically assault someone. Joy Osofsky (1999) “The Impact of Violence on Children,” stated that protective factors such as a caring adult, a community safe haven, and a child’s own internal resources, increases the child’s resiliency and decreases the negative effects of exposure to familial domestic violence. However, further research is needed in this area.

This study indicates community based treatment can be effective. For example, 34.5 percent reported learning coping skills and 51.7 percent learned anger management skills while incarcerated, as compared to 51.7 percent that learned coping skills and 65.5 percent that learned anger management skills while at Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community based program for girls. According to past research, community based programs were more effective than incarcerating youth (Coates et al., 1982; Kristberg et al., 1988). However, the results of this study do not show a significant difference in coping skills acquired at either facility. But, the results do show an increase in anger management skills learned at the community-based program.
This study indicated a statistically significant association between domestic violence and recidivism. Of the participants, 58.6 percent were repeat offenders. A study by Loza and Loza-Fanous (1999), found that anger was one of many personality attributes that have been reported to be related to violent behavior and recidivism. The participants, also reported that witnessing familial domestic violence makes 69 percent of them feel angry. Other negative emotions included feelings of being unhappy (48.3 percent), unloved (24 percent), and unwanted (20.7 percent). These negative feelings may also contribute to recidivism. Contributing factors of recidivism rates for African American females in this study could be one or all of the antisocial behaviors, such as prostitution, running away, and physical assault exhibited from exposure to domestic violence or the lack of treatment received. The data suggest that additional research is needed to determine the effectiveness of current treatment approaches and additional services needed by this population to prevent or decrease the recidivism rates.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study is beneficial, there are limitations to its generalizability due to the sample, which only consisted of 29 participants. Since all participants were African American females in Atlanta, Georgia’s metro juvenile justice system, it may not be feasible to generalize the results to other populations. Questionnaires were only given for two months (December 2000 and January 2001) which creates a time limitation. Questionnaires were given during free time and it appeared that some participants hurried
through the questionnaire to resume free time activities, therefore, accuracy in answering questions may be decreased.
CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Although this study addresses the effects of exposure to familial domestic violence on children as it relates to their antisocial behaviors and recidivism, additional research is needed. To effectively combat the detrimental effects of children exposed to domestic violence and the resulting antisocial behaviors, social workers must ensure effective services at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

At the micro level, social workers must understand the effects and dynamics of children exposed to domestic violence. Studies have concluded that adolescent exposure to violence may lead to criminal behavior, aggressive behavior, running away, academic underachievement, adjustment problems, prostitution and suicidal behavior. Mental disorders such as depression, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, delusion disorders, and conduct disorders have also been reported as effects due to domestic violence (Fantuzzo et al., 1991; Henning, Leitenburg, Coffey, Bennett, & Jankowski, 1997; Kearney, 1999; Lehmann, 1997). The impact of exposure to domestic violence is so severe, that social workers at a micro level must provide therapy and services to child witnesses. Therapy and services should address problems related to the physical, psychological, and social well being of the child. If the problems associated with exposure to domestic violence are not addressed, the children are at risk for continuing the viscous cycle of abuse throughout their life.
This study has shown that the relationship with exposure to domestic violence and antisocial behaviors can lead to involvement in the juvenile justice system. Due to the lack of services and programs in the Atlanta metropolitan area, juvenile court judges have no choice but to place runaways and/or teenage prostitutes in jail for their own safety (Hickson, 2000). Effective counseling services may avoid incarceration. However, once a child becomes involved in the juvenile justice system, she must be provided with effective therapy and intervention programs that address her needs.

To be effective at the mezzo level, it is important for social workers to understand how these children are socialized through their exposure to family violence. The Social Learning Theory posits, that behavior is learned principally from interactions, or the influences of those groups that control individual major sources of reinforcement and punishment, and thus, expose them to behavioral models and normative definitions. One of the most important of these groups is the family (Akers et al., 1979). Exposure to family violence teaches children antisocial behaviors. As found in this study, 55.2 percent of the participants felt that “the violence that occurred in their home happened in other homes.”

At the macro level, social workers must be active advocates regarding state and federal legislation. Currently, in the state of Georgia, there is an amendment to increase the penalty of the Official Code of Georgia § 16-6-13, regarding the pimping of child prostitutes. If this legislation is passed, female prostitution may be decreased. Social workers must be active participants to ensure such laws are passed that have the potential to protect children. For example, social workers must advocate for children by ensuring
enforcement of the Official Code of Georgia §16-5-70 - Cruelty to Children in the Second Degree—which states that "any person that commits the offense of cruelty to children in the second degree, when such persons, who is the primary aggressor, allows a child under the age of 18 to witness the commission of a forcible felony, battery or family violence battery. Social workers must also advocate for legislation that provides funding to the Department of Juvenile Justice and community based programs for the creation and improvement of female programming and research.

In conclusion, this study has supported the need for social work intervention. Additional research and effective services are needed on the micro, mezzo and macro levels. Without effective services, African American females with familial exposure to domestic violence, exhibiting antisocial behaviors are at risk for becoming repeat offenders.
African American Females in the Juvenile Justice System and Exposure to Domestic Violence Questionnaire

Questions below elicit information about African American females in the juvenile justice system and exposure to domestic violence in the State of Georgia. The purpose of this questionnaire is to show the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and its impact on African American female adolescents.

Section I: Please check one answer for each question.

1. Age:
   1)____ 10-12
   2)____ 13-15
   3)____ 16-18

2. County of Residence:
   1)____ Fulton
   2)____ Dekalb
   3)____ Other: _____________________________

3. The highest grade level completed:
   1)____ 4th-6th
   2)____ 7th-8th
   3)____ 9th-10th
   4)____ 11th-12th

4. Race:
   1)____ Caucasian
   2)____ African American
   3)____ Native American
   4)____ Other: _____________________________
5. Before involvement in the Juvenile System, I lived with my:
   1) _____ Biological Mother
   2) _____ Grandmother
   3) _____ Aunt
   4) _____ Foster Mother
   5) _____ Biological Father
   6) _____ Uncle
   7) _____ Foster Family
   8) _____ Biological Parents
   9) _____ Grandparents
   10) _____ Other: __

6. The person/persons I lived with were:
   1) _____ Married
   2) _____ Single (never married)
   3) _____ Divorced
   4) _____ Widowed

Section II: Write yes or no to the following statements.

7. _____ I have witnessed my caretaker physically assaulted by her husband/friend.
8. _____ My caretaker leaves home to avoid being abused.
9. _____ I was physically assaulted by family members.
10. _____ I was sexually abused before I ran away from home.
11. _____ The adults I live with yell, scream, and curse each other.
12. _____ I think the level of violence that occurred in my home happens in other families.
13. _____ Witnessing abuse in my home makes me run away.
14. _____ I had sex for money when I ran away from home.
15. _____ I was sexually abused while on the run.
16. _____ I was physically abused while on the run.
17. _____ While in detention I learned coping skills to help me stop running away.
18. _____ I would rather stay with a pimp than at home.
19. _____ While in detention we discussed reasons not to continue prostituting.
20. _____ I have physically hit someone to get what I want.
21. _____ While in detention I learned anger management skills to control my aggressiveness.
Appendix A: Continued

Section III. Check all answers that apply.

22. I have seen the following used in domestic violence attacks:
   1) _____ Appliances (iron, pot pans, telephone, etc.)
   2) _____ Body Parts (fists, teeth, feet, etc.)
   3) _____ Furniture (chairs, figures, etc.)
   4) _____ Weapons (guns, knives, eating utensils, etc.)
   5) _____ Other: __________

23. Witnessing violence in my home makes me feel:
   1) _____ Angry
   2) _____ Scared
   3) _____ Unhappy
   4) _____ Unwanted
   5) _____ Unloved
   6) _____ Nervous
   7) _____ Anxious
   8) _____ Other: ____________________________

Section IV. Please check the one correct answer.

24. How long have you been involved in the Juvenile Justice system?
   1) _____ Less than one month
   2) _____ 1 month to a year
   3) _____ 2-3 years
   4) _____ 4 or more years

25. How many times have you been incarcerated?
   1) _____ Never
   2) _____ Once
   3) _____ Twice
   4) _____ Three or more times

26. How many times have you run away from home?
   1) _____ Never
   2) _____ Once
   3) _____ 2-5 times
   4) _____ 6-10 times
   5) _____ 11 or more times
Appendix A: Continued

27. How many times have you had sex for money?
   1) ___ Never
   2) ___ Once
   3) ___ 2-5 times
   4) ___ 6-10 times
   5) ___ 11 or more times

28. When I ran away from home I lived:
   1) ___ With a relative
   2) ___ With an adult male friend
   3) ___ With a pimp
   4) ___ With a teenage friend
   5) ___ With other runaways
   6) ___ On the street
   7) ___ In an abandoned house
   8) ___ Other: ________________________

29. What was the most memorable incident of domestic violence that you’ve witnessed?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

30. What skills have you learned at the Father Flannagen’s Boys Town of Georgia Community-Based Program to keep you from committing another crime?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B:

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR., SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Atlanta, Georgia

African American Females in the Juvenile Justice System
and Exposure to Domestic Violence Questionnaire

Questionnaire Consent Form

I have been asked to participate as a subject in a study regarding exposure to domestic violence. If I choose to participate, I will complete a survey dealing with prevalence, tactics, emotions, and coping skills. In addition, information on my age, race, and sentence will be included.

There are no reasonably foreseeable risks associated with the questionnaire, as I will not be identified by name and data will not be used in any way that might effect the outcome of my case. However, any plans I share in the survey involving child abuse, or future plans to injure others, or myself will be reported to staff members of the facility.

Answering questions about some incidents may cause me some anxiety or discomfort. There is not likely to be any direct benefit to me, but knowledge gained from this study may contribute to prevention and intervention services for children exposed to domestic violence.

The data collected and summarized will be in group form. Information that is gathered about me will not be reported to anyone outside the research project in a manner that personally identifies me. My name will not appear on the actual survey only on the consent form. The consent form will not be attached to the questionnaire and will be collected at a different time.

I have read and understand that I may refuse to participate in this study, and if I do choose to participate I may stop at any time. If I refuse to participate or decide to stop, I will not be penalized.

I agree to participate.
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APPENDIX C:

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR., SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Atlanta, Georgia

African American Females in the Juvenile Justice System
and Exposure to Domestic Violence Questionnaire

Descriptive Statistics

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