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Maternal incarceration : exploring the impact on children

Lia Morrin Jenner
Ryerson University

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MATERNAL INCARCERATION: EXPLORING THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

by

Lia Morrin Jenner

B.A. Honours, University of Guelph, 2006

Child and Youth Worker Diploma, Humber College, 2008

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requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the Program of
Early Childhood Studies

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Author's Declaration Page

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory research study was to examine the impact of maternal incarceration on mothers and their children from an ecological perspective. Individual interviews were conducted with four mothers who have previously been in conflict with the law and have been in custody for a minimum of twelve months. Two primary workers from Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County were also interviewed for another perspective pertaining to this topic. Participants were recruited by distributing advertisements at the Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. This study coincided with the literature and found that there are a number of combining factors from the broader system which impact the developmental outcomes of a child. After analyzing the data it appeared that there were two main aspects reported by all participants that affect children when their mothers are incarcerated. These include: System Barriers and Resource Barriers. The participants from this study recommended child friendly centres and physical visitations to rectify and maintain the mother-child relationship while mothers are incarcerated. This study helped to deconstruct norms associated with traditional families and recognized the unique experiences of mother-child relationships during incarceration.

Keywords: child development; maternal incarceration; ecological perspective

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Review of the Literature

Introduction

The importance of parent-child relationships has been widely studied by researchers (Collins, Madsen, & Susman-Stillman, 2002). Studies have examined the contributions of parenting and parent-child relationships and their influences on the child (Hinde, 1997). Some researchers have suggested that support and protection established in a parent-child relationship to be a universal phenomenon (Hinde, 1997). More recent studies have recognized families from a broader perspective; families are seen as a system of interacting elements (Young & Smith, 2000). Parents and their children have an influence on one another through interaction with others in the larger system (Parke & Buriel, 1998). However, during childhood parent-child relationships are considered the primary source of support (Laursen, Furman, & Mooney, 2006). Strong supportive relationships with an adult while a child ages have been shown to be an important variable in child development (Werner, 1996). Sigmund Freud was the first theorist to emphasize the importance of emotional ties to a child's mother for healthy psychological development (Kail, 2005). More recent theorists such as John Bowlby purport that a child who forms a social emotional relationship has a higher probability of surviving. This adult must be responsive, caring and consistently available to the child in order for the child to exhibit secure attachment (Kail, 2005). Infants that receive the compassion and trust of a secure attachment from an adult tend to interact confidently and successfully with other relationships during preschool years (Kail, 2005). Conversely, infants who do not experience a satisfying relationship have a higher probability of exhibiting problems in social interactions later in childhood (Kail, 2005). Children who are separated from their parents for various reasons may not establish a healthy attachment, which could lead to poor developmental outcomes later in life. Separation

because of maternal incarceration can have a severe impact on a child's developmental outcomes. For the purpose of my major research paper I conducted an exploratory study from an ecological perspective on the impact of maternal incarceration on children. Although there is literature available from other countries, few studies have been conducted in Canada surrounding children who are affected by maternal incarceration.

Overview of the Ecological Theoretical Perspective

The ecological model examines behaviour within its social setting and recognizes the importance of the individual's subjective view (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2008). One of the most important contributions to this model is Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). This theorist presented a model that divided a child's environment into four nested and interrelated systems and allowed researchers to see and understand how patterns of interaction within the family and the society influenced each other and in turn impacted the connection between development and culture (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2008). Bronfenbrenner (2005) noted that when relationships between systems are in harmony a child is more likely to exhibit healthy developmental outcomes. From this perspective, an individual is seen not as a passive participant but rather as a dynamic and evolving being that interacts with the many environments that he or she may encounter (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Furthermore, an individual's perception of their environment is often considered more important than "objective reality" under this model (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2008).

An ecological theoretical perspective can be helpful when exploring the issues surrounding the experiences that children face as a result of maternal incarceration. This model emphasizes the interactions between families, communities, the individual, and social systems

(Young & Smith, 2000). From an ecological perspective, a person's environment is comprised of all individuals, groups and organizations, which the person encounters. An individual's culture, circumstances, conditions and historical context are also taken into consideration when understanding the various influences (Young & Smith, 2000). Exchanges and interactions in a person's environments are reciprocal in nature and thus a problem cannot truly be understood by just looking at the individual and attempting to change them. The interaction between both the individual and the environment are the point of intervention (Young & Smith, 2000). In order to help the person there has to be an understanding of what meaning the individual gives each interaction. As shown in Figure 1 (Appendix A), child developmental outcomes are influenced by the interaction between mother-child relationship, caregiver-relationship, the Correctional Facility and Elizabeth Fry Society. The meaning a person gives to each exchange is largely shaped by their race, class, gender and experiences (Young & Smith, 2000).

A person's life circumstances by maternal incarceration could not be properly understood without addressing the impact of class, race and gender oppression. Aboriginal women and ethnic minorities continue to be disproportionately represented among federally sentenced women in Canada. Women account for less than 5% of individuals serving two years or more in Canada (Women's Inequality in Canada, 2008). Thirty two percent of the women that are federal prisoners are Aboriginal women whereas Aboriginal women account for 3% of the total general population (Women's Inequality in Canada, 2008). Similarly, African-Canadian women also represent 5% of prisoners in female federal prisons in Canada and only 1% of the female population (Women's Inequality in Canada, 2008). A large proportion of women who have been federally sentenced are mothers. Approximately 25,000 children have mothers who have either been federally sentenced or are in provincial prisons across Canada during any given year

(Women's Inequality in Canada, 2008). Nine percent of the 33,971 sentenced admissions to Ontario provincial facilities were women in 1997 and 1998 (Reed & Roberts, 1999). The median provincial sentence in Canada during this time was 45 days. However, the median time that was actually served was 24 days (Reed & Roberts, 1999). The most common offences of conviction that women at the provincial level are sentenced for are drug related offences and theft (Finn et al., 1999).

Many women who are incarcerated and their families belong to groups that systematically experience oppression due to their race or gender (Young, 1996). In terms of the individual level, the systemic nature of oppression usually entails a person that has not been given the same opportunities as those in positions of privilege (Steven & Hall, 1992). Individuals are not afforded opportunities that allow them to prosper economically, socially or in terms of well being (Steven & Hall, 1992). Women who are incarcerated at the provincial level tend to be young and single parents (Finn et al., 1999) Female inmates also typically come from family background of poverty (Sommers, 1995). If a person is growing up in poverty sometimes their needs as a child are unmet and they could have a more difficult time developing adequate life skills and have limited access to resources (Garcia Coll, Surrey, Buccio-Notaro & Molla, 1998). In addition, mothers who are in prison often come from low levels of education which further acts as a barrier to their ability to attain higher paying employment with benefits (Brown, 2000). Barnhill (1996) discusses the disadvantages and barriers that grandparent caregivers of children whose mothers are in prison experience; poverty, racism and sexism in the larger system's policies and practices all contribute to disadvantage a person's choices (Barnhill, 1996). Barnhill (1996) suggests that these barriers continue to disadvantage individuals in each generation within the family. From an ecological perspective, the environment can have a large influence on the

mother that is incarcerated and their child. The following section will examine the issue surrounding the criminological literature and the host of problems related to a mother-child separation due to incarceration.

Issues with Criminological Literature

Much of the research surrounding offenders and the criminal justice system have been from a male model (Belknap, 1996). This model purported that women do not need a special category and that gender makes little difference in terms of theorizing and analysis. However, most of the theorizing about crime from this gender free approach did not adequately explain women's criminality (Smart, 1976). Many studies began to acknowledge that women offenders tend to come from a disadvantaged position prior to being incarcerated (Sommers, 1995). This resulted in the recognition that woman's lives and their criminality could be explained by the subordinate social and economic status of women in society (Boritch, 1997). Moreover, women's criminality could be a reflection of their harsh social circumstances rather than their individual responsibility (Chesney-Lind, 1997). Feminist researchers also began to recognize issues related to women offenders and the impact on their family (Enos, 2001). Families tend to be more adversely effected by a mothers' incarceration than by the fathers' (Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagen & Kennon, 1999). This is in part due to the fact that mothers are more often the sole caregivers of their children prior to their incarceration (Seymour, 1998).

Impact on the Child

When a mother is removed from the home due to incarceration a child is adversely affected in a variety of ways. Children whose mothers are incarcerated are considered to be among the most vulnerable children in our nation (Myers et al., 1999). These children tend to

lose their familial home and their sole care provider (Stanton, 1980). They experience problems associated with the separation from their parent (Myers et al., 1999). Some children are put into adoption or placed in permanent foster care (Brown, 2000). These children are also repeatedly shifting households and caregivers (Sack, Seidler & Thomas, 1976). Children in these circumstances also typically experience school problems (Sack et al., 1976) and poverty (Baunach, 1985). Researchers have suggested that these children have ongoing trauma and that stressors are barriers to successfully conquering developmental tasks (Phillips & Harm, 1997).

Children often exhibit emotional problems and adult behavioural issues as a result of their mother's incarceration. For example, children who are separated from their mother tend to demonstrate emotional problems such as loneliness, anxiety, guilt and anger which they typically have difficulty managing (Seymour, 1998). There are also studies that have shown a strong correlation between incarcerated mothers and future criminal behaviour (Jose-Kampfner, 1991).

Children can also develop relationship issues if they are separated from a parent who is incarcerated. Sack et al., (1976) interviewed children, caretakers and parents who were incarcerated. Out of twenty two children, sixteen were reported to have poor peer relationships. Similarly, Jose-Kampfner (1991) purported that the social stigma associated with having a parent who is incarcerated tends to result in a child having psychological and emotional difficulties. These children are typically teased at school by their peers (Jose-Kampfner, 1991). Many suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Symptoms of this disorder include hyper alertness, sleep disturbances, withdrawal, guilt, trouble concentrating and impaired memory (Jose-Kampfner, 1991). A large number of these studies strictly discuss the impact of separation on children and adolescence. In the literature that was reviewed preschoolers have been solemnly studied. Although there have been studies concerning the effects of separation on the child from

other countries, few studies have examined the impact of separation on incarcerated mothers in the context of Canada.

The impact of a parent-child separation is largely associated with the child's stage of development. Infants and toddlers face attachment issues when separated from a parent (Myers et al., 1999). As a result of the separation some of these children may not form secure relationships with their mother. Mothers also may lack the opportunity to bond with their child as needed (Myers et al., 1999). Preschool children who are two to six years of age tend to be the most impacted by separation from their mothers. These children are beginning to develop moral emotions such as shame, guilt and empathy (Kochanska, Casey & Fukumoto, 1995). They may be the most likely to witness their mothers' crime because they are still too young to be at school (Myers et al., 1999). After being separated from their mother, these children could have difficulty establishing independence and instead revert back to being excessively dependent on their caregiver (Myers et al., 1999). Children this young also cannot completely recognize themselves as separate from their parents. This could lead them to feelings of guilt and responsibility for their mother's removal from the household (Myers et al., 1999). These children often have terrible images associated with their mother's incarceration. Some of the children in Thompson's (1984) study depicted prison conditions as small and dark and believed that mothers were being abused by guards while they were incarcerated.

Impact on the Mother

For a large proportion of incarcerated women, separation from their children is considered a major source of stress and having the opportunity to stay in touch with them tends to give these women hope (Bloom, 1992). Female offenders also have to plan on reuniting with

their children upon their release. These mothers are usually responsible for securing housing and child care arrangements once they re-enter the community and are employed (Seymour, 1998). These women tend to have a difficult time finding employment. Public service employers that work in fields such as child care facilities, elder care and health care often do not allow individuals with a criminal record to work for them (Brown, 2000).

Some studies have suggested that incarcerated mothers' depression can often be the result of being separated from their children (Hairston, 1991). Depression, guilt, sense of loss and lowered self esteem, are prevalent in mothers who are incarcerated (Ingram-Fogel, 1993). There is no reason to assume that all mothers that are incarcerated experience depression due to being separated from their child. Depression is a complex disorder and far exceeds the topic of this paper. However, it is interesting to note that some studies have concluded that depression is prevalent among mothers who are incarcerated.

Incarcerated mothers' experiences while in prison vary in terms of their perception of their current situation. Some women perceive incarceration as a form of "shelter" while others believe it has contributed to their feelings of losing control in their life (Garcia Coll et al., 1998). Women who are incarcerated have indicated that the experience has enabled them to be free from alcohol or drugs and given them time to reflect on their past mistakes associated with mothering (Garcia Coll et. al., 1998).

Mothering tends to vary somewhat and thus it is difficult for mothers to adequately meet expectations associated with being a good mother when they are separated from their child due to incarceration. Mothers have reported that the lack of involvement in the daily lives of their children was considered to be the most difficult issue to cope with during incarceration (Ingram-

Fogel's, 1993). These mothers tended to have feelings of guilt and feared that their children would not grow up to know who they were (Ingram-Fogel's, 1993). The dominant discourse around mothering also makes it difficult for mothers to sustain mothering practices that are alternative to the mainstream ideologies.

When viewed from an ecological perspective, the influence of environmental constraints such as the policies related to incarceration impact on family relationships and this should be recognized. Inmate mothers have difficulty responding to the needs of their children when they are separated from their child. These mothers will eventually be reunited with their families upon their release. Mothers tend to be ill prepared to resume care giving responsibilities and roles once released (Kaplan & Sasser, 1996). A large number of treatments within prisons do not necessarily address the difficulties that led to a mother's incarceration in the first place (Kaplan & Sasser, 1996). Mothers that are released from prison often have low self esteem and have difficulty resuming responsibility which was taken away when they were incarcerated (Young, 1996). The difficulty associated with maintaining a relationship with one's child throughout the incarceration period strains the mother-child relationship. Children may exhibit feelings of uncertainty and unfamiliarity with their mother due to the separation (Beckerman, 1989).

The research surrounding motherhood issues for incarcerated mothers suggests that mothering tends to be important for a large proportion of women. Most of the studies mentioned above provided detailed descriptions of a women's account. Few researchers have actually explored the relationships between certain aspects of these women's lives that they have reported in these studies. For example, some of the studies that were encountered during the literature review recommend facilitating a mother's ability to maintain contact with their children. This is an assumption that this contact benefits both the child and the family.

As indicated, research on children of inmate women is scarce. Academics have not been able to find representative samples of these children. They do not know whether the ones that are in studies reflect a typical sample or are considered the most troubled children from that population (Myers et al., 1999). Studies using standardized assessment techniques to measure children's behavioural outcomes are rare in the literature (Gabel, 1992). Nor have there been studies that have explored children's coping skills or the resiliency factors associated with a parent being incarcerated (Gabel, 1992). The majority of the research on the impact of children has been based on parent and caregiver accounts (Myers et al., 1999). Parental reports on how their children are coping may not be accurate. The results from these interviews could be influenced by social desirability or inaccurate due to the parent being unaware of their child's well being (Myers et al., 1999).

An ecological perspective would benefit future research. Children's issues are not caused solely by their mother's incarceration. They are caused by multiple risk factors which interact and change depending on the historical context. Children's issues can also be moderated by protective factors present in the individual and in their environment (Myers et al., 1999). In this literature review, there were no studies which explored how children's relationship changed throughout their mother's incarceration or any longitudinal studies.

Summary

Mothers in prison and their children represent a special population with unique life experiences that warrant attention from researchers in the field. Families in these circumstances often exhibit a host of problems such as behavioural, emotional and practical difficulties associated with being separated due to incarceration. An ecological theoretical perspective can

be helpful in understanding issues that these families cope with when faced with maternal incarceration. This model requires researchers to pay attention to the interactions between individuals and their environment while acknowledging the reciprocal nature of these exchanges (Young & Smith, 2000). Interventions that take into account these interactions and cultural factors can also be suggested for mothers and their children. These strategies can be designed to increase competence, self direction and self esteem (Young & Smith, 2000).

The current research study will make an important contribution to the literature on maternal incarceration and the effect on children. Rehabilitation and treatment for a mother is related to family matters (Young & Smith, 2000). As families reshape their roles and response to issues related to maternal incarceration attention to family dynamics is necessary in order to effectively help women address the issues related to their incarceration (Young & Smith, 2000). This will help them toward successful re integration into the community. Secondly, mother's voices have been neglected in the literature and it is important in establishing a better representation of their unique experiences in the research. This research will deconstruct norms associated with maternal incarceration and challenge traditional ideology around family. Mothers and their children will be recognized for their unique experiences and empowered to share their stories in order to contribute to research surrounding maternal incarceration.

Research Design

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to explore how maternal incarceration influences children from the perspective of the mother. Based on the literature reviewed for this study, a limited amount of research has studied the impact of maternal incarceration on children. This exploratory study utilized interviews with mothers who have previously been in custody and primary workers as the unit of analysis. The setting for recruiting participants for this research study is through the Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County in Barrie, Ontario. After receiving approval from Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board, the Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County in Barrie was selected based on information that was advertised via the internet, through word of mouth and by contacting women advocacy groups in the Simcoe County Region. The executive director of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County in Barrie was contacted via phone and a meeting was scheduled in which information about the study and an invitation to support the current study was discussed.

The participating site was selected to recruit participants for the current research based on a series of criteria. Most importantly, the participating facility is a non profit direct service organization that assists women from the time that they are arrested to their discharge from prison and through to their reintegration into the community (Cunningham & Baker, 2003). Programs that are offered include: those pertaining to court processing, counselling, probation services, temporary absences, life skills, substance abuse programs, in reach programs, release planning, parole supervision, vocational training and a programs related to residential services (Cunnningham & Baker, 2003). Elizabeth Fry Societies from across Canada are all connected

and represented by the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Society. The goal of the association is to collaboratively work with Elizabeth Fry Societies and other women's advocacy groups to, "...address poverty, racism, and other forms of oppression" (The Elizabeth Fry Society, 2009).

Secondly, the facility is one of the few programs available for women who have been federally sentenced and released into the community. According to Correctional Service of Canada (2009) website there is limited information that exists in community services for women offenders and few services that are provided are framed to address the needs of female inmates. Resources that are offered in the community typically are concentrated in urban centres and are inaccessible to women from many rural or northern parts of Canada (Comack, 2000).

The women who access Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County services are also characteristically varied. The services offered support all women regardless of, "...race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion and freedom of conscience, social or economic condition" (Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, 2009). This agency provides programs and services which are devoted to help females of all ages who are or could be at risk of being in conflict with the law. Simcoe County has a large French and First Nation speaking population (Elizabeth Fry Society, 2009). The Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County also is one of the only facilities to provide residence north of Toronto to both federally sentenced and provincially sentenced women (Elizabeth Fry Society, 2009). This combination of services and population characteristics thus made this research site ideal for data collection.

Participant Recruitment

Given the dearth of qualitative data available on the impact of maternal incarceration on their children and their unique experiences in Canada, a qualitative methodology was used to explore mothers' and primary workers' perspective and experiences on this topic. Qualitative techniques are often used when the problem that is being researched is considered not well understood or complex (Berg, 1998). Marina Barnard (2005: pg 2) refers to complex or sensitive research as studies which explore 'socially-charged and contentious areas of human behaviour'. Issues under study in which participants could disclose behaviours or attitudes which would naturally be kept private could also be deemed sensitive (Wellings, Branigan & Mitchell, 2000). Mothers who have been previously incarcerated could demonstrate discomfort to express their unique experiences. In keeping with this, semi structured interviews with a sample of 4 mothers who have been previously incarcerated for a minimum of twelve months were scheduled individually. Individuals who receive sentences of under two years serve their sentences in a provincial correctional institution because Canada has a two tier correction system (Moffat & Shaw, 2000). Women sentenced to two years or more are referred to as federally sentenced and usually serve their sentence in federal facilities (Moffat & Shaw, 2000). Two primary workers that are employed through Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County were also interviewed individually for the purpose of this study. All of the participants were audio-taped and notes were taken at the time of the interview as a means to further explore the issues that this population and their families encountered. The interview guide was developed from the review of the literature and in consultation with the director of Elizabeth Fry Society.

With the assistance of the Executive Director of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County, a flyer was distributed and placed within the facility and sister agencies. Those interested in the

study were asked to contact the email address on the poster and were then asked if they wished to participate in an interview on a particular date and time that suited their schedule. In order to ensure confidentiality, each interview took place at the public library in Barrie, which is in walking distance of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. A private room was booked at the public library in order to promote confidentiality and well being of all participants.

Informed Consent and Data Security

All participants in the current study were informed of the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. An informed consent document was used and can be found in Appendix B. Each potential participant was informed of their right to refuse participation or to withdraw during any point in the study. The informed consent form included contact information for participants seeking further information. Each participant was also given a list of resources in the community if they were experiencing adverse effects as a result of the study (Appendix C). All phases of this current study were approved by the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board.

To protect the confidentiality of all participants the data collected from the interviews were coded and all identifiers were removed. The computer files that were relevant to this study were protected by a password and only the researcher had access to this information. Consent forms, data observations and any other material involved in this study were also stored and locked in a cabinet. Lastly, all final reports of the research data are devoid of any identifying information that was specific to the individual respondents in this study.

Participants

Appendix D presents the following demographic information in raw form:

Four mothers and two primary workers from Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County were interviewed for the purpose of this study. At the time of incarceration the age range of three mothers was 25 to 27 years old with the remaining mother being 35 years old. The time of incarceration ranged from one year upward to 7 years with an average of 3.8 years in prison. While the oldest participant had four children ranging in age from 6 to 12 the remaining three women had either one or two children and all were under the age of 9 with the youngest respondent having a single child 2 years of age. With respect to race, three of the participants described themselves as Canadian and one respondent indicated her race as best described as Aboriginal.

The two primary workers that work at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County and were interviewed for the purpose of this study were not asked for demographic information. One of the primary workers indicated that she has been working at the facility as a residential worker before entering her current position as a Program Coordinator. The other staff member that was interviewed for the purpose of this study previously worked at Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene before becoming the Manager of Correctional Programs at Elizabeth Fry Society.

Design Advantages and Limitations

It is important to note that the researcher did not ask demographic questions throughout this study. The only question the researcher asked prior to interviewing was whether the participant had children and the length of their sentence. Most of the respondents provided demographic information while they were describing their unique experiences. The reason that the researcher did not choose to ask demographic questions was because this type of information

permits profiling of participants. Comparing the demographic characteristics of the study participants usually allows the researcher to draw inferences as to how representative the study participants are of the population (Peterson, 2000). This information can also allow researchers to compare respondents with other groups of individuals when drawing inferences about answers to other questions in the interview (Peterson, 2000). One major limitation of the current study is its small sample size and this is one reason the researcher did not ask demographic questions. Qualitative researchers tend to focus less on the sample's representativeness than on how the sample reflects on social life (Neuman, 2006). The primary purpose of sampling using the qualitative approach is to collect participants that can clarify and deepen the understanding of a social problem (Neuman, 2006). While repeated efforts were made to recruit a larger sample this study relies on the response of four mothers and two primary workers. The researcher used random sampling. The researcher could not pre determine the sample size in advance. Unlike quantitative researchers who use preplanned approaches to their studies, qualitative researchers tend to select participants gradually while taking into account the specific content of a case (Neuman, 2006). For qualitative researchers, "it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected" (Flick, 1998:41). Exploratory research lacks the finality of definitive research and any issues related to validity, reliability and generalizability of research results are thus left to the confirmatory phase of research (Stebbins, 2001, pp. 46-50). The current study therefore only provides support for future studies. Stebbins (2001) further suggests that studies conducted by researchers on the same group over time tend to result in more convincing validations and thus generalizations can emerge.

The second limitation of the current study is the use of face-to-face interviews to gather data. One disadvantage was the amount of time needed to analyse each participant's response (Neuman, 2006). The personnel costs associated with travel was also considered one disadvantage that the researcher underestimated. Interviewer bias could have also been greater by using this type of instrument to gather data (Neuman, 2006). The tone of voice, appearance and question wording could have affected the respondent (Neuman, 2006). From a positive perspective, face-to-face interviews tend to have the highest response rate and allowed the participants to ask questions or address concerns immediately (Neuman, 2006). Interviewers can also ask types of questions that are more complex and use probes to gain more insight on a social issue (Neuman, 2006). Despite some of the limitations in using this type of method to gather data, using semi structured interviews was important. Respondents were given freedom to answer how they wished providing them a feeling of empowerment during the interview. Individuals want to tell their stories and open ended questions provide participants with a means to talk freely (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991).

Given the limitations mentioned above, this study is intended to provide a framework for future research to be conducted on this topic. It should not be assumed that this study provides definitive results regarding maternal incarceration and the affect on children. The results and analysis of the data collected in this study are not intended to generalize to the population of mothers who have been previously incarcerated in Ontario or across the country. The current research represents an attempt to explore and analyze the nature of maternal incarceration and the impact on children and simply offers preliminary data that could support further research in this area.

Data Collection

The data collection tool that was used is qualitative interviewing to explore the research question: How does maternal incarceration impact children? Qualitative interviewing structured the interview as a natural flowing conversation in which the researcher had a focus of inquiry without predetermined chronological asking of questions (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002). The interview only took place once the participant understood the terms of the informed consent form. The interviewer developed semi-structured interview questions which addressed the relationship between mother-child relationship. These types of questions guided the direction of the study and enabled the researcher to be flexible and use probes as necessary (Neuman, 2006). The researcher took the role as an active listener and employed the use of the following questions based on participants narratives, "How is that?, In what way?, How do you mean? What would be an example of that?" which were employed throughout the interview when necessary (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002, p.333).

Questions started out with easy subjects in order to ensure participants' comfort. Respondent comfort was important and required in order to build a rapport with each mother. Miller and Tewskbury (2001) suggested that building a rapport is important for researchers who work with certain groups of participants. Individuals who have engaged in highly deviant activity and thus have been shunned or stigmatized by society tend to be suspicious of researchers (pp.55). The researcher attempted to put the respondents at ease by attending the residential meeting and describing the study in their environment. I attempted to build a feeling of trust by answering individual questions and by engaging in conversations that did not pertain to this study. It was hoped that this approach would alleviate any risk of negative emotional or psychological feelings associated with discussing a sensitive subject. Questions for the mothers

psychological feelings associated with discussing a sensitive subject. Questions for the mothers were designed to shed light on the impact of incarceration on their child and understand their unique experiences. Questions for the primary workers of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County were written with the goal of exploring their experiences with the mothers and their beliefs of the effect of incarceration on the family. In order to further empower respondents they were each given the opportunity to provide any additional experiences at the end of each interview. Giving a voice to vulnerable individuals is considered the first step to empower them (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000).

The use of an individual interview method allowed mothers and primary workers to guide the focus and direction of the narrative. This affords the researcher the opportunity to follow up and clarify questions based on the mother's narratives (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002). This approach also enabled mother's voices to be at the forefront (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2002). Mothers were not compensated for participating in this research study as it is believed the opportunity to open up and tell their lived experiences could be an empowering experience. Narratives demonstrate people as having agency rather than merely being passive recipients (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). This approach created an ease of sharing and engaged mothers in discussing their stories. Participant's experiences were audio recorded and the interviews lasted approximately 25-45 minutes in duration. Each subject only participated in this study once they signed the consent form that indicated the interviews will be recorded. Audio recording was used in order for the principal investigator to transcribe the data that was collected through interviewing. Recording the data in this way allowed the researcher to represent the narratives of the participants more accurately when transcribing the data. In order for the researcher to keep track of what was collected and what still needed to be finished a checklist was used to further

organize materials. This checklist included: signed consent forms for mothers, observations, field notes, data analysis and appreciation notes. The last column was included to inform mothers with a note stating appreciation for their participation and indicating the importance of their contribution to the study. This was intended to promote positive feelings after the study has been completed.

In order to maintain the privacy of each participant during the data collection phase, caution was taken place so as to not make it obvious to staff members of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County as to who was participating in this study. The researcher had each participant contact them through the Ryerson University email account prior to the interview.

Location

Once a participant initiated contact with the researcher over email they were asked their preference of where in the Barrie area they would like to do the interview. The researcher suggested meeting each participant in the local library which is two blocks away from Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. This location was considered suitable for several reasons. The location provided an environment that would reduce power between the researcher and participant (Neuman, 2006). A private room was booked for an hour so that interviews could be audio taped. These additional measures were taken to ensure the comfort of the participant while maximising privacy and confidentiality.

Interviews for all participants, with the exception of two primary workers took place at the local library. Most of the mothers had told the researcher that they often frequent the local library to use the computer and to access the internet. It is likely that this location lessened the risk that participants would experience negative feelings associated with the interview. This was

a familiar, accessible and safe environment (Liamputtong, 2007). The researcher also recognized that the mothers would be disclosing sensitive issues around the topic during the time of the interview. The researcher needed to be prepared if any of the respondents felt overwhelmed, experienced distress, anxiety or flashbacks. As an additional measure the researcher offered each mother a referral for support such as counselling services, contacts, information and local support groups (Cutcliffe & Ramcharan, 2002). To accommodate the needs of respondents, the two interviews with primary workers took place at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County.

Ethics

When a researcher conducts research involving human subjects they must protect the participants from any unnecessary harm that they may experience (Hagan, 1989). This is especially true when working with vulnerable individuals such as women who have been previously incarcerated. In order to minimize harm to each participant, all respondents were ensured of anonymity. The researcher advised each participant that involvement in the study was voluntary. Each mother was also instructed that they could withdraw at any point during the study without consequence. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic participants were also told they could refuse to answer any questions that they felt uncomfortable answering. During each stage of the research study the researcher took steps to ensure that the rights and dignity of each respondent were protected.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher after each interview took place. Using field notes and transcribed interviews the researcher organized the raw data into conceptual categories and created themes. Qualitative coding is an essential part of data analysis (Neuman, 2006). This

process is often guided by the researchers' questions and the process tends to lead to new questions (Neuman, 2006). This researcher used open coding which usually happens at the beginning of the first time through collected data. During this phase of coding data the researcher located themes and assigned them initial codes in order to condense the amount of data into small manageable piles (Neuman, 2006). The researcher looked for critical themes and key events throughout this process. After the initial codes had been created the researcher decided to use axial coding. Axial coding requires a researcher to organize the codes and link them to create analytic categories (Neuman, 2006). This process stimulates thinking about the links between initial concepts and themes (Neuman, 2006). The researcher also created a flow chart in order to further organize the links between concepts and themes. The final step that the researcher used for data coding is called selective coding. This part of data analysis involves the researcher scanning all the data and selectively choosing cases that illustrate themes. Comparisons and contrasts were made during this time and several core ideas emerged (Neuman, 2006). Analytic memo writing will be used to organize my thoughts and ideas about the coding process. Each coded theme had a separate memo and this assisted in linking raw evidence to theoretical thinking (Neuman, 2006). The emerging themes and categories were cross referenced with the literature. In keeping with the ecological approach, the researcher paid close attention to culture and themes of oppression. Peer referencing was also used as a strategy that helped the researcher to analyze the data. This additional measure was taken to improve the quality of the study as opportunity for improvement may be more obvious to a colleague who has expertise on the subject.

Results

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County is a community based agency that provides services to women from the time they are in conflict with the law through to their discharge in the community (Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County, 2009). The goal of each Elizabeth Fry Society is to advocate for women while addressing issues related to poverty, racism and other forms of oppression (Elizabeth Fry Society, 2009). Founded in 1989, the agency provides shelter and residence for homeless women and women under parole supervision to Correctional Services Canada and The Ministry of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The primary workers that were interviewed for the purpose of this study had varying levels of educational background ranging from work experience to Master of Social Work degree.

Social services for women include counselling, classes about anger management, anti-theft programs, court support programs, restorative justice circles, victim support worker programs and classes related to shoplifting (Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County, 2009). Residents of Joyce Kope House, the Residential Facility at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County, receive transportation and are encouraged to participate in community programs, if needed.

After analyzing the data it appears that the mothers and the primary workers from Elizabeth Fry of Simcoe County reported two main aspects which affect the mother-child relationship while mothers are in prison. These include: System Barriers and Resource Barriers. These two themes are further broken down into sub themes, as shown in Figure 2 (Appendix E). These major themes have an influence and impact on the mother and child.

System Barriers

“There is always Another Hurdle that comes up”

The following sub-themes arose out of the first major theme of System Barriers: prison policies and procedures, the process of Children’s Aid Society, and Caregivers acting as gatekeepers to the mother-child relationship.

Prison Policies and Procedures. Three of the participants described system barriers that transcend through prison policies and procedures. A sample of their accounts helps give shape to what mothers experienced during their sentence in prison. Two participants articulated their experience of prison policies and procedures surrounding visits as acting as system barriers in the following ways:

You can have visitors but it’s a lot of paper work you have to fill out. People just can’t see you or stuff like that. It takes a long time too.

One of the primary workers reported, with an air of frustration, her experience working with mothers at Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene.

Nope they can have visitors come up and they are seen through the glass. It is quite a process for someone incarcerated and you must get a form to allow that person to come in. You send that form to have it approved and on that form the person must include: date of birth, address and phone numbers. It is information that is very difficult for someone who is incarcerated to get a hold of. A full mailing address is hard to get. You fill out that form and then you pass it on and that can take two weeks. They have to have a drivers licence on there as well and the form has to be verified and checked. They must also do what is called a CPIC on the person. If the person has five people on a waiting list and three of them are your children that process takes that much longer. Then they schedule an appointment to come in and if they are on lock down they can’t see them. Then they reschedule and there may not be enough officers to take you or escort you out to see them so you can’t. Then if they come in on a weekend the weekend is cut short because there are too many people waiting. Just when a mother thinks she has reached the point to see her family there is always another hurdle that comes up. It isn’t like that all the time but a good majority of the time.

One mother stated that it is not just prison policies around visits that makes it difficult to have contact with her child but also rules around phone calls.

You have to go on a long list and get a like set time to call like once a month.

Children's Aid Society (CAS). To further expand the notion of system barriers, two participants in this study commented on their experience with the Children's Aid Society. The following quotes are used to help articulate the essence of individual experience.

I have two kids. One of them was taken away from me and I have not seen him since February 2007. I don't know where he is because CAS has placed him in a home. I don't get how the entire thing works to be honest.

Sometimes I would spend hours on the phone trying to get in touch with my kid. CAS was helpful at times but there was a lot of shit you had to go through to get a case worker on the phone to get visits with your kid.

One of the primary workers response coincided with the other mother's frustration around working alongside the Children's Aid Society. She acknowledges that many women have a lot of angst and frustration about initiating contact with CAS case managers.

The majority of the women are going through CAS matters and there are a lot of mixed feelings around this process. Women usually feel angst and frustration around this, especially when they first have contact with the case manager. There is a lot of confusion about the whole process of CAS and what that means for their children. Mothers usually have trouble understanding what that means for them and their family in the future.

Finally, one participant in particular, expressed her gratitude for not having to interact with Children's Aid Society.

I'm lucky compared to most because my kids are all with family members rather than CAS. Most women in prison have to work with them.

Caregivers as Gatekeepers. Within this sub-theme three participants highlighted their frustration with caregivers. Most of them aired their frustration around family members

determining when mothers were allowed to have access to their children. One mother recalls her family situation during her incarceration period. She stated:

It is hard because those people are trying to put a wedge between my son and I. I guess they see how close I have become with him. What they don't understand is that I'm his mom and it doesn't matter where I go or what I do I'm still his mother. As long as I show him I love him he will love me back. They tried really hard to stop me from being with him.

One mother in particular, stated that the caregivers of her child would make it difficult for her to call her son when she was in prison.

I would write to my son while I was in jail and talk to him over the phone when someone would do three way. He lives with his grandparents and they did not accept collect calls even when I would send them money. That was never good enough for them.

Another interviewee summed up her experience with the caregiver of her child as hopeless.

In prison they were allowed to come and visit me but they didn't. The prison I was in was in Quebec so they wouldn't bring him there anyway. Anything to try and keep me out of the picture now is what they are trying to do. It is hopeless I mean I could be in Kitchener they wouldn't let me see him. Even when I'm here in Barrie they won't bring him to see me. It doesn't matter if I lived in Toronto. I had to pull teeth two weekends ago to them to pick him up so I could catch the bus to be back at Elizabeth Fry Society on time.

One of the primary workers reported from her experience of working with women at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County, that one barrier which tends to impede the mother-child relationship is the caregiver refusing to allow the women to see their children.

The separation is definitely a barrier to the mom's relationship with her kid and who the child is being taken care of at this point. We often see the father's family has custody of the child and then the father does not like the mom anymore. He will ensure that the family does not allow the mom to see her kids then. The mother tries to do the best that they can in this situation but it's tough.

Resource Barriers

The second major theme that emerged from the data that hinders the mother-child relationships during incarceration is resource barriers. It inspired the following three sub-themes:

1) Transportation 2) Money and 3) Programs in Prison.

Transportation. Three of the participants reflected on their experiences in prison and identified the lack of transportation and the remote location of the prison hindering their relationship with their children.

The jail that I was in was really far away. There was no way for my children to come up and visit me. My brother in law didn't have a car at the time so it wasn't going to happen.

Well I was placed all the way in Quebec so yeah it was too far for my kids to get out there.

I mostly called my kids when I was in prison just because of the distance. It was too far away. It was a three to four hours drive. I guess phone calls and letters are the most common ways.

When mothers have been released into the community and are under the supervision of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County transportation continues to be a barrier which reduces contact with their children. One primary worker identified from her experience of working with women that their transition into the community tends to be a difficult process.

Because they are in the residential program and halfway house passes have to be approved so in order for them to go out that must be done. A lot of them are not from the Barrie area so there is a transportation issue. Finding a ride and having it approved usually does not make some of the women happy.

Money. Another sub-theme which emerged from this study, which affected some mothers having contact with their children, was lack of money. One mother in particular, recalled her frustration of not having the monetary funds to stay in contact with her son.

You can pay for your phone calls but it gets so expensive. I used to get upset because I didn't have the money to pay for that.

One interviewee described how she was fortunate because her brother in law had custody of two of her children and was a good support.

The two kids that are with my brother in law have lots of money so they are well taken care of. The family is very close too. My brother in law pays for the phone calls so I can talk to my kids. I'm lucky in that way.

Programs in Prison. In addition to money, another sub-theme that emerged from this study was the lack of programs and services offered in the prison. Virtually all the respondents commented on the lack of parenting courses and family orientated programs, which some mothers felt could have strengthened their relationship with their children. One mother reported that she was frustrated by the lack of parenting courses.

When I was in the prison in Quebec called Joliette there were no parenting programs. There should be. We had what was called Dialectal Behavioural Therapy and school but that was it. But you don't have like a parent program and I'm still a parent! I guess in prison you aren't supposed to do anything else. They did have a women substance abuse program and grief and loss course. That doesn't go into the core issue of the problem though. It should be mandatory that women take a parenting course. When these women go in there they leave and go back into the community and end up right back in jail. They didn't know how to live out there because that's all these women are used to. So maybe if we pushed women to take a parenting course and make her do programs that deal with families the better side of her would come out and she wouldn't do the things that got her into jail in the first place.

Two mothers in particular identified their struggle with the programs that were offered in prison which, did not accommodate their needs. They stated:

There was a couple of parenting programs offered in the prison that I was in. It was not at all helpful for me though but could have been for other women. I have different circumstances because I had started my behavioural problems while I was thirty five. Before that I had been working, had a house, a husband, kids and everything else was normal. Most of the other girls in jail were teens in trouble and in jail without parenting skills. They don't know them at all so I think it was beneficial for them. I took a grievance and loss course. I thought it was more related to death which both my parents are dead. My mom had just died when I was in jail so that was a huge stress. I thought it

would deal more with that but it just sort of touched on the loss of your children. I thought there could have been more around that though but that's a loss so that class helped me to deal with it. It would have been better though if they had courses that talked about how to have the relationship continue once you leave jail. I think some moms have trouble being close with their kids once they are out because their kids are older now.

I think there needed to be more guidance counsellors to make the contact with my kids. It is hard to even call with phone calls and stuff. It is hard to contact some of the people through CAS.

The primary worker who worked at the Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene discussed how she recognized that there was virtually no counselling for mothers and their families while they were in prison or once they were released from prison.

Our community and even in some of the prisons there needs to be a lot more counselling available to these women. Counselling that is either free or easily accessible. Our wait list for counselling for families is astronomical right now so women could sit on a waiting list for a year. The counselling will address their issues in a year. So that doesn't help right now and especially when the women are clean and are ready to go. Their families need to be a part of that process as well.

One of the primary workers also reported that once mothers have been reintegrated into the community and are being supervised by Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County there continues to be no programming to support the mother-child relationship.

Well basically we don't have any specific programs run out of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. The women in the house have the use of the internet and they have access to certain things. We give them certain information if they require anything like if they want to take a parenting course or we will assist them on reaching out to their child. We will also provide them with information. Whether it is phone numbers, names or anything like that we will research if for them and find it.

Impact on the Mother

The two major themes; System Barriers and Resource Barriers were both found to affect the mother-child relationship during incarceration. Accounts from the mothers and primary workers were further broken down into a category called: the impact on the mother. This theme

was divided into the following three sub-categories: Emotional Response, Parental Role and Basic Necessities.

Emotional Response. The primary worker who worked at Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene commented on how many of the women she has come across have a history of coping with issues of abuse. She stated:

I would have to say substance abuse is always a big issue that we see when women come in. Other forms of childhood abuse too. A lack of self awareness seems to be a major issue. Abuse is always a topic of conversation. Really any sort or form; we see it all. This tends to be intergenerational but you don't always get that stereotype but it does come up a lot. So they are bringing a lot of issues to the table.

Participant's perceptions of their incarceration varied in this study. One mother perceived her incarceration as a positive because it relieved her from parental responsibilities while she was getting substance abuse programming for her addiction.

It was good because it relieved my stress from me. I didn't have to take all the responsibility on anymore. I could still guide my children but I didn't have to tell them what to do. I didn't have to be on them anymore about making their bed or cleaning their room.

Another interviewee expressed that it gave her time to reflect on past mistakes associated with mothering.

For the first time in my life I could look back and figure out where I went wrong with my life. I thought a lot about my mistakes and how I got into this mess. I thought about how I could be a better mother because I mean you have all the time to think about this stuff in jail right.

Two of the participants recalled negative feelings from being separated from their children during their incarceration. The following sample of comments serves to represent a frequently reoccurring theme:

It made me feel like I had a lot of guilt and shame for what I did. I missed my kids every day and it kind of made me feel empty. I was no longer whole because I didn't know

where my son was when CAS took over. When I had them when they were little I was a great mom and we did everything. I was a good mom and now I don't even have them in my life.

It was awful because at the time I was also fighting an addiction and I was trying to beat that while I was away from my kids. I also had to deal with trying to keep my kids but that didn't happen. I had a lot of mixed feelings at that time.

One interviewee articulated that the lack of involvement in the daily life of her child was difficult for her and she mentioned that she feared that her son would not know what she looked like now. This part of the interview impacted the respondent emotionally and she disclosed the following while crying.

The hardest part for me is that my child was living life and I wasn't there to see it. He doesn't even have a picture of me and wouldn't know what I look like now. I just wanted to be there for him and watch him grow up.

One respondent demonstrated feelings of detachment when asked to describe the feelings associated with being separated from her child. She stated:

It was hard at first but I adapted quite well. Knowing that I couldn't see my son anyways and being in prison helped me not show emotions so I was okay. I got through it pretty good.

One of the primary workers empathized with a lot of the mothers that she encountered while working in the prison. She claimed:

It would be hard I think for anyone to be in jail. I think that whole process of being in prison is very humiliating and degrading for these women. This is a part of their life that is very traumatic for them so for them it is important to come to terms with that and deal with those issues prior to getting the custody of their children again.

Both primary workers further elaborated to describe how many women are triggered with negative emotions specifically around the holidays.

I know that for those who do not have CAS matters and their children are with family members for the most part they have been able to keep in touch with their children. It is very difficult around specific holidays though. That's when you see it hurt mother's the most and trigger them greatly when they are inside the prison because they don't have the

physical connection with their children. They can talk to them on the phone and write them letters but that only seems to go so far.

Sometime they will talk about when they were jail. They tell me it's really hard for them around the holidays. They get their hopes up around then because they will be able to see their children. Sometimes things get messed up with that though and then they didn't get to see them. It is hard for the women because the women don't understand why they can't see their kids. It has that effect on them as well and as a result they get kind of upset.

One primary worker articulated that most of the women that she has worked with tend to demonstrate low self esteem when discussing their role as a mother while in prison.

Many women talk about the separation and how it hinders the relationship with their children. As a result of this a lot of them think they aren't good mothers. I guess they think that if they aren't seeing them then they aren't taking care of them. They are trying to do the best that they can.

When asked whether the mother's disclose how they felt about their incarceration and being separated from their children, one primary worker's comments demonstrate that some women experience distrust in expressing their emotions around this topic. The following quote is used to illustrate this and to articulate the essence of the feelings of being separated from their children during their sentence.

Yes some women do share their feelings around being in prison. However, some of the other women will not discuss or refuse to when they initially come in to Elizabeth Fry Society. Once they build that rapport with you than a lot of them just break down. A lot of women have had to deal with giving their children up for adoption or whether the father has them and there is no longer contact. They may not have them because they are on parole or at the halfway house too. They will break down over this because it is a constant reminder of the mistakes they have made along the way.

Parental Role. With respect to mothering all four participants reported that they were the sole caregivers of their children prior to their incarceration. Three participants reported their experience parenting prior to their sentence. They said:

It was all me who took care of the kids. I remember one time I tried to go back to school and their father stayed at home because he wasn't doing much of anything. I would go to

school and come back and the house would still look the same as when I left. I was like shit I can't go to school and do this at the same time.

Well their father was there but he would not do anything. It was all up to me so it was hard you know.

Basically our family would go to the park and paint balling and stuff like that. One of my sons lived with his grandparents and I gave him to them at a younger age because I couldn't handle both of them by myself.

One of the mothers in particular, described the experience of transferring parental responsibility over for adoption prior to her incarceration.

At the time I did my crime there was no way I could keep them because I was looking at Penitentiary time. They wanted five years so I was like well what the hell am I going to do now. So this family wanted one of my kids and he was in foster care for six months. They seemed pretty cool with him so I decided he would be with them now. So I just let him go.

Once they were incarcerated, some women struggled with the change in their parenting role once their child was being taken care of by a caregiver. One respondent described her experience with her son as the following:

It was kind of like I was meeting a new friend. I had to try and rebuild all that trust back and prove to him that I'm not going anywhere.

Similar to the comment above, two other participants described their relationship with their child as taking the role of a friend rather than as their mother.

I struggle with wanting to be his giddy little friend because I no longer feel comfortable being the parent. It's kind of hard to adapt to that. The role switched and I no longer wanted to be too hard on him because in a way I haven't been there for so long. I know I just have to ease my way back in.

Oh yeah my parenting role has changed! I'm not their parent anymore. I'm their mom and I'm always going to be their mom. But now I'm their friend.

Some of the interviewees also expressed their appreciation that their children were being cared for by family members. Two women expressed their gratitude and frustration in the following way:

Well I have to be grateful because they are taking care of him. I think they are doing a pretty good job. I feel like yeah I have been to prison but that's the only place I have gone. You haven't gotten rid of me and you aren't getting rid of me.

The two that are with my brother in law are well taken care of so I'm happy about that. I haven't seen them in so long but I talk sometimes to my oldest son and they seem to be doing good. It's been hard sometimes not knowing what they are up too.

One respondent commented on how she did not know about how her child was being parented while she was in prison. However, she expressed how she felt the caregivers of her son were not promoting her son's independence. She stated:

I think I would have parented my kid differently if I had of been with him. I don't really know too much about the parenting that is going on. I did hear that they don't let him do what he should be doing at his age. Like I know and understand that they were trying to protect him and keep him sheltered but I know my kid can be naive to a lot of shit that is going on. He thinks he knows but he doesn't. He is too blind to stuff because they have kept him so sheltered.

Basic Necessities. Most of the interviewee's mentioned how their basic necessities were not being met prior to their incarceration and once they were released. Some women mentioned struggling to support the family and living in conditions of poverty. Half of the mothers interviewed described their experience of being on welfare as follows:

When I had my kids I was a bit younger right. At that age I couldn't afford anything for my kids because I was on welfare and that was hard.

I was on welfare so I had trouble paying for food, diapers and everything else in the house. And I wasn't getting much help either. Like their dad was there but I was doing a lot of it.

One of the respondents mentioned that it was difficult once she left prison because she still did not have employment and that this was hindering from seeing her child.

I don't really have a job right now. Well I start in August but so I can't really go home when I want because I can't afford to without money.

The primary worker who worked in the residential program agreed with the mothers that employment was considered one barrier that many women tend to face once they enter programming at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. She stated:

They don't have jobs at first which is always hard for them to deal with. A lot of them are working up to getting jobs but at first none of them have one. They don't have the finances then to go and see their family usually. Again a lot of them are not from the Barrie area so that is an ongoing problem.

Impact on the Child

System barriers, Resource barriers and the impact on the mother all influence and ultimately can be inferred to impact the child. This led the researcher to include a category called: Impact on the Child. This group was further broken down into three sub-themes; Emotional Response; Behavioural Response and Schooling.

Emotional Response. One of the mothers indicated that her child had a lot of anger toward her due to the lack of contact during her incarceration period. She disclosed the following:

Well I guess my son was weird when it happened. Sometimes he seemed really angry about it and actually would make comments. I felt like it was because other people were feeding him crap about it.

Another respondent expressed that her son was upset and exhibited confusion when she was incarcerated.

I think he was really sad when I first went in. I think he did not know about what was happening. It had a huge impact on him before because he didn't know where I was. He didn't have me there regardless even when I was there whatever. At the time he didn't have me there at all and he didn't have me to talk to.

The fear of abandonment for these children was also mentioned from several of the interviewees. The women who do have contact with their children reported that their children had anxiety with the fear that they will be incarcerated again. This was articulated in the following way:

My daughter is worried every time I see her that it will be the last. I guess she just figures that the police will take me again. Even when we walk on the street to go to the park or something and she sees a cop car she will grab me and not let go.

I have to prove to him that I'm not going anywhere. He is concerned I will be locked up once more.

One mother felt that her son was lonely while she was in prison. She stated:

I don't know if he got out much and every time I called him he would tell me how he did not have anyone to talk to. I would try to listen but there was only so much I could do.

One primary worker mentioned that she noticed a lot of the children did not understand their mother's circumstances and the reasons they could not see her.

Sometimes the children get upset because they don't understand mom can't see them. They are still just children.

Behavioural Response. A number of participants articulated that their child tended to ask a lot of questions regarding their incarceration. One respondent spoke about how difficult it was to answer her son's questions.

He started to comment and ask a lot of questions about why I went in. He also was like if you go back will be together again afterwards. And I'm like shit he doesn't even know what I was in prison for. I told him it was my first time and told him that I wasn't in jail and that I was just with someone who did something wrong because he didn't need to know at the time. He was only what nine at the time. But he kept on asking and bringing it up questions. I did not know what to say.

Two mothers indicated that their son's would demonstrate physical aggression and poor relationship skills when they were in prison. They stated:

My aunt was taking care of them at the time and would tell me that they would fight. She would leave the room and one would always be all scratched up and the other would have a face that was red. They needed to learn how to treat each other but I guess they didn't really know how to.

He doesn't know how to deal with issues. A bully beat him up and he just fought back and this got him into trouble at home.

One interviewee expressed her concern that her child would lie to her and empathized with what he was going through at the time of her incarceration. She stated:

Usually he would talk openly with me whenever we spoke. But as soon as I was in jail he started to tell me lies and keep secrets. I had trouble communicating with him because of this. Sometimes the way he talked to me was inappropriate but I try and look at it from his perspective. I would probably do the same thing to my mom if I didn't really know who she was because she was gone for that long.

One mother in particular, claimed her son's behavioural issues were so great that he was removed from the home. The following comment captured the essence of her experience.

Just my youngest son was really bad when I left. He had a lot of other issues which scared me. He had violent tendencies and he had to be medicated for it. This is why he is in the group home now. I really worried about him a lot.

On the other hand one mother expressed that her children were stable during the time she was incarcerated.

The kids were doing pretty well at that time. They were stable when I left because that was just after my bender which I think put stress on them. So it was better in a way when I left. They were more stable then.

Another participant remarked that her son took on the responsibility and care giving duties of his younger brother.

During that time, my oldest son really would look after the younger one. I heard stories that he would try and make him breakfast and look out for him and stuff like that. The younger one would just follow right behind him.

A primary worker reported that while she was working for Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene she noticed a lot of children from incarcerated mothers would end up in prison for engaging in criminal behaviour. She stated:

Some of the mothers who had older children in their late teens like twenties or thirties a lot of them have started their own process of following in mom's footsteps and so helping them deal with that to be able to reach out to their children and tell them not to do what they did was a part of my job.

Schooling. Two of the participants described their children and how they were doing academically. A sample of their accounts helps give shape to what the children experienced while their mothers were in prison. Both respondents articulated their child's schooling in the following way:

I know that my one son was doing good in school. He mostly got some C's but he is a pretty good kid. The other kid I don't know because again I haven't seen him since February 2007.

They are doing better now. Back then it was just my youngest son who was having issues in school. The other three were doing pretty good.

One of the respondents expressed gratitude toward the caregiver of her two sons because they had more opportunities since she was in prison. She stated:

They seem to be much better now though. I hear they have a lot of things now compared to before. They are in private school, go to the cottage and play sports so they have a lot more things to do. They seem like normal kids.

One mother had not spoken to her child for a long time. She reported that it was frustrating not knowing how he was doing in school. She expressed the following while sobbing:

I have no idea about how he is doing in school. I can't have contact so I just don't know. I wish I knew though.

Stigmatization. A greater theme that emerged in this study that influenced the child and their mother is the stigmatization that these families faced in the community. Several participants

directly commented on experiences in which they felt the public had found that their behaviour was disgraceful. They elaborated in the following comments:

I felt like people thought that I was a shit parent. I would get looks when I would leave the house. People knew that I was in jail so I just felt like everyone was staring and talking about it.

Both the primary workers elaborated on this theme by reflecting on their experiences while working with women at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County and at the Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene. They stated:

It is hard to say but I know some of the women have told me how they feel when people know that this is a shelter and halfway house they are perceived as the stereotype. A lot of people I'm sure assume when you see them walking out of here that they do drugs, prostitution and think negative things. They don't ever think that someone has made a mistake and trying to get their life back together. Anyone could end up here in an instant and people don't think of that from the outside.

From what I have seen, there is the sense that once a user then they will always be a user. Also once they fail their children, they will continue to do so. If they can't get it together for themselves how will they get it together for their children. You hear a lot of things like how does she have children and be able to clean herself up. Those things you take with a grain of salt because I personally believe that anyone of us could end up in jail, anyone of us could end up having a fall out with a child, anyone of us could lose that contact with our children and I don't just mean physically but the emotional connection too. It doesn't make us bad parents or horrible people it is just the things that we choose to do which sometimes hurt other people.

Two respondents reported that both their children would refuse to comment with their peers about where their mother is for fear that they would be bullied. One mother stated the following:

He won't talk about it with his friends. He wasn't really allowed to and didn't want to either because he knew he would be picked on.

Another mother indicated that her children recognized her issues with substance abuse and told people openly about it.

My kids were very accepting of what my problems were. It was an addiction and they were old enough to understand what had happened. I never hid anything but I never threw it out the whole mess either. They understood and were always good about it. They never distance themselves and have always been close to me. This could be because my family is already really close. They were accepting too and realized I'm not a bad person and that I just have problems. They told their close friends and were open about it. I have been really lucky and there is still a long road ahead.

Recommendations. Most of the women and primary workers had recommendations that Correctional facilities should implement to rectify the mother-child relationship. The following comments articulate the essence of what most mothers felt could have alleviated the stress associated with being separated from their child. They stated:

I think the prison should do like conjugal visits with children because you can do that with your husband but I haven't seen them where the caregivers could drop the child off and mom could be alone in the trailer visit for three days. They should let them do something like that.

In the place I was at in Quebec we had one house where mothers could keep their child for the first four years and now they don't even have that anymore. So some women come in pregnant and they have it and they have to leave it. It is not right because if you only have a two year sentence at least you should be able to keep it. I don't know if I totally agree with children being in prison but you have to understand that that is the most important time so let them be with their child until they can get out and go and do something with their lives.

I think there needs to be more contact with your kids. Not just phone calls or letters but real contact. Although I wouldn't want children to come into prison I don't think. I guess it would depend on the ages of them as well. But even so your mother is in prison is hard enough and then to have them come. I wouldn't want that I think. There needs to be something else where that can happen but in a safer place.

The two primary workers reported similar recommendations as the respondents above. The following statements reflect what these employers felt would benefit the mother-child relationship while the mother was incarcerated.

I have talked to some of the women before and I know (I don't know specific jails) but some of the jails will have the children stay with mother for a specific amount of time. Especially, if she is pregnant at the time and if they are still little enough. I understand once they reach a certain age you don't want a child to be raised in a prison I get that. When the child is an infant or baby maybe having something set up where each jail has a

section for women with newborn children that they stay. I know they have houses at jails where a bunch of women are in their own house so they should do that with their children. A day care atmosphere would be good, where they can go there throughout the day and take courses related to parenting and life skills. They may be young and may not know so learning how to take care of a child and learning how to clean. Learning how to do all those things that they need to do for when they get out so they can still have their child there to build that bond instead of having that child taken away and put into foster care.

After working at Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene, I have realized I'm a big fan of the contact. They physical contact and open visits are the most important thing. I believe it is more impactful than sitting in front of a plexi glass window and talking to your two year old child that you haven't seen in years. Start at the basics by going back to that.

One of the primary workers elaborated on her comments and suggested that for any recommendations to take place there must be societal change. She stated:

I think that there needs to be more conversation going on about this topic. People just don't know and I don't know how it would be but a societal change must happen. Companies that work with children for example youth shelters or CAS homes should be reaching out to the parents as well. They need to be coming into the programming and get involved with the prison. Our community needs a lot more of that happening.

Discussion

Four mothers between the ages of 25 and 35 who had been previously incarcerated were interviewed. Two primary workers from Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County were also interviewed for the purpose of this study. Many significant themes were realized several of which were accompanied by vivid memories and strong emotions. The time spent with mothers and primary workers from Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County sheds light on what the impact of maternal incarceration can be on children. According to the mothers and primary workers that were interviewed in this study it appears that incarceration is not the only variable which influences the outcome of the child. Through interviews and the ecological model it appears that a blend of combining factors from the broader system and microsystem need to be

considered in attempting to understand the impact of the maternal incarceration process on children.

In the ecological model of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that a person develops within a complete system which is largely influenced by a variety of levels surrounding that individual's environment. He described four elements of an individual's ecological system which can be used to understand development. The four dimensions include of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Aspects of the microsystem and exosystem were examined in this study. Bronfenbrenner (2005) described the microsystem as a pattern of roles, activities and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person. As a child develops and grows he or she is a part of other microsystems such as the school, peer group and neighbourhood. In this study, child developmental outcomes are influenced by the interaction between mother-child relationship, caregiver-relationship, the Correctional Facility and Elizabeth Fry Society. The meaning the child gives to each exchange is largely shaped by their race, class, gender and experiences (Young & Smith, 2000). From an ecological perspective, the environment can have a large influence on the mother that is incarcerated and their child.

Much of the findings from this study relate to current research, as Sommers, (1995) acknowledged that women who have been incarcerated tend to come from disadvantaged positions. The majority of respondents in this study disclosed that they had lived on welfare prior to their incarceration and were the sole caregivers of their child. These women acknowledged that they did not receive the benefit of child care, housing or the support of a spouse to contribute to the well being of their children. This is congruent with other researchers who claim that this population is not being afforded with opportunities that will allow them to prosper financially

and socially (Steven & Hall, 1992). According to the primary workers and their experience gained from working with mothers who have been incarcerated the vast majority of them have history of abuse that is sometimes intergenerational. This correlates with research conducted by Garcia, et al. (1998) that their needs were never fully met as a child so it is little wonder they have had a more difficult time developing adequate life skills and thus have difficulty accessing resources in the community.

All of the respondents from this study also acknowledged how prison policies and practices hindered their communication and contact with their children. This is congruent with the Barnhill (1996) study, which examined larger system's policies and procedures and suggested that they give little choice. That such barriers further disadvantage individuals. Most of the women and primary workers mentioned practical barriers such as rules related to phone calls and visitation which impeded communication with their children. Young and Smith (2000) found similar findings, which suggest that institutional policies regarding phone calls and physical visitation often make it more difficult for women to stay in contact with their family members. Many mothers also complained that the locations of Correctional Facilities are often remote and thus inaccessible to their children. Primary workers elaborated to suggest that scheduled times are allotted for family visitation but that this rarely follows through due to eligibility of visit and pending on behaviour. The literature supports these findings and notes that visits tend to depend on would be visitor's schedule, which also makes visitation more difficult (Kaplan & Sasser, 1996).

All the respondents from this study recommended that in order to support mother-child relationships while mothers are incarcerated there needs to be more child friendly centres and privacy associated with visitations. Many of the participants were conflicted with the notion of

children visiting or residing in the prison. These beliefs could stem from cultural views that inmates should be without privileges including family visitations. Some detention centres in France and Switzerland have permitted the mother and child to reside with one another for a two year period (Jaffe et al., 1997). The prison has altered their institution to accommodate children's needs and provide opportunities for family preservation outside the prison as well (Jaffe et al., 1997). Some of the mothers from this study felt that prison conditions would produce negative emotions in their child. Some studies have found that children who have visited their parents in prison often have reduced concerns and anxiety about their parents well being (Sack, 1977). A program such as "Girl Scouts Beyond Bars" is an example of an intervention program that gives mother's visitation opportunities and promotes group activities (Moses, 1995). Daughters of mothers who are incarcerated meet as a group inside and outside the prison to act as transitional support and to encourage mothers to participate in parenting courses (Moses, 1995). Group treatment can address the need for social support while allowing mothers to address their concerns (Springer et al., 2000). Children learn that other group members have experienced similar circumstances and this can diffuse negative emotions associated with their parent's incarceration while promoting the mother-child relationship (Kahn, 1994). This could also further empower children to voice their concerns and feelings associated with being separated from their mother. The primary worker interviewed for this study expressed the need to have agencies and the community to reach out and include mothers who have been incarcerated. A family liaison official could help to facilitate and maintain the mother-child relationship while women are in prison. They could build the gap between CAS workers, caregivers, extended family members, school personnel and anyone else connected to the child's immediate environment.

Most of the women interviewed for the purpose of this study mentioned that caregivers and Children's Aid Society tended to act as a barrier and further impede the mother-child relationship. Many disclosed that their extended family made it difficult for them to talk to their child. According to Bowlby, the lack of opportunity for regular contact between the child and parent could impede the healthy development of a child's attachment (Bowlby, 1969). One mother in particular remarked that her two children had a healthy relationship with their caregiver who was their uncle. Children who may exhibit an insecure attachment with a mother due to separation could resume a secure attachment with another caregiver provider resulting in higher probability of being more socially competent as compared to their control groups (Howes & Hamilton, 1993).

Primary workers and mothers expressed how there were a lack of services to promote healthy relationships with the caregivers and their children. Several reports have noted that the programs offered to women in Correctional Facilities in Canada have not taken into account the needs of women (Moffat & Shaw, 2000). Some correctional program strategies have been put into place such as parenting programs (Moffat & Shaw, 2000). One respondent in this study suggested that there may be parenting programs but that these services do not suit individual needs. Her experience was that it merely dealt with basic parenting skills instead of the grief and loss associated with being separated from your children. Confinement to prison means that women are being separated from any source of support including their children. The women in this study expressed that they experienced a variety of negative emotions associated with being disconnected with the sources of support they count on such as their children and family members. Prison tends to aggravate women's emotions linked to close ties with family members and this is the consequence of being incarcerated (Pollock-Byrne, 1990). The rupture of

emotions experienced by the child and mother due to separation could be avoided by having women serve their sentence in community based sentencing instead of being incarcerated (Myers et al. , 1999). Community sentencing programs include half way houses, house arrest and day programs where inmates could be supervised but also reside with their children (Griffiths, 2004). These programs are positive alternatives when one considers that the vast majority of offenses committed by women are non violent and considered minor offenses. Most of the women that are convicted to provincial facilities are sentenced for drug related offences and theft (Finn et al., 1999). Some studies have shown that community based programs are an effective way to ensure family preservation and more positive implications for children's adjustment (Devine, 1997). Although community based intervention strategies benefit these families it is also important to look at the larger systems to have mothers prosper in the community. The women interviewed in this study expressed the difficulties associated with being the sole caregiver while living on welfare. Mothers who have been incarcerated need public assistance from community agencies. Access to public assistance, education, child care, mental health agencies and drug treatment would ensure women have the basic necessities to support the development of their children.

Through examination of the literature and conducting interviews it is evident that maternal incarceration on the family can have negative implications on the developmental outcomes of the child. Children face problems which are painful for them and which can be difficult for the community. There are a number of questions that have emerged from this study. Questions remain as to which children tend to show early signs of issues. At what age do children start exhibiting adjustment issues? Which children are showing signs of resiliency? Are children from Canada influenced by their mother's incarceration differently? How does the care giving the child receives while the mother is in custody influence their adjustment? What kinds

of resources could serve as risk or protective factors for these children? Do incarceration factors such as programs and services affect a child's adjustment? Incarceration factors are important because they can be changed through policies (Myers et al., 1999). Before services can be provided to families of incarcerated mothers researchers need to identify the risk and protective factors that influence the lives of these children. Federal law and local practice should consider the large systems that influence these families. Public policies concerned with employment, child welfare, criminal justice systems and immigration are all candidates to promote the mother-child relationship. Implementation of program and service that directly benefit these families could give mothers the tools necessary to provide the necessities to their children.

Research around this topic needs to focus on examining the child directly. Children need to be given the opportunity to express their opinion on their experience. As Jerome Kagan has indicated, "The person's interpretation of experience is simultaneously the most significant product of an encounter and the spur to the next" (1984: 279). It could be argued that without examining the personal experience of the child society has an incomplete account of the issues associated with maternal incarceration and the impact on children. Studying children's perspective on this topic advances our understanding while allowing the children to be agents in their own lives. This shift to studying children respects their rights as individuals while promoting their entitlement to being considered (Hogan & Greene, 2005).

Conclusion

This research study sheds light on the impact of maternal incarceration on mothers and their children. The opportunity gave family members as well as the staff of Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County to disclose their unique experiences about the topic. The lack of services to promote mother-child relationships provided in provincial institutions and federal facilities in Canada was revealed thus adding to the importance of this study and future ones like it.

One staff member could not have said it better when reflecting on mother's experiences in prison. She stated: "Anyone could end up here in an instant and people don't think of that from the outside." With continued research to validate the needs of services and programs to suit mothers' needs prior to and post incarceration, children may be given more opportunity to prosper and thrive in their community.

Appendix A

Figure #1

The Microsystem Influencing the Developmental Outcomes of the Child

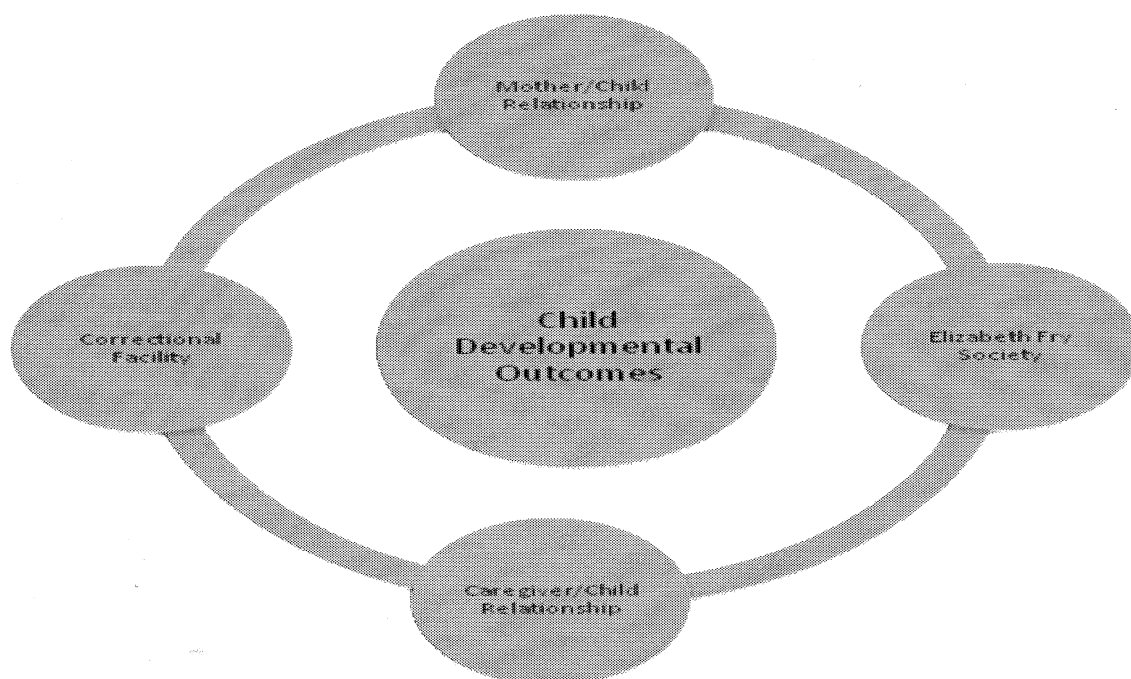


Figure 1: The microsystem influencing the developmental outcomes of the child

Appendix B
Informed Consent Documents

Ryerson University

Graduate Student Researcher

Informed Consent Form (Primary Worker Interview)

The purpose of an informed consent is to ensure that you understand the intent of the study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent must provide sufficient information such that you have the opportunity to determine whether you wish to participate in this study.

Purpose of the Study and Task Requirements:

As you know, the purpose of this study is to understand how women feel about being mothers and the nature of their relationship with their children during incarceration. It attempts to understand the unique experiences that women and their children face through incarceration. In this part of the study, you will be asked questions about what you felt your experiences were like working with mothers and their children, how you feel the separation between a mother and their offspring impacts a child and what are some recommendations to facilitate further relationship between mothers and their child throughout their incarceration. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

Research Personnel:

The following people are involved in this research study and may be contacted at any time. For questions or concerns regarding the study, please contact: Lia Jenner (Principal Investigator, lia.jenner@ryerson.ca); Dr. Francis Hare (Faculty Investigator, (416) 979-5000 ext. 6200); Alex Karabanow (Ryerson University Ethics Board, alex.karabanow@ryerson.ca, (416) 979-5000 ext. 7112).

Potential Risk/ Discomfort:

Some employees may find certain issues in this study upsetting and causing discomfort. If you need to discuss this, please contact further support through workers through Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to continue with the study or to answer all the questions.

Confidentiality:

Data collected in this study will be used only by the researcher and will be kept confidential. All information will be coded and analyzed in such a way that your name and your personal identity will not be used. Your name will appear only on this consent form, whereas the tape of the interview and/ or researchers note will have only a code (number) that will be assigned to you name. In order to ensure confidentiality, this consent form with your name and signature will be kept in a separate envelope and only the researcher will have access to it. You should be aware that any disclosure of a child being

and your personal identity will not be used. Your name will appear only on this consent form, whereas the tape of the interview and/ or researchers note will have only a code (number) that will be assigned to you name. In order to ensure confidentiality, this consent form with your name and signature will be kept in a separate envelope and only the researcher will have access to it. You should be aware that any disclosure of a child being abused will have to be reported to the Children's Aid Society. Any disclosure of illegal activities or imminent harm to self or others will be reported.

Potential Benefits:

This study could contribute to the knowledge on mothers who have been incarcerated and the impact on their children. This study will also give mothers and their family the opportunity to share their unique experiences. This could give mothers a sense of empowerment and boost their self esteem while creating a supportive space where they can be recognized.

Right to Withdraw:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to answer any questions that you prefer not to.

Signatures:

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the interview and that **the interview may be recorded.**

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the interview and that I give permission to the researcher to record **what is said in this interview.**

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

Ryerson University

Graduate Student Researcher

Informed Consent Form (Maternal Interview)

The purpose of an informed consent is to ensure that you understand the purpose of the study and the nature of your involvement. The informed consent must provide sufficient information such that you have the opportunity to determine whether you wish to participate in this study. Your decision to participate or not in no way will affect your treatment at the Elizabeth Fry Society.

Purpose of the Study and Task Requirements:

As you know, the purpose of this study is to understand how women feel about being mothers and the nature of their relationship with their children during incarceration. It attempts to understand the unique experiences that women and their children face through incarceration. In this part of the study, you will be asked questions about what you felt your experiences were like with your child before you were incarcerated, what were your experiences like when you were incarcerated and how you feel the separation from your child through incarceration has impacted them. The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

Research Personnel:

The following people are involved in this research study and may be contacted at any time. For questions or concerns regarding the study, please contact: Lia Jenner (Principal Investigator, lia.jenner@ryerson.ca); Dr. Francis Hare (Faculty Sponsor, (416) 979-5000 ext. 6200); Alex Karabanow (Ryerson University Ethics Board, alex.karabanow@ryerson.ca, (416) 979-5000 ext. 7112).

Potential Risk/Discomfort:

Some women may find certain issues in this study upsetting and causing discomfort. If you need to talk about it, please contact the primary workers at Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe County. You can get in touch with support workers by letting your primary worker know that you need to see them and you will have an appointment scheduled as soon as possible. You can also refer to the resource page which will be given to you before the interview begins. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to continue with the study or to answer all the questions.

Potential Benefits:

This study could contribute to the knowledge on mothers who have been incarcerated and the impact on their children. This study will also give mothers and their family the opportunity to share their unique experiences. This could give mothers a sense of empowerment and boost their self esteem while creating a supportive space where they can be recognized.

Confidentiality:

Data collected in this study will be used only by the researcher and will be kept confidential. All information will be coded and analyzed in such a way that your name and your personal identity will not be used. Your name will appear only on this consent form, whereas the tape of the interview and/ or researchers note will have only a code (number) that will be assigned to your name. In order to ensure confidentiality, this consent form with your name and signature will be kept in a separate envelope and only the research will have access to it. You should be aware that any disclosure of your child being abused will have to be reported to the Children's Aid Society. Any disclosure of illegal activities or imminent harm to self or others will be reported.

Right to Withdraw:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and you do not have to answer any questions that you prefer not to.

Signatures:

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the interview and that **the interview may be recorded.**

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in the interview and that I give permission to the researcher to record **what is said in this interview.**

Name: _____ Researcher: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Code: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C
List of Resources in the Community

Canadian Mental Health Association. Simcoe County Branch

Crisis Services

Crisis Phone: 705-728-5044 * 1-888-893-8333

Address: 15 Bradford St, Barrie, ON, L4N 1W2

Location (Intersection): Barrie (Bradford & Simcoe St.)

Hours: Daily 24 hr

Service Description: A telephone crisis line providing Simcoe County and Muskoka residents with single point access to crisis services for both adults and children. Crisis workers provide assistance in resolving crises and securing appropriate crisis intervention. The support workers will provide information, referrals, crisis intervention and pre crisis.

Mobile Crisis Response Services for Children and Youth. Orillia

Crisis Phone: Mental Health Crisis Line (705) 728-5044

Toll-free phone: 1-888-893-8333

Address: New Path Youth and Family Services, 359 West St N, Orillia, ON, L3V 5E5

Location: Orillia

Hours: Mobile Crisis Response Worker available Mon-Fri 8:30am-8:30pm (with the exception of holidays); Mental Health Crisis Line Worker available 24 hrs a day 7 days a week.

Service Description: The Youth Mobile Crisis Response Services for children and youth is designed to provide mental health supports to children, youth and families experiencing a crisis that is not imminently life threatening but would benefit from an immediate supportive response.

Appendix D

Characteristics of Study Respondents

Table # 1

Demographic Characteristics (During time of incarceration)

Mother (Post Incarceration)

Participant	Age (in years)	Period of Custody (in years)	Number of Children	Age of Child (in years)	Race
1	27	4	2	8, 9	Canadian
2	35	1 1/2	4	6,8,10,12	Canadian
3	25	3	2	3,5	Aboriginal
4	26	7	1	2	Canadian

Primary Workers from Elizabeth Fry Society

Participant	Position at Elizabeth Fry Society
1	Program Coordinator
2	Manager of Correctional Programs

Appendix E

Figure #2

Variables Contributing to the Developmental Outcome of the Child

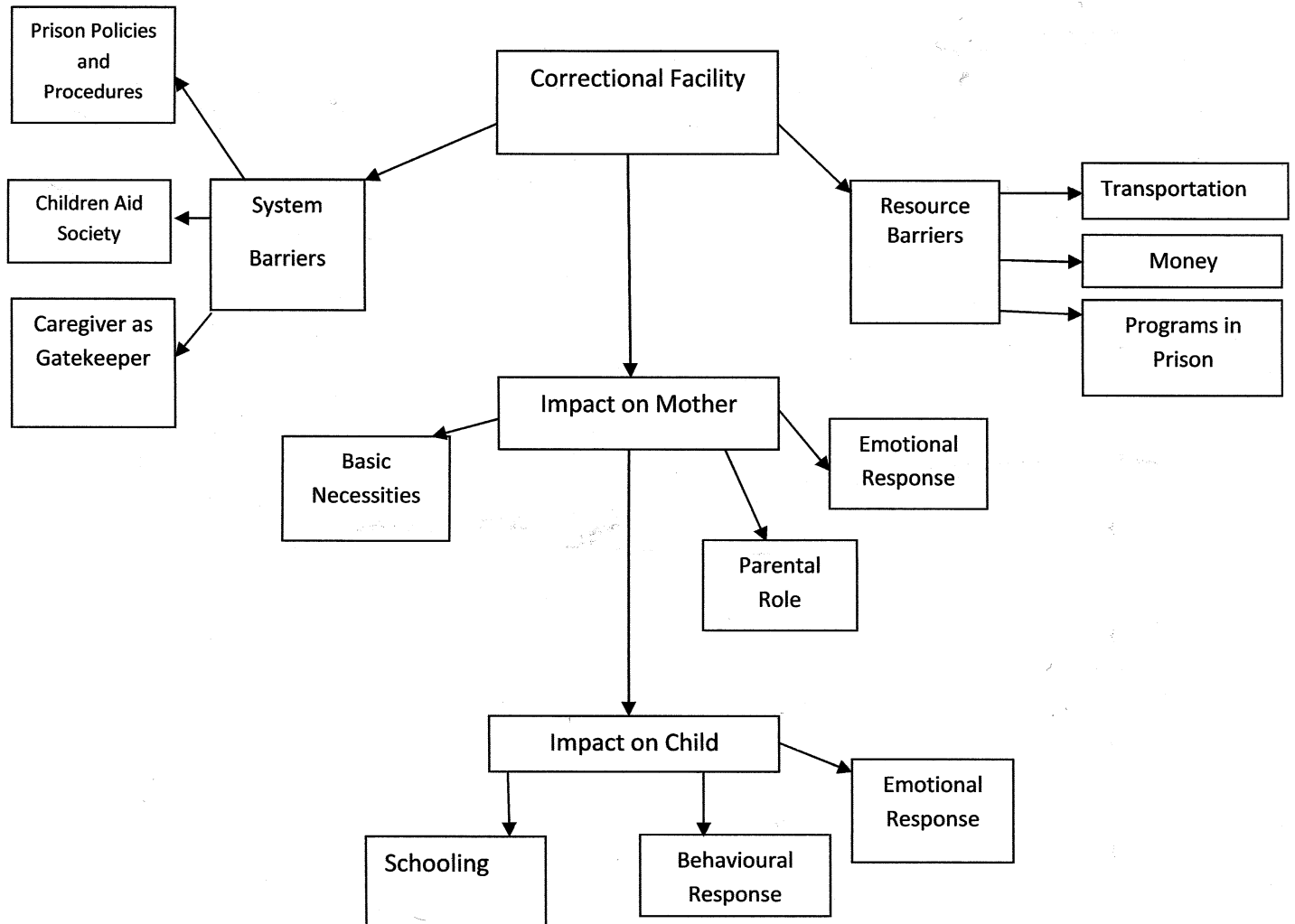


Figure 2. Variables contributing to developmental outcomes for children affected by maternal incarceration, depicted through the microsystem stage of the ecological perspective.

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