

Child Victims of Human Trafficking: Outcomes & Service Adaptation within the URM Program

Thursday, June 30 @ 2PM EST





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Welcome!

Thank you for participating in this peer exchange and your interest in this very important topic!

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- This webinar will be recorded and archived. An evaluation will be sent after the webinar is completed.
- A copy of the slides and any supplemental material can be found in the shared files box in the bottom left of your screen.
- As a courtesy, all phone lines are muted.
- During the Q&A session, please use the chat box to submit your questions. Any unanswered questions will be posted and responded to on BRYCS Blog: <http://brycsblog.blogspot.com/>

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Learning Objectives

Participants will learn about:

- the unique set of services implemented for foreign-born child trafficking victims in a community-based foster care setting
- a successful program model that could be adapted for domestic child trafficking victims in the United States, or for trafficking victims in other countries
- the specific outcomes tracked on children in specialized foster care programs that relate to improving their safety, permanency, and well-being
- special considerations when serving this population in a community-based setting, including collaborating with law enforcement and safety planning

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Program Model

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Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program

- Specialized foster care program for unaccompanied foreign-born children in the United States
- 23 programs nationwide
- Eligible populations:
 - Refugees
 - Asylees
 - Cuban/Haitian Entrants
 - Special Immigrant Juveniles (SIJS)
 - Victims of Human Trafficking



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URM Program



- Thousands of unaccompanied and separated minors brought to U.S. from SE Asia after end of Vietnam War
- Refugee Act of 1980 lead to formalization of the URM program as it is known today
- Funded by U.S. Government, administered through the State where each program is located
- Each program is a licensed child placing agency
- Two national agencies authorized by U.S. Government to place children into URM programs: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration & Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)

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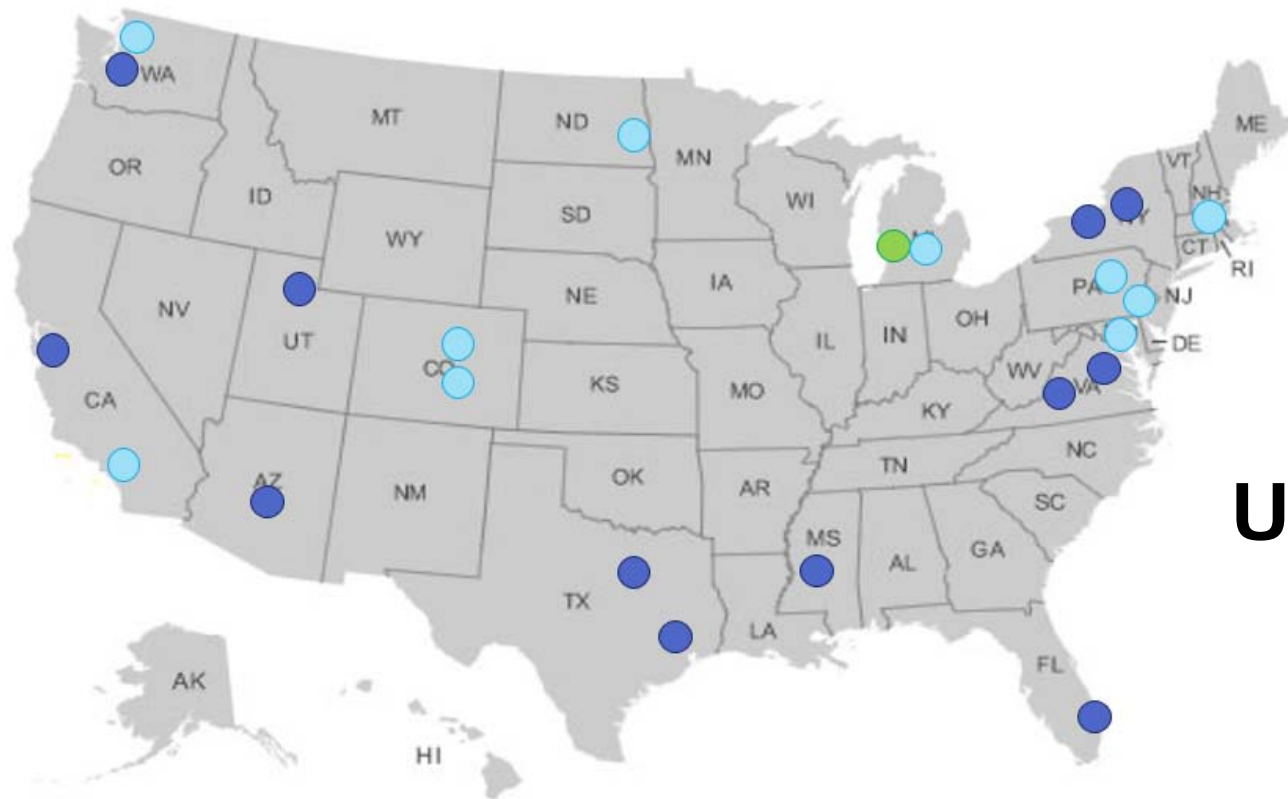
Why is the URM Program unique?

- The U.S. URM program is the only program of its kind in the world!
- It is a shining example of how unaccompanied minors can be included within a receiving country's existing child welfare framework while adapting services to meet the special needs of a child with forced migration experiences.
- Bridging of two fields of expertise -- **child welfare and migration** – makes URM program unique and allows for serving youth in both the most culturally competent and child-centered manner.

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URM Program Locations

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URM Program Services

- Recruitment and ongoing training of foster families
- Placement in foster family, group care, or independent living
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate case management
- Access to medical and dental care
- Mental health assessment and services
- Legal assistance - immigration relief application, adjustment of status
- Education assistance – enrollment, tutoring, ESL classes



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URM Program Services

- Cultural orientation/education
- Safety planning
- Integration assistance into community
- Preservation of ethnic, cultural and religious identity
- Assistance with family connections, reunification
- Social/recreational activities to foster group cohesion among children in program
- Preparation for independent living



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The Study

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Purpose of Study

- Research exists on victim identification but little on service provision and long-term outcomes for child trafficking victims in community-based care settings
- Emerging body of literature has shown that this population has unique needs and must be served differently
- URM program is one of the longest running programs serving this specific population; also provides one of the largest data sets from which to draw findings and recommendations

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Goals of Study

- Share key findings related to:
 - individual outcomes for child victims of trafficking
 - specialized services and resources provided to this population
 - policies and practices of URM programs for the recruitment, training and support of foster families and program staff
- The URM program, with its effective adaptations to meet the specialized needs of this population in a community-based setting, can serve as a national and international model for the care and integration of child trafficking victims



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Study Methodology - Quantitative

Analysis of empirical data on child victims of trafficking placed in USCCB's URM program network over 7 year period between 2004-2011.

- Sample analyzed = 67 cases
- Demographics
- Trafficking case history
- Outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being



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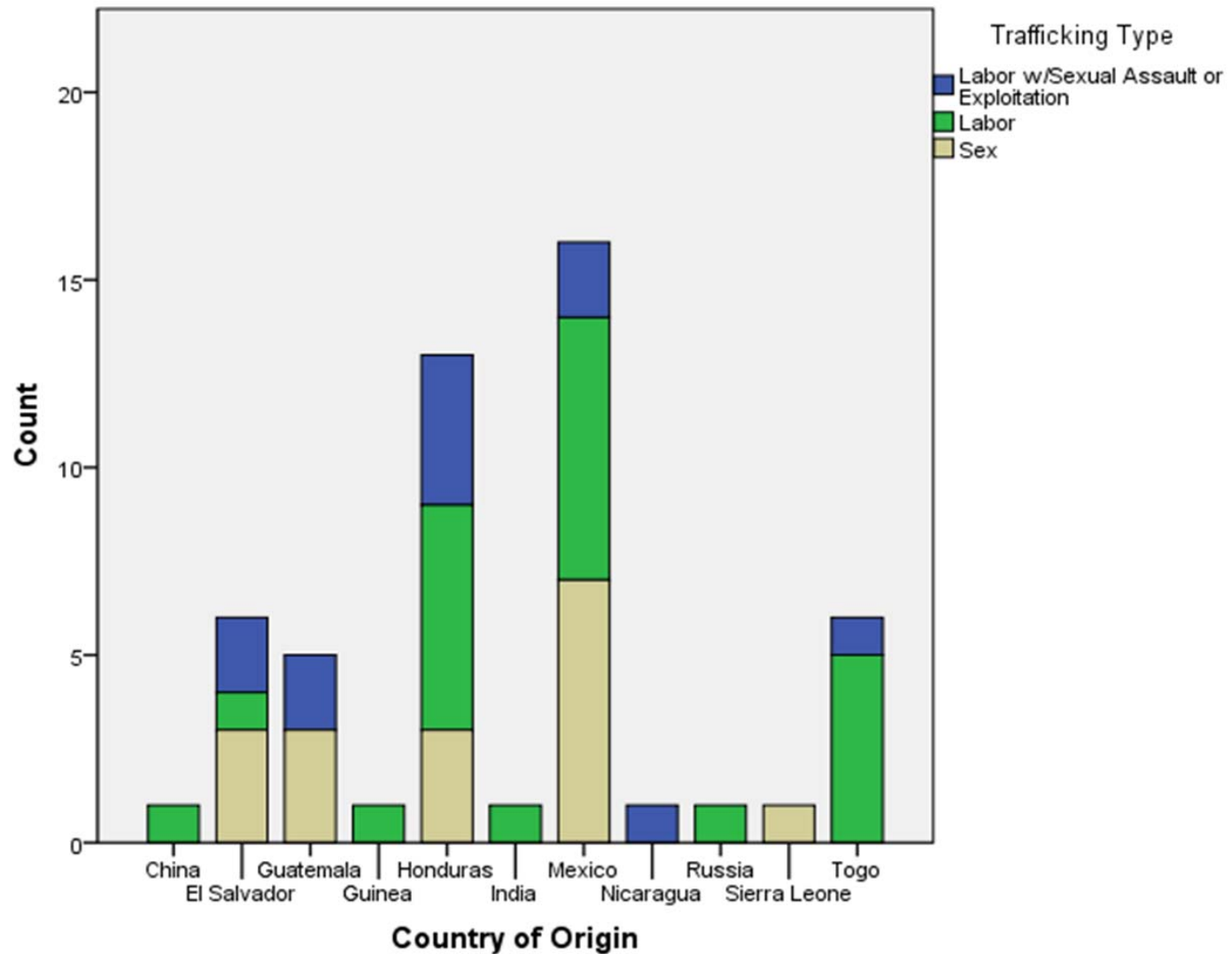
Demographics & Case History

- Gender
- Country of origin
- Type of trafficking
- Age at time of URM enrollment
- Length of time in trafficking situation
- Relationship to trafficker, if any

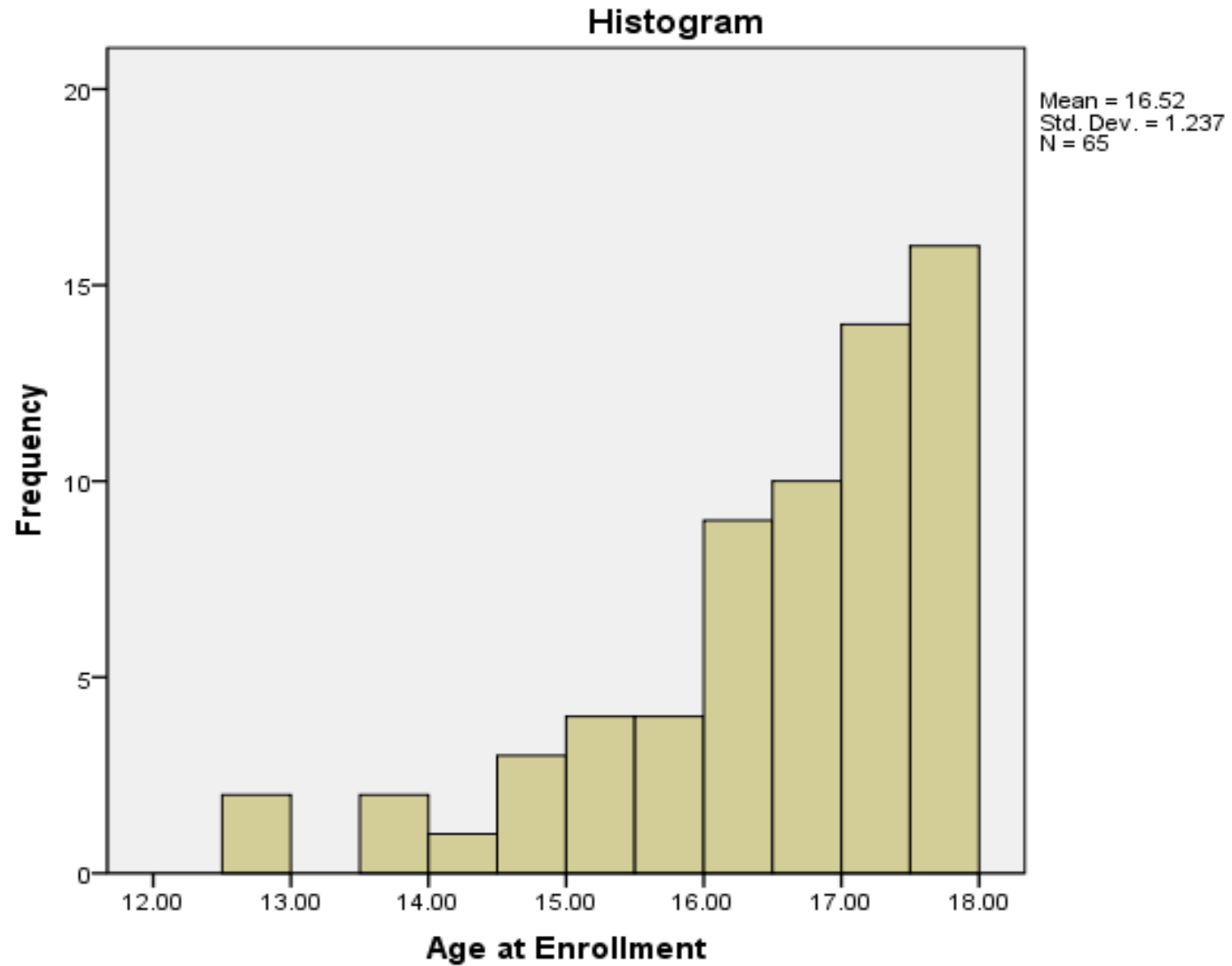


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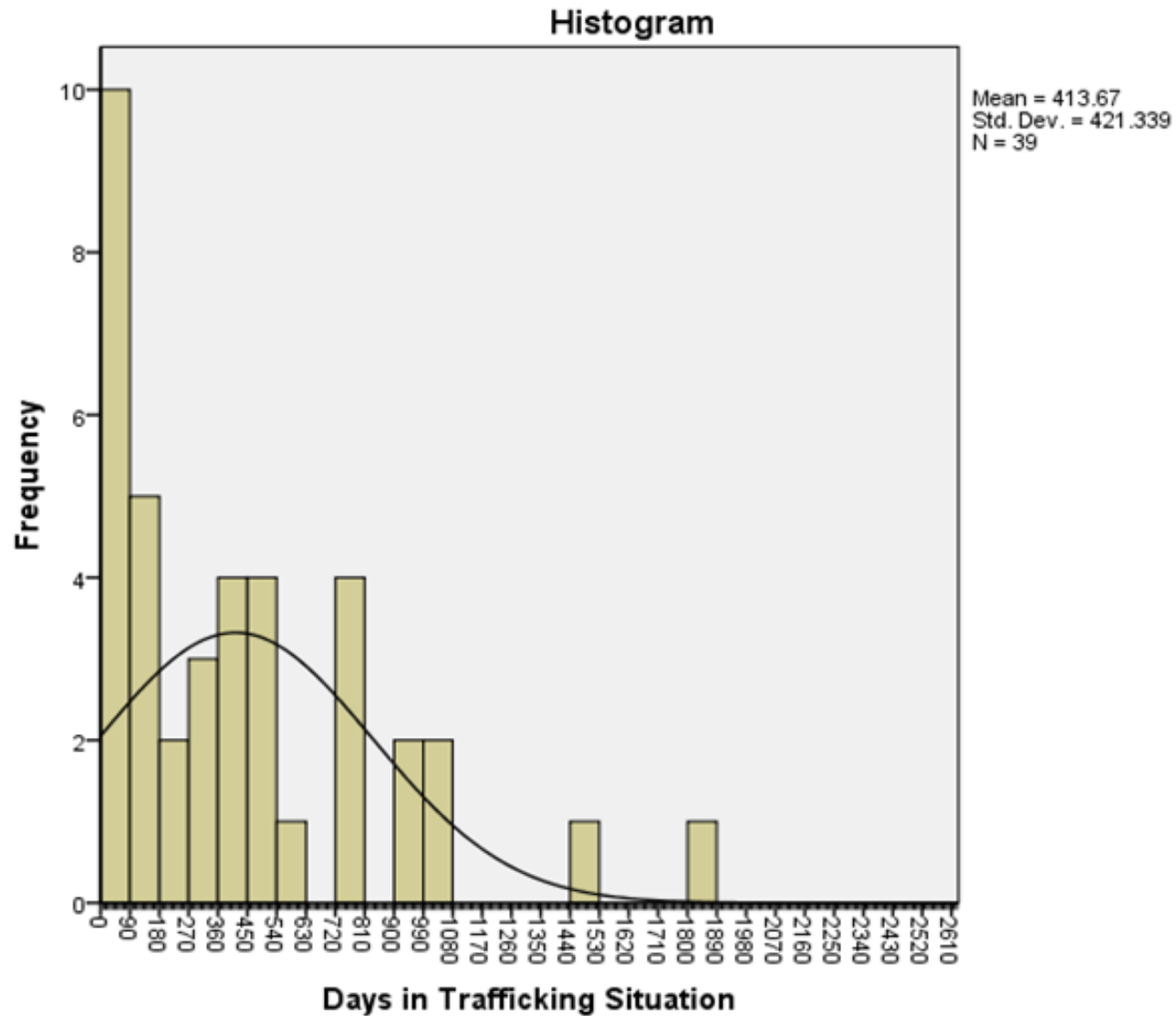
Country of Origin & Trafficking Type



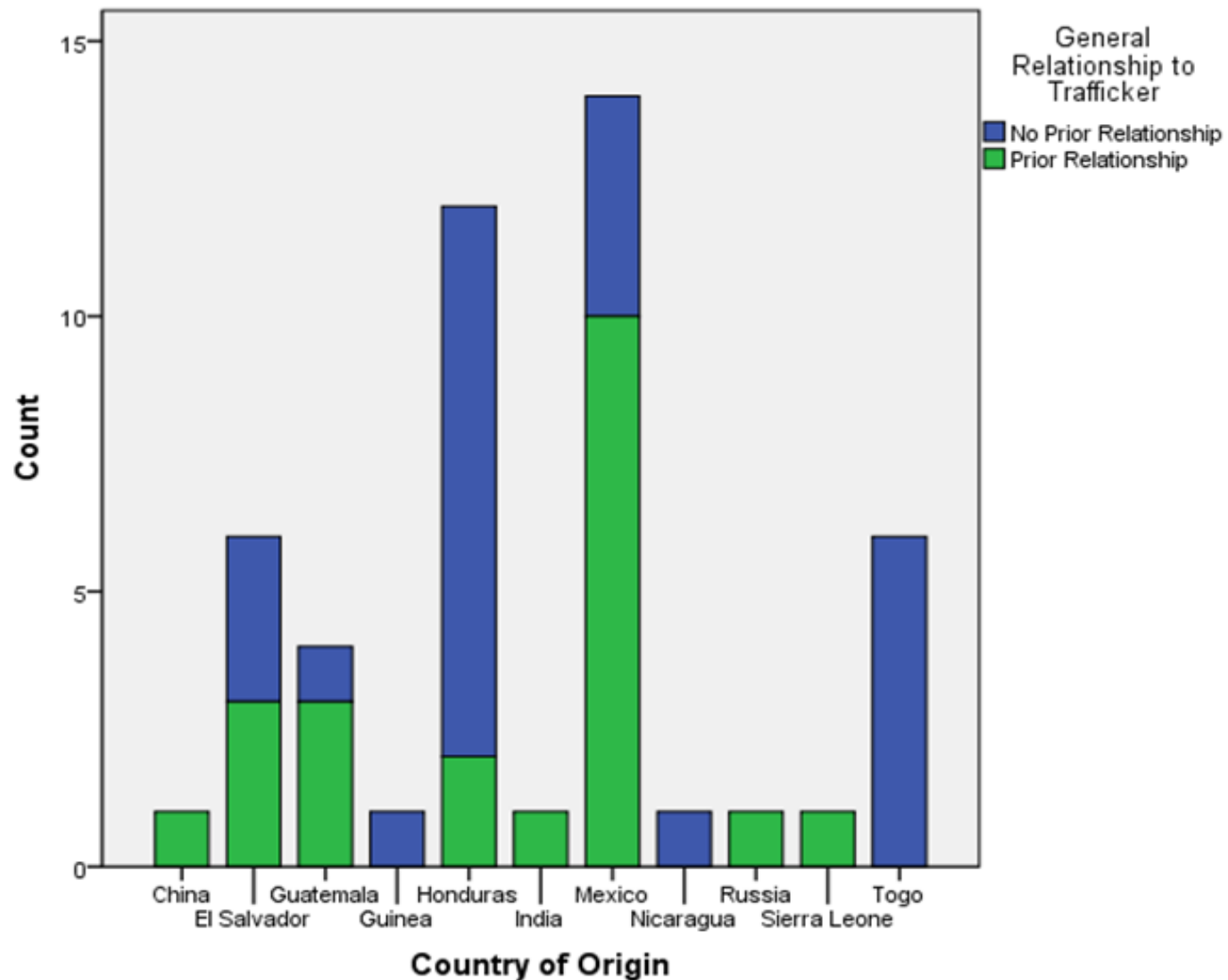
Age at Enrollment



Time in Trafficking Situation



Relationship to Trafficker & Country of Origin





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Outcomes Collected

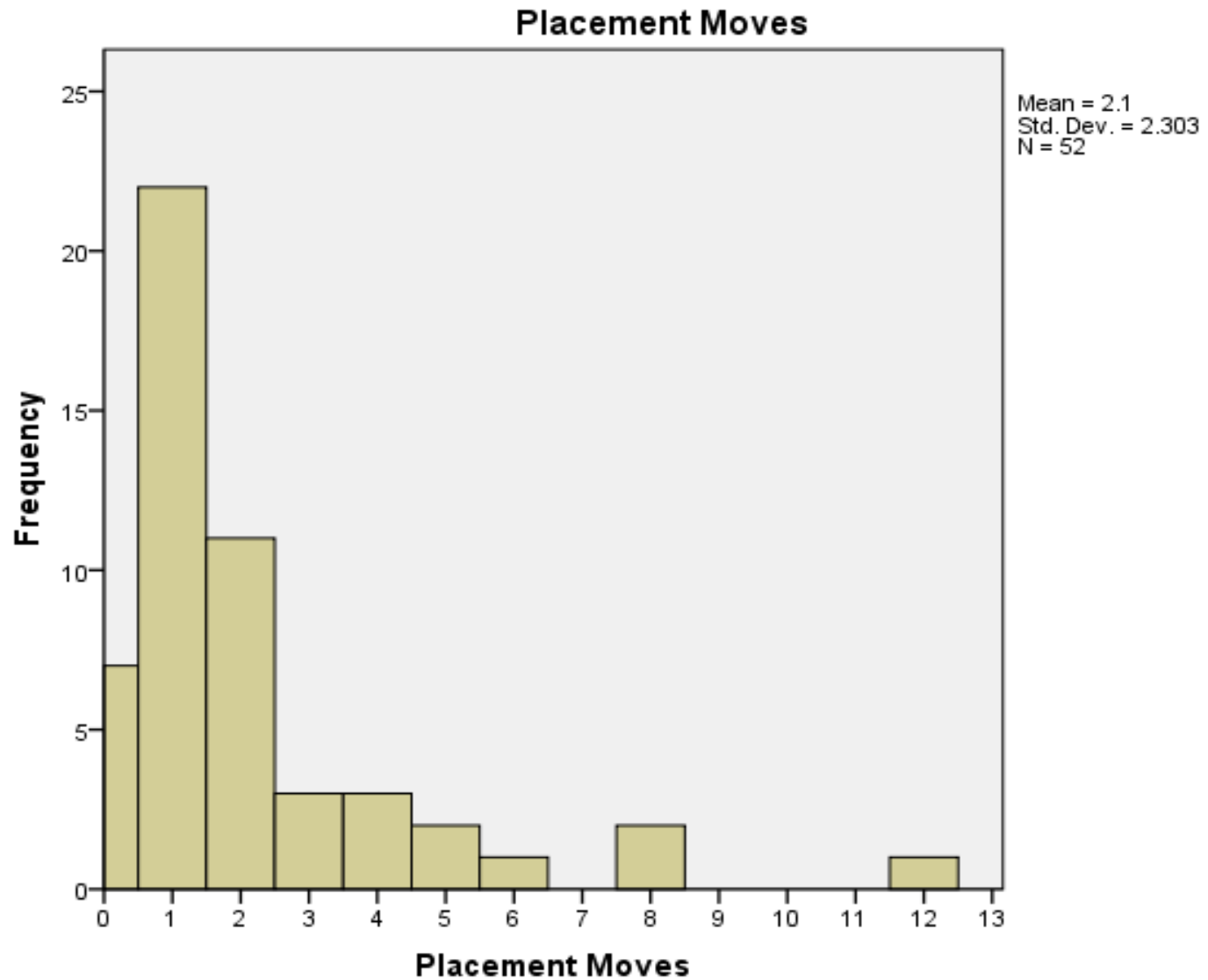
From standard government reporting forms and case file review:

- Placement stability
- Emotional connection to adults
- Law enforcement involvement
- Legal immigration relief
- Family reunification within the U.S. and internationally
- Discharge disposition

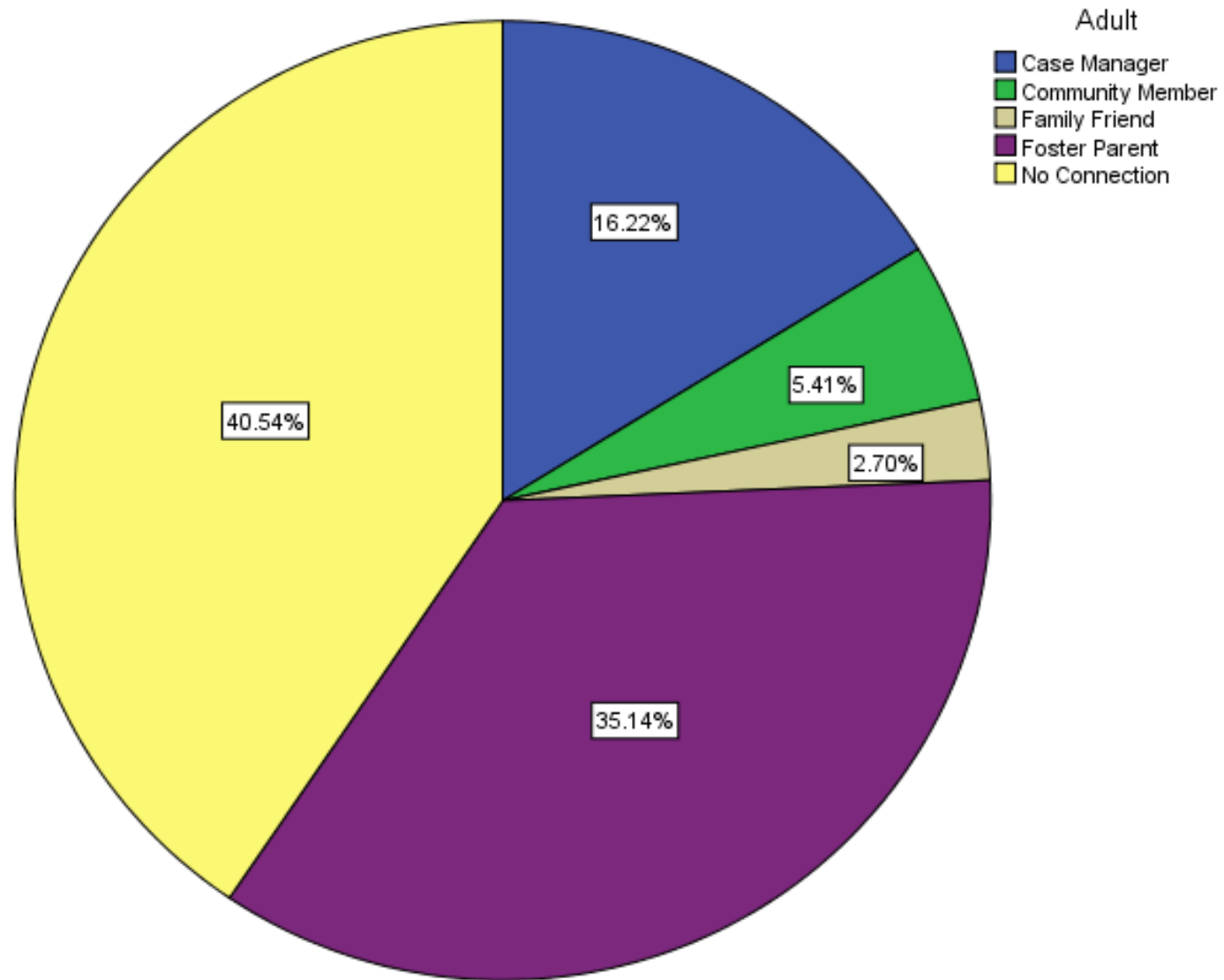


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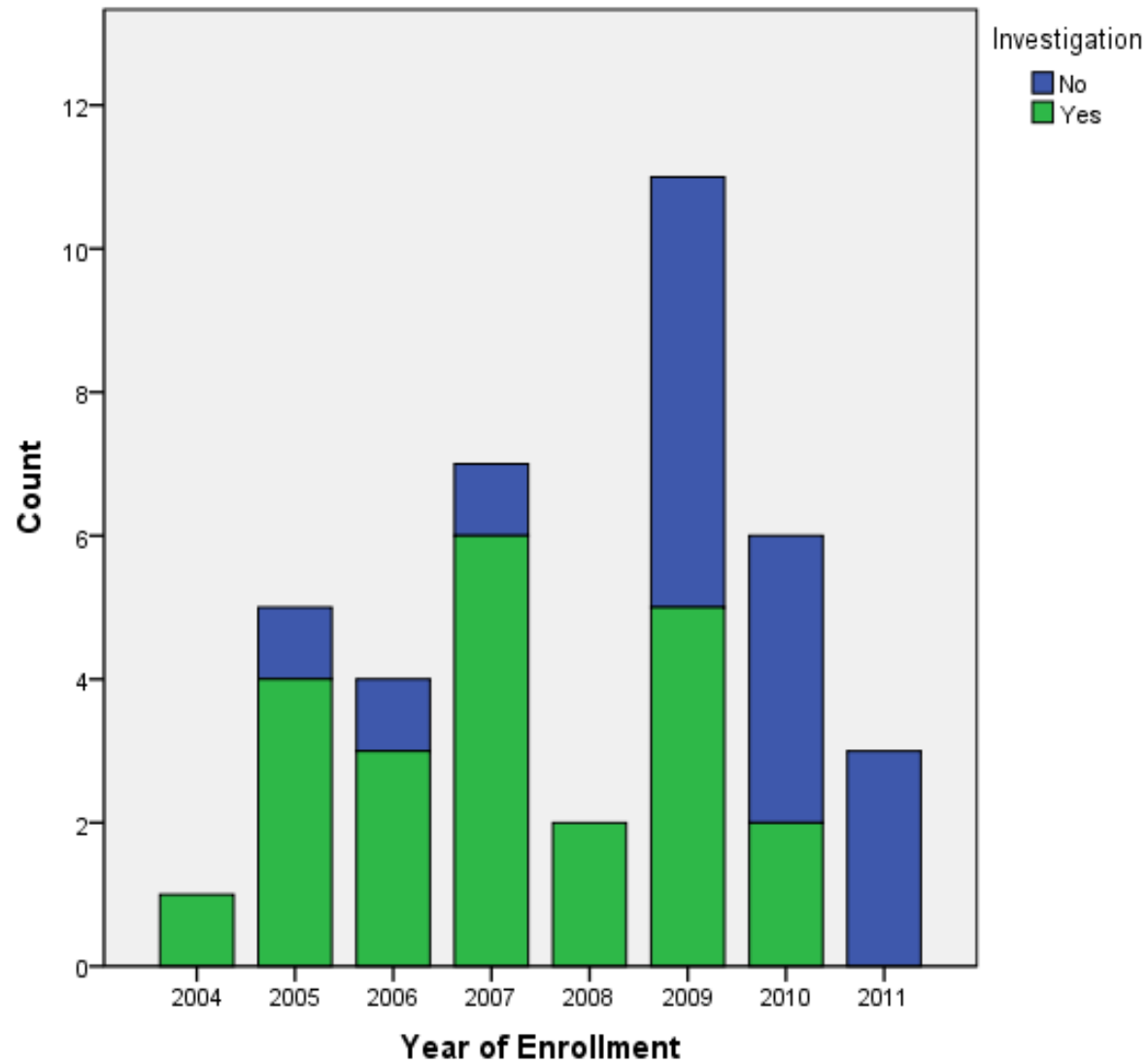
Placement Stability



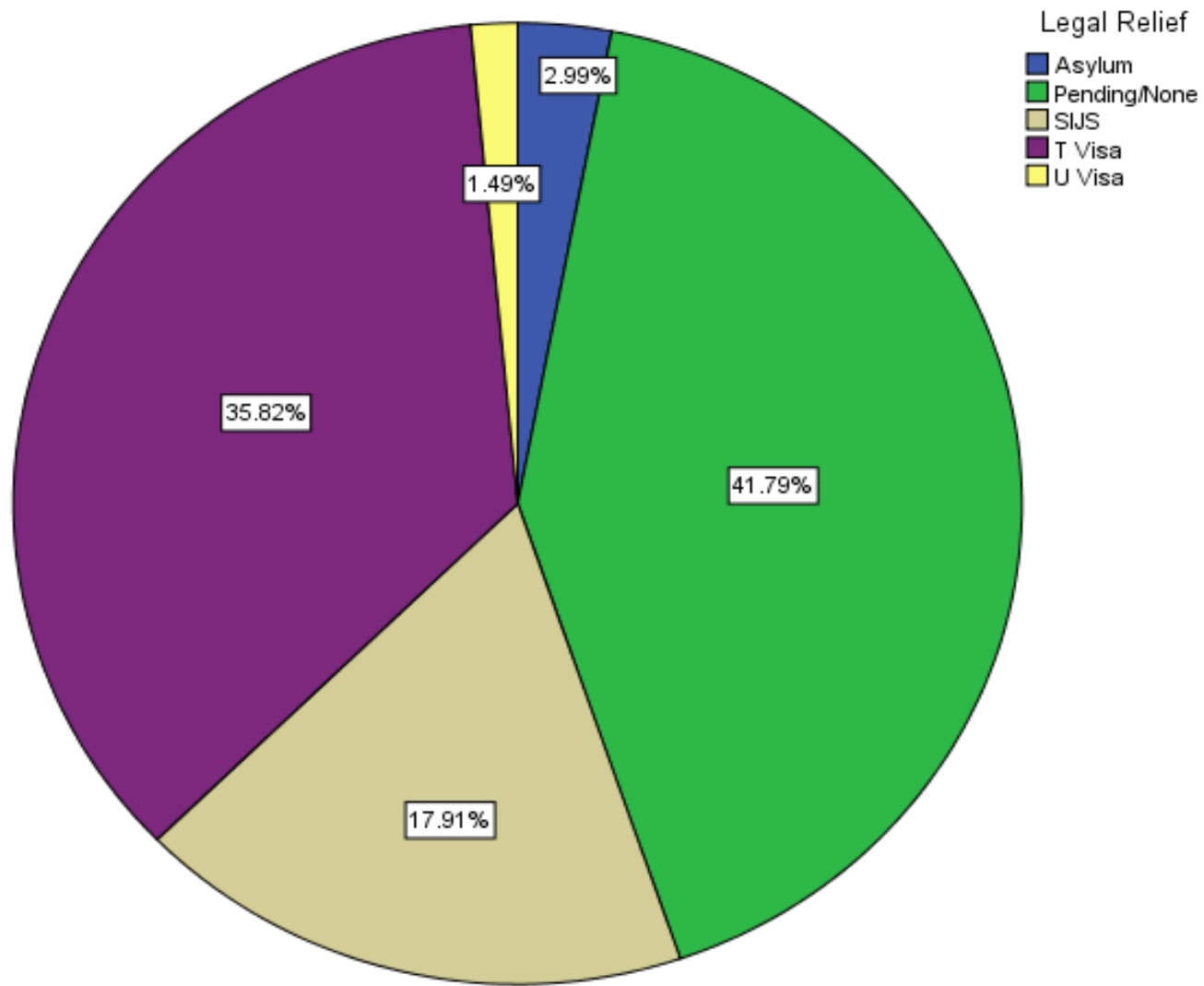
Connection to an Adult



Law Enforcement Involvement



Legal Immigration Relief



Discharge Disposition

Status	Result	Count
Emancipation (over 18)		12
	Voluntarily Emancipated from Program	8
	Emancipated to Live with Biological Family	3
	Age Out (Age 23)	1
AWOL (Under 18)		5
	To Family Member	2
	Unknown Destination	3
Family Reunification (Under 18)		2
Terminated by URM Program (Individual was likely over 18 at initial placement)		1



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Study Methodology - Qualitative

- Service adaptability – how have URM programs adapted services for this unique population?
- Experiences of program staff and foster parents caring for child victims of trafficking
 - ✓ Program staff interviews
 - ✓ Foster parent survey



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Program Staff Interviews

- Conducted on site at 11 programs, by telephone with 1 program
- Interviewees included social workers, program directors, clinicians, foster family recruiters/trainers, and other auxiliary staff
- Asked a series of questions about how they administered the program in general, and provided services to this specific population
- Also asked to consider whether they employed different strategies with child victims of trafficking compared to other URM populations (e.g. refugees)

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Staff Interview Question Topics

- Foster family recruitment
- Foster family training and retention
- Characteristics of foster families who successfully foster child trafficking victims
- Initial placement adjustment
- Staff training on human trafficking
- Staff assigned to child victims of trafficking cases





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Staff Interview Question Topics

- Staff experiences with meeting individual needs of these children (i.e. therapeutic and behavioral needs)
- Child trusting in others and feeling safe
- Keeping children safe in community-based care
- Family connections and reunification
- Collaboration with law enforcement, assistance with investigations
- Working with community partners





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Adapted Services

- Foster parent training and ongoing support
- Case manager assignments
- Increased supervisor involvement
- Building trust, helping child feel safe
- More home visits, check-ins
- Increased monitoring of external communications, social media use
- Navigation of complicated familial relationships



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Foster Parent Survey

- Anonymous, on-line survey which included both closed and open-ended questions distributed to foster parents who had victims of trafficking placed in their homes during the study period
- Question topics included:
 - History of fostering in general, and to this population specifically
 - Receipt of specialized training from program
 - Ongoing support from program
 - Child's ability to bond with family
 - How is this population different to care for than other foster children?
 - What potential foster parents need to know about fostering this population

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Foster Parent Survey Results

- 61% reported receiving specialized training from URM program on fostering a child trafficking victim
- 67% felt they had adequate training to respond to the child's needs related to the trafficking situation
- 72% felt the child developed a bond or connection with foster family
- 78% felt supported by the URM program staff while child was in their home



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Special Considerations

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Pros & Cons of Participating in the Criminal Investigation

PROS:

- Immigration benefits more quickly
- Social services and resources for the victim/survivor
- Immigration benefits and some services available to family derivatives sooner
- Participating in a prosecution can be empowering and/or bring closure

Trusted adults can have more influence on investigation than you may think

CONS:

- Re-traumatization of recounting abuse, repeatedly and publically
- Child may have to face traffickers in court
- Time consuming and can prolong the experience; time frame is open ended
- Real and perceived negative consequences of opting out of cooperation
- Increased scrutiny of all decisions and actions throughout the pendency of the case

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Tips for Effectively Advocating for & Protecting the Child in Your Care

- Trusted adult/s should be the point of contact with law enforcement: manage communication
- Identify lead investigator/prosecutor and victim services coordinator, and centralize communication
- Set ground rules for access to the child in your care and hold to them
- Consult with child's attorney before sharing new information (except in case of emergency)
- Make sure the child in your care receives any benefits they are entitled to or were promised for their *willingness to cooperate*



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Potential Impact of High Risk/ Illegal Activities on the Trafficking Case

Engaging in illegal activities, especially related to the prior trafficking situation, can weaken or *strengthen* a case, depends on the spin!

- Immediately establish the child's safety
- Follow any mandatory reporting laws
- If a trafficker or subject in the case are involved, notify child's attorney and lead law enforcement POC
- Even if the act is *not directly* related to or involve anyone from the case, still contact child's attorney
- Always involve child's therapist



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Collaborating with Law Enforcement

- Build strong relationships before you need them
- If possible, allow children in your care to establish relationships beyond the scope of an investigation
- Be up front and explicit about your professional standards, especially related to information sharing
- Set boundaries, but share after-hours contact information (establish circumstances when would you each use an emergency number)

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Safety Planning: Crafting a Safety Plan with the Child in Your Care

What is the purpose or utility of a Safety Plan?
To *provide structure* and *reduce uncertainty*.

- Outline expectations, boundaries and limits for the child or youth
- Define "range of appropriate responses" for foster parents, case managers, etc.
- Relate consequences to deviations from the Safety Plan
- Agreement between child/youth and responsible adults in their lives to work through conflicts, not give up on each other



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Crafting a Safety Plan with the Child in Your Care

Strengths-Based Approach

- De-emphasize negative behaviors—don't make list of “off-limits” behaviors that is based on past indiscretions and bad choices
- Emphasize “prevention” and “diversion” actions as alternatives to bad habits and negative reactions
- Talk through consequences and allow the youth to make the connections
- Emphasize personal development; progressively add responsibilities for the youth

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Crafting a Safety Plan with the Child in Your Care

Collaborative & Dynamic

- Allow all of the parties to be involved in the creation of a safety plan that will in fact direct many of their responsibilities and daily activities
- Clearly outline the responsibilities and actions (especially related to consequences) that each individual will be following
- The document should be dynamic and adapted as needed through “family meetings”
- The family meeting can provide a venue for individuals to weigh in and express how following or not following the plan positively or negatively impacts them

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Re-establishing Family Relationships

- As much as possible, explore role of bio family in the trafficking/exploitation
 - Facilitated, complicit in the trafficking?
 - Inadvertently contributed or enabled the trafficking?
 - Subjected, at risk, or vulnerable to retaliation?
- Explore current perceptions of the trafficking situation and/or of the child or youth
 - Is blame ascribed to the child or youth?
 - Does child or youth's circumstance bring shame to family?
 - What is the current role, responsibility or expectation of the child or youth relative to the family?





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Questions?



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