Foster Care & The Impact on Children

What is foster care?
- Temporary placement service for children who are unable to stay in their homes.
- Over 430,000 children in foster care in the United States (AFCARS, 2019).
- In Philadelphia - approximately 4,500 children in foster care (DHS).

What is the impact on children?
- Children experience: neglect, parental drug abuse, sexual and physical abuse.
- Multiple ACEs —> poor health outcomes.

The Focus on Foster Parents

- Foster parents play a vital role in the child welfare system.
  - “I would want foster parents to recognize and realize the hugeness and importance of their role. You know that…you are creating a place for a child to build, which changes the trajectory of their life, families, communities.”
- Foster parents need to be adequately trained to provide successful caregiving.
  - Training, however, remains unstandardized and variable in quality (Dorsey et al., 2008).

Methods

- 6 focus group transcripts received —> secondary data analysis performed using a directed-content analysis approach.
- Transcripts were open-coded & preliminary codes and definitions were developed.
- Codebook was developed and NVivo 12 Software was utilized to create a coding database.
- Transcripts were then independently double-coded, with frequent discussion and review of discrepancies until consensus was reached.
- Codes were organized into 4 major thematic categories, which were then used in the development of a qualitative model.

Discussion

Inhibitory factors:
- Negative relationships
- Lack of: Emotional supports, system understanding, knowledge of roles/responsibilities
- Misunderstanding culture and trauma
- Inappropriate expectations
- Attitudes/Perspectives

Facilitative Factors:
- Positive relationships
- Knowledge of: the system & its resources, caregiving strategies
- Positive Motivations
- Attitudes/Perspectives

Limitations:
- 8 focus groups were performed but only 6 were able to be transcribed due to language difficulties; Inaudible transcript issues; Perspectives of foster parents at other agencies may differ; Of note, many foster parents have been agency staff.

References

All references available upon requisition
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