

CHILD WELFARE AND BLACK SURVIVORS: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION: from a Practice-based Research Paper (PRP) (THESIS) SUBMITTED TO YORK UNIVERSITY - CANADA FOR A MASTERS DEGREE (2019)

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Article History

Received: 17.07.2024

Accepted: 25.08.2024

Published: 29.10.2024

Abstract: The researchers dissected and opened up some of the methodological conundrums that were part of the main research work. The researchers outline the methods used in this Practice-based Research Paper (PRP), linking them together and presented the demographics of the participants.

Using the interview technique and the theoretical framework of narrative inquiry and phenomenology, the author analyzed data pertaining to the inadequacies of the child welfare system. These are some of the themes that emerged from the data: cultural competency, systematic barriers, poverty, affordable daycare, housing, employment, lack of counseling or therapy, burnout of workers, and large caseloads. These themes point to the complexity of being a child protection worker or Black Crown ward. Based on participants' data, this research confirms that there is a gap in the reunification process of child welfare and families. As confirmed by participants, there still needs to be more work done within systems of child welfare, education, immigration, and other social services.

Keywords: Research method, interviews, data, methodology, research design.

Cite this article:

Owusu R., Yamoah J., Owusu Nyarko R. et al (2024). CHILD WELFARE AND BLACK SURVIVORS: RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION: from a Practice-based Research Paper (PRP) (THESIS) SUBMITTED TO YORK UNIVERSITY - CANADA FOR A MASTERS DEGREE (2019). *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(10), 112-119.

Introduction

The two concepts of research design and research methodology need to be clarified firstly, in order to clear the confusion that is often associated with their usage, particularly by emerging researchers. Each of these concepts is presented as a compound word, with the concepts design and methodology attached to the noun research. Research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Research design aids the researcher in the allocation of limited resources by posing

crucial choices in methodology. Research design is the plan and structure of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions. The plan is the overall scheme or program of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data. Research design expresses both the structure of the research problem, the framework, organization, or configuration of the relationships among variables of a study and the plan of investigation used to obtain empirical evidence on those relationships.

Research Method

Research methods are the tools, instruments, practices, processes that allow one to answer questions of interest and contribute to a critical conversation, or a grouping of recognized ideas about that interest. The critical conversation comes out of our preliminary discovery about a particular question or set of questions: discovery work known as rhetorical invention, or a starting place for thinking, researching, and writing. Research methods focus on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. Research methods are the strategies, processes or techniques utilized in the collection of data or evidence for analysis in order to uncover new information or create better understanding of a topic.

Who and What? Interviews, Narrative Inquiry, and Phenomenology

Five (5) interviews were conducted with child welfare related people: three child protection workers and three Crown ward survivors. The child protection workers were Black; so were the Crown wards. To interview foster parents, adoptive parents, Crown ward survivors, and child protection workers was the original plan - people from all walks of life, of diverse backgrounds. The researchers wanted to know about their lived experience in the context of care and the inadequacies of the system. The interview technique allows for narrative to be brought to the fore. Life is a story, so, recounting one's story can serve as a platform for empowerment (White, 2001). Power is brought in to the lives of interviewees, as memories and new possibilities form through discourse. Interviews open up the space for examining the lived experience of Crown ward survivors. Listening, attentiveness, cues, and memories are all key pieces of the interview method. The interview technique meshes well with narrative theory and therapy, as interviewees share information during their interview. The interview dynamic carves out room for players and actors, and interviewees are independent agents in the interview. In addition, phenomenology is tied to daily reality through embodied experience. People's experiences are phenomenological when they are informed by space, the world, and how people move through the world (Creswell, 2013; McIntosh, 2016; Prasad Kaffle, 2011). Part of this research on Black Crown wards and the reunification process involves qualitative measures. Interviews, narration and narrative theory and therapy, and phenomenology are all qualitative tools to make sense of people's concrete realities. In the context of Black Crown wards, more specifically Blackness, this combination of qualitative measures alludes to Fanonian theory around Black ontology. This combination also harkens back to Du Bois's work on the Black soul and double consciousness. In short, the interview methodology borrows from multiple interpretative strands of theory, which demonstrates the interview's share in contemporary and traditional work on child welfare and the reunification process. The researchers conducted five interviews, they made inquiries (Tilley, 2016), and through snowballing sampling, spoke to diverse people, from a diverse pool. Connections were made amidst this research, which led to interviews. It is through communication (e.g. e-mail) that researchers relayed information around the research, through telephone calls, and arranged meetings in person. These were one-on-one interviews, and they were very rich. Phones were used to record interviews. The combination of methods, interview, narrative, and phenomenology, allows for a kind of triangulation of rich data (Creswell, 2013, p. 70). These methods form a whole to decode interviews and code for

keywords, key concepts, and themes. The researchers made these decisions in the light of postmodernism, and how lineages and genealogies of poststructuralist, critical race, and feminist theories inform the interview technique as it blends with narrative and phenomenology (Creswell, 2013, p. 70). So, it is a blend of interactive and critical paradigms that informs my vision of this PRP. Much as the vision of Black Crown wards is tailored to Blackness and precarity, the vision of this study is grounded in theory rooted in critical discourses of knowledge production.

Methodologically, a lot of methods were used in this research. Interviews, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology combine with discourse analysis in the process of doing research. While research is messy, it can be alleviated through grounding in theory. Postmodernism makes sure that theories and methods rough around the edges (in their beginning phase) are polished and become more forceful in the context of research outlines and designs. More specifically, this research's main question is: How is reunification understood and practiced in Black Crown ward cases? Phenomenology, as it relates to Blackness, is key in examining the lived experience and understandings of Black Crown ward survivors. Because phenomenology opens up the space for narration and narrative inquiry, it is a good method to combine with wisdom and knowledge production created amidst the research process (i.e., interview process). Precisely, discourse analysis emerged in the coding of the data collected. But, for the purposes of this research study, the main methods used and boldly outlined are interviews, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology. It is important to set limits and boundaries around methods used, and are curious to push those boundaries. The researchers pushed the envelope by creating a triangulation of methods, one that is informed by bodies of theory related back to anti-colonialism and post-imperialism. The PRP was not meant to be shameful or rearticulate damage of any sort. Rather, the goal or intention is to empower people to tell their story. Though the research process was emotionally sensitive (e.g. one participant cried), researchers tried to follow guidelines around minimal risks involved and ethics. That is to say, the researchers did their best to follow ethical considerations and not harm or hurt participants because of their traumatic history or characteristics.

Findings and Discussion/Conclusions

This chapter opened up a discussion about the questions asked in the research project: How is reunification understood and practiced in Black Crown ward cases? How does Crown wardship affect Black children's adult life? What challenges do child protection workers face in bringing restoration to Black families? (What are the benefits and risks of family reunification?) What does critical social work learn from these two above-sub questions? These questions are addressed in this chapter through discussion of the data. The questions below were interview questions, and they point to the inadequacies of child protection services. The questions shed light on the challenges faced daily by child protection workers, within their professional work, and the challenges faced daily by Crown ward survivors. The interview answers and data illuminate some of the difficulties of being a Black Crown ward. They also highlight the need to address the unresolved feelings attached to trauma and trauma related experiences. Participants' baggage around trauma experiences need to be seen as "luggage", as it is this material that serves as a platform for empowerment for child protection workers and Crown wards.

Questions for Black Crown wards

1. Tell me about your experiences with child welfare.
2. How did you feel about being removed from your home?
3. How did this impact you as a Black child and as a Black adult?
4. What would you change about the removal process?
5. If anything could be done differently about the removal process, what would it be?

Questions for child protection workers

1. If anything could be done differently about child welfare, what would it be?
2. Describe an ideal child welfare practice.
3. Do you feel there is a gap between the removal process and family reunification?
4. As a child protection worker, what are some of the challenges you face in bringing about reunification in Black families?

Furthermore, researchers went over the data collected in this PRP. They presented themes suggested by the participants. These themes were arrived at after rigorous coding and understandings of the interview transcripts. Keeping cognizant of the methodologies used in this project, it is important to centre the experiences, narratives, and stories of the participants. Likewise, it is important to centre the phenomenological experiences of these people. Several themes emerged in the data collected for this research. I have divided them in to two categories: themes for child protection workers, and themes for Crown wards.

Thematic Analysis: Part 1

For child protection workers, cultural competency points to colonial relations (Landertinger, 2017, p. ii). Colonial relations sustain the present through historical, cultural, social, and political practices. Social work's fundamental assumption is "helping" populations in need (Jeffrey, 2002). There are so many cultures in the world; as such, social and child protection workers need to be sensitive to colour, race, and ethnicity. KB, a participant in this study (child protection worker), is knowledgeable about not practicing social work from a Eurocentric lens. KB believes in using an anti-oppressive lens when dealing with diverse bodies and racialized populations.

Child welfare is practiced from a Eurocentric perspective and our society in general is becoming a global village, communities are becoming more diverse and cosmopolitan people have different backgrounds, so, if we practice child welfare from the Western or the Eurocentric way, it stigmatizes. It puts people back in to their silos. Our intention is to protect children, but the way our society is we won't be [...] able to protect children the way we're supposed to. (KB)

In this research, both child protection workers and Crown wards shared a perspective of challenging lack of cultural awareness within the system. In the Peel region, the executive director (ED), originally from the United Kingdom, has brought in the ideology that apprehension is the last resort in child protection proceedings. Staff are trained to address issues and not neglect the root cause of why families are having CAS involvement. Before apprehension, staff must look at kinship, community involvement (e.g. Mosque),

and close friends to prevent children from becoming state owned. Once the children reach the age of eighteen to twenty-one, and if they are not involved in higher education, they are left without any hope. Though there is funding for most Crown wards to continue in to high education, there is a qualifying aspect.

In contrast to the child protection worker at Peel (VA, a participant), FF (another participant; child protection worker) expressed that the way CAS in Toronto looks at cultural competency and sensitivity is through mandatory anti-racism and anti-oppressive training (AOP) for all workers. Staff has African, African-Canadian, and Black Caribbean lead supervisors, and staff must consult them during investigation of a child protection case. There is a commonality between the two organizations (in Peel and Toronto). They believe in collaborating with the families and children to prevent apprehension or the removal process from taking place, because once it goes to court, it is difficult to bring the child back to their family. People try to prevent the apprehension stage from happening. Both the Peel and Toronto CAS organizations believe in using kinship in order to stop apprehension. FF talked about how parenting, in Canada, is done in Eurocentric ways. In her culture, she was disciplined (corporeal punishment). In Canada, if one slaps their child and leaves a mark, there is a criminal aspect to it and CAS will get involved. At times, there is no reunification, especially because children sometimes lie about those cases of slapping. There is legal bureaucracy that comes in to play here, as judges and attorneys and child protection workers work collaboratively to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child. Spirituality is another link to cultural competency. During the interview process, Crown wards expressed the importance of being placed appropriately with foster parents who were Christians and shared their faith, potentially having a cultural understanding of where they are coming from. This entailed non-judgmental frameworks and respect. This is not to advocate cultural or racial segregation. The goal is to continue the grounding of children, making sure that they have a sense of belonging (Nourian, Shahbohlagni, Tabrizi, & Rassouli, 2016). Both JA and LW, who attended church, found hope and realized how their life was "more than this" (JA), and that they could do better. JA states: "Back of my mind, I'm going to be better; I will make something out of my life". Spirituality gave these participants a sense of empowerment and belonging. Systematically, a lot of things can be said about child welfare. There are interdisciplinary bodies that interact with one another to improve the lives and circumstances (quality of life) of children and Crown wards. The racial aspect of child protection links child welfare to ongoing colonial relations (Stewart, 2016; Landertinger, 2017). As such, cultural barriers, poverty, affordable housing, and lack of extended family are intersectional bodies that coalesce to make moving forward difficult and problematic, be it for child protection workers or Crown wards. Getting by in Canadian context means navigating regulatory mechanisms that include some while excluding others. VA used smart words to describe the status quo in child welfare: she enumerated some of the barriers mentioned above. But the problem is bigger than barriers; it is systems finding against each other. For example, VA relays the fact of a mother with HIV/AIDs who died and left three children in Canada. Her only kinship was her biological father who came to take care of the children. The mother's father was not on the lease, so, the housing workers gave him an eviction notice. VA had to file an appeal against the housing and CAS supported to fight the case through the courts, to try to get the decision revoked. The legal system comes face to face with

the housing system. The legal system became a mediator for CAS and housing. In the meantime, the children become like Ping-Pong balls, being thrown from system to system. This resonates with LA who was placed, at the age of sixteen, in six different foster homes. She ran away from all them, and was even thrown out of a residential home for rebelling. She felt the residential home was like a prison, which was designed for troubled kids. They were labeled as the bad kids. Workers came only once in a while. She had no relationship or rapport with workers; so, she would run away and sleep under bridges and near subway stations. She felt she did something wrong, she felt punished. LW had little trust for workers. Child protection workers have the duty to work with children in arrangements that work for everyone. Patterns need to be named and marked. For example, there is a view that African-

Canadians cannot take care of their own children: “[...] reports have been made about a view held by some child welfare workers that African-Canadian children would have better outcomes in the care of White middle class families (OACAS, 2015)” (Black Community Action Network of Peel, 2015, p. 6). The Black Community Action Network of Peel (2015) makes a prominent statement about race and racialization. Is the implication that Black people are not capable of nurturing their own? This suggestion alludes to a lack of reunification, where reunification might not be possible if children are not placed with culturally appropriate people and families. More collaboration needs to happen across people involved in child protection, in order to meet the needs of all parties. Such parties include families, children, and health care providers.

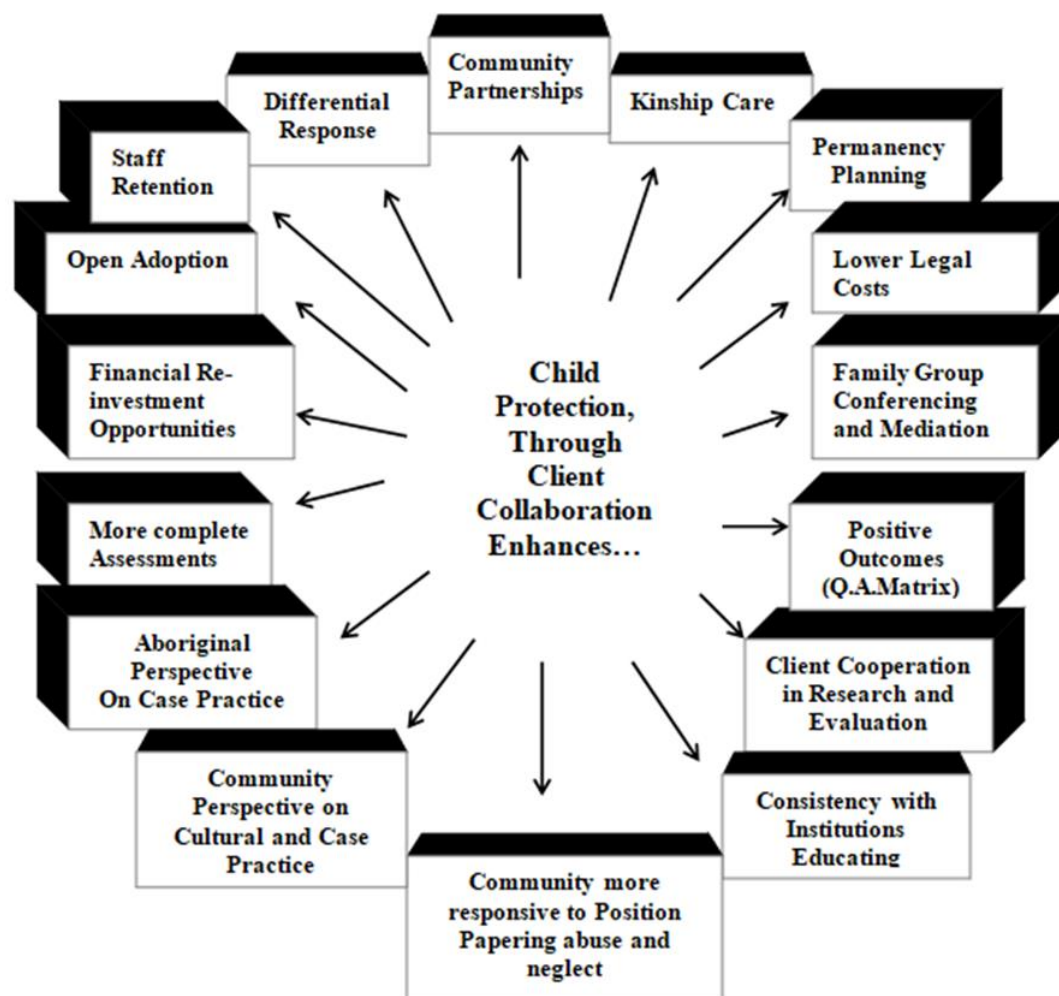


Figure 2: The Importance of Client Collaboration in Combination with Other Strategies for Protecting Children (Child welfare in Ontario: Developing a collaborative intervention model, 2005, p. 31).

As this chart illustrates, multiple domains of the child's life need to be prominent in child protection proceedings. VA shed insight on permanency planning within the Peel region, which involved using a plan of care to protect the child. Plans of care are crucial in the current system of child welfare. They are based on a roundtable with the caregivers of the child, children themselves, and judicial bodies like lawyers and judges. CAS is involved, but these roundtables are not always established.

In VA's words: "Child welfare is not the best at parenting. Anything we can do to restore a child with any member of their family is important. Children lose a sense of identity and self-worth" (VA). To have a plan of care is to set the stage for reunification.

Reunification can be understood as a step-by-step process to bring about holistic and therapeutic experiences for those involved. During access visitations, the participants felt that these are the times to brainstorm and speak about the needs of the parent as well as the child. What resources are available to bring about reconnectedness and restoration (Savoie, 2006)? This may not always be possible due to the fact that safety concerns may override reunification, and some people might not want to be reunified with their family of origin. In some cases, Crown wards want to stay in care to avoid strict rules and regulations within their biological or original home. Once they experience freedom in foster care, there might not be safety issues at hand. With LA's situation, there was

lack of cultural understanding from CAS. What she remembers is that employment was an issue in the home; a lot of fighting, arguments, in contrast to JA, there was a safety concern around mental health and drug addictions. There was no kinship available. In my case, it was not a question of kinship because kinship was available. JA is a prime example of an individual affected by mental health challenges and addictions. First, it is important to place mental health and addictions in the context of medicalization. If it were not for medicine, mental health and addictions would be seen as experiences and circumstances by many people. These could be seen as “normal”, as integral facets to people’s humanity and embodiments. From conception, JA’s mother was already red flagged by CAS. So, JA had social work involvement from birth. She was taken away in to foster care. At age four, she was returned to her mother once she was cleaned up. JA’s mother attended rehabilitation programs. Throughout JA’s life, this was the norm for her. She states: “Due to my mother’s age, I had a social worker from birth at the hospital that was alongside my mother for years. I felt she had a disadvantage from the moment she stepped in to motherhood by the system” (JA). In family pictures, JA always saw a White woman. She would ask her mom about this person, but her mom never gave concrete answers. Later, JA would find out that this person was her social worker. VA, JA, and KB all talked about mental health challenges and the importance of caregivers getting help medically, when it came to risk assessment. VA, JA, and KB took the matter very seriously, suggesting that caregivers attend their appointments and take their medication. From a critical lens, in the Western world, medicalization is “always the answer”.

From a non-Western perspective, different modalities of healing are practiced. For example, in an African or Caribbean perspective, there is communal prayer and herbal medicine. It is important to have awareness around mental health issues within the Black community and population, as these challenges face people who are racialized. JA’s mom was a “crack addict”, and JA was a “crack baby”. These formulations can be seen as “syndromes” that mark a link between inadequate service provision and daily, embodied experience. JA was a crack baby who moved through the world with difficulty. She provides a grounding illustration of how child welfare, through its workers, needs to explain to the child in protection that things will be okay. In JA’s case, someone needed to explain to her that her mom was having some help. Someone also needed to explain who the social worker was. JA had a social worker from birth (“flagged from the womb” (JA)). JA should be dead by now, as she was a stripper, dancer, and crack and street involved. Using Michel Foucault’s notions of bio power and bio politics, JA was destined for premature death, a crack survivor. But the shift in fate that marks her life illustrates her survivorship. She had three jobs, bought a townhouse at twenty with her mom. She had “to take fight” (JA). JA’s dad was also crack involved; he got her mom in to addiction. Addiction is a tricky thing, and JA pushed through. She had to grow up very fast. She made ends meet by working a lot. Kinship worked in this situation: mother - daughter kinship, and job related kinship and connections. JA was involved in complicated relationships, as she witnessed many sexually abused young women. JA did not make these women fall through the cracks of the interview. She emphasizes that social workers need to explain the circumstances surrounding their apprehension. Complicated kinships are born of abusive relationships, which must be emphasized in child welfare proceedings. JA was able to give voice to herself. She even self-diagnosed her issues and

concerns, which anticipatively revolved around systematic challenges (e.g. selling drugs and being the mother figure at age fourteen). LW returned back home, at one point, where she found her voice. But she was never explained why she was removed, another gap in the system. Both LW and JA ended up homeless and living in a shelter. “Giving voice” is a grey area, because “voice” is contingent on multiple things. Do Black people have a voice? When the researchers did these interviews, it reminded of Frantz Fanon and W.E.B. Du Bois’s meditations on Blackness. All participants were racialized, Black. Historically, social work is a White, female profession. Recently, there have been Black people rising to positions of power in institutions. These power positions have been managerial and supervisory positions.

Their roles have been similar to historical White positions, but it would be unfair to state that Black people are entering in to White roles. For example, FF made a point that leads are Black. Team, supervisory leads are Black people guiding ontologies for practice during child protection investigations. Leads use their (insider) knowledge of the Black community and population to nudge non-Black workers in a Black direction. This can be called Black phenomenology, which is in conversation with Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness. Black people have insider knowledge of their community, reflecting years of struggle for enfranchisement in White societies. Societies of control have meant the disempowerment of Black people and other minorities, but this disempowerment can be challenged by power sources like double consciousness. In a White society, there is space for Black insurgence. Workers and other professionals need to be educated about CAS. There must be critical and historical lenses used when examining children’s cases. LA felt that she was a “mere” number in the system. The workers talked about in this research were quick to close cases. High turnover was also a prominent aspect of workers in child protection. This circumstance might speak to generalized challenges, such as compassionate fatigue and trauma re - visitation (Salloum, Kondrat, Johnco, & Olson, 2015). We don’t know. But what can be assumed or drawn from these experiences is “stuckness” in the system. Some people are stuck when they have to deal with other people, which might speak to problems or conflict in interpersonal skills. This looks bad for reunification, as complete reunification cannot happen if people are stuck and cannot move forward. Reunification might be a lofty goal. But JA and LA had experiences of reunification. JA’s getting a home with her mom and being the mother figure are somewhat reunification experiences. It was learnt from JA that reunification is another grey area, not concrete. Child protection workers interviewed for this study emphasized that removal is not a solution to conflictual family dynamics. They emphasized kinship. Participants suggested that kinship and community involvement are pivotal in family restoration and keeping family members within their own home. This prevents trauma, and money needs to be funneled to provide trauma-informed care in the family unit, household, or clan. LW found reunification through family and kinship, but not through the system’s mechanisms. She turned away from child welfare: “My family and I had to repair our relationship overtime, but somethings are irreparable, the stain and trauma caused by apprehension” (LW). LW hits the nail on the head when she highlights the inadequacy of child welfare.

Child protection services need to be equipped with new methods of dealing with protection and safety.

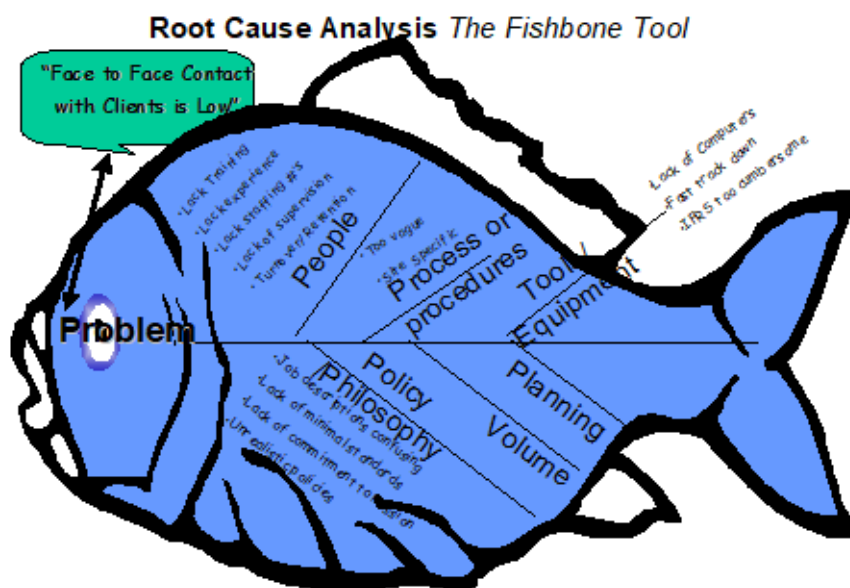


Figure 3: Root Cause Analysis (Child welfare in Ontario: Developing a collaborative intervention model, 2005, p. 43).

As illustrated by Figure 3, it is not enough to “be” workers in the context of child non-safety. More child protection workers need to be harnessed with anti-oppressive methodologies and frameworks for dealing with the unique needs of the child and families.

Thematic Analysis Part 2:

Recommendations

Why are we removing the child? A thorough investigation is not always the answer. Removing may be based on a good reason. But we shouldn't be reactionary. We must be proactive. We will prevent trauma, we need to prevent trauma, why not work with the mother, visit weekly, or place the child with kinship? Remove from the harm and place in safety. And set a smart goal. Removal traumatizes the child and it takes years and sometimes they never get over it. (KB)

The tug of war between my mom and the CAS led to me suffering from PTSD. Bad relationships. It is believed that CAS needs to have a better communication between the child and parent and the social worker. No matter how young the child is there should be a form of explanation on their level. (JA) Based on participants' data, this research confirms that there is a gap in the reunification process of child welfare and families. As confirmed by participants, there still needs to be more work done within systems of child welfare, education, immigration, and other social services. For example, it is important that new migrants are educated by the CAS system and what it does, that it is not a taboo, and remove the negative connotations associated with CAS. Pamphlets and information slips need to be distributed or inserted in their newcomer package, the same way OW does with its users. There needs to be national awareness on child welfare and protection. The government needs to fund culturally sensitive programs to eliminate poverty within the marginalized population. Many parents leave their children alone because of unaffordable daycare availability. In line with this, affordable housing is another recommendation for the government to look in to. For subsidized housing, waiting lists span five to ten years, and placement in a

subsidized neighborhood is risky. Gentrification has meant that people of color are pushed from their milieu and put in to silos where they are stigmatized. Cultural misplacement leads to bullying in schools, which in turn creates more marginalization for people of color and Black children. Ethnic minorities need to be in positions of power and leadership, creating their own community and ensuring that people in it have actual lived experience of CAS involvement. Their families also need to be involved to ensure their voices are heard and opinions drawn on. Black-focused agencies must be the context for all these recommendations, as Black institutions have traditionally empowered and enfranchised people marginalized by virtue of their race, gender, and ability. For example, churches can accept people regardless of their identities, and intersectional, Black people can be a source of inspiration for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) people. As evidenced by the data collected for this study, Black Crown ward survivors are part of an unheard population across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The opinions and statements made by Black Crown ward survivors need to be centered and Whiteness decentered. This could lead to a more equal playing field in power dynamics. Alliances between child protection workers and Black Crown wards must happen to allow for collaboration across kinships. For example, roundtables could be held to gather information and facts lived and embodied by Black survivors.

These stories and narratives keep being repeated and coming to the fore, but nothing is being done about them. The facts and recommendations are there (One Vision One Voice, 2016), and Black Crown wards are still waiting years to have their needs met. We are still without housing and other important circumstances. After the removal process, what is the professional help (i.e., therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy, narrative therapy) in place to remove blame from Crown wards? These practices could help eliminate blame, self-hatred, internalized shame, and feelings of guilt. The permanent mark made on Black Crown wards is damaging, hence they are survivors. As VA put it, is important to keep families together to maintain a sense of self, identity. More funding can be used to “push reunification” (VA) as a new model,

for those who want it. This is a narrative of self-determination and a sense of belonging, which can move people to change the status quo through new policy implementation, program changes, new funding models, and other areas crucial to kinship restoration. Data collected for this PRP confirms hypotheses around child welfare and some of the inadequacies and challenges that Black Crown ward survivors face. There is lack of family restoration in Black Crown ward cases. Some survivors do not want reunification, while others want it. For those who want or/and need reunification, there is a gap of help that exists in their lives. Lack of therapy and counseling has meant more trauma and unresolved feelings for all involved.

Recommendations around kinship are good, as they scene for some sort of support. For example, FGDM can bring family members back together. It can also alleviate the stressor of shame experienced in Crown ward cases. The narratives relayed by the participants all point to the inadequacies of the system. The child welfare system is insufficient in providing seamless support to Black Crown ward survivors. The narratives explored for this PRP have evoked feelings of compassion in me, empathy and sadness that speak to broader struggles to be allies to survivors of child welfare. Narratives of this nature has been there for so long now, so, the hope is to provide recommendations that will more forcefully effect change in the social lives of participants. Many narratives join forces to paint a picture of child welfare in Canada, and how it has failed people and communities. Phenomenologically, the participants moved through the world as Black adults enfranchised to talk about their experiences, share their narratives. They recalled the insider knowledge that Black people possess by virtue of their Blackness. The participants know the system very well, as they have lived experience in it, whether as child protection workers or Crown wards. This study opened up a space to resist racist, classist, and sexist systems that criminalize Black people by virtue of their intersectionalities (Clarke, 2012). The kinship model that child welfare is using now has already been established in Indigenous child protection. As evidenced by participants' knowledge of the child welfare system, child protection services are beginning to implement methods of reunification that are tied to kinship. Kinship care means family members and next of kin take charge of the ward to look after and care for them. The child, in this case, is close to home or family of origin, which could prevent trauma. In this way, family preservation is the result of child welfare involvement, which sounds like a positive goal. Positive outcomes may be born of re-establishing ties to family of origin, which is desirable in the context of difficulty navigating the world. Trauma can be offset by kinship. Kinship allows for centuries of colonization to be interrogated, as it showcases resiliency in the face of racist, sexist, and classist relations.

Furthermore, a Black CAS might serve the needs of Black children, youth, and families, by implementing slavery-conscious modalities of training and education. Education within interdisciplinarity can manage the stress of slavery and anti-Black racism by providing knowledge around critical thought, thinking, and other progressive systems. Training is recommended to be culturally sensitive and Black, which will offset shame, guilt, blame, loss, and gaps in services (Clarke, 2012). Training that is sensitive and Black can use slavery as a platform to empower everyone and effect change. Critical social work needs to have an anti-oppressive and anti-racist lens when dealing with the Black

population. It needs to be slavery-conscious and colonization-conscious. It needs to decolonize the mindset of child protection workers and social workers within their practices. This will help to prevent re-traumatization and intergenerational trauma. Unless the government reviews its policies, mandates, and manifestos on child welfare, change will not happen. Policy-makers, child protection workers, and social workers need to purge the system from Eurocentric thought and ideology.

Conclusion

The shortcomings of child protection speak to the need to look in to academic publications and community research documentation. If recommendations are made and not followed through by the government, money is thrown out of the window, marginalizing struggles for social transformation (Jones, 2016; Child welfare in Ontario: Developing a collaborative intervention model, 2005).

Critical social work can be promising if it uses epistemological models that are in line with people's ontology. What social workers need is a model open to diverse people's experiences and grounded in their lives.

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