

SPIRITUALITY AS PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR ADOLESCENTS
EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

SPIRITUALITY AS PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR ADOLESCENTS EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Research has shown that exposure to domestic violence can have adverse developmental outcomes for adolescents. Several protective factors have been identified in the research literature as promoting resilience with at-risk youth. Recently spirituality as a potential protective factor has received attention. The current phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of fourteen adolescents-who had been exposed to domestic violence-to answer the following questions: 1) How do adolescents define spirituality? 2) In what ways does spirituality serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence? In the current study, both traditional and non-traditional definitions of spirituality emerged. Spirituality appeared to be a source of strength for the participants and manifested itself in numerous ways. Themes included having a sense of purpose, a positive attitude, learning from experiences and helping others.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	x
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Problem Statement.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study	4
1.3 Purpose of the Study	5
1.4 Rationale for the Study	6
1.5 Professional Significance of the Study	6
1.6 Research Questions.....	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Strategy for Literature Review.....	7
2.3 Children and Adolescents.....	8
2.4 Definitions.....	9
2.5 Risks of Exposure to Domestic Violence	11
2.6 Resiliency and Protective Factors	16
2.7 Spirituality as a Protective Factor	24

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/CONCEPTUALIZATION.....	28
3.1 Strengths Perspective	28
3.2 Conceptualization: Spirituality	32
4. METHODOLOGY.....	43
4.1 Rationale for Qualitative Methodology	43
4.2 Purpose.....	43
4.3 Research Questions.....	44
4.4 Research Design.....	44
4.5 Sample.....	45
4.6 Setting	46
4.7 Data Collection	46
4.8 Ethical Considerations	48
4.9 Analyses.....	49
4.10 Methodological Rigor	51
4.11 Summary.....	53
5. RESULTS.....	55
5.1 Spirituality-General.....	57
5.2 Spirituality-Meaning to Them.....	61
5.3 Spirituality-Are they Spiritual.....	65
5.4 Spirituality-Help	66
6. DISCUSSION.....	77
6.1 Summary of Results.....	77

6.2 Interpretation of Findings	78
6.3 Siblings.....	85
6.4 Gender Differences.....	86
6.5 Racial Differences.....	86
6.6 Implications for Social Work	88
6.7 Limitations	91
6.8 Conclusion.....	91
APPENDIX	
A. SUMMARY TABLE OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES	93
B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	116
C. CONSENT/ASSENT FORM (ENGLISH AND SPANISH).....	119
D. STUDY NOTICE FLYERS.....	128
REFERENCES	133
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....	150

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1 Conceptualization of Spirituality.....	42

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Problem Statement

Domestic violence is a prevalent, widespread problem in the United States. Recent national data obtained from the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) Survey indicate that approximately 1.5 million women are physically assaulted and/or raped by their intimate partners each year (United States Department of Justice, 2000). In addition to physical and sexual violence, domestic violence encompasses other forms of abuse towards women by an intimate partner: psychological, emotional, mental, and/or verbal (Holden, 2003). Difficulty in operationalizing non-physical forms of violence towards women, however, has resulted in studies on the subject restricting their definitions of domestic violence to physical and/or sexual violence. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain both the number of victims of domestic violence and the number of domestic violence incidents in the United States. Despite these limitations, it is clear that domestic violence is a significant problem in our country, which affects not only the female victims, but their children as well.

Children and adolescents are the unfortunate victims caught in the middle. It is estimated that between 10 million and 17 million children and adolescents are exposed to domestic violence each year in the United States (Yexley, Borowsky, & Ireland, 2002). It is unclear from these estimates however, if they encompass all forms of domestic violence children and

adolescents can be exposed to or if they only cover physical assaults. For example, McDonald, Jouriles, Ramisetty-Mikler, Caetano, & Green (2006) found that approximately 15.5 million children and adolescents live in households characterized by domestic violence each year. While this is the most recent estimate on the prevalence of children and adolescents exposure to domestic violence, it is possibly low as McDonald, et al. did not include psychological, emotional, verbal, and/or mental abuse in their definition of domestic violence, only examining households characterized by physical violence (moderate and extreme). Studies have shown that exposure to even non-physical forms of domestic violence can have detrimental effects. Jouriles, Norwood, McDonald, Vincent, & Mahoney (1996) found in their study that being exposed to verbal abuse was just as likely a predictor of children's problems as being exposed to physical violence in the home. Therefore, it is important to include all forms of domestic violence (physical, mental, verbal, and psychological) in determining prevalence and incident rates.

These children and adolescents can be exposed to the violence in their homes in numerous ways. Exposure to domestic violence, which is conceptualized for the current proposal as the different ways children and adolescents can be involved or impacted by the violence at home, can include hearing, seeing, intervening, and/or participating in the violence which can lead to the child or adolescent being hurt (Holden, 2003). In their study of children's involvement in domestic violence, Edleson, Mbilinyi, Beeman, & Hagemeister (2003) found that a quarter of the mothers interviewed reported that their children were physically involved during the violence at home.

According to Litrownik, Newton, Hunter, English, & Everson, 2003, "this epidemic is of concern because many of our nation's youth are suffering physical injuries (including death),

disruptions in their psychosocial development, and themselves are becoming perpetrators of violence” (p. 59). Research on this subject has centered on assessing both the short and long term consequences of exposure to domestic violence. These studies categorize the impact of domestic violence on children and adolescents of battered women into distinct risks. A substantial amount of the research has focused on the development of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Grych, Jouriles, Swank, McDonald, & Norwood, 2000; Becker & McCloskey, 2002; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003; Fantuzzo, DePaola, Lambert, Martino, Anderson, & Sutton, 1991; and Jouriles, Norwood, McDonald, Vincent, & Mahoney, 1996); traumatization (Levendosky, Hutch-Bocks, Semel, & Shapiro, 2002 & Lehmann, 1997); perpetration of violence in intimate relationships later in life (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003); and substance abuse and mental health problems (Caetano, Field, & Nelson, 2003 & Luster, Small, & Lower, 2002; and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Monson, Meyer, Caster, & Sanders, 1998). These studies indicate that children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk for psychological and social problems than children who have no history of exposure to domestic violence (Yexley, Borowsky, & Ireland, 2002). In their study on the effects of domestic violence on preschool children, Fantuzzo et al. (1991) found that children exposed to domestic violence displayed both internalizing and externalizing behaviors, the latter being significantly severe to fall in the clinical range. Similarly, Levendosky et al. (2002) found in their study of preschool children, who either witness domestic violence or live in a home characterized by domestic violence without being a witness to the violence, suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, including reexperiencing the traumatic event and/or hyperarousal. Exposure to domestic

violence can also have long term impact. In their study of adults who had been exposed to domestic violence in childhood, Caetano, Field, & Nelson (2003) found that such exposure is a risk factor for the development of substance abuse problems later in life. These findings are consistent with Grych, Jouriles, Swank, McDonald, & Norwood (2000), who found in their research that “the variability in child outcomes seen in prior research mirrors the diversity and complexity of children’s responses to living in a violent household” (p. 9).

1.2 Background of the Study

Recent studies on resiliency, which have provided evidence that children and adolescents can have positive developmental trajectories despite stressful life events (Alvord & Grados, 2005), call attention to the need for a shift from a pathological, deficit model of focusing on negative outcomes to a model that focuses on identifying and fostering strengths. These strengths are known in the research literature as protective factors. Protective factors have been identified as both internal assets and external resources available to the individual (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). The presence of hope (Hagen, Myers, & Mackintosh, 2005 & Carbonell, Reinherz, Giaconia, Stashwick, Paradis, & Beardslee, 2002), positive self-esteem (O’Keefe, 1998), and positive interpersonal relationships (Luthar, 1991; Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Lapp, 2002; & Carbonell et al, 2002) are a few of the internal characteristics identified in the research literature that serve as protective factors leading to resiliency in children and adolescents. The child’s family, school, and/or community can also serve as protective buffers against negative developmental outcomes and can lead to resiliency (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). In addition, affiliation and participation in religion has been identified as a protective factor for children/adolescents (Herrenkohl, Hill, Chung, Guo, Abbott, & Hawkins,

2003 & Kogan, Luo, Murry, & Brody, 2005). Herrenkohl et al. found that for at-risk youth attending religious services lowers the likelihood of violence later in life. Recently attention has turned to exploring spirituality as a potential protective factor. In their study of teenagers of alcoholic parents, Chandy, Blum, & Resnick, (1996) found that their participants felt a sense of spiritual connectedness apart from formal religion, stating “this variable may be indicative of the sense of meaning and coherence in their lives which serves as a protective factor” (p. 427). Other studies have also found that spirituality functions as a protective factor, buffering adolescents from negative consequences of being exposed to stressful life events in general (Williams, 2004; Kidd, 2003; Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz, & Jarvis, 2001; Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, & Flynn, 2007; Lindsey, Kurtz, Jarvis, Williams, & Nackerud, 2000; Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003; Cotton, Larkin, Hoopes, Cromer, & Rosenthal, 2005; Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya, 2001; Knight, Sherritt, Harris, Holder, Kulig, Shrier, Gabrielli, & Chang, 2007; Sussman, Skara, Rodriguez, & Pokhrel, 2006; & Ritt-Olson, Milam, Unger, Trinidad, Teran, Dent, Sussman, 2004). Limited research, however, has been conducted on the role of spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence.

1.3 Purpose of Study

The current qualitative research study examined the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence. The aim of the study was to explore how adolescents define spirituality and in what way(s) spirituality serves as a protective factor for these adolescents.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

This is an important area of study for several reasons. First of all, while a substantial amount of the research on children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence has focused on exploring risks of exposure, research on the identification and role of protective factors for these children and adolescents is limited. Research that examines the strengths and coping mechanisms of children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence contribute important research and practice implications and should not be overlooked. Secondly, in the limited research on protective factors for adolescents exposed to domestic violence available, research on spirituality as a protective factor is sparse. Spirituality as a protective factor has been explored with favorable implications for other at-risk populations. A better understanding of spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence provides valuable research and practice implications in this field.

1.5 Professional Significance of the Study

The qualitative study contributes to the research literature on adolescents exposed to domestic violence by further examining and identifying protective factors, in particular spirituality, that have the potential to act as buffers against negative outcomes associated with exposure to domestic violence.

1.6 Research questions

1. How do adolescents define spirituality?
2. In what ways does spirituality serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Domestic violence is a prevalent problem in the United States. The risks for detrimental outcomes children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence face have been well documented in the research literature. Recent studies on resiliency and protective factors, however, have given attention to the fact that some children and adolescents fare well despite stressful life events, such as domestic violence. Several protective factors have been identified in the research literature for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events in general, with limited research available on protective factors for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence in particular. In the research literature on protective factors, spirituality has recently received attention as a potential protective factor. Additional research is needed in order to fully understand spirituality as a protective factor for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence. The current chapter first examines the research literature on the risks of exposure to domestic violence, then reviews the research literature on protective factors, and finally examines the research literature on spirituality as a protective factor.

2.2 Strategy for Literature Review

For the current literature review the University of Texas at Arlington library was used to locate both journal articles and books on the subject matters. Library databases used for journal articles included Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete, Ingenta, Kluwer

Online, PsycArticles, Psychology: A Sage Full-Text Collection, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, PsycInfo, Professional Development Collection, Social Sciences Citation, Index, Social Services Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, SpringerLink, and Religion & Philosophy Collection. Keywords used in the search included domestic violence, intimate partner violence, interpersonal violence, marital violence, wife abuse, abuse, physical, mental, verbal, psychological, violence in the home, children, adolescents, exposure, witnesses, impact, adversity, internalizing behaviors, adjustment problems, depression, anxiety, suicide, self-esteem, externalizing behaviors, behavioral problems, aggressiveness, teen dating violence, cycle of violence, traumatization, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, drug addiction, mental health problems, quantitative, qualitative, protective factors, risk factors, resiliency, family, religion, and spirituality. A summary table detailing the purpose, data collection, sample method, response rate/sample size, statistical analyses, and significant findings for each of the studies reviewed is included (Appendix A).

2.3 Children and Adolescents

The current literature review includes studies that examine both children and adolescents. Although the current research aims at understanding the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence, a large portion of the research literature on both risks of exposure to domestic violence and protective factors has concentrated on children. It is this deficit in the research literature on adolescents who have been exposed to domestic violence, the impact of such exposure, and possible protective factors, which was the impetus behind the current research's focus on adolescents exposed to domestic violence. Studies that focus on children

exposed to domestic violence were included in the current research literature as they fill the gap and provide a better context for understanding exposure to domestic violence.

2.4 Definitions

Domestic Violence

The term domestic violence has been used interchangeably with interpersonal violence, intimate partner violence, marital violence, wife abuse, and other similar terms in the research literature (Holden, 2003). Holden defines domestic violence as “a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors that adults use against their intimate partners” (p. 155). For the purpose of the current paper, the term domestic violence will be used to encompass the range of physical, psychological, verbal, and mental abuse experienced by victims at the hands of their abusive partners.

Exposure to Domestic Violence

The term exposure to domestic violence is used to refer to the various ways children can be involved in the violence occurring in their homes. Holden’s (2003) taxonomy of children’s exposure to domestic violence encompasses different types of exposures to domestic violence. Holden lists several discrete categories of exposure: “exposed prenatally,” “intervenes,” “victimized,” “participates,” “eyewitnesses,” “overhears,” “observes the initial effects,” “experiences the aftermath,” and “hears about it” (p. 152). For the purpose of the current paper the term exposure to domestic violence will be used to encompass the varying types of ways children could have been involved in or impacted by the violence at home.

Internalizing & Externalizing Behaviors

Internalizing behaviors are defined for the current paper as adjustment problems expressed as internalized symptoms; including depression, anxiety, maladjustment, suicidal ideation, and fear. Externalizing behaviors are defined for the current paper as problems expressed as externalizing symptoms; including behavioral problems, aggressiveness, disobedience, destructiveness, and teen dating violence (Jaffe, Wolfe, and Wilson, 1990).

Protective Factors

For the purpose of the current paper, protective factors are defined as those strengths, internal and external, which enable individuals to successfully adapt to stressful life events (Alvord & Grados, 2005 & Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). Protective factors are “hypothesized to interact with sources of risk such that they reduce the probability of negative outcomes under conditions of high risk” (Compas, Hinden, & Gerhardt, 1995, p. 273). As such, protective factors can be seen as the “building blocks” (Minnard, 2002, p. 235) of resilience.

Internal and External Protective Factors

Protective factors have been identified as both internal assets of the child and “external strengths occurring within systems in which the individual grows and develops” (Howard, et al, 1999, p. 310).

Spirituality

The “developmental ‘engine’ that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices” (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude , 2003, p. 205-206).

2.5 Risks of Exposure to Domestic Violence

Millions of children and adolescents are exposed to domestic violence each year, placing them at-risk for adverse developmental outcomes. A review of the research literature identified several areas of concern including behavioral problems and adjustment difficulties (Grych, Jouriles, Swank, McDonald, & Norwood, 2000; Becker & McCloskey, 2002; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003; Fantuzzo, DePaola, Lambert, Martino, Anderson, & Sutton, 1991; and Jouriles, Norwood, McDonald, Vincent, & Mahoney, 1996); the development of trauma symptoms (Levendosky, Hutch-Bocks, Semel, & Shapiro, 2002 & Lehmann, 1997); circle of violence (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003); and substance abuse and mental health problems (Caetano, Field, & Nelson, 2003 & Luster, Small, & Lower, 2002; and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Monson, Meyer, Caster, & Sanders, 1998). A closer examination of the research literature for each risk follows.

Internalizing and Externalizing Behaviors

A substantial amount of the research literature has focused on child maladjustment and behavioral problems in children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence. A review of the research literature yielded several studies that interviewed either mother and child/adolescent or child/adolescent individually to examine the development of internalizing and externalizing problems in children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence. These studies have found that exposure to domestic violence place children and adolescents at-risk for aggressive behavior, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Fantuzzo, DePaola, Lambert, Martino, Anderson, & Sutton, 1991; Grych, Jouriles, Swank, McDonald, & Norwood, 2000; Becker &

McCloskey, 2002; Yexley, Borowsky, & Ireland, 2002; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003; and Jouriles, Norwood, McDonald, Vincent, & Mahoney, 1996).

In their study on patterns of adjustment with eight to fourteen year olds exposed to domestic violence, Grych, Jouriles, Swank, McDonald, & Norwood (2000) found that children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence are at risk for the development of maladaptive internalized feelings, such as depression, anxiety, self-blame, and helplessness. The authors found that those children and adolescents who reported significant levels of anxiety and depression in their study also exhibited significant levels of aggressive behavior. Grych, et al., (2000) conclude that “with increasing exposure to family aggression, children are likely to experience greater difficulties regulating their affect and behavior, which in turn magnifies the impact of later instances of conflict and aggression” (p. 91). The development of behavioral problems, such as aggression, in children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence was seen in other studies as well. In their study, Fantuzzo et al. (1991) found that preschool children exposed to domestic violence displayed externalizing behaviors in the clinical range. Similarly, McCloskey & Lichter’s (2003) data from their longitudinal study indicated that children from homes characterized by domestic violence are at risk for becoming aggressive as adolescents, especially towards their same sex peers. Not all the studies reviewed reached the same conclusions, however. In their study on conduct problems in children of battered women, Becker & McCloskey (2002) found that domestic violence did not directly predict adolescent delinquency for either females or males.

Traumatization

Research has also examined the development of trauma symptoms in children exposed to domestic violence (Levendosky, Hutch-Bocks, Semel, & Shapiro, 2002 and Lehmann, 1997). In his study on the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in children of battered women, Lehmann (1997) found that more than half of the children in the study met diagnostic criteria for a PTSD diagnosis. Levendosky, Hutch-Bocks, Semel, & Shapiro (2002) reported similar results in their study with preschool children who had either witnessed domestic violence or lived in a home characterized by domestic violence without directly witnessing the violence. The implications for children of battered women who develop trauma symptoms are described by Lehmann (1997): “a child’s internal and external coping resources are rendered ineffective in the face of real or perceived life threatening events, resulting in feelings of fear, helplessness, and terror” (p. 242).

Cycle of Violence

Researchers have also investigated a cycle of violence hypothesis. Several recent empirical studies examined the concept that children of battered women grow up to become batterers themselves (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti, 2003; McCloskey & Lichter, 2003). Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti (2003) reported that people exposed to domestic violence as children have a significantly higher risk of becoming victims of domestic violence or becoming perpetrators of domestic violence as adults. Similarly, Carr & VanDeusen (2002) found in their study of young college males that exposure to domestic violence earlier in life was a significant predictor of becoming perpetrators of physical dating violence as young men. Carr & VanDeusen (2002) elaborate on their findings: “the

intergenerational transmission of violence theory holds that through learning process, witnessing and experiencing violence as a child leads to greater use of violence as an adult” (p. 641).

However, not all the studies concur that exposure to domestic violence in childhood predicts later perpetration of acts of violence towards an intimate partner. In their study of dating aggression in adolescents, McCloskey & Lichter (2003) found that exposure to domestic violence in childhood failed to directly predict aggression against a dating partner in adolescents. McCloskey & Lichter (2003) go on to state, however, that “although a direct cycle of violence fails to explain dating aggression in this analysis, it is plausible that exposure to family violence early in life launches a risk for psychopathology that in turn promotes dating aggression” (p. 406).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems

The development of substance abuse and mental health problems in children of battered women has also been studied (Luster, Small, & Lower, 2002; Caetano, Field, & Nelson, 2003; and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Monson, Meyer, Caster, & Sanders, 1998). In their secondary data analysis of adolescents’ experiences with different types of violence, Luster, Small, & Lower (2002) found that witnessing physical violence towards another person (including domestic violence) was associated with substance abuse and mental health problems, as well as lower grades in school. These results have important implications for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence. The authors observed:

Watching someone being battered is likely to be a highly stressful event, especially if the adolescent has a close relationship with the victim and the battering occurs over an extended period of time. Exposure to such stressful events may affect adolescents’ ability

to focus on school work and contribute to feelings of sadness or depression. We also suspect that some adolescents may cope with stressful events such as being abused or witnessing abuse by turning to alcohol or other drugs. (p. 1325-1326)

Similarly, Caetano, Field, & Nelson (2003) found that the results from their study confirm that “observing a threat of violence or physical violence between parents are factors of risk for developing problems later in life, in this particular case alcohol problems” (p. 251). However, in their study of college students’ retrospective reports, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Monson, Meyer, Caster, & Sanders (1998) found that exposure to domestic violence did not result in the development of mental health problems.

Summary of Risks of Exposure to Domestic Violence

The previous review of the research literature on the consequences of exposure to domestic violence provides a better understanding of the risks children and adolescents face as a result of the violence they are subjected to in their homes. Exposure to domestic violence puts children and adolescents at risk for the development of emotional and behavioral problems, the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, becoming victims or perpetrators of domestic violence themselves, mental health problems, and/or substance abuse. However, it can also be concluded from the studies reviewed that not all children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence develop emotional and behavioral problems, are not subject to a cycle of violence, and/or develop mental health problems. For example, in their study of eight to fourteen year olds, Grych et al. (2000) found that thirty-one percent of their sample did not exhibit any signs of adjustment and behavioral problems. Similarly, Becker & McCloskey (2002) found that domestic violence did not directly predict adolescent delinquency for either females or males in

their sample. McCloskey & Lichter (2003) did not find empirical support for the cycle of violence theory and Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al (1998) did not find mental health problems among their sample of college students who had been exposed to domestic violence when younger. New developments in the literature on resiliency and protective factors could provide a better understanding of why some children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence experience detrimental consequences and other appear to escape unscathed.

2.6 Resiliency and Protective Factors

Dissatisfaction with a pathological, deficit model, in light of research that found that some children fare well despite exposure to stressful life events (Kirby & Fraser, 1997), led to the conceptualization of a strength based approach of understanding human development in adverse situations (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). This approach, known as resilience, is generally used to describe those individuals who under seemingly insurmountable obstacles achieve positive outcomes (Fraser, Richman, & Galinsky, 1999). Resilience, however, is not a “one-dimensional, dichotomous attribute that persons either have or do not have” (Alvord & Grados, 2005, p. 238), but rather is the “continuing articulation of capacities and knowledge derived through the interplay of risks and protections in the world” (Saleebey, 1996, p. 299).

Several protective factors, both internal and external, have been identified in the research literature for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events. As limited attention has been paid within the research literature on identifying and explicating protective factors for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence, research on protective factors for stressful life events in general has filled the gap to provide a better understanding of potential protective factors for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence (Jenkins & Bell,

1997). These studies are of value in understanding the role of protective factors for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence, as they have pointed to the fact that protective factors “operate in other risk situations and may serve to buffer children exposed to” (Jenkins & Bell, 1997, p. 23) different types of stressful life events. A closer look at these protective factors follows.

Internal Protective Factors

Several internal protective factors have been identified in the research literature, including hope, internal locus of control, self-esteem, self-regulation, intelligence, and positive interpersonal relationships (Carbonell, Reinherz, Giaconia, Stashwick, Paradis, & Beardslee, 2002; Hagen, Myers, & Mackintosh, 2005; Luthar, 1991; Grossman, Beinashowitz, Anderson, Sakurai, Finnin, & Flaherty, 1992; O’Keefe 1998; Kliewer, Cunningham, Diehl, Parrish, Walker, Atiyeh, Neace, Duncan, Taylor, & Mejia, 2004; Lengua, 2002; Prelow & Loukas; 2003; Jackson, 2005; and Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Lapp, 2002).

Hope

A review of the research literature on protective factors found empirical support for viewing the presence of hope as a protective factor for children and adolescents exposed to multiple risks. In their study of children (ages 6 to 12) of incarcerated women, Hagen, Myers, & Mackintosh (2005) found that hopeful children exhibited fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors than children who scored below the mean on the Children’s Hope Scale. Similarly, in their longitudinal study of children at risk for the development of depression (exposure to domestic violence was one of nine risk factors examined), Carbonell, Reinherz, Giaconia, Stashwick, Paradis, & Beardslee (2002) found that being optimistic about themselves and their

futures served as a protective factor which helped protect the subjects from developing depression in young adulthood. Carbonell et al. (2002) expounded, stating “resilient respondents were able to look past their experiences and adversities with a sense of hope that enabled them to persevere and function well in young adulthood” (p. 407). For children exposed to domestic violence who live in chaos the presence of hope for themselves and their future serves as a powerful protective factor that enables children to feel a sense of control over their future (Hagen et al, 2005).

Internal Locus of Control

The concept of internal locus of control, which is the belief that one’s life and future is within one’s control (Luthar, 1991), was found to be a protective factor for adolescents exposed to stressful life events in the research literature. In her study of 144 inner-city, high-risk adolescents, Luthar found that when adolescents perceived themselves to be in control of the events and outcomes in their lives, they strove harder to overcome the difficulties they were experiencing. Grossman et al. (1992), found a strong association between this protective factor and good adaptation in the adolescents in their study. Luthar (1991) expounds, stating “when individuals believe that events and outcomes are controllable, learned helplessness is avoided, and, instead, active attempts are made to overcome aversive situations” (p. 610).

Self-Esteem

In her study of adolescents who reported witnessing high levels of domestic violence, O’Keefe (1998) found that self-esteem “emerged as a significant protective factor distinguishing high risk males who inflicted dating violence from those who did not” (p. 50). The finding that self-esteem serves as a protective factor is extremely important as research has shown that

children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence are at risk for the development of low self-esteem. This in turn can lead to long-term adverse consequences, such as a perpetration of violence later in life. O'Keefe's study points to the need to address the development of healthy self-esteem in children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence to serve as a protective factor rather than progressing to a risk trait.

Self-Regulation

Self regulation, "the ability of children to calm themselves down when upset or to keep positive or negative emotions in check" (Kliewer et al., 2004, p. 478), has been identified as a fundamental protective factor for children and adolescents. In their study of third to fifth graders exposed to multiple risks (family history of problems was one of several risk factors examined), Lengua (2002) found that self-regulation served as a protective factor which "moderated the relation between multiple risk and adjustment" (p. 156). Similarly Kliewer et al (2004) found that for children and adolescents exposed to community violence, the ability of the subjects to regulate their emotions reduced the risk for internalizing behaviors. In their study of low socioeconomic, Hispanic adolescents, Prelow & Loukas (2003) found that self-regulation was a protective factor for poor academic achievement. These findings are important as children's ability to regulate their emotions allows them to calm and sooth themselves when under stress. This is especially important for children exposed to domestic violence who oftentimes do not have anyone to comfort them.

Intelligence

Intelligence, or a child's cognitive ability, has been identified in the literature as a protective factor for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events. In a study of high

school students who reported exposure to domestic violence, O'Keefe (1998) found that good academic achievement served as a protective factor for females from being a victim or perpetrator of dating violence. Similarly, children's intelligence level, measured by IQ scores, was found to be a protective factor from the development of maladaptive adjustment in 8 to 12 year olds (Jackson, 2005). Jackson (2005) expounds, stating that intelligence acts as a guard "inhibiting the impact of negative major life events from altering prosocial behavior" (p. 378). Therefore, fostering children's continued intellectual growth is important for children to become and remain resilient throughout difficult times (Alvord & Grados, 2005).

Positive Interpersonal Relationships

Positive interpersonal relationships, which promote a sense of belonging in children within the systems in which they live and increases children's self-esteem, serves as a protective factor for children exposed to violence at home (Alvord & Grados, 2005). While the presence of positive interpersonal relationships can also be seen as an external protective factor, namely the presence of social support, the empirical research found internal attributes that children and adolescents possess that promote the development of healthy relationships and foster the development of other protective factors. One such attribute is ego development, which is defined as a "trait reflecting character development which is related to various aspects of cognitive and interpersonal development" (Luthar, 1991, p. 601). Ego development was found to be a protective factor in a study of 144 at risk adolescents (Luthar, 1991). In the same study, Luthar found that social expressiveness, defined as an interpersonal skill was a significant protective factor against the development of depression and anxiety for the adolescents in her study.

The importance of developing healthy interpersonal relationships with others is underscored for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence who are at-risk for repeating a history of violence. This is further supported by Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Lapp, (2002), who in their study on children exposed to familial adversity, found that positive peer relationships served as a protective factor from developing behavioral problems. In addition, having positive interpersonal relationships was found to be a protective factor for adolescents at risk of depression (Carbonell et al. 2002).

External Protective Factors

Three primary systems in a child's life (family, school, and community) have been identified in the conceptual literature as categories of external protective factors for children exposed to stressful life events (Howard et al., 1999).

Family

The family system has been found to be a source of numerous strengths that can serve as protective factors for children and adolescents. Two constructs within the family system were identified as protective factors: positive family relationships (Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999) and parenting styles (Rak & Patterson, 1996). Positive family relationships were found to be a protective factor for children and adolescents at risk of internalizing behaviors (Carbonell et al. 2002; Margolin, 2006; Denny, Clark, Fleming, & Wall, 2004; McCabe, Clark, & Barnett, 1999; Grossman et al. 1992; Jackson, 2005; & Kliewer et al., 2004). In addition, in their study of African American high school dropouts, Kogan et al. (2005) found that positive family relationships served as a protective factor against substance abuse.

Parenting styles that included warmth and clear boundaries proved effective protective factors for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events at risk for internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Herrenkohl, Hill, Chung, Guo, Abbott, & Hawkins, 2003 & McCabe et al., 1999). In their study on African-American children exposed to stressful life events, McCabe et al. found that primary caregivers who reported providing their children with affection and attention, had children whose teachers reported were less sad, anxious, and withdrawn. Similarly, both Herrenkohl et al. & McCabe et al. found in their respective studies that children and adolescents benefited from caregivers who provided clear rules and limits.

School

School as a protective factor is conceptualized to foster resiliency through distinct pathways (Minnard, 2002). The first pathway by which school can serve as a protective factor is through the presence of teachers who show concern and attention to children (Howard et al., 1999 & Minnard, 2002). As such, the school provides the student with support they might not be receiving at home (Rak & Patterson, 1996). According to Howard et al. (1999), doing well in school can also foster resiliency in children. Finally, by providing positive extracurricular activities for children (i.e. sports) or opportunities for leadership within the school (Howard et al., 1999), schools foster the development of resiliency in children at risk for adverse outcomes.

Herrenkohl et al. (2003) and Prelow & Loukas (2003) both found in their studies that school played a role in protecting adolescents from adverse outcomes. Herrenkohl et al. (2003) found that school bonding served as a protective factor for adolescents from later violent behavior. Similarly, Prelow & Loukas (2003) found in their study that extracurricular activities

within the school (and community) increased female adolescent's bonding to their school and therefore served as a protective factor.

Community

The presence of social support systems in a child's environment has been identified as a strong protective factor for at risk children (Sandler, Miller, Short, & Wolchik, 1989). The presence of caring adults through either extended family, family friends, teachers, religious leaders, social workers, and other adults children come across in their environment is a strong, protective factor that can foster resiliency in children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events. Rak and Patterson (1996) concur, stating "resilient children often had a number of mentors outside the family throughout their development" (p. 369).

Social support was identified as a protective factor for children and adolescents at risk for internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Hagen et al., 2005; Chandy, Blum, & Resnick, 1996 & Denny et al., 2004) and poor academic outcomes (Chandy et al., 1996). In their study of adolescents in alternative schools, Denny et al. found that peer support served as a protective factor against the development of depression. Similarly, Scheingart, Molnar, Klein, Lowe, & Hartmann (1995), found that homeless children involved in an early childhood education program had less developmental difficulties. The presence of religion was also identified as a protective factor for adolescents at risk of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Chandy et al., 1996 & Herrenkohl et al. 2003) and substance abuse problems (Kogan et al., 2005). Herrenkohl et al. found that for the adolescents in their study from high crime neighborhoods, attending religious services lowered the likelihood of perpetration of violent acts later in life. Similarly, In their study of adolescents who had been exposed to parental substance abuse and

were themselves victims of sexual abuse, Chandy et al. found that spiritual connectedness, measured through the subject's self-perception of themselves as being either religious or spiritual, served as a significant protective factor against the development of internalizing behaviors, substance abuse, and poor academic performance.

2.7 Spirituality as a Protective Factor

Spirituality has recently begun to receive attention as a potential protective factor for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events. The research literature on the subject, however, is limited. This is especially true when exploring the role of spirituality as a protective factor for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence in particular. In addition, a large part of the research available on spirituality as a protective factor uses spirituality and religion as interchangeable concepts. The current proposal conceptualizes spirituality and religion as two separate but related concepts, with the current proposal defining spirituality as the "developmental 'engine' that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices" (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003, p. 205-206). As such, a review of the research literature yielded studies exploring spirituality as a protective factor for children and adolescents at-risk for homelessness (Williams, 2004; Kidd, 2003; Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz, & Jarvis, 2001; Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, & Flynn, 2007; & Lindsey, Kurtz, Jarvis, Williams, & Nackerud, 2000); mental health problems (Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003 & Cotton, Larkin, Hoopes, Cromer, & Rosenthal, 2005); and substance abuse (Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya, 2001; Knight, Sherritt, Harris, Holder, Kulig, Shrier, Gabrielli, & Chang, 2007; Sussman, Skara,

Rodriguez, & Pokhrel, 2006; & Ritt-Olson, Milam, Unger, Trinidad, Teran, Dent, Sussman, 2004).

Homelessness and Runaway Youths

Several studies exploring spirituality as a protective factor for homeless and runaway youths were found in the research literature (Williams, 2004; Kidd, 2003; Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz, & Jarvis, 2001; Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, & Flynn, 2007; & Lindsey, Kurtz, Jarvis, Williams, & Nackerud, 2000). In his qualitative study on homeless youth, Kidd (2003) found that for several of the participants a sense of their own individual spirituality helped them to survive life on the streets. Kidd states that for these participants “when they were feeling very down, this sense of spirituality gave some meaning to their suffering, and that there was a ‘reason’ why they had survived up to that point” (p. 250). In their study of former runaway and homeless youth, Williams et al, (2001) found that for their participants a sense of meaning and purpose was a source strength and comfort during their time on the streets. Similarly, in her study of homeless and runaway youths, Williams (2004) found that half of the participants believed that a higher power had been their source of strength in overcoming the adversity they faced. Williams elaborated, stating “an integral part of this new found sense of self in relation to a Higher Power was gaining a fresh understanding of the meaning and purpose in life” (p. 60).

Mental Health Problems

Spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents with mental health problems has also been explored in the research literature (Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003 & Cotton, Larkin, Hoopes, Cromer, & Rosenthal, 2005). In their study of 14 to 17 year old at-risk adolescents, Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius (2003) found that greater spiritual well-being, as measured through the

Spiritual Well-Being Scale, was predicative of lower levels of anxiety. Similarly, Cotton, et al. (2005), in their study on the impact of adolescent spirituality on depression, found that adolescents with “higher levels of spiritual well-being, in particular existential well-being, had fewer depressive symptoms and fewer risk-taking behavior” (p. 529e12).

Substance Abuse

Spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents at-risk for the development of substance abuse has also been explored in the research literature (Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya, 2001; Knight, Sherritt, Harris, Holder, Kulig, Shrier, Gabrielli, & Chang, 2007; Sussman, Skara, Rodriguez, & Pokhrel, 2006; & Ritt-Olson, Milam, Unger, Trinidad, Teran, Dent, Sussman, 2004). In their study of at-risk rural youth, Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya (2001) found that spirituality served as a protective factor against adolescent use of marijuana and other hard drugs. Similarly, Sussman, et al. (2006) found in their study of at-risk high school students in California that spirituality served as a protective factor against alcohol, marijuana, and stimulant use. Hodge et al., offer an explanation as to why spirituality may serve as a protective factor against substance abuse in adolescence, stating “because spirituality may enhance self-esteem and perceptions of personal efficacy, youths may develop the internal resources to be able to make choices that are consistent with their own values and beliefs” (2001, p. 159).

Summary of Protective Factors

Several protective factors were identified in the research literature for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events, with some of the studies reviewed including exposure to domestic violence as the risk factor. The protective factors identified include hope, internal locus of control, self-esteem, self-regulation, intelligence, positive interpersonal

relationships, family, school, and the community, including religious affiliation and participation. The identification of protective factors has implications for practice, policy, and most importantly research. Continued research is necessary to expand the knowledge base on protective factors for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events in general and domestic violence in particular. Towards that end, spirituality has recently begun to receive attention as a potential protective factor. Growing recognition that religion and spirituality are not one and the same, but rather are separate, while related concepts, has led to spirituality receiving attention as a potential protective factor. Such research is still in its infancy and as a result is sparse.

The current research review identified a few studies examining spirituality as a protective factor. These studies centered on spirituality as a protective factor for children and adolescents at-risk for homelessness, mental health problems, and substance use and abuse. These studies indicated that spirituality is a fundamental form of resilience that can protect children and adolescents from the development of at-risk behaviors and therefore detrimental developmental outcomes. Further research, however, is needed to examine spirituality as a protective factor for children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/CONCPETUALIZATION

3.1 Strengths Perspective

The strengths perspective was developed as a response to the prevailing disease framework of human functioning found across the mental health professions, the profession of social work in particular (Saleebey, 1996). In social work, the tendency towards a pathological framework of assessment and intervention has its roots from the inception of the profession, which began in the 1800s as a societal answer to problems perceived as the result of moral deficiencies, i.e. substance abuse (Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, & Kisthardt, 1989). While there has been some attention given to the importance of client strengths in the social work literature since the early 1900s (Chapin, 1995), “the emphasis on human failing as the cause of difficulties established a conceptual thread whose strands are found in practice today” (Weick et al., 1989, p. 350). With its emphasis on perceiving and building on the inherent capabilities and strengths of individuals, families, and communities (Salebeey, 2006), the strengths perspective has provided the social work profession with an alternative to the focus on deficits found in current social work theoretical orientations and practice modalities (Noble, Perkins, & Fatout, 2000).

At its core, the strengths perspective is based on the belief that all individuals possess a reservoir of strengths. While these strengths may be at times “obscured by the stresses of the moment, submerged under the weight of crisis, oppression, or illness” (Saleebey, 2006, p. 16),

they still exist. It is through the identification and utilization of these strengths that change and growth can occur and through which additional strengths can develop (Weick et al, 1989). The shift in focus from a pathological, deficit model to a strengths based model does not deny the existence of personal and environmental factors which can be harmful to individuals, but rather calls attention to the fact that “people are often able to direct their lives more than they realize; they have some freedom to choose even if their options are restricted by environmental variables” and therefore are “continuously motivated to address their basic physiological and abstract self-actualization needs” (Langer, 2004, p. 614-615). As such, the strengths perspective has been explained for a variety of populations and social issues, including work with families (Early & GlenMaye, 2000; Sousa, Ribeiro, & Rodrigues, 2006), older adults (Nelson-Becker, Chapin, & Fast, 2006), adolescents with mental health problems (Yip, 2005; Yip 2006), persons with disabilities (Sullivan, 1992), and child welfare (Noble, Perkins, & Fatout, 2000).

Resilience and Protective Factors

A key concept of the strengths perspective is the belief that strengths lead to resiliency in individuals. Resiliency, which is defined as individual, familial, and environmental strengths that “modify risk and allow children to thrive despite at-risk circumstances” (Gleason, 2007, p. 52), has pervaded the research literature as a result of studies which have provided evidence that children and adolescents can have positive developmental outcomes despite stressful life events (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Most notable in early resiliency studies was the work of Werner & Smith (1977, 1982), who in the 1950s began a longitudinal study from birth over a thirty year span with at-risk children in Kauai, Hawaii. The Kauai children were born into chronic poverty and into families with little, if any, formal education. In addition to social disadvantages, these

children also faced learning and behavioral problems as they grew into adolescence and early adulthood. Yet, “approximately one of ten in the cohort managed to develop into competent and autonomous young adults” (Werner & Smith, 1982, p. 153). The findings from the Kauai study and those of other resiliency studies provided credence to the concept of resiliency and emphasized the need for researchers to look beyond long standing deficit based models of understanding at-risk populations (Masten, 2001). These early resiliency researchers “recognized that such children could teach us better ways to reduce risk, promote competence, and shift the course of development in more positive directions” (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998, p. 205).

Research on resiliency has focused on understanding who has the potential to become resilient and the process by which resiliency occurs. While early studies on resiliency lead to the assumption that resiliency in at-risk children and adolescents was remarkable, and that resilient children and adolescents were special and “invincible” (Werner & Smith, 1982) researchers now agree that resiliency is not an uncommon phenomenon (Garmezy, 1985; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; & Masten, 2001). Numerous studies have well documented the ordinariness of its occurrence within different populations, including victims of family and community violence, poverty, war, natural disasters, and with others who have been exposed to different stressful life circumstances (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Resilience, while originally believed to be a fixed attribute of an individual, is rather “a variable quality that derives from a process of repeated interactions between a person and favourable features of the surrounding context in a person’s life” (Gilligan, 2004, p. 94). These favorable strengths are known in the research literature as protective factors (Howard, et al.,

1999). Protective factors have been conceptualized as internal and external strengths which enable individuals to successfully adapt to stressful life events (Alvord & Grados, 2005 & Howard, Dryden, & Johnson, 1999). Internal protective factors can be of a mental, physical, emotional, social, and/or spiritual nature (Weick et al, 1989). External protective factors are strengths which, according to McCashen (2005), can be found in an individual's environment, such as family, friends, and community resources (i.e. schools, places of worship, community centers). Protective factors are "hypothesized to interact with sources of risk such that they reduce the probability of negative outcomes under conditions of high risk" (Compas, Hinden, & Gerhardt, 1995, p. 273). Protective factors therefore have a cumulative effect in the lives of children: the more protective factors a child has the more resilient they will be (Howard et al., 1999). Protective factors can be thought of as the "building blocks" (Minnard, 2002, p. 235) of resilience. Resiliency, in turn, provides the process through which additional strengths are developed (Smith, 2006).

Several protective factors have been identified in the research literature for children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events. Internal protective factors identified in the research literature include hope, internal locus of control, self-esteem, self-regulation, intelligence, and positive interpersonal relationships (Carbonell, Reinherz, Giaconia, Stashwick, Paradis, & Beardslee, 2002; Hagen, Myers, & Mackintosh, 2005; Luthar, 1991; Grossman, Beinashowitz, Anderson, Sakurai, Finnin, & Flaherty, 1992; O'Keefe 1998; Kliewer, Cunningham, Diehl, Parrish, Walker, Neace, Duncan, Taylor, & Mejia, 2004; Lengua, 2002; Prelow & Loukas; 2003; Jackson, 2005; and Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Lapp, 2002). Three primary systems in a

child's life (family, school, and community) have been identified as categories of external protective factors (Howard et al., 1999):

Recently, spirituality as a source of resilience in individuals has begun to receive attention in the conceptual and research literature, in particular the social work literature. The profession's ties to spirituality (and religion) have a long history, the inception of the profession was faith based (Bullis, 1996). However, as a result of a shift within the profession from a philanthropic pastime to an organized profession within the social sciences, social workers began to disassociate themselves from the realm of the religious/spiritual (Weick, et al, 1989). Recent attention to the spiritual realm of individuals is in part the result of the profession's growing acceptance of the strengths perspective (Hodge, 2001). With its focus on helping individuals find meaning from their experiences (Smith, 2006), the strengths perspective provides an avenue by which spirituality can be studied and understood as a protective factor that leads to the development of resiliency in individuals.

3.2 Conceptualization

While the study of spirituality is not new, both ancient philosophers and modern theorists have applied themselves to its study (Purdy & Dupey, 2005), spirituality as an acceptable topic for research within the realm of the social sciences is a relatively recent development (Purdy & Dupey, 2005 & Helminiak 1996). According to Purdy & Dupey, it has only been in the past twenty years that researchers have begun to take a closer look at spirituality and its applicability to the helping professions. Understanding if spirituality serves as a source of strength for individuals facing adversity, in particular children and adolescents, and the process by which it does so provides the purpose for the current proposal. While unique to each person, an

understanding of both the developmental process and attributes of spirituality provides a clearer conceptualization of such a subjective concept.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development in adolescents has not always been seen as an important area of study. As a result of traditional stage models of cognitive development that posit that the level of abstract thinking needed to contemplate spiritual issues is not reached until late adolescence/early adulthood, many researchers were led to the conclusion that those in their early adolescent years “do not, and cannot, have a genuine spiritual life” (Hart, 2006, p. 163). Recently, however, interest in the spiritual development of adolescents has begun to grow as a result of the recent attention spirituality has received as a potential protective factor for adolescents exposed to stressful life events. Spirituality has been identified as a source of resiliency (Crawford, Wright, & Masten, 2006); as a source of decline in risk behaviors (Blakeney & Blakeney, 2006); and as a factor in positive adolescent development in general (Benson, Scales, Sesma, & Roehlkepartain, 2005 & King & Benson, 2006). An understanding of spiritual development from childhood is important in understanding spirituality in adolescence and how spirituality can serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence.

Several authors have explored both the process and context of spiritual development from childhood to adolescence. Spirituality has been conceptualized by some as innate to children and adolescents (Hart, 2006; Hay & Nye, 2006; & Smith & McSherry, 2004). In his qualitative research, Hart identified four types of innate spiritual experiences in children: wonder, wondering, relational spirituality, and wisdom. Per Hart, “what we can begin to understand is

that children already have a spiritual life; they have access to wonder, struggle with questions of meaning and mortality, and have a deep sense of compassion” (p. 175). Hay & Nye (2006) point to the inherent curiosity, meaning-making, and search for identity in children and adolescents as playing an important role in continuous spiritual development.

As adolescence approaches searching for one’s identity and the meaning and purpose of one’s life becomes more salient (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003; Frankl, 1986; & Hay & Nye, 2006). Searching for meaning and purpose “takes on this overwhelming urgency particularly at puberty, when the essential uncertainty of human life is suddenly revealed to young people maturing and struggling spiritually” (Frankl, 1986, pp 26-27). As adolescents begin exploring and deepening their spirituality, they are aided and influenced in their development by both family and friends (Rew, Wong, Torres, & Howell, 2007; Boyatzis, Dollahite, & Marks, 2006; Schwartz, Bukowski, & Aoki, 2006). In their qualitative study of older adolescents, Rew, Wong, Torres, & Howell (2007) found that their participants perceive their spiritual and religious beliefs to be similar to that of their parents. Friends, mentors, and spiritual guides also play an important role in the spiritual development of both children and adolescents (Schwartz, Bukowski, & Aoki, 2006).

While family and friends contribute to the spiritual development of children and adolescents, spirituality is conceptualized as an inherent dimension of all individuals (Hart, 2006; Hay & Nye, 2006; & Smith & McSherry, 2004). Spirituality is understood to be larger than any one religion (Hay & Nye, 2006). As such, spirituality can develop within or outside of formal religious development.

Differentiating between Religion and Spirituality

The study of spirituality is complicated by a lack of consensus in the research literature in how spirituality is to be conceptualized. The connection between spirituality and religion has been identified in the research literature as contributing to the struggle of conceptualizing such a subjective concept as that of spirituality.

While historically spirituality and religion were considered one and the same, the rise of secularism in recent years has changed the way these two concepts are understood (Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott, & Kadar 1997). Spirituality has become a broader concept, one that is not limited by religious boundaries, but rather is “an inherent component of humans” (Tanyi, 2002, p. 503) whether belonging to organized religion or not. Despite this shift in thinking, the terms spirituality and religion are used interchangeably in the research literature with relative ease. This is perhaps as a result of unclear distinctions between the two terms.

Several authors have tackled the challenge of distinguishing between spirituality and religion (Tanyi, 2002; Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott, & Kadar, 1997; van Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006; & Cotton, Zebracki, Rosenthal, Tsevat, & Drotar, 2006). One significant study which measured individuals’ understanding of religion and spirituality was conducted by Zinnbauer, et al., (1997). Zinnbauer, et al., found that religion and spirituality were described and understood as different concepts by their subjects. While spirituality “was most often described in personal or experiential terms,” religion was described as “organizational or institutional beliefs and practices (Zinnbauer et al., 1997, p. 561).

Other authors have defined religion in similar terms. Religion is identified in the literature as an organized institution with a set of concrete rituals, practices, and values (Tanyi, 2002) and a strong focus on community (van Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006). Cotton, et al. (2006) elaborate, stating “religiosity can be thought of as the formal, institutional, and outward expression of the sacred” (p. 472), which can be measured by variables such as belief in God and frequency of church attendance.

Spirituality, on the other hand, is understood as a search for meaning, connectedness, peace, and self-transcendence (Tanyi, 2002, Cotton, et al., 2006). Spirituality has also been understood as “the unconscious longing for insight into our existence and for wholeness” (Ploeger, 1997, p. 16) and as allowing individuals to experience transcendent meaning in their lives (Frankl, 2006). Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude (2003) summarize, stating that spirituality is the “developmental ‘engine’ that propels the search for connectedness, meaning, purpose, and contribution. It is shaped both within and outside of religious traditions, beliefs, and practices” (p. 205-206).

Several authors suggest proceeding with caution when distinguishing between religion and spirituality. Pargament (1999), Hill & Pargament (2003), & Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson, & Zinnbauer (2000), cautioned against the trend of polarizing religion and spirituality into extremes, from the “individual vs. institutional or good vs. bad” (Hill, et al, 2000, p. 64) as they have found to be the case in some of the research literature. While different concepts, religion and spirituality can be, and often times are, interrelated. In their study Zinnbauer et al. (1997) found that although the subjects described and understood spirituality and religion as two separate concepts, spirituality and religion were not totally

independent of each other and share a “belief in God or a higher power.” Consequently, spiritually can be expressed through religious practices, however, it is important to understand that belonging to an organized religion does not imply the individual is spiritual (Tanyi, 2002).

Meaning and Purpose

While a conceptualization of spirituality has not been agreed upon in the research literature, an attribute of spirituality that is mentioned in almost all discourse of spirituality is the search for meaning and purpose in life. Searching for meaning and purpose in one’s life is a subject which has been explored by several authors within different populations, including those suffering from depression (Mascaro & Rosen, 2006 & Westgate, 1996), post-traumatic stress disorder (Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Nasello, & Koenig, 2007; Southwick, Gilmartin, McDonough, & Morrissey, 2006; & Vis & Boynton, 2008), health concerns (Park, 2007; Seifert, 2002; Thompson, Coker, Krause, & Henry, 2003; & Edser & May, 2007) substance abuse (Okundaye, Smith, & Lawrence-Webb, 2001), and grief and loss (Goldsworthy, 2005 & Breitbart, Gibson, Poppito, & Berg, 2004). In addition, meaning and purpose in life has been applied to individuals in different settings: group therapy (Greenstein & Breitbart, 2000 & Lantz, 1998) and correctional rehabilitation (Shrum, 2004).

Perhaps the most recognized work on the subject is that of Viktor Frankl, whose book “Man’s Search for Meaning” describes his experiences as a Nazi prisoner. For Frankl, finding the meaning behind his suffering allowed him to transcend the trauma he experienced during the Holocaust. Frankl contends that the “the way in which a man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity-even under the most difficult circumstances-to add a deeper meaning to his life” (2006, p. 67).

Frankl (1986, 1988, & 2006) holds that all humans innately search for and give meaning to their lives, a process which he called a will to meaning. Frankl considers the will to meaning as the most human phenomenon of all (1986) and the primary motivation of all individuals (2006). Frankl believes that knowing that there is meaning in one's life helps individuals overcome even the direst of circumstances (2006). As a Nazi prisoner Frankl experienced and observed this first hand:

Whenever there was an opportunity for it, one had to give them a why-an aim-for their lives, in order to strengthen them to bear the terrible how of their existence. Woe to him who saw no more sense in his life, no aim, no purpose, and therefore no point in carrying on. He was soon lost. (2006, p. 76)

Frankl's belief that an individual's will to meaning is a source of resilience for individuals is supported by recent studies with individuals suffering from physical and mental health problems. In their study of individuals with traumatic spinal cord injury, Thompson, et al. (2003) found that the will to meaning in participants mediated between negative adjustment (anxiety and aggression) and healthy adjustment (activity and sociability). Thompson, et al. conclude that the results of their study strongly suggest that for individuals with traumatic spinal cord injury, searching for meaning and purpose in life is a strong predictor of positive adjustment. Similarly, Mascaro & Rosen (2006) found that spiritual meaning (which the authors defined as believing that life has purpose and that meaning is obtained from a higher power) was a source of resilience for their participants. The authors found that as levels of spiritual meaning increased, levels of depression and stress dropped or became nonexistent for the participants of their study.

According to Frankl, meanings are unique and specific to each individual. Individuals, therefore, have a responsibility to discover and fulfill their own unique meanings (1988 & 1986). To achieve an understanding of meaning, individuals have to examine the importance of each of the situations they encounter in relation to their broader lives (Frankl, 1986 & O'Connor, 2002-2003). Frankl (2000) asserts that "life never ceases to offer us a meaning up to its last moment, up to our last breath" (p. 141). Meanings can be achieved through realizing creative (i.e. working, creating) and experiential (i.e. seeing the good in life and in others) values. Frankl asserts that even individuals in the most dismal of circumstances, who are unable to obtain meaning through creative and/or experiential values, can still find meaning in their suffering (Frankl, 2006, 1988, & 1986). According to Frankl (2000), "meaning may be squeezed out even from suffering, and that is the very reason why life remains potentially meaningful in spite of everything" (p. 142).

It is not uncommon for individual's experiencing a difficult time in their lives to question the why of their sufferings (Edser & May, 2007). For Frankl (1986, 1988), although often unable to control the situation that they are in or the consequences that follow, individuals have a choice in how they respond to the situation. This is what Frankl (1988) termed the freedom of will, which is not freedom from adverse circumstances, but rather "freedom to take a stand on whatever conditions might confront" the individual (p. 16), whether they are psychological, biological, or environmental. It is the individual's stand, and not the conditions themselves, that make the individual who he is. This allows us to "bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one's predicament into

a human achievement” (Frankl, 2006, p. 112). According to Frankl (1986), to decide one’s attitude towards a particular situation was to have spiritual freedom.

The will to meaning, will to freedom, and finding meaning and purpose in life are the tenets by which Frankl conceptualizes spirituality. In his conceptualization of spirituality, Frankl distinguishes spirituality from organized religion, asserting that through spirituality a person is able to transcend, or rise above, life’s circumstances and move towards meanings and purpose (1986, 1988, & 2006). For Frankl (1988) individuals are assisted in their search for meaning by their own consciences, which he saw as the inherent capability of individuals to grasp the meaning of each situation. This process of self-transcendence,

Denotes the fact that human existence always points, and is directed, toward something other than oneself; or rather, toward something or someone other than oneself, namely, toward meanings to fulfill, or toward other human beings to encounter lovingly. And only to the extent to which a human being lives out his self-transcendence is he really becoming human and actualizing himself. (Frankl, 1986, p. 294)

If the individual can understand that each situation is a unique opportunity to find meaning, then the individual can use their freedom of will and their responsibility to actualize their specific meaning through how they live their lives. It is through the self-discovery of meaning that meaning bears any significance to the individual (Frankl, 2006). It is through this process that individuals are able to make sense of their worlds and find a sense of purpose. It allows individuals to develop the capacity to rise above their circumstances, no matter how tragic (Frankl, 1988).

Spirituality as a search for meaning and purpose in life is not the only conceptualization of spirituality presented in the literature. Other authors have conceptualized spirituality in different ways: holistic wellness (Purdy & Dupey, 2005), eudaimonic well-being (van Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006), relational dialogue with God (Desrosiers & Miller, 2007), among others.

However, with its focus on finding meaning from suffering and obtaining strength through the process, “suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning” (Frankl, 2006, p. 113), the conceptualization of spirituality as the search for meaning and purpose has significant implications for adolescents exposed to stressful life events, domestic violence in particular. Although limited, research with children and adolescents exposed to stressful life events has found that meaning and purpose in life reduces anxiety (Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003) and provides healing from traumatic life experiences (Williams, 2004). As such, the current study conceptualizes spirituality as a search for meaning and purpose in life. This conceptualization of spirituality will allow for a closer examination and understanding of how adolescents exposed to domestic violence are able to transcend their sufferings through both the freedom and responsibility to make life choices that are conducive to growth despite adverse circumstances.

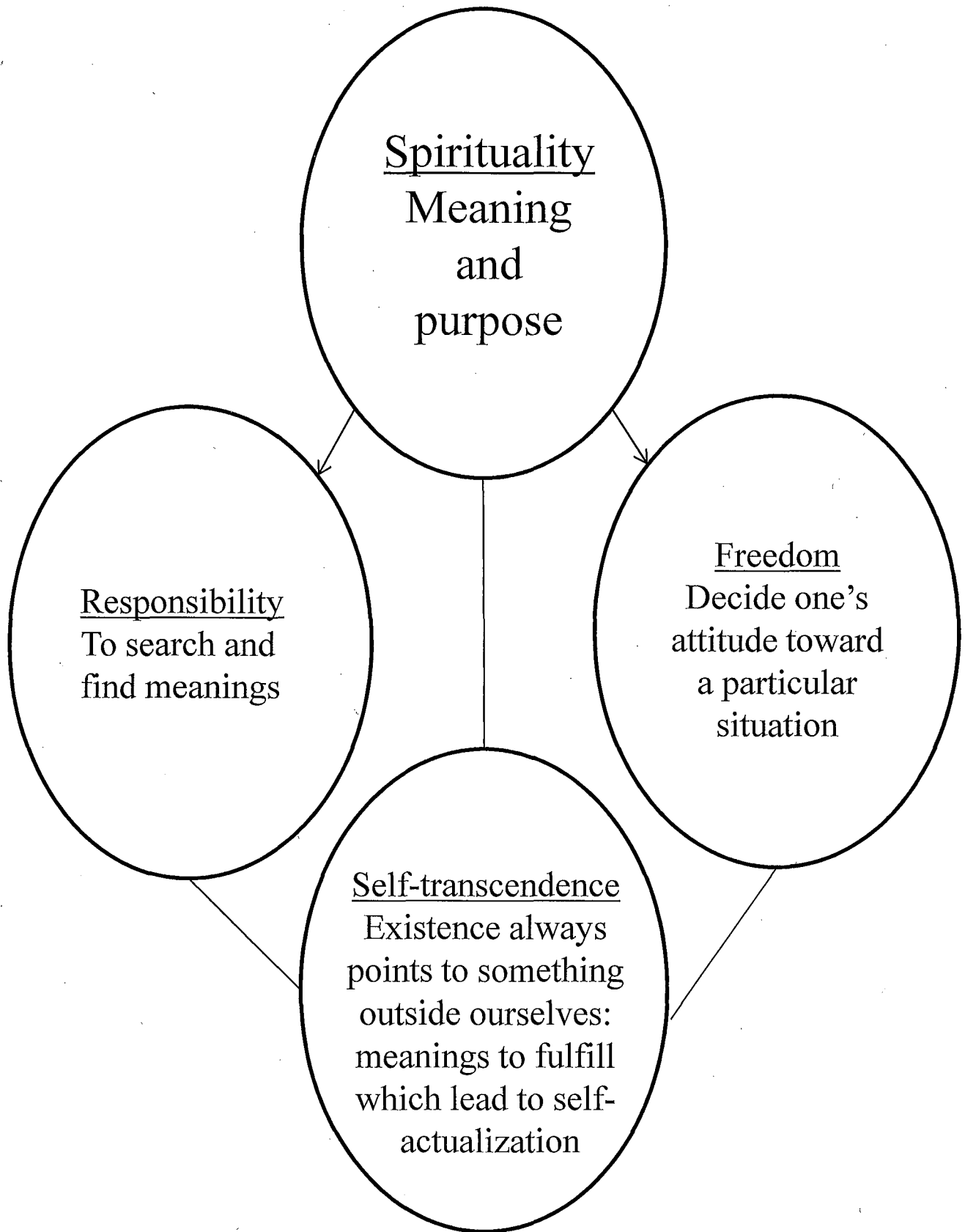


Figure 1: Conceptualization of Spirituality

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

A review of the research literature indicates that exposure to domestic violence can have adverse developmental consequences for adolescents. Several protective factors have been identified in the research literature for adolescents exposed to stressful life events, including domestic violence. Recently, studies have identified spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to stressful life events, (i.e. substance abuse, homelessness). These studies offer a promising starting point for understanding spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence. Qualitative methodology allows for an in-depth understanding of the meanings individuals make from their experiences, which would otherwise not be accessible to researchers (Morrow, 2007). As such, it is the most appropriate methodology to study the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence and how spirituality functions as a protective factor for these adolescents.

4.2 Purpose

The purpose of the current study was to discover the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence and explore and gain an understanding of the role of spirituality as a protective factor for these adolescents.

4.3 Research Questions

The current study endeavored to answer two questions: 1) How do adolescents define spirituality? 2) In what ways does spirituality serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence?

4.4 Research Design

Phenomenology

The current study used the phenomenological perspective as the theoretical lens through which the qualitative research was understood. The phenomenological perspective was developed by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (Groenewald, 2004). The empirical/transcendental phenomenology as conceived by Husserl rejected “the positivist focus on an observed reality but was unsatisfied as well with the mentalist view that there is no material reality” (Baker, Wuest, Stern, 1992, p. 1356). Instead, Husserl conceptualized phenomenology as an objective empirical description of lived experiences (Maggs-Rapport, 2001).

The empirical/transcendental phenomenological perspective influenced other researchers, most notably Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl. Heidegger, intrigued by phenomenology’s focus on the lived experiences of individuals (McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009), developed his own approach, hermeneutical phenomenology. Hermeneutical phenomenology focuses on the interpretation of the meanings individual’s make of their lives and their experiences (Koch, 1995 & Creswell, Hanson, Clark, & Morales, 2007). As such, the goal of hermeneutical phenomenology is “to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people” (Patton, 2002, p. 482).

According to Mackey (2005), researchers conducting hermeneutical phenomenology engage in both description and interpretation of the data. As such, the current research was influenced by both perspectives and focused on both the description and interpretation of the experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence and the role of spirituality as a protective factor throughout these experiences.

4.5 Sample

Purposeful Sampling

As qualitative research seeks to identify those individuals whose life experiences are most relevant and provide the most insight to the subject being studied (Devers & Frankel, 2000; Maxwell, 1996; Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora, & Mattis, 2007; & Wertz, 2005), the current study used purposeful sampling. According to Patton (2002), the goal of purposeful sampling is obtaining in-depth, “information-rich cases” (p. 230). The use of purposeful sampling to obtain information-rich cases in qualitative research is driven by theoretical and conceptualization purposes, and not for generalization as in quantitative studies (Padgett, 2008).

Sample Size

There are no hard and fast rules for sample size in qualitative research, rather sample size is dependent on the research itself (Patton, 2002). According to Padgett (2008), for qualitative studies, the focus on sampling is on “flexibility and depth rather than on mathematical probabilities and external validity” (p. 56). Several factors must be taken into consideration, including the purpose of research, what will yield credible results, and what is feasible with time and resource constraints (Padgett, 2008, Patton, 2002, & Munhall & Chenail, 2008).

Demographics

The sample size of the current study consisted of fourteen adolescents. Eleven of the participants were female, three were male. Seven of the participant identified themselves as Hispanic, six as African-American, and one as White. The ages of the participants ranged from thirteen to sixteen (six participants were thirteen years of age, four were fourteen years of age, two were fifteen years of age, and two were sixteen years of age).

4.6 Setting

As in purposeful sampling “sites, like organizations, and people within sites are selected because of their relevance to understanding a social phenomenon” (Bryman, 2008, p. 415), the current study was conducted at a local non-for profit agency for victims of family violence. The agency serves both adult victims of domestic violence and their children. The agency has several different programs from which the participants were recruited, including a shelter, a transitional living program, and a main outreach center. The majority of the participants (nine) were recruited through the agency’s domestic violence emergency shelter, three participants were recruited through the agency’s outreach center, while two participants were recruited through the agency’s transitional living program.

4.7 Data Collection

In-Depth Interviews

Patton (2002) maintains that to truly understand the lived experiences of others researchers must experience the phenomena for themselves. One way to do this is through the use of in depth interviewing. The use of in-depth interviewing in qualitative phenomenological research is widely accepted and used. According to Suzuki et al. (2007), “the interview produces

data that emphasize the interviewees' lived experiences from their points of view and that help glean an understanding of the meaning behind their experiences" (p. 308).

Semi-structured interview

Qualitative phenomenological interviews run the continuum from unstructured to structured (Padgett, 2008). The decision on how structured the interview will be depends on the study itself, taking into consideration the sample size (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The current study used a semi-structured interview (Appendix B), with the same set of questions asked to each participant, so as to allow the participants to share their experiences as they view them, but at the same time allow for the systematic collection of data from several interviews. Suzuki et al. (2007) elaborate on the benefits of semi-structured interviews, stating that they allow for covering a common set of themes, while "preserving a natural conversation flow" (p. 311). In addition, semi-structured interviews facilitate "cross-case comparability" (Bryman, 2008, p. 440). To ensure the age appropriateness of the interview questions, five teenagers (two females/ three males) between the ages of thirteen and seventeen were consulted to assist in finding language that would be understandable to a young age group.

Gaining Access

Flyers were placed in the different program locations inviting adolescents to participate in the study (Appendix D). The researcher was available on certain dates and times to discuss the study with interested mothers and adolescents.

The interviews were conducted face to face, at the agency location from which the participant was recruited. The interviews took approximately one to two hours to complete.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Approval for study was obtained through both the University of Texas at Arlington Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the agency prior to the beginning of the research. Informed consent/assent was obtained from the adolescent participant's mother and from the adolescent participants themselves. Consent/assent forms were available in both English and Spanish (Appendix C). Participants were advised upon signing consent/assent forms that interviews would be taped and transcribed. Interviews were recorded through the use of a digital tape recorder. The researcher transcribed each interview personally. Participants were advised that all efforts to protect their confidentiality would be made, including securing their taped interviews in a locked location during the research process and the assurance that tapes will be destroyed after three years (as mandated by IRB policies). Participants were advised that their names would not appear on the tapes or the transcribed interviews, but instead they would be identified through an assigned number.

Participants were advised of their option to suspend or terminate the interview at any time they chose without any adverse consequences. Participants were advised that they would still receive a \$10 gift certificate to Wal-Mart for their participation, whether or not they completed the study. Participants were debriefed after the interview and given the opportunity to elaborate further on any information they provided. Participants were also referred back to their individual or group counselors assigned to work with them.

4.9 Analysis

For the current study, a combined analytical approach was utilized to provide both a phenomenological description and hermeneutical interpretation of the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence. As such, the current research was guided in the coding process by Morrissette's (1999) proposed model for phenomenological data analysis and interpretation by Heidegger's hermeneutical circle.

Coding

Morrissette's stages of data analysis included: 1) interview as a whole, 2) interview as text, 3) first order thematic, 4) second order thematic, 5) within person analysis, 6) overall synthesis of participant's protocols, and 7) between persons analysis (Morrissette, 1999).

Interview as a Whole

Immediately after each interview was concluded, the researcher listened to and reviewed the taped interview as well as any notes taken during the interview. Additional notes were taken upon listening to the taped interview. This process allowed the researcher to start becoming familiarized with the data (Morrissette, 1999).

Interview as Text

Each interview was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. This process allowed the researcher to not only become more familiarized with the data, but allowed for a sense of immersion in the experiences of each of the participants. After each interview was transcribed, it was read several times. During this process key words and noteworthy statements/quotes were highlighted (Morrissette, 1999).

First and Second Order Thematic

During these two stages the interviews were reduced to significant statements/quotes corresponding to one of four larger categories (Spirituality-General, Spirituality-Meaning to Them, Spirituality-Are they Spiritual, and Spirituality-Help). The significant statements/quotes were then cut from each interview which allowed for the researcher and second coder to begin searching for themes within each interview. A code book was developed by both the researcher and the second coder which allowed for themes to be recorded and further analyzed.

Within Person Analysis

Themes were found within each participant's interview. Researcher and second coder agreed on the themes that emerged from each participant's interview during the within person analysis.

Overall Synthesis of Participants' Protocols

Researcher and second coder discussed each of the themes that emerged from each interview and began the process of comparing themes across participants.

Between Persons Analysis

Themes were compared between participants and final themes and subthemes were obtained.

Hermeneutical Circle

In hermeneutical phenomenology the process of interpreting meanings is known as the hermeneutical circle (Kvale, 1983). The hermeneutical circle is a process that contains "on one hand an explanation, i.e. an analysis of the whole into its parts, and a comprehension, i.e. a synthesis of the parts into a united whole" (Hollnagel, 1978, p. 192). As such, the analysis

moves back and forth through the data (Rapport & Wainwright, 2006). During the analysis of the data, the researcher actively engaged in this process. This was done at first through the coding process in which the researcher and second coder coded each individual interview and then engaged in between-persons analysis to obtain themes and subthemes. The researcher continued engaging in this process during the interpretation of the findings. Moving the data back from themes to a comprehension of what the data as a whole tells us about this population.

N-Vivo

In addition to the above coding procedures, the data analysis was further supported by the use of the Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) N-Vivo 8. N-Vivo was used an organizational tool which allowed for the systematic organization of the data.

4.10 Methodological Rigor

Standards by which to judge the rigor of qualitative research have been proposed by several authors (Maxwell, 1996; Bryman, 2008; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009; Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008; de Witt & Ploeg, 2006; Morrow, 2007; Koch, 1994). The steps taken to ensure the rigor of a study are important if the findings are to be credible. As such, a review of the steps taken to ensure the rigor of the current study will be addressed here.

Validity

Threats to the validity of a qualitative study can occur in the description, interpretation (Maxwell, 1996), and results of the data (Maggs-Rapport, 2000).

Description

In the current study, the researcher audio recorded and personally transcribed each interview verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the description of the data. In addition, the researcher checked for the accurateness of each transcription by going back and re-listening to the interview and checking the accuracy of the transcription every ten minutes of interview.

Interpretation

According to Maxwell, “the main threat to valid interpretation is imposing one’s own framework or meaning, rather than understanding the perspective of the people studied and the meanings they attach to their words and actions” (1996, pp. 89-90). As in hermeneutical phenomenology the subjective experience of the researcher often guides the design of the study from the literature review to the interview questions asked, it is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that there is no biased framework under which the data is obtained and analyzed (Lopez & Willis, 2004). In order to do this, the researcher kept a personal journal during the data collection and analysis phases of the study. The journal allowed the researcher to process her feelings and identify her own subjectivity. In addition, open-ended questions were asked in the interview to elicit information-rich data (Patton, 2002) from each of the participants which allowed for a complete understanding of each participant’s lived experience. According to Maxwell (1996), information-rich data provides “a test of one’s developing theories, rather than simply a source of supporting instances” (p. 95).

Results

According to Maggs-Rapport (2000), threats to the validity of research results can be reduced through the use of triangulation: Triangulation generally refers to the “process of using

multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.147). A second coder was used in the current study as a method of triangulating the data. A second coder with qualitative research experience was selected to code and search for themes. Researcher and second coder met to compare findings throughout coding process. According to Padgett (2008), areas of disagreement between researcher and second coder can arise as a result of disagreement on several aspects of coding, including the selection of segments of data that are “code-worthy” (p. 154). According to Padgett, “thinking about codes, discussing and defending them, and reaching consensus are valuable aspects of the process, not something to avoid or prematurely conclude” (p. 154). As part of this process, the researcher and second coder worked diligently to select only those codes that fit the data the best and discarded those that did not.

4.11 Summary

The current qualitative study utilized both the empirical/transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenological perspectives with the aim of understanding the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence and how spirituality serves as a protective factor for these adolescents. This research is important as a review of the research literature identified several adverse consequences for adolescents exposed to domestic violence, including the development of internal and external behaviors, traumatization, and a cycle of violence. Recent research has identified spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to other stressful life events. An understanding of the role of spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence has significant practice, policy, and research implications.

The current study was conducted at a local agency for victims of domestic violence and used purposeful sampling to obtain information-rich data. Interviews were semi-structured, digitally recorded, and transcribed by the researcher. Using the empirical/transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenological perspectives, data was coded and themes obtained from the data. All efforts have been made to protect the confidentiality of all participants. Participants were fully advised of study's purpose and right to suspend and/or withdraw from study without any negative consequence before signing consent (for the parent of participants) and assent (for participants).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The adolescents' who participated in the current study were all clients of a local agency for victims of family violence. As such, the common denominator was their exposure to domestic violence and the fact that they were receiving either individual and/or group counseling. Despite these commonalities, each of the participants' had unique stories to share about their lives and experiences. Each provided the researcher, and as a result imbued the current study, with an insight into their own lives as they experience it firsthand. In order to provide a context in which to understand the results of the current study, it is important to understand how the participants' describe what is going on in their own lives.

~ *I have a very uneventful life I guess you can say.* (Brian-14 years old)

~ *Like when I am mad at like I am mainly mad cuz of what my dad's done and stuff, but like when I am sad it's cuz I'm remembering the stuff that happened in the past.*
(Maria-14 years old)

~ *I got what I wanted and uh we stay in a safe place and we went bowling.* (Brittany-13 years old)

~ *My mom and her boyfriend been arguing a lot and I don't think, he never he never hit the kids, like us but I don't know about my mom, they argued a lot but uhm I don't know if he ever hit her, if he ever hit her before.* (Cynthia-16 years old)

- ~ *Like I still feel sad and stuff, I don't feel sad no more, but I used to because like the fact that my dad wasn't there and stuff and like now that he's calling me and he*
- ~ *wants to see us you know, I feel a little upset and then like sad. (Martha-14 years old)*
- ~ *My birthday, my friend's birthday, we took the Taks test and I got my report card. We moved here. I just started talking to my dad. That's it. (Krystal-13 years old)*
- ~ *They make my mom feel kind of sad, I guess and that just kind of makes me feel kind of I don't know like want to make her happy or something, but she just stays like that and kind of makes me mad because I really didn't want to come here, but I know that I have to so, yeah. (Diana-15 years old)*
- ~ *Well since I've been here it's been it's been ok because I like where I'm at because it's safe and where I was it wasn't safe because of the threats that was happening to my mom and I didn't like it, so I'm glad we're away from the violence and in a safe place. (Bailey-13 years old)*
- ~ *It's affected my learning like at my old school I was at the teacher would call because I wasn't behaving the way I should because I had all this on my mind and then I'd take it out on other kids which I didn't like so I stopped and just started being good. (Bailey-13 years old)*
- ~ *He (her father) like a devil instead of acting like God's child. (Bailey-13 years old)*
- ~ *I don't know it was weird cuz like there's a lot of restrictions that we have like curfews and stuff and eating time, we take my brother out to eat or whatever, but I*

feel like I'm used to it plus I know it's better here than it was at home so. (Sara-16 years old)

To understand how spirituality serves as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence, it was necessary to first gain an understanding of how these adolescents define spirituality. As such, participants in the current study were asked to describe what they thought of when they heard the word spirituality (Spirituality-General), what the word spirituality meant to them specifically (Spirituality-Means to Them), and what made them a spiritual person (Spirituality-Are they Spiritual). Participant's responses established a context by which spirituality as a protective factor for the participants could then be explored (Spirituality-Help). The first section of the current chapter aims to answer the research question: How do adolescents exposed to domestic violence define spirituality? The second section of the current chapter aims to answer the research question: In what ways does spirituality serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence?

5.1 Spirituality (General)

Participants were asked what they thought of when they heard the word spirituality. Seven themes emerged from their answers: God and Religion, Separation of Religion and Spirituality, It's Personal, Feelings, Don't Know, Negative Connotation, and Beliefs.

God and Religion

Five of the participants in the current study related spirituality with both God and Religion. Brian, a fourteen year old White male, stated that when he hears the word spirituality he thinks of God. Brian elaborated, stating:

“I think of somebody’s walk with God. I think of how their spirit interacts with the Holy Spirit in them and how they, how they interact with God and Jesus or like how they interact with their God and their religion.”

Similarly, Bailey—a thirteen year old African-American female, stated when she hears the word spirituality she thinks of the *“spirit of people or like the spirit that God gave us.”* For Rosie, the word spirituality brings to mind for her God. For two of the participants, Krystal and Diana, the word spirituality brings to mind religion. For Krystal, a thirteen year old African-American female, the word spirituality makes her think of the Christian religion. Diana, a fifteen year old Hispanic female, states: *“well I think of like if you’re Catholic or Christian or something like that.”*

Separation of Religion and Spirituality

Not all participants in the study thought that spirituality went hand in hand with religion. Sara, a sixteen year old Hispanic female, expressed that while the word spirituality at first made her think of religion, she does not consider herself a religious person. Instead, Sara stated that she believes in a *“superior power.”* Sara goes on to state:

“I just I can’t say I’m part of a religion cuz I don’t understand most of them but I like I do believe there is someone like watching over us and like probably like putting like obstacles in our life so that we can like grow from it.”

For Brian, who had stated that when he hears the word spirituality he thinks of someone’s walk with God, spirituality and religion can also be separate concepts. Brian states that what’s important is:

“just however you get your spirituality out, whether you are like atheist or not or just however you explain to yourself how it all happens, what it all goes down, and how it works out and just how you keep your spirit alive pretty much.

It's Personal

The third theme under Spirituality-General is the participants' views that spirituality is something personal to each individual. Maria-a fourteen year old Hispanic female, Brittany-a thirteen year old African-American female, Martha-a fourteen year old Hispanic female, and Eric-a thirteen year old Hispanic male described spirituality as something inside of a person.

Eric elaborated:

“Probably spirituality is when it's this power within you that you never felt before that nothing can ever hurt it or crush it down”

For Eric, spirituality is also something that no one can take away. Eric states that spirituality is *“yours to keep, no one in the world could ever take that from you.”*

Participants also associated spirituality to mean being true to oneself. Kelsey, a thirteen year old African-American female, stated that when she hears the word spirituality what comes to mind is to *“like just be yourself.”* As participants associated spirituality with something within them that no one could take away and being a part of who they are, several feelings were expressed as constituting one's spirituality.

Feelings

The fourth theme to emerge from Spirituality-General was feelings. According to Brittany, spirituality meant *“that you got a lot of happiness.”* Michael-a fifteen year old African-American male stated that *“relaxed, calm, free going, usually what I usually hear.”* For

Cynthia-a sixteen year old African-American female, spirituality was *“just positive thinking.”*

Diana elaborated on her feelings:

“Like at the games the coaches are always like you have to have a lot of spirit and cheer for people, like be uplifting and stuff, that’s what I think of spirituality.”

Thirteen year old Bailey stated that spirituality was the celebration of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus.

Don’t Know

A fifth theme that emerged from Spirituality-General pointed to the fact that for three of the participants’ spirituality was not a concept they immediately were able to explicate on. Despite the initial reaction of not knowing, several of these participants went on to provide insights into spirituality. For example, when first asked what she thought of when she heard the word spirituality, Maria stated that she did not know what the word meant. However, later on in the interview Maria provided insights into her own spirituality, which she associated with being a creative individual.

Negative Connotation

The sixth theme that emerged under the category of Spirituality-General was the negative connotation of spirituality. For both Martha and Diana hearing the word spirituality brought to mind ghosts, witches, and voodoo. Diana stated:

“I kind of think of like t.v. whenever there’s like witches or something doing like little voodoo stuff, I don’t know, I guess it kind of comes to mind.”

Beliefs

The seventh and final theme to emerge from Spirituality-General is that of beliefs. Participants identified several beliefs they thought of when they heard the word spirituality, including faith (Cynthia), the belief that things will get better (Cynthia), one's point of view (Sara), and for Maria a belief in her own future:

"Like what I want to do when I grow up and stuff like that, like what I want to become."

5.2 Spirituality (Meaning to Them)

Participants were asked what spirituality meant to them. While some participants elaborated on their previous answers on what they thought of when they heard the word spirituality, for others what they thought of when they heard the word spirituality and what spirituality actually meant to them were two separate ideas. Four themes emerged from their answers: Walk with God, Who you Are, Don't Know, and Church.

Walk with God

The first theme that emerged through the data analysis was a Walk with God. Brian described this as a process of keeping his spirit alive:

"Spirituality means to me like my walk with God and my walk with Jesus...and just how I keep my spirit alive and healthy instead of letting it shrivel up, you know? It's almost like, it's almost like feeding your spirit, because if you don't eat you will shrivel up, you will waste away and it's like if you don't feed your spirit and if you don't talk to God and you know do all this it's almost like your spirit will shrivel up, waste away because if you don't it changes you so it's just sort of how you keep your spirit alive almost."

Spirituality for both Cynthia and Krystal meant believing. For Cynthia, it meant believing in “something or someone.” Cynthia goes on to state that spirituality for her meant a belief in God and “positive stuff.” Krystal elaborates on her beliefs, stating: *“I believe, I am a Christian, so I believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins.”*

Spirituality for Cynthia also meant struggling with doubts about her own beliefs. Cynthia states:

It's like sometimes I believe, I have faith in the people I'm supposed to have faith in, it's like I don't know if I have faith in them like I'm supposed to like my mom, my sisters, my brother and stuff like that and I don't know with God, I believe in God but it's like I don't know if He really loved me why would all this stuff be happening, all the bad stuff?

As a result of her struggles, Cynthia expressed mixed feelings. When asked about her spirituality, Cynthia stated:

“I don't like it, I don't, cuz we're supposed to have faith in your parents and your brothers and sisters and of course God, but I'm trying to work on it, I really am.”

However, despite these doubts, Cynthia expressed that at times she felt that there was a reason for her struggles. Cynthia states:

“But then it's like some days it's like everything happens for a reason, maybe this is what's supposed to happen or maybe I'm supposed to learn a lesson or something.”

For Eric, whose spirituality he associated with his religion-Christianity, spirituality has been a source of help for him during difficult times. Eric elaborates, stating:

“It would always help me, it's what got me through the bad times, most of the bad times that happened recently you know?”

For Bailey, spirituality is a reflection of how people should treat each other. Bailey states:

"We should all stick together b/c God looking down on us and He see that we not we been wrong and doing bad and we treat people wrong and we should be treating them right."

Who You Are

The second theme under Spirituality-Meaning to Them is Who You Are. Many of the participants elaborated further on ideas that they had brought up when asked what they thought of when they heard the word spirituality.

For Maria and Theresa-a fourteen year old Hispanic female, spirituality meant something inside themselves. Maria, who had stated that when she heard the word spirituality she thought of something inside of herself or other people elaborated, stating that for her spirituality is:

"what's inside of you your feelings and stuff and like your power."

For Maria and Theresa, spirituality also meant having a creative outlet. Maria stated:

"Like I think I'm a good artist and stuff and I'm also trying to get like to music stuff too and then I do lots of stuff like crafts and just like doing stuff to forget about the bad stuff I have or the other stuff I have."

Similarly, Theresa stated that fifty percent of her day involved music. Theresa elaborated, stating *"I have a little journal and if I'm feeling bad or something I usually write songs in there."*

Similarly, Michael stated that for him, spirituality was being able to express himself.

For several participants-Rosie-a thirteen year old Hispanic female, Michael, Kelsey, Krystal, and Bailey spirituality for them means being yourself. Michael elaborated, stating:

“For me it’s just like be yourself, don’t usually, don’t think about what everybody else is thinking, just just be you, don’t try to act somebody that you’re not, just act the way you usually do.”

For Brittany, Martha, and Diana, spirituality was different feelings, including feeling happy or sad (Martha), celebrating (Brittany), and being positive (Diana). Diana elaborates, stating:

“ I think that is being me cuz I’m just a cheerful person, I’m always happy and just I always try to be positive for other people too cuz when somebody is feeling down or like their sad I try and make them happy and like you know and don’t be sad.”

Church

The third theme under Spirituality-Meaning for Them is Church. For several participants, Rosie, Krystal, Diana, and Bailey, spirituality was closely tied with their respective churches.

For Rosie, church was an outlet for her to help others:

“Like I really like to be in to the stuff from church and I really like to you know like do what I do best and be helpful to others.”

For Diana and Bailey, church was an outlet for their own spirituality. According to Diana,

“I go to church and I used to go to a church classes, Sunday school, and it like teaches me about my what’s it called my faith I guess and I guess that’s kind of like my spirituality”

Bailey stated that for her going to church and seeing other people express their own spirituality helped her understand her own spirituality: *“like when I go to church this how if I see all the people shouting and stuff like I said they have the spirit in them, the spirit is in them and not just like it’s not fake, it’s real.”*

Church, however, was not a positive experience for all participants. According to Krystal:

“Well some of the churches that I’ve been to their really uppity so they’ll just pick and choose when they want to say something to you and if they don’t say anything they’ll just give you very nasty looks.”

Don’t Know

Theresa, Martha, Kelsey, and Sara stated that they did not know how to answer the question of what spirituality meant to them. Despite this, each of these participants, except for Sara, all did discuss what spirituality meant to them.

5.3 Spirituality-Are They Spiritual

Participants were asked what makes them a spiritual person. Three themes emerged: Church, Not a Spiritual Person, and Don’t Know.

Church

The first theme under Spirituality-Are they Spiritual is Church. When asked what makes them spiritual, Krystal, Diana, and Bailey related their answers back to church. For Krystal, growing up in a church makes her a spiritual person. For Diana, the fact that she goes to church makes her a spiritual person. For Bailey, her participation in church activities, namely a dance group in her church, makes her a spiritual person. Bailey stated that:

“I like doing it because it’s it’s a good thing like I’m giving God my praise and giving Him the honor for Him dying for me and everyone else.”

Don’t Know

Three participants, Cynthia, Theresa, and Martha stated that they did not know what made them a spiritual person.

Not a Spiritual Person

Cynthia, who had stated that when she heard the word spirituality she thought of having faith in God and other people, had expressed doubts and struggles in her own belief in God and other people. When asked what made her a spiritual person, Cynthia probably as a result of doubts stated that she did not think that she was a spiritual person.

5.4 Spirituality-Help

Ten themes emerged under the Spirituality-Help category. They are: Purpose, Learning from Experiences, Positive Attitude, Helping Others, Prayer, Doubt, Expressing Themselves, Feelings, Beliefs, and Don't Know.

Purpose

The first theme under the category Spirituality-Help is Purpose. For Michael, who stated that for him spirituality was both being yourself and expressing yourself-which was expressed through his artistic abilities, spirituality gives him a sense of purpose in his life. When asked if his spirituality gave him a sense of purpose, Michael responded: *"Yeah, it does. It does because it knows that I have something I know that I have a talent that I can do so I figure I can put it to good use."* Similarly, Maria when asked the same question stated *"like if I keep probably drawing more I could probably be like a good artist or something."* Maria also stated that when she has doubts as to why God put her here on earth, she remembers what her mother told her about her purpose in life, which is to be a *"great sister"* to her little sister.

For Brian, his purpose in life is something that he is still trying to figure out. Despite not knowing yet what his purpose in life is, Brian stated that *"I know God put me here for a reason."* Brian elaborated on how this knowledge helps him during difficult times:

“Because if times are difficult, it is the easy times that are fun, but it is the difficult times that shape you, so there’s a reason it’s happening, so that will sort of affect what you do with your life and that will in turn affect the meaning of your life, so it helps me get through hard times because there I know that there is a reason behind it so knowing there is meaning to life means is knowing there is a reason behind hard times.”

Theresa also verbalized that knowing that there is a reason and purpose for everything helps her.

For Diana, knowing that she has a purpose in life has helped her as well. Diana elaborated:

“Because like in difficult times I guess knowing that I have a purpose I’m not like oh I want to die I, I don’t want to live and be negative and like now like in a difficult time I don’t want to be like oh this happened I can never fix it, and like this is the end or whatever and I know that I want to become I want to become something good, or like make something of my life, so I can help others, so I can just keep going from that difficult time.”

For Eric, his spirituality gives him hope for the future. Eric elaborated, stating:

“If there was a time when I didn’t know what my purpose was my spirituality would show me a hope for the future, for another purpose, so that way I wouldn’t fall back on my knees or fall down.”

Learning from Experiences

Seven of the participants expressed that for them learning from their experiences served to help them during difficult times. For Brian, who had stated that spirituality for him meant his walk with God, all experiences, even negative ones, have a point to them. Brain elaborated:

“Because if you don’t learn anything from something that happened especially something

negative, something bad, especially something big, then there wasn't any point to it happening, but there's always a point to most, to like everything, most things, everything happening."

Similarly, Rosie stated that she can learn from negative experiences and realize *"that the past is the past."*

Martha stated that for her the experiences she has had will help her to be more understanding and forgiving. According to Martha, *"in the future, if I go through something like that again I won't like, it won't be as hard you know, because I'll understand more and then I'll forgive more."*

For Eric, Diana, and Sara the difficult experiences they have lived through will help them be prepared for difficult times in the future. Eric elaborated, stating *"if I can overcome that difficult time I can overcome the future ones then."* For Diana, difficult times have not only made her feel that she can overcome difficult times in the future; she feels that she can use these experiences to help others. According to Diana, *"maybe like if it happens again I can like help somebody that is going through the same situation."* For Sara, overcoming difficult experiences will help her when she becomes a mother. Sara elaborated:

"When it comes time to making a family it's like I need to be there for my kids to show them what I learned in my life so they cannot make the same mistakes or not or learn to not do things the wrong way, you know? Like whatever I learned try to teach them."

Brittany stated that her experiences had made her spiritually stronger by helping her to not take any unnecessary risks:

“It made me not do anything crazy like when I see my momma arguing with somebody or something I know not to do anything like pick up anything to try and hurt anybody so just run somewhere where I’m not close to it and stay there until my momma comes back in.”

Expressing Themselves

The third theme to emerge from the category Spirituality-Help is Expressing Themselves. For several of the participants spirituality meant a creative side of oneself. For Maria, who had stated that for her spirituality meant being a good artist, her spirituality helps her through difficult times. Maria elaborated, stating:

“Like whenever I start drawing I start either drawing about stuff like stuff that happened in my life or stuff that I feel or like I hear something inside of a song and its if it kinda of relates to me I write it down and then draw a picture of what it means to me.”

Similarly, Michael stated that *“knowing that I can draw gives me hope that I know I can try to achieve my dreams.”*

For Maria, Brittany, and Krystal writing is an outlet which helps them during difficult times.

Maria elaborated, stating:

“It helps me like when my mom, my parents, when they would like fight or something I would just think back on the other things that would happen before that and the just write them down or something like I would write my feelings down.

As previously stated, several participants identified being oneself as their own spirituality. Being oneself, the feeling of individuality, also served as a source of help for Bailey, Krystal, and Eric. Bailey stated that her individuality:

“Helps me to be real and not trying to be like someone else and when it doesn’t help me

like I'll be like someone else, trying to act like them cuz their a bad person and then I do the same thing and I don't like it so I'll be who I am, be that good person and act like a good person."

Feelings

Different feelings, including happiness, celebrating, were identified as spirituality by several participants. These differing feelings became a protective factor for several participants. The different feelings participants identified as helping them through difficult times are confidence (Brian, Rosie, Eric), happiness (Eric, Rosie), cheering (Diana), celebrating (Brittany), forgiveness (Martha), and not letting things bother them (Michael).

For Eric, his spirituality helps him during difficult times by giving him confidence in himself.

Eric elaborates, *"it gives me like an extra boldness, like when I'm feeling down it brings me back up just to know that I have it there."*

Beliefs

The fifth theme under Spirituality-Help is beliefs. Several participants identified three beliefs that help them during difficult times: karma (Bailey), things will get better (Brittany, Cynthia, Rosie, Eric), and they are never alone (Brian, Krystal).

Bailey, who had stated that for her how people treat each other is a reflection of their own spirituality, expressed her belief that when you do bad things, bad things will happen to you. She used her father as an example:

"My dad just felt big and bad and so he would go kick the door in and all this stuff but my mom said when he would be so evil when you be evil bad things happen to you, like it's almost, his leg got broke and then his hand got messed up and my mom said you shouldn't

be the way you are because the next thing that's going to happen is your going to end up dead or in jail."

Bailey stated that her spirituality-her belief that how people treat each other is a reflection of spirituality, gives her hope for her future because:

"what I want to be depends on how I'm living now and when I get there to that point I will know what to do because I will have a good mom who taught me the things to do in the right way now so that's why I say what I'm doing now will affect on how I'll be when I get older."

Several of the participants expressed a belief that things would get better for them. Eric stated that for him *"going to my church and seeing other people happy and how I can be that way"* helps him during difficult times. Similarly, Cynthia stated that her spirituality helps her believe that *"everything will get better and eventually things will work out and go back to normal."*

Two participants expressed a belief that they were never alone. When asked how his spirituality helped him during difficult times, Brian stated *"there's always a place I can turn to seek comfort and guidance and I haven't really it's really recently that I really developed and thought of my spirituality as this great thing that it is."* Brian stated that for him knowing that *"I'm never alone because the only time your alone is when you are without God,"* makes him feel protected. Brian elaborates, stating *"it's like a shield almost you know protecting you comforting you, keeping you warm, keeping you alive...it just lets me know that I am protected, that somebody is there for me."* Similarly, Krystal stated that her spirituality gives her hope for

her future as it *"tells me that I'm not by myself. I like to think I'm by myself, but it shows me that I'm not by myself."*

Positive Attitude

The sixth theme in Spirituality-Help is Positive Attitude. Several participants stated that their spirituality allowed them to have a positive attitude which helped them during difficult times. For both Diana and Martha their spirituality helps them look for the positive aspects of negative situations. For Diana, her spirituality *"brings me up when cuz I'm feeling sad, but I'm always trying to look for the positive things in the negative things."* Doing this allows Diana to *"overcome it like not think about it anymore and like be like not be I guess emotionally wrecked."* Similarly, Krystal stated that difficult times have made her spiritually stronger by helping her *"better my mindset instead of breaking me."* Krystal elaborates, stating *"instead of making me cry or something like that it doesn't make me cry, like I might be sad for like a few hours or a little bit but not like a week or anything like that."*

For some participants staying focused was an aspect of having a positive attitude that helped them during difficult times. For Bailey, her spirituality helps her to *"see what I need to see and what I don't need to see, like if I need to see something if I see somebody graduate I want to do the same thing when I get there if I don't I don't want to be like the ones that dropped out of school and made bad choices with their lives, I want to be like the ones that did something with their lives."* Rosie and Sara also expressed that their spirituality helps them to keep a positive attitude. For Sara, difficult times have made her spiritually stronger by realizing that *"probably at the beginning or at that moment the problems will probably start bringing me down, but as soon as I find a way I'll try to like get back on my feet and just realize you know*

tomorrow's a new day, I'm gonna get through this." Sara also stated that keeping things in perspective helped her as well, *"it's like don't make a big deal out of it because it's like I'm not saying you can be way worse, but it's like there's other people going through things too and it's like they're getting through it you know they're going to get through it they're own way, you should be able to get through it your own way."*

Helping Others

The seventh theme in Spirituality-Help is Helping Others. For several participants helping others served as a source of help during difficult times. Rosie, who for her helping others was a part of her own spirituality, stated that she believed that she had been created to help others. Rosie elaborated on how this helps her, stating *"sometimes I don't pay attention to school work then later on I realize that that school work can actually help me when I grow up to get an education, help others."* Diana expressed a similar feeling, stating that *"I don't want my life to be nothing, I want it to mean something and like I feel like by making meaning of my life, of like making something of myself I can help others, the fact that I want to be a doctor I can help others and like after I finish helping myself I guess I can go and help others."* Several participants identified that helping others helped them. For Bailey, who identified how people treat each other as a reflection of spirituality, helping others *"help me get stronger because I see other people like other people could be sad and have low self-esteem but myself if I see something difficult if being the strong girl on me it bring my self-esteem higher, not low, that's why I like helping others."* Similarly, Eric stated that helping others makes him feel *"greatness and powerful."* Eric also stated that helping others *"is giving me happiness which goes back to me feeling great in a depression time."*

Prayer

The eighth theme in Spirituality-Help is Prayer. Several participants expressed that praying in general (Krystal, Rosie, and Cynthia) served as a source of help. Krystal expressed how her spirituality helps her through difficult times: *"It helps me cope and stuff instead of trying to like get mad at somebody else, or try to fight, like fight somebody else, I just pray about it and move on."* Other participants (Diana, Bailey, Brian) stated that praying to God helped them during difficult times. Bailey elaborated, stating:

"Like I pray to God and that help me relieve the pressure off of me and the emotions and when I go to church to worship Him I be in praise dance with the rest of the kinds and I feel like I have angels surrounding me."

For Bailey, reading the bible is also a form of prayer that helped her during her parents' fights at home: *"one night my mom and dad was arguing and I went and got a bible and started flipping pages and read this section."*

Doubt

The ninth theme for Spirituality-Help is Doubt. For two participants doubting was a source of growth in their own spiritual journey. For Brian, who had stated that for him spirituality meant his walk with God, difficult times made him doubt his own spirituality: *"In one way it made me doubt like if there is God why would He let these things happen?"*

Doubting, however, helped Brian realize that *"God isn't doing this. I mean He's everywhere but the suffering of His people is His suffering too."*

Similarly for Maria, doubts led her to find meaning and purpose to her life:

“When I’m really sad and stuff I’m like why did He bring me here? And I’m always wondering but then when I go back to church I’m like I start listening to things again and then it’s like the question comes back but then my mom I asked her once and then she was like He probably brought you to Earth so that you could be a great sister to your little sister.”

Don’t Know

The tenth and final theme in Spirituality-Help is Don’t Know. While several participants (Michael, Theresa, Martha, Rosie, and Krystal) stated that they did not know how their spirituality served as a source of help, all provided insights into their spirituality and how it helps them. While they did not identify these insights to be protective, they all served to help them during difficult times. Michael identified how his spirituality-being himself and expressing himself-provided him with a sense of purpose. For Theresa, who identified her spirituality as something inside of herself, her spirituality gives her life a sense of purpose as it provides her with a reason as to why things happen. For Martha, her spirituality-which she identified as different feelings-happy and/or sad-helps her in understanding and forgiving those that have hurt her. In addition, her spirituality provides her with a positive attitude: *“if something difficult is going on like I’ll be like well at least this didn’t happen or at least I didn’t get in trouble like that.”* Similarly, Rosie identified her positive attitude-staying focused-as one of the things that help her during difficult times. For Krystal, her spirituality which she stated was her belief in God, helped her to feel that she is never alone and that that difficult situations will not break her down.

In conclusion, four larger categories, Spirituality-General, Spirituality-Meaning to Them, Spirituality-Are they Spiritual, and Spirituality-Help, were identified as a means by which to categorize the themes and subthemes obtained during data analysis. Spirituality-General included six themes: God and Religion, It's Personal, Feelings, Don't Know, Negative Connotation, and Beliefs. Spirituality-Meaning to Them included four themes: Walk with God, Who You Are, Don't Know, and Church. Spirituality-Are they Spiritual included two themes: Don't Know and Church. And finally, Spirituality-Help included ten themes: Purpose, Learning from Experiences, Positive Attitude, Helping Others, Prayer, Doubt, Expressing Themselves, Feelings, Beliefs, and Don't Know.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The current qualitative research was an exploratory study with the aim of understanding how adolescents exposed to domestic violence define spirituality and in what ways their spirituality serves as a protective factor. A review of the research literature indicated that adolescents exposed to domestic violence are at-risk for internalizing and externalizing behaviors, traumatization, perpetration of acts of violence later on in life, substance abuse and mental health problems. Research on resiliency and protective factors, however, has brought to light the concept of spirituality as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to stressful life events in general. The current qualitative study aimed to discover the lived experiences of adolescents exposed to domestic violence and explore and gain an understanding of the role of spirituality as a protective factor for these adolescents. Hermeneutical phenomenology was utilized as the lens through which the data was analyzed and understood. The analysis brought to light several themes and subthemes.

6.1 Summary of Results

Four categories Spirituality-General, Spirituality-Meaning to Them, Spirituality-Are they Spiritual, and Spirituality-Help, were identified as a means by which to categorize the themes and subthemes obtained during the analysis of the interviews. The first three categories,

Spirituality-General, Spirituality-Meaning to Them, and Spirituality-Are they Spiritual-answered the first research question of the current study: How do adolescents define spirituality? The themes and subthemes under each category Spirituality-General (God and Religion, It's Personal, Feelings, Don't Know, Negative Connotation, and Beliefs); Spirituality-Meaning to Them (Walk with God, Who You Are, Don't Know, and Church); and Spirituality-Are they Spiritual (Don't Know and Church) provided an understanding for how the adolescents who participated in this study understood spirituality and how they defined what spirituality meant to them.

Understanding how adolescents define spirituality was an essential part of the research that provided a context by which to explore how spirituality served as a protective factor for these adolescents. The fourth and final category Spirituality-Help (Purpose, Learning from Experiences, Positive Attitude, Helping Others, Prayer, Doubt, Expressing Themselves, Feelings, Beliefs, and Don't Know) answered the research question: In what ways does spirituality serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence?

6.2 Interpretation of Findings

The strengths perspective which focuses on an individual's strengths provided the theoretical foundation upon which the current study was built. As such, it provides a context for understanding the results and what they tell us about how spirituality serves as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence. The aim of the current study was to answer the following research questions: 1) How do adolescents define spirituality? And 2) In what ways does spirituality serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence?

Spirituality Defined

The adolescent participants in the current study understood and defined spirituality in numerous ways. The traditional conceptualization of spirituality as being related, if not one and the same, as the concepts of God and organized religion was a theme found throughout the categories Spirituality-General, Spirituality-Meaning to Them, and Spirituality-Are they Spiritual. Several of the participants in the study, however, provided different insights into how they understood the concept of spirituality and how they defined it for themselves.

Spirituality Defined-Traditional

Half of the participants in the study related their conceptualization of spirituality to God, organized religion, and/or both. For the majority of these participants, the theme of God, organized religion, and/or both could be found throughout the three categories: Spirituality-General, Spirituality-Meaning to Them, and Spirituality-Are they Spiritual. One reason for this could be that adolescents learn and adopt some of the same beliefs about spirituality from those closest to them. Several studies on the spiritual development of adolescents point to the fact that adolescents take on the spiritual beliefs of their families and friends (Rew, Wong, Torres, & Howell, 2007; Boyatzis, Dollahite, & Marks, 2006; Schwartz, Bukowski, & Aoki, 2006). In addition, several of the participants who defined spirituality as being related to God, organized religion, and/or both identified growing up attending church and continued participation in church and church activities as what makes them spiritual. The continued presence of an organized religion in their lives could also be a source of how these participants define spirituality for themselves. What is important to understand is that for half of the participants the

concepts of God, organized religion, and/or both were central to their understanding of what spirituality meant for them.

Spirituality Defined-Non-Traditional

The other half of the participants in the study defined spirituality in numerous, non-traditional ways, including something inside of oneself, feelings, being true to yourself, expressing yourself, creativity, and beliefs. Conceptualizations of spirituality such as these are often discounted when working with adolescents as many make the assumption that “spiritual awareness is always something extraordinary, equated with mystical ecstasy, instead of holding open the possibility that it might be a very ordinary aspect” (Hay & Nye, 2006, p. 50) in the life of an adolescent. Recognizing the validity of the varied conceptualizations of spirituality provided by the participants is important in understanding how they can act as a source of strength during difficult times.

Spirituality as Protective Factor

In the current study spirituality appeared to be a source of strength for the participants during difficult times in their lives. In what ways the participants’ conceptualizations of spirituality manifested themselves as strengths during difficult times will be addressed next.

Purpose

Several of the participants expressed that their spirituality gave them a sense of purpose in life. Knowing they had a purpose in life allowed the participants to keep going despite hard times and provided them with a sense of hope. In addition, knowing there was a reason behind difficult times helped some of the participants understand that they had a purpose to fulfill. Frankl (2006) elaborates on this point in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Frankl states that

searching for a reason behind difficult situations allows individuals to rise above feelings of hopelessness and meaninglessness to find one's purpose. Similarly, in his study on homeless youth, Kidd (2003) found that for the participants in his study, knowing there was a reason for their struggles and survival helped them survive life on the streets.

A review of the research literature also found that a lack of purpose in one's life is associated with problem behaviors. In their study on adolescents and young adults attitudes towards violence, Newcomb (1986) found that the presence of anxiety was "significantly associated with less purpose in life" (p. 906). Similarly, in their study on adolescent substance abuse, Kinnier, Metha, Keim, Okey, Adler-Tabia, Berry, & Mulvenon (1994) found "a strong effect that the lack of purpose in life had in explaining drug use" (p. 109).

A review of the research literature also found that at-risk behaviors threatened an individual's sense of purpose, which can have a negative impact. In their study on adolescent substance abuse, Kinnier, Metha, Okey, & Keim (1994), found that an increase in substance abuse was associated with a declining sense of purpose in life and with increased feelings of depression. Similarly, Harlow, Newcomb, & Bentler (1986) in their study of adolescents found that "negative feelings or thoughts (i.e. Depression and Self-derogation) can be seen as precursors to a lack of purpose in life for young adults" (p. 16-18). These findings suggest that a perceived purpose in life can serve as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence who are at-risk for internalizing and externalizing behaviors, trauma symptoms, cycle of violence, mental health and substance abuse problems.

Learning from Experiences

Several of the participants expressed that their spirituality allowed them to understand that there was always something to be learned from their experiences. For these adolescents their experiences taught them to be more understanding and forgiving, to help others in similar situations, to be prepared for more difficult times, helped them realize that the past is past, that they can pass what they have learned to their own children, and to not do anything crazy.

This finding is supported in the research literature. In his phenomenological study of the coping strategies of adolescents exposed to domestic violence, Goldblatt (2003) found that the adolescents in his study perceived “the dualities and contrasts in their lives in violence as an empowering experience that provides them with skills for a better future” (p. 547). By learning from their experiences, the participants in the current study found a way to turn troubled experiences to insightful and beneficial experiences.

Positive Attitude

Having a positive attitude helped several of the participants during difficult times. This is what Frankl (1988) termed the freedom of will. The freedom of will is not freedom from adverse circumstances, but rather is the freedom of the individual to choose one’s own attitude in life. According to Frankl, it is the individual’s stand, and not the conditions themselves, that make the individual who he is. To decide one’s attitude towards a particular situation was to have spiritual freedom (Frankl, 1986). For these participants, having a positive attitude helped them see the good in the bad, keep things in perspective, and stay focused on their goals.

Helping Others

Helping others was a source of strength for several of the participants. Some of the participants felt that they had been created to help others and as such helping others was an integral part of their spirituality. Helping others helped the participants in numerous ways, including helping them focus on school so that they could get an education which would allow them to continue to help others, it provided them with good self-esteem, allowed them to feel powerful, and helped them forget about their own problems. In their study on runaway and homeless youth, Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz, & Jarvis (2001) found that helping others was a way that the participants redefined their “spiritual relationships in a new context” which “empowered them to establish a more personalized and healing relationship with others” (p.250).

Prayer

Several of the participants expressed that praying was an important part of their spirituality which helped them during difficult times. The participants identified praying in general, prayer to God, and reading the Bible as a form of prayer.

Doubt

Several participants identified doubt as playing an important role in their spirituality. Doubting and asking why they were going through difficult times was a process that two participants identified as a strength which made them feel spiritually stronger. For these participants their spiritual foundations were strengthened through moments of doubt. For one participant, however, this was not the case. Having doubts led the participant to the conclusion that she was not a spiritual person. And while in the interview, the participant addressed spirituality issues numerous times, she did not identify them as spirituality.

Expressing Themselves

For several of the participants being able to express themselves was an integral part of their spirituality. Creative forms of expression, such as drawing and singing, was as a spiritual outlet identified by several of the participants as a source of help during difficult times. Similarly, writing their feelings down was a source of strength identified by the participants. Individuality was also identified as a source of strength during hard times by the participants. The focus on being able to express themselves, through their creativity and individuality, could be a part of the search for identity associated with adolescence. When adolescents are allowed to express themselves, an “atmosphere that advances certain resiliency-building factors—a sense of belonging, feelings of safety and security, mutual respect, and high self-esteem” (Hall, 2007, p. 240) is created.

Feelings

Several of the participants identified diverse feelings as part of their own spirituality. These feelings were also perceived by the participants as being a source of help during difficult times. For several of the participants, their spirituality made them feel confident in themselves and as a result helped give them, as one participant stated, “an extra boldness” that helped them during the difficult times in their lives. Feelings of happiness, cheering, and celebrating were also identified by the participants as being a part of their spirituality which helped them during difficult times. Not letting things bother them and forgiving others were also feelings identified by the participants as sources of strength. Similarly, in their study of Christian adolescents who had been exposed to domestic violence, Toussaint & Jorgensen (2008) found that forgiveness was negatively associated with psychological problems. According to Toussaint & Jorgensen,

those participants willing to forgive “not only value but also utilize forgiveness as an effective means of coping with conflict and poor familial relationship quality” (p. 344).

Beliefs

The participants identified different beliefs, including a belief in karma, that they were never alone, and that things would get better, as sources of strength during difficult times. For one participant believing that bad things happen to those who do bad things helped the participant to not do bad things. By believing that they were never alone, participants felt protected and cared for. The belief that things would get better provided the participants with a sense of hope for their future. Hope as a protective factor has been identified in the research literature for adolescents at-risk for the development of depression (Carbonell, Reinherz, Giaconia, Stashwick, Paradis, & Beardslee, 2002).

Don't Know

Some of the participants stated that they did not know how their spirituality helped them during difficult times. However, despite stating that they did not know how their spirituality helped them during difficult times, each of these participants in their own way expressed how their spirituality serves as a strength during difficult times. Perhaps the reason for the initial answer of I don't know could be because the participants were not used to thinking in these terms about their spirituality.

6.3 Siblings

Four of the participants in the current study were all siblings. These adolescents had diverse conceptualizations of spirituality. For one of the siblings, spirituality was being and expressing oneself. Another sibling expressed a belief in God as her conceptualization of

spirituality. Two of the four siblings were twins, and each provided their own unique conceptualizations of spirituality. For one of the twins, spirituality meant a belief in God and being oneself. For the other twin, spirituality meant being oneself, their individuality.

6.4 Gender Differences

The current study had three males and eleven females participate. As a result, the perspective of female adolescents who have been exposed to domestic violence and how they define spirituality and how spirituality serves as a protective factor comes across predominately. Attempting to ascertain gender differences with such a disparate number is difficult. This, however, does not discount the voice of the male participants who provided valuable insights to the current study. One of the advantages of qualitative research is that it allows for the voices of all participants to be heard.

6.5 Racial Differences

Of the fourteen participants, seven identified themselves as Hispanic, six as African-American, and one as White. The findings of the current study revealed that there were no racial differences in how the participants conceptualized spirituality (as traditional or non-traditional). There were, however, racial differences in three of the ten themes that reflected the participants' conceptualizations of how their spirituality manifested itself as a protective factor. A discussion on the differences in the themes purpose, learning from experiences, and expressing themselves follows.

Purpose

Only one of the six African-American participants identified having a purpose in life as a method by which their spirituality served as a protective factor. This finding is surprising as

other studies have identified having a purpose in life as a form of resilience for African-American adolescents. In their study of African American adolescents exposed to both family and community violence, DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens, & Linder (1994), found that their subjects reported high scores on the purpose in life scale, which lead to less engagement in violent behavior. In contrast, four of the seven Hispanic participants identified having a purpose in life as a method by which their spirituality served as a protective factor.

Expressing Themselves

For five of the six African-American adolescent participants in the study expressing themselves through drawing and singing was a method by which their spirituality served as a protective factor. In contrast, only two of the seven Hispanic participants identified expressing themselves as a protective factor. Hall (2007) found that for both Hispanic and African-American male adolescents, the ability to express themselves through poems, hip hop, rap, and spoken word text was a means by which resilience was built. According to Hall “this research suggests that when adolescent males of color have a strong sense of cultural pride and awareness, they are able to construct healthy self-concepts that assist them in acts of agency and resistance against negative psychological forces” (p. 237).

Learning from Experiences

For five of the seven Hispanic participants, learning from their experiences was a method by which their spirituality served as a protective factor. In contrast, only one African-American participant identified learning from their experiences as a protective factor. A review of the research literature found a lack of attention to racial similarities and/or differences in how learning from experiences serves as a protective factor for Hispanics, but not for African-

Americans-as is the case in the current study. Further research is needed to gain a better understanding of racial differences in how learning from experiences serves as a protective factor.

In conclusion, the current study found that adolescent participants defined spirituality in numerous ways. Half of the participants defined spirituality as being related to God, organized religion, and/or both. For the other half, spirituality was conceptualized in numerous ways, including creativity and expressing oneself. The results of the study suggest that the adolescents' unique conceptualizations of spirituality served as a strength during difficult times for several of the participants. Interestingly, spirituality was not conceptualized as a search for meaning and purpose in life by any of the participants as conceptualized in the current study for the purpose of explicating the concept of spirituality.

6.6 Implications for Social Work

Implications for Research

The findings of the study provide several implications for future research in this area. The belief that the level of abstract thinking needed to comprehend and contemplate spiritual issues is not reached until late adolescents appears not to be the case in this study. Even the youngest participants, who were thirteen years of age, had insights into their own spirituality and how their spirituality helped them during difficult times. It is, therefore, important not to assume that younger adolescents do not have valuable insights to offer when it comes to spirituality. The findings from this study also indicate that adolescents have diverse ways of understanding and defining spirituality, some relate spirituality to God and/or religion, while for others spirituality is being a creative person. Further research is needed in understanding the spiritual development

of adolescents. A more accurate picture of when and how adolescents begin contemplating spiritual issues is important as it guides research such as the current study in understanding and placing into context the participants' own spiritual journey.

As seen in the current study, the adolescents who participated in the study defined spirituality in numerous ways, both traditional and non-traditional. However, the research literature's continued use of spirituality and religion as one and the same stifles non-traditional ways of conceptualizing spirituality. It is, therefore, important for future research to focus on studies that extricate spirituality from a religious foundation and exploring how adolescents define spirituality for themselves. It is important for researchers to allow adolescents to define their own spirituality, and not define spirituality for them.

Further research is needed in understanding how spirituality serves as a protective factor for adolescents exposed to domestic violence. While the current study highlighted some ways in which spirituality does so, future research taking the findings from this research further is needed if we are to obtain a better picture of the process by which spirituality serves as a protective factor for this population. Attention in the research literature on this subject also has to focus on gender and racial similarities and/or differences. Future research in this area lends itself to both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research can provide a medium by which to test some of the results of the current study with a larger number of participants. While qualitative research can continue to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the findings of the current study.

Implications for Practice

The findings of the current study provide several implications for social work practice with this population. First, the findings of the current study imply that for the adolescent participants in the current study, spirituality is an important part of their lives. This is important knowledge for social work practitioners who have an untapped strength and resource in the spiritual lives of adolescents. While Hodge & Boddie (2007) and Krieglstein (2006) have found that the profession of social work is beginning to change and embrace the need to address spirituality in general, our society's secularism has limited the amount of attention social workers give to their clients' spiritual lives. The results of this study suggest that to do so can be a disservice for this population. However, it is important for social work practitioners to understand their own conceptualization of spirituality, whether it is a positive or negative conceptualization, to ensure that the social work practitioner does not compel their own conceptualizations on their adolescent clients.

Programs serving adolescents exposed to domestic violence need to as well become more aware of the spiritual lives of adolescents and how spirituality can serve as a source of strength to their clients. Spirituality as an integral part of adolescents needs to be included in the formation of program goals and services if it is to be accepted within these agencies. As such, program directors need to keep up to date with the current research literature, such as the current study, to continue understanding adolescent spirituality and how to best meet the spiritual needs of adolescents at both the macro and micro levels.

6.7 Limitations

The current study had several limitations that must be addressed here. First, several of the participants struggled with what the questions meant. This could be that the concepts of spirituality, meaning, and purpose might not have been the terms they themselves would use to describe their own spiritual lives. Secondly, some concepts were not pursued enough by the researcher during the interviews that could have provided for better linkages between the concepts. Thirdly, the current study utilized a semi-structured questionnaire, that while having several advantages, also runs the risk of being so structured that participants' responses can be limited. Fourthly, the current study had eleven female participants and only three male participants. As a result, a female perspective is what comes across most strongly. The researcher tried diligently to obtain male participants, but perhaps because of the composition of the families receiving services at the agency where the research was conducted or a lack of interest in the study by male adolescents, more females participated in the study than males. Fifth, the sample size was relatively small. And finally, it is not possible to generalize the findings outside of the current study.

6.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the current phenomenological study examined the lived experience of adolescents exposed to domestic violence and how spirituality served as a protective factor for these adolescents. Adolescents were recruited to participate in the study through a local non-for profit agency for victims of family violence. Interviews were taped and transcribed and themes and subthemes were found using phenomenological coding and the hermeneutical circle. The themes and subthemes indicated that adolescents defined spirituality in diverse ways and that for

several of the participants their own spirituality did serve as a protective factor. Implications for future research and practice were discussed. The current study had several limitation which were discussed, including small sample size, uneven ratio of female to male participants, and lack of generalizability of findings.

APPENDIX A
SUMMARY TABLE OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Study	Purpose	Data Collection	Sample Method	Sample Size Response Rate	Statistical Analysis	Findings
Becker & McCloskey (2002)	Examines the development of attention and conduct problems in children exposed to family violence.	Longitudinal Study: Phase 1: 1990-1991; 363 Mother/Child interviews conducted Phase 2: 1996-1997; 299 (83%) re-interviewed Measures included: CTS & CAS.	Non-Probability Sampling	Sample Size: Phase 1: 363 Mother/Child pairs Phase 2: 299 Mother/Child pairs (83% retention rate)	Structural Equation Model Analyses	Exposure to family violence had direct effect on the development of delinquency in girls; family violence failed to account for delinquency in boys.
Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, & Flynn (2007)	Examines the strengths of homeless youth.	Seven Focus Groups (average 8 subjects per group)	Purposeful Sampling	Sample Size: 60 homeless young adults	Qualitative analyses: Iterative process	Several themes emerged highlighting strengths of homeless youth, including spirituality.
Caetano, Field, & Nelson (2003)	Examines the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and	Survey & Face to Face Interviews. Measure was a standardized	Probability Sampling	Sample Size: 3,270 individuals (1,635 couples)	Chi-Square Analyses Logistical Regression	Findings suggest that exposure to domestic violence (observing either threat of violence

	being victim of child abuse with the development of substance abuse.	questionnaire examining substance abuse in adulthood, childhood physical abuse, and exposure to domestic violence in childhood.				or physical violence) and being victim of child abuse are risk factors for the development of substance abuse problems (alcohol problems).
Carbonell, Reinherz, Giaconia, Stashwick, Paradis, & Beardslee (2002)	Identify adolescent protective factors that are associated with resilient outcomes in young adults at-risk (including exposure to domestic violence) for depression	Longitudinal Study: Single aged cohort from age 5 to 26. Data collected from various sources: including the participants, their mothers, teachers, and interviewers at seven time-points: ages 5, 6, 9, 15, 18, 21, & 26. Measures included: DIS IV; FACES III; ASSIS, & Piers-Harris.	Non-probability Sampling	Longitudinal Study: followed single aged cohort from age 5 to 26 (N=763). 2 nd sample from larger sample selected based on at-risk for depression (N=102) 3 rd sample consisted of all those who met Major Depression diagnosis (N=33) Comparison group selected from 2 nd sample of at-risk for depression	Bivariate analyses: t-tests chi-square analyses	Family cohesion, positive outlook, and interpersonal relationships all served as protective factors in adolescence for at-risk participants from developing depression in young adulthood. Social support, also hypothesized as a protective factor, not supported by the study.

				(N=15)		
Carr & VanDeusen (2002)	Examines relationship between witnessing domestic violence, being victim of child abuse, and perpetration of dating violence.	Survey of undergraduate students. Measures included: CTS, SES, HTW, ASB, AIV, & RMAS.	Random Sample	Sample Size: 150 Response Rate: 99 (66%)	Multiple Regression Analyses	Findings suggest that witnessing domestic violence is a significant predictor of dating violence.
Chandy, Blum, & Resnick (1996)	Identify risk and protective factors in adolescents with a history of sexual abuse and parental alcohol misuse at risk for internalizing behavior, substance abuse, and poor academic achievement	Secondary Data Analysis: Adolescent Health Survey	Non-probability Sampling	Secondary Data Analysis (Adolescent Health Survey: 1986-1987; N=over 36,000). Sub-sample of those who reported having alcohol abusing parents (N=769); hx of sexual abuse (N=1121), or both (N=69) for a total of N=1959. Of N=1959 sub-sample, a resilient group of N=118	Bivariate analysis: Chi-square; Multivariate analysis: Logistic Regression	Respondent's self-perception as a religious/spiritual person and accessible sources for help were identified as protective factors for adolescents in this study

				were identified (when compared to a comparison group of N=1959 respondents from original sample who did not report parental alcohol abuse &/or sexual abuse).		
Cotton, Larkin, Hoopes, Cromer, & Rosenthal (2005)	Examines spirituality as a protective factor for at adolescents at-risk for depression and health risk behaviors.	Survey Measure: Youth Risk Behavior Survey w/additional questions on spirituality, religion, and CDI short form.	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 300 high school students Response Rate: 183 (61%)	Multiple Linear Regression Models	Study found that subjects with higher levels of spiritual well-being had fewer depressive symptoms and less health risk behaviors.
Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Lapp (2002)	Examines peer acceptance and friendships as potential moderators in the link between family adversity (including violent marital conflict) and child	Longitudinal Study: Child & family characteristics (including presence of d.v.) obtained prior to kindergarten, positive peer	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: Original sample consisted of 585 families, by 2 nd grade 517 remained (88.4) retention.	Descriptive Statistics Bivariate Correlations Regression Analysis	Peer acceptance moderated impact of all three indexes of family adversity (economic problems; domestic violence; and harsh discipline).

	externalizing behavioral problems	relationship data obtained during kindergarten and 1 st grade; teacher's ratings of externalizing behavior obtained in 2 nd grade.				Friendship moderated the impact of only one of the family adversity indexes: harsh discipline.
Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius (2003)	Examines the relationship between spirituality and presence of anxiety in at-risk adolescents.	Surveys. Measures included: STAI, SWBS, Allport/Ross Religious Orientation Scale, & Social Provisions Scales.	Non-Probability Sampling	Sample Size: 45 at-risk high school students	Backward Regression Analyses	Study found that for boys trait anxiety and spiritual well being were negatively correlated. Same was not the case with girls in the study.
Denny, Clark, Fleming, & Wall (2004)	Identify risk and protective factors for depressed adolescents (witnessing domestic violence risk factor for depression).	Survey measuring depression, social environment, witnessing family violence, family connectedness, peer support, poverty/social.	Probability Sampling	Sample Size: 268 alternative education high school students in New Zealand responded	Bivariate analyses: chi-square t-tests Multivariate Linear Regression	Findings suggest that family connection and peer support are protective factors for depressed adolescents.

		disorg., & school environment				
Fantuzzo DePaola, Lambert, Martino, Anderson, & Sutton (1991)	Examines the psychological adjustment and competencies of children exposed to domestic violence.	107 young children and their mothers who attended Head Start or resided in domestic violence shelter. Measures included: CTS, CBCL, & PCSA.	Non-Probability Sampling	Sample Size: 107 children and their mothers; 84 enrolled in Head Start; 23 residing in domestic violence shelter. Ages 3.5 to 6.4	Three-way ANOVAs	Findings suggested that exposure to domestic violence (where verbal and physical violence was present) and residence (domestic violence shelter) had a direct relationship with clinical levels of conduct problems, higher level of emotional problems, and lower levels of social functioning.
Grossman, Beinashowitz, Anderson, Sakurai, Finnin, & Flaherty (1992)	Examines the role of risk and protective factors in adolescents from lower and middle incomes in adjustment.	Data collected in two phases: Phase 1: Risk Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and demographic	Non-probability Sampling	9 th graders Original Sample (N=199) By Phase II 179 remained.	T-tests Pearson's r Correlations Multiple Regression	Family cohesion, communication with mother, & internal locus of control all were found to be protective factors in the current

		form administered in group. Phase 2: Indiv. semi-structured interview & Parent/Adol. Comm. scale; Locus of Ctrl scale; & Family Adaptability & Cohesion Scale				study. Communication with father and relationship to a significant adult (non-parent) also hypothesized as protective factors were not supported by the current study.
Grych, Jouriles, Swank, McDonald, & Norwood (2000)	Seeks to identify distinct patterns of adjustment in children living in domestic violence shelters.	Interviews of Mother/Child pairs. Measures included: CBCL, RCMAS, CSEI, CTS, PCCTS, & CPIC	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 228 children (ages 8 to 14 years old) and their mothers.	Cluster Analyses	Five patterns of adjustment emerged: multi-problem externalizing, multi-problem internalizing, externalizing, mild distress, & no problems.
Hagen, Myers, & Mackintosh (2005)	Examines the effects of hope, social support, and stress on behavioral problems in a high-risk group of children	Data collected in individual interviews with the subjects. Measurements administered were: Pictorial Perceived Social Support	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 65 children of incarcerated women between the ages of 6 & 12	Hierarchical Regression Analyses	Findings suggest that hope and social support are protective factors for the subjects in the current study

		Scale; Youth Self Report; & Children's Hope Scale				
Herrenkohl, Hill, Chung, Guo, Abbott, & Hawkins (2003)	Identify protective factors against violent aggressive behavior in adolescence	Longitudinal Study: Current study utilized sub-sample of at-risk adolescents from a larger longitudinal study of 808 subjects. Measurements administered at 3 point times (ages 10, 15, & 18) were Child Beh. Checklist and different surveys.	Non-probability Sampling	154 subjects from a larger longitudinal study of 808 subjects.	Logistic Regression	Findings suggest that religious service attendance, good family management, and bonding to school are protective factors for the subjects in the current study.
Hodge, Cardenas, & Montoya (2001)	Examines the relationship between spirituality and religious participation in substance use.	Questionnaire administered to middle school, high school, and GED students. Measurements included: INSPIRIT, and questions	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 526 Response Rate: 475 (90%)	Logistical Regression	Findings suggest that spirituality was significantly related to subjects not using marijuana and/or hard drugs, but not related to alcohol use.

		specific to religious participation and substance use.				Religious participation was significantly associated with not using alcohol, but not related to marijuana and/or hard drug use.
Jackson (2005)	Examines how protective factors influence the relation between exposure to life events and adaptive behavior in children	Data collected via individual interviews with children and their parents; measurements used include: LEC; SES; MCTQ; SSSC; NRI; FES & BASC	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 432 children between the ages of 8 and 12	Hierarchical multiple regression	Study found that regardless of number of stressful life events, positive family environ. & higher intelligence, serve as protective factors that bolster children's adaptive functioning.
Jouriles, Norwood, McDonald, Vincent, & Mahoney (1996)	Examines if marital violence (including physical violence and other forms marital aggression) correlate with behavioral problems in	Two Separate Studies: Study 1: 55 families, couples enrolled in marital counseling. Children ages 5 to 12 years old. Measures	Non-Probability Sampling	Study 1: 55 families in marital counseling Study 2: 199 mother/child(ren) residing in domestic violence shelters.	Hierarchical Regression Analyses	Study 1: Physical violence and other forms of marital violence correlated positively with externalizing problems of exposed children.

	children exposed to the marital violence.	included: CTS & BPC. Study 2: Expanded on findings of Study 1, 199 mother and child(ren) living in domestic violence shelters. Children ages 5 to 12 years old. Measures included: CTS, CBCL, & CSEI.				Study 2: Physical violence and other forms of marital violence correlated positively with externalizing and internalizing problems of exposed children.
Kidd (2003)	Expand on current knowledge of homeless youths' perceptions of coping.	In-depth interviews, semi-structured.	Purposeful Sampling	Sample Size: 80 homeless youth.	Qualitative Study: Rigorous Content Analyses	Spirituality emerged as a theme, helping subjects cope with their situations. Spirituality gave meaning to the hard times they faced.
Kliewer, Cunningham, Diehl, Parrish, Walker, Atiyeh, Neace,	Explores protective factors within the child, the caregiver, the caregiver-child	Longitudinal Study: Data collected from both children and their	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 101 African-American 9 to 13 year olds 1 st interview: 101	Regression analyses	The quality of caregiver-child relationship & child's emotional self regulation

Duncan, Taylor, & Mejia (2004)	relationship, and community that might moderate relations between community violence exposure and subsequent internalizing and externalizing adjustment problems in African American children	caregivers on two separate occasions; measures include: the Survey of Children's Exposure to Comm. Viol.; CBCL; Child Depression Inventory; & RCMAS.		children and their caregivers 2 nd interview: only 69 of the original sample returned (70 retention rate).		found to be protective factors for the participants. Caregiver emotional regulation, also hypothesized, was less strongly associated with child's adjust. Perceived neighborhood cohesion as a protective factor not supported by the study
Knight, Sherritt, Harris, Holder, Kulig, Shrier, Gabrielli, & Chang (2007)	Examines adolescent alcohol use and role of religion and spirituality	Questionnaires. Measures included: TLFB, BMMRS, & Spiritual Connectedness Scale	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 305 (12 to 18 years)	Logistical Regression Analyses	Study findings suggest that in adolescence forgiveness is an important spiritual construct that could lower the risk of substance use (alcohol) during stressful times.
Kogan, Luo, Murry, & Brody (2005)	Identify risk and protective factors that predict	Longitudinal Study: Using Secondary Data	Probability Sampling	Sample Size: Subsample of 318 African American	Structural Equation Modeling	Study findings indicate that positive family

	substance abuse among African American high school dropouts	Analysis: National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. Measures included substance use outcomes, positive family relationships, religious involvement, positive life orientation, Conventional Peers subscale, and potential moderators.		adolescents who dropped out of high school who were part of a representative sample of 24,599 adolescents from the United States		relationships and religiosity serve as protective factors for adolescents in this study
Langhinrichs en-Rohling, Monson, Meyer, Caster, & Sanders (1998)	Examines the relationship between exposure to domestic violence and/or being victim of child abuse with development of depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation in college	Questionnaires Measures included: FOVS, LAS, BDI, & BHS.	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 351 college students (Median age 19.9 years)	Multivariate Analyses	Findings indicate that being a victim of child abuse was strongly associated with depression, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation in college students. This was not the case

	students.					for those exposed to domestic violence in childhood.
Lehmann (1997)	Examines the relationship between the development of PTSD and various coping variables in children exposed to domestic violence.	Interviewed Mothers and their children residing in eight different domestic violence shelters; mean age of children: 11 years. Measures included: CITES-FVF, CDI, & ARI-RS.	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 84 Children 67 Mothers	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses	Findings indicate that more than half of sample size met PTSD diagnostic criteria.
Lengua (2002)	Explore the contribution of multiple risk (including exposure to domestic violence) and temperament to children's adjustment	Data collected from children and their female primary caregivers in individual interviews. Measures used include: Mult. Risk Scale, Stroop Color & Word Test,	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 101 3 rd to 5 th graders	Standardized regression analyses; Logistic regression	The findings from the current study indicate that positive emotionality and self-regulation served as protective factors for the children in the study.

		EATQ, CBQ, CFA, Child Beh. Checklist, CDI, SSRS, & Perceived Competence Scale for Children				
Levendosky, Hutch-Bocks, Semel, & Shapiro (2002)	Examines the development of trauma symptoms in children exposed to domestic violence.	Interviewed mothers and their preschool children (ages 3 to 5) residing in homes where domestic violence is perpetrated. Measures included: SVAWS, CBCL, & PTSD-PAC.	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 62 preschool children	Multiple Regression Analyses	Findings indicate that preschool children who are exposed (either direct witnesses or indirect exposure) have PTSD symptoms. Preschool children more vulnerable to re-experiencing the traumatic event and/or hyperarousal.
Lindsey, Kurtz, Jarvis, Williams, & Nackerud (2000)	Examines the development of strengths and resources for homeless youth as they transition into young adulthood	Focus Groups	Purposeful Sampling	Sample Size: 12 subjects	Qualitative analyses: Constant comparative approach.	Several themes identified strengths of homeless youth as they transition into young adulthood, including

						spirituality.
Luster, Small, & Lower (2002)	Examines correlation between physical abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing physical abuse of another person, and harassment by school peers with development of binge drinking, low grades, and depression in adolescents.	Secondary Analyses of Data obtained through a survey of adolescents (grades 8 to 12).	Non-Probability Sampling	Sample Size: 17,465	Multivariate Analyses	Physical abuse, sexual abuse, and witnessing physical abuse of another person was associated with binge drinking, poor grades, and feelings of sadness in both male and female adolescents. Harassment by peers was partially supported.
Luthar (1991)	Identify factors that allow children to maintain socially competent behavior despite stressful life events	Data collected from adolescents during school. Measures used include: LEC, T-CRS, RCP, SPM, SSI, Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Ctrl Scale, Sentence Completion	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 144 adolescents Average age (15.3)	Factor Analysis Hierarchical Regressions ANOVA	Internal locus of control, social expressiveness, & ego development were found to be protective factors for adolescents in the current study. Intelligence and positive life events, also hypothesized to be protective

		Test-Form 81, CDI, RCMAS, & DEQ.				factors, were not supported by the findings of the current study
Margolin (2006)	Examine family support and activity involvement to find whether their presence among adolescents serve as protective factors against self-reports of depression, anxiety, loneliness, or low self-esteem	Data collected from children during school. Measures used include: "My family and friends interview," "My Activities," DSRS, Social Anxiety Scale for Children, Self-Perception Profile, Loneliness Rating Scale	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 395 students. Response Rate: 161 sixth graders.	Multivariate analyses	Family support and family activity involvement were found to be protective factors for the children in this study. Support from peers, school personnel, & community members, also hypothesized as protective factors, were not supported by the findings of the current study.
McCabe, Clark, & Barnett (1999)	Examine the relationship between family	Data collected from children, their primary	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 64 sixth grade African American	Hierarchical Regression Hierarchical	Kinship social support protective factor for

	protective factors, stressful life events (including exposure to domestic violence), and behavioral/emotional adjustment of African American children	caregiver(s), and teacher during school and home interviews. Measures include: Demographics Interview, Stressful Life Events Checklist, Conflict Tactics Scale, Parenting Questionnaire, PPVT-R, Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict, Kinship Soc Supp. Scale, & Teacher-Child Rating Scale		children	Multiple Regression	internalizing problems, however, not for externalizing problems. Parental warmth moderated internalizing problems. Corporal punishment acted as risk factor for externalizing & internalizing problems. Parental demandingness protective factor for externalizing problems. Father involvement protective factor for externalizing problems, however, not for internalizing problems.
McCloskey & Lichter (2003)	Examines the contribution of family of violence	Longitudinal Study: Phase 1:	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 363 Mother/Child pairs in original	Logistical Regression	Exposure to domestic violence predicted youth

	origin to adolescent aggression in different relationships.	1990, 363 Mother/Child pairs; Phase 2: 1996-1997, 310 re-interviewed; Phase 3: 1998-1999, 296 re-interviewed. Measures included: CTS, CBC, CESD, & PRCE.		sample. 83.4 retention rate throughout study.		aggression towards all peers; child to parent aggression predicted for subjects over the age of 18; depression in adolescence.
O'Keefe (1998)	Examine protective and vulnerability factors in adolescents exposed to domestic violence at risk for dating violence	Data collected from students during school. Measures used include: modified version of the Physical Aggression subscale of the CTS, CTS-PC, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, student's grades, substance abuse Likert scale, & Hollingshead 2-	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 232 adolescents, between the ages of 14 to 19 all of whom reported high levels of domestic violence at home	Logistic Regression Analysis	Study found that self esteem served as a protective factor for at risk for dating violence males. School achievement protective factor for at risk females.

		factor scale				
Prelow & Loukas (2003)	Examine the role of resource, protective, and risk factors on academic achievement for Latino youth	Secondary Data Analysis: Welfare, Children & Families: A Three City Study	Probability Sampling	Sample Size: Subsample of 549 Latino adolescents, ranging in age from 10 to 14 obtained from larger representative sample of 2402 subjects	Hierarchical Regression Analyses	Study found that monitoring of activities by their mother and academic involvement in the home served as protective factors that led to better achievement outcomes for the subjects. Adolescent's participation in extracurricular activities and adolescent socio-emotional competence (self-regulation) served as protective factors for the subjects.
Ritt-Olson, Milam, Unger, Trinidad, Teran, Dent, & Sussman (2004)	Examines spirituality and Health-as-a-Value as potential protective factors for high school	Surveys for two distinct samples: Low risk & High risk. Measures	Non-Probability Sampling	Sample Size: High Risk: 382 students from alternative high schools Low Risk: 211	Chi-square ANOVA Logistic Regression	Findings from the study indicate that spirituality served as a protective factor against all substance use

	students from the development of alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use.	included: Systems of Belief Inventory, HAV, substance use questionnaire.		students from magnate high school.		among high risk sample.
Scheingart, Molnar, Klein, Lowe, & Hartmann (1995)	Identify protective factors that moderate outcomes on child functioning of homeless pre-school aged children	Secondary Data Analysis: New York City Homeless population (1989)	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 82 homeless families with preschool aged children between the ages of 3 & 5 Comparison group of 62 poverty level housed families	Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses	Finding from the study indicate that participation in a Early Childhood Education program served as a protective factor for the children in the current study. Availability of an additional caregiver, also hypothesized as a protective factor, was not supported by the results of the study.
Sussman, Skara, Rodriguez, & Pokhrel (2006)	Examines whether spirituality plays a role in individuals' decisions to use or not use various	Self-report questionnaires. Baseline measures collected between 10/1997-	Non-probability Sampling	Sample Size: 501 Adolescents from Southern California.	15 General linear model analyses	Findings suggest that spirituality was negatively predictive of alcohol, marijuana, and stimulant use.

	drugs.	6/1998. One year follow-up collected between 10/1998-6/1999 Measures included: NDUSS and questionnaire assessing drug use.				
Whitfield, Anda, Dube, & Felitti (2003)	Examines the relationship between being a victim of child abuse or witnessing domestic violence to the risk of intimate partner violence.	Two Surveys Wave One: 8/95-11/95 & 1/96-3/96 Wave Two: 6/97-10/97. Measure used: ACE questionnaire.	Probability Sampling	Wave One: Sample Size: 13,494 Response Rate: 9,508 (70%) Wave Two: Sample Size: 13,330 Response Rate: 8,667 (65%).	Multivariate Logistic Regression	Findings suggest that being a victim of child abuse or being witnessing domestic violence are risk factors for becoming a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence as adults.
Williams (2004)	Explores the impact of spirituality on the coping mechanisms of runaway and/or homeless youth.	Semi-structured interviews. Two waves: Wave 1: 12 subjects Wave 2: 7 subjects	Purposeful Sampling	Sample Size: 19 participants (ages 18-25).	Qualitative Study: Constant Comparative Method. Open coding methods.	Five themes emerged from data: 1) belief in divine intervention; 2) belief in relationship w/a Higher Power;

						3) participation in religious practices (traditional & non-traditional); 4) prayer 5) finding meaning and purpose in life.
Williams, Lindsey, Kurtz, & Jarvis (2001)	Identify protective factors that promote resiliency in runaway and homeless youth	Data collected via interviews with the participants	Purposeful Sampling	Sample Size: 5 females, between the ages of 19 and 22.	None. Qualitative study using multiple case study design with data analysis using constant comparative method	Determination, feeling of having meaning/purpose in life (to include spiritual connection, hope, & awareness of self), caring for self (including dev of problem-solving skills) & accepting help from others (including quality)

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General:

What has been going on in your life in the past few days/weeks/months?

What is going on in your life right now?

How do these experiences make you feel?

How have these experiences affected you?

What has helped you handle what is going on in your life right now?

Have these things helped you during other difficult times?

Strengths:

What are your inner strengths/abilities?

When you feel confident, where does it come from?

How do you deal with difficult situations?

Spirituality (General):

What do you think of when you hear the word spirituality?

What does the word spirituality mean to you?

Tell me about your own spirituality.

How do you feel about your own spirituality?

What makes you a spiritual person?

How does your spirituality help you through difficult times?

How have difficult times helped you become spiritually stronger?

In what ways does your spirituality give you hope for your future?

Spirituality (Meaning):

What gives your life meaning?

Where and when do you find meaning in your life?

In what ways do your experiences give your life meaning?

How does your spirituality help you find meaning in your life?

How do you feel knowing your life has meaning?

How does knowing that your life has meaning help you during difficult times?

Have you always felt this way? If not, when?

Spirituality (Purpose):

Describe your purpose in life.

How do your experiences give your life a sense of purpose?

How does your spirituality give your life a sense of purpose?

How does knowing that you have a purpose in life help you during difficult times?

Have you always felt this way? If not, when?

Spirituality (Meaning and Purpose):

How have your recent experiences shaped your view of your meaning and purpose in life?

How do difficult experiences help you find meaning and purpose in life?

Where and when do you find meaning and purpose in your life every day?

APPENDIX C
CONSENT/ASSENT FORM (ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSIONS)

INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: LINDA E. BENAVIDES

TITLE OF PROJECT: SPIRITUALITY AS PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR ADOLESCENTS EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

My name is Linda E. Benavides and I am a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work. You are being invited to participate in a study I am conducting with adolescent clients from The Family Place. This Informed Consent form will explain the study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to participate in the study.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this research study is to understand how adolescents who have been exposed to domestic violence define spirituality and how their own spirituality helps protect them from negative consequences.

DURATION:

You will be asked to meet with the Principal Investigator, Linda E. Benavides, for 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours on one occasion. If necessary, the Principal Investigator, Linda E. Benavides, may wish to meet in person or over the telephone with you at a later date for any follow-up questions, the duration of which will be the same.

PROCEDURE:

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to meet with the Principal Investigator, Linda E. Benavides, for 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours. During this meeting, you will be given an opportunity to talk about yourself, your experiences, and your spirituality. If necessary, the Principal Investigator, Linda E. Benavides, may wish to meet in person or over the phone with you at a later date for any follow-up questions, the duration of which will be the same.

All interviews will be audio taped by the Principal Investigator. All tapes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. All tapes will be kept in a safe and secure location. All tapes will be heard only for research purposes by the Principal Investigator and her associates. All tapes will be retained for possible future analysis.

JAN 27 2009

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_____ Subject Initials

Institutional Review Board

POSSIBLE BENEFITS:

A possible benefit from participating in this study is the opportunity to learn more about your own spirituality. In addition, the research study has the potential to contribute to the knowledge base of other adolescents exposed to domestic violence, which can benefit these adolescents in the future.

COMPENSATION:

As a participant you will receive a one-time \$10 compensatory gift card to Wal-Mart for your voluntary participation in this research study. You will receive the \$10 gift card at the end of your participation in the study. If you wish to suspend and/or discontinue participation in the research as a result of any discomfort from participation, you will still receive your one-time \$10 compensatory gift card to Wal-Mart.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS:

There is minimal to no risk to your participation in this study. It is possible that the subject matter could cause you emotional discomfort. If this occurs, you will be advised of your right to suspend or terminate participation in the study if you so choose and will be referred back to your individual counselor at The Family Place.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS:

You have a right to refuse to participate in the study without any negative consequence to yourself or your parent. You have a right to suspend or terminate participation without any negative consequences.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY:

Adolescent participants may discontinue their participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. Any adolescent participant who wishes to discontinue in the research as a result of any discomfort from participation, will still receive their one-time \$10 compensatory gift card to Wal-Mart.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

We expect up to 25 adolescent participants to enroll in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in Dr. Jean Rycraft's office, 101 B, University of Texas at

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Arlington School of Social Work for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study, as well as direct quotes from the interview(s), may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA IRB, and personnel particular to this research (Linda E. Benavides, Principal Investigator; Dr. Joan Rycraft, Faculty Sponsor; and Dheeshana Jayasundara, second coder), have access to the study records. Your interview records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

There are two legal exceptions to this promise of confidentiality:

- 1) Suspected child abuse or neglect of the adolescent participant.
- 2) The adolescent participant makes threats to harm themselves or others.

In either of these two cases, the proper authorities (Child Protective Services if child abuse or neglect is suspected) will be notified.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions, problems or research-related problems at any time, you may call Linda E. Benavides at (214) 717-1923 or Dr. Joan Rycraft at (817) 272-5225. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at (817) 272-3723 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

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VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

DATE

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you.

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You understand that since you are under 18 years of age that your parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) have consented for your participation.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

SIGNATURE OF MINOR PARTICIPANT

DATE

By signing below, you confirm that you have read or had this document read to you.

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this informed consent document. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You freely and voluntarily choose to allow your child to be in this research study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and that you may choose to discontinue your child's participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN

DATE

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Institutional Review Board

MAY 18 2009
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CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

JAN 26 2010

INVESTIGADOR PRINCIPAL: LINDA E. BENAVIDES

Institutional Review Board

TITULO DEL PROYECTO: ESPIRITUALIDAD COMO FACTOR DE
PROTECCION PARA ADOLESCENTES EXPUESTOS A LA VIOLENCIA
DOMÉSTICA

Mi nombre es Linda E. Benavides y soy una estudiante doctoral en la Universidad de Texas en Arlington Escuela de Trabajo Social. Se le está invitando a participar en un estudio que estoy realizando con los clientes adolescentes de The Family Place. Este Consentimiento Informado explica el estudio. Es importante que lea cuidadosamente este material antes de decidir si desea participar en el estudio.

PROPÓSITO:

El propósito de este estudio es entender cómo adolescentes que han estado expuestos a la violencia doméstica definen espiritualidad y cómo su propia espiritualidad les ayuda a protegerlos de consecuencias negativas.

DURACION:

Se le pedirá una reunión/entrevista con el Investigador Principal, Linda E. Benavides, por 1 ½ a 2 ½ horas en una sola ocasión. Si es necesario, el Investigador Principal, Linda E. Benavides, le puede pedir hablar en persona o por teléfono con usted en una fecha posterior si es necesario obtener más información. La reunión/entrevista tomaría el mismo tiempo que la anterior.

PROCEDIMIENTO:

Si usted decide participar en este estudio se le pedirá una reunión/entrevista con el Investigador Principal, Linda E. Benavides, por 1 ½ a 2 ½ horas. Durante esta reunión/entrevista, usted tendrá la oportunidad de hablar sobre usted mismo, sus experiencias, y su espiritualidad. Si es necesario, el Investigador Principal, Linda E. Benavides, le puede pedir hablar en persona o por teléfono con usted en una fecha posterior si es necesario obtener más información. La reunión/entrevista tomaría el mismo tiempo que la anterior.

Todas las entrevistas serán grabadas en audio por el Investigador Principal. Las cintas se codificarán de manera que no habrá información personal de identificación visible en ellas. Las cintas estarán guardadas en un lugar seguro. Las cintas se escucharán solamente para propósitos del estudio por el Investigador Principal y sus colaboradores. Las cintas se conservarán para un posible análisis en el futuro.

Ultima Revision 05/14/2009

_____ Iniciales del Participante

POSIBLES BENEFICIOS:

Un posible beneficio de participar en este estudio es la oportunidad de aprender sobre tu propia espiritualidad. Además, el estudio tiene el potencial de contribuir a la base de conocimiento sobre adolescentes expuestos a la violencia doméstica, que puede beneficiar a estos adolescentes en el futuro.

COMPENSACIÓN:

Como participante usted recibirá por única vez una tarjeta de regalo de \$10 de Wal-Mart como compensación por su participación voluntaria en este estudio. Usted recibirá su tarjeta de \$10 al final de su participación en este estudio. Si usted decide suspender o discontinuar su participación en el estudio como resultado de alguna incomodidad al participar, de cualquier modo recibirá su tarjeta de regalo de Wal-Mart como compensación.

POSIBLES RIESGOS/INCOMODIDADES:

Hay un mínimo a no riesgo en su participación en este estudio. Es posible que el tema pueda causarle incomodidades emocionales. Si esto ocurre, se le avisara de su derecho de suspender o discontinuar su participación en el estudio si usted desea y será referido a su consejero individual en The Family Place.

PROCEDIMIENTOS O TRATAMIENTOS ALTERNATIVOS:

Usted tiene el derecho a rehusarse a participar en el estudio sin ninguna consecuencia negativa para usted o sus padres. Usted tiene el derecho de suspender o discontinuar su participación sin ninguna consecuencia negativa para usted.

RETIRADA DEL ESTUDIO:

Participantes adolescentes pueden discontinuar su participación en el estudio en cualquier momento sin penalidad o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho. Cualquier adolescente participante que desea discontinuar el estudio como resultado de alguna incomodidad por su participación, de cualquier forma recibirá su tarjeta de regalo de Wal-Mart de \$10 de compensación por una única vez.

NUMERO DE PARTICIPANTES:

Esperamos hasta 25 participantes adolescentes que se registren en este estudio.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD:

Se realizará todo esfuerzo para asegurar que los resultados de este estudio sean confidenciales. Copias de los documentos de este estudio serán conservados en la oficina de la Dra. Joan Rycraft, 101 B, Universidad de Texas en Arlington Escuela de Trabajo

Ultima Revision 05/14/2009

_____ Iniciales del Participante

Institutional Review Board

JAN 28 2009

APPROVED
MAY 18 2009

Social por un periodo mínimo de tres años después de haber terminado este estudio. Los resultados de este estudio, así como referencias directas de la entrevista, podrán ser publicados y/o presentados en reuniones sin revelar su nombre o identidad. Se protegerá sus derechos y su privacidad, no obstante, el Secretario del Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos, la Junta Evaluadora de la Universidad de Texas en Arlington, y los trabajadores asociados con esta investigación (Linda E. Benavides, Investigador Principal; Dra. Joan Rycraft, Patrocinadora de Facultad, y Dheeshana Jayasundara-Segundo Investigador) tendrán acceso a los documentos e información relacionados con este estudio. Su expediente será completamente confidencial según lo indica la ley. Este no será compartido con otras personas a menos que sea exigido por la ley o de acuerdo con las especificaciones mencionadas anteriormente.

Hay dos excepciones legales a esta promesa de confidencialidad:

1. Sospecha de abuso o negligencia al participante adolescente
2. Si el participante adolescente hace amenazas de lastimarse o lastimar a otros

En cualquiera de estos casos, las autoridades apropiadas (Servicios Protectores Al Niño si se sospecha abuso o negligencia) serán notificadas.

CONTACTO PARA PREGUNTAS:

Si usted tiene algunas preguntas, problemas o problemas relacionadas al estudio, usted puede llamar a Linda E. Benavides al número (214) 717-1923 o a la Dra. Joan Rycraft al número (817) 272-5225. Usted puede comunicarse con el Director de la Junta Evaluadora de UTA llamando al número (817) 272-3723 si usted tiene preguntas relacionadas con sus derechos como participante en un estudio.

MAY 18 2009
APPROVED
JAN 26 2010
Institutional Review Board

Última Revisión 05/14/2009

_____ Iniciales del Participante

MAY 18 2009
APPROVED

JAN 26 2010

PARTICIPACION VOLUNTARIA:

Firmas:

Institutional Review Board

Como representante de este estudio, yo he explicado el propósito, el procedimiento, los beneficios, y riesgos asociados con este estudio:

FIRMA DEL INVESTIGADOR PRINCIPAL

FECHA

Al firmar abajo, usted confirma que usted ha leído este documento o que alguien se lo ha leído.

Usted ha sido informado sobre el propósito, el procedimiento, los posibles beneficios y riesgos, y usted ha recibido una copia de esta forma. A usted se le ha dado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas antes de firmar, y se le ha avisado que usted puede hacer preguntas en cualquier momento. Usted entiende que como usted es menor de 18 años de edad que sus padres/guardián legal ha dado su consentimiento para su participación.

Usted accede a participar voluntariamente en este estudio. Al firmar este documento, usted no está cediendo sus derechos legales. El rehusarse a participar no implica ninguna penalidad o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho; usted también puede discontinuar su participación en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE MENOR

FECHA

Al firmar abajo, usted confirma que usted ha leído este documento o que alguien se lo ha leído.

Usted ha sido informado sobre el propósito, el procedimiento, los posibles beneficios y riesgos, y usted ha recibido una copia de esta forma. A usted se le ha dado la oportunidad de hacer preguntas antes de firmar, y se le ha avisado que usted puede hacer preguntas en cualquier momento.

Usted libremente y voluntariamente decidió permitir que su hijo/hija participe en este estudio. Al firmar este documento, usted no está cediendo sus derechos legales. El rehusarse a participar no implica ninguna penalidad o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho; usted también puede discontinuar la participación de su hijo/hija en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalidad o pérdida de beneficios a los que tiene derecho.

FIRMA DEL PADRE/GUARDIAN LEGAL

FECHA

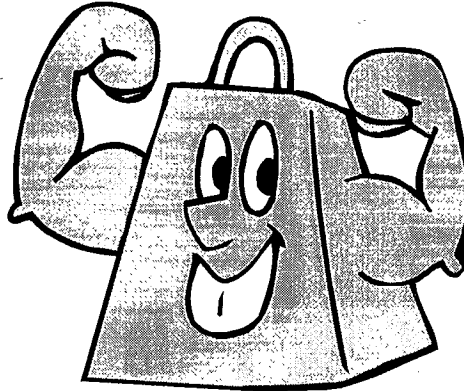
Ultima Revision 05/14/2009

_____ Iniciales del Participante

APPENDIX D
STUDY NOTICE FLYERS

**DO YOU HAVE A SON/DAUGHTER BETWEEN THE AGES OF
13 AND 17?**

**WOULD YOU LIKE THEM TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO DISCOVER THEIR OWN UNIQUE STRENGTHS?**



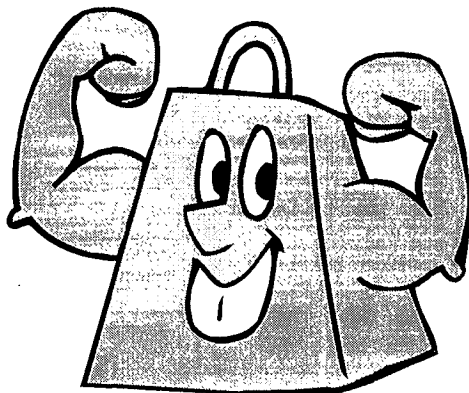
**IF SO, YOU'RE ADOLESCENT SON/DAUGHTER IS
INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY BY LINDA E.
BENAVIDES, DOCTORAL STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
LINDA E. BENAVIDES at (214) 717-1923**

***ALL ADOLESCENT PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A \$10
GIFT CARD FOR THEIR TIME.***

¿TIENE UN HIJO / HIJA ENTRE LAS EDADES DE 13 y 17?

**¿LE GUSTARIA QUE TENGAN LA OPPORTUNIDAD DE
DESCUBRIR SUS PROPIAS FUERZAS?**



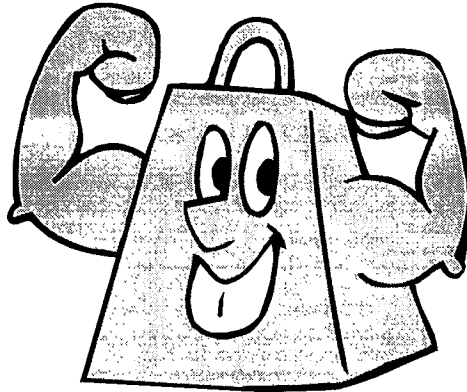
**SI ES ASI, SU HIJO /HIJA ES INVITADO A PARTICIPAR EN
UN ESTUDIO REALIZADO POR LINDA E. BENAVIDES,
ESTUDIANTE DOCTORAL EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DE TEXAS
EN ARLINGTON ESCUELA DE TRABAJO SOCIAL.**

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN, POR FAVOR CONTACTAR:

LINDA E. BENAVIDES al (214) 717-1923

***TODOS LOS PARTICIPANTES RECIBIRAN UNA TARJETA
DE REGALO DE \$10 POR SU TIEMPO.***

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DISCOVERING AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR OWN UNIQUE STRENGTHS?



ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 17?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO EARN A \$10 GIFT CARD?

IF SO, THEN YOU ARE BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY BY LINDA E. BENAVIDES, DOCTORAL STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE HAVE YOUR PARENT CONTACT:

LINDA E. BENAVIDES at (214) 717-1923

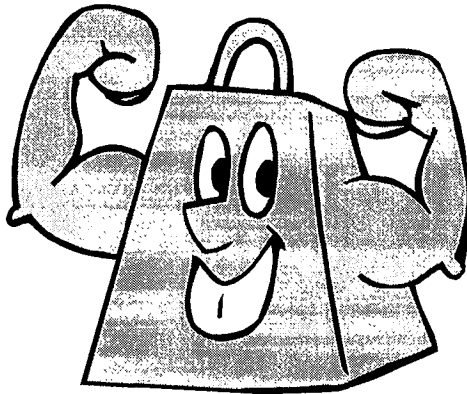
ON

AT

LINDA E. BENAVIDES (DOCTORAL STUDENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK) WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON HER STUDY FOR ADOLESCENTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 TO 17.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

LINDA E. BENAVIDES (214) 717-1923



CHIPS AND SOFT DRINKS WILL BE AVAILABLE

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

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