Exploration of Multi-system Strategies to Promote Minoritized Family Mental Wellbeing After Experiences of Homelessness with Young Children

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Conflict of Interest

None to report.

Thank You To Our Funders!











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Family Experiences of Homelessness

Over 1.2 million

Children under 6 years old experience homelessness every year

Nearly half

Of children living in emergency shelters are under 6 years old

Disproportionally effect minoritized groups

50% of families experiencing homelessness are Black

(Yamashireo & McLaughlin, 2021; Henry et al., 2020; Iruka et al., 2022; Bailey et al., 2017)

Systemic and Structural Racism

- Historically rooted and culturally reinforced history of racial inequity and oppression
  - Continues to be enforced across housing, income, CPS, and education
  - Examples: Redlining, hiring discrimination, increased policing, incarceration, lack of health care, etc.

- Spanish speaking families – especially foreign born – face additional barriers to permanent housing
  - Examples: Culturally or linguistically responsive services, fear of public charge policies, barriers to housing benefits, etc.



(Richard, 2023; Iruka et al., 2022; Bailey et al., 2017; Henwood et al., 2024)

Family Experiences of Homelessness in Los Angeles

- Current family homelessness crisis
- 3,520 families in Los Angeles County experienced homelessness in 2023
- Rapid increase in Latinx and Spanish speaking families experiencing homelessness



(Los Angeles Homless Services Authority. 2024; Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority; Chinchilla et al., 2023; Robles et al., 2024)

Effects of Homelessness on Early Childhood Development

Cognitive functioning
(Masten et al., 2012)

Academic achievement
(Perlman & Fantuzzo, 2010; Stargel & Easterbrooks, 2022; Palmer et al., 2023)



Mental health
(Haskett et al., 2016)

Speech
(Grant, 1991)

Health related concerns
(Cutuli et al., 2014; Wood et al., 1990; Grant et al., 2007; Buckner, 2008; Cutuli et al., 2017)

Social skills
(Rybski & Israel, 2018)



Multisystem Resilience Theory

"The capacity of a system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, function, or development of the system"

- Resilience of an individual depends on the resilience of interconnected systems
- Relationships, social supports, and societal structures are vital

(Masten, 2018)

Study Aims

Gather parent and provider perceptions on:

1) The mental health and developmental care needs of families with young children experiencing homelessness.
   - Facilitators and barriers to health care service access
   - Role of intersectional needs (e.g., language, cultural, or immigration status)

2) The ways shelter settings or service providers can be supported in providing evidence based, developmentally appropriate, and culturally responsive services

Participant Recruitment Goals

In an emergency or transitional housing setting:

Parents

- ~ 20 Parents
  - ~ 9 Parents who are Spanish only Speaking
- 3- to 6-year-old child
- Current n = 8



Providers

- ~15 Service Providers
- Work with families who have young children and are experiencing homelessness
- Current n = 13



Integrating Community Feedback

- Community Advisory Board Meeting – UCLA HEAR CAB
  - Individuals with lived experience and who work in the field
  - Feedback on interview order, language, and content
  - Advice on showing up in the space in a respectful way
- Met and Discussed Project Goals and Deliverables with Community Partners
  - Strategies for recruitment and how to work synergistically with staff
  - Interest in information to inform their programs
  - Interest in cultivating/creating needed workshops and training materials

Methods

90 minute virtual or in-person sessions

Parents

- Demographic Survey
- Semi-Structured Qualitative Interview
- Child and Parent Services Survey
- Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Perceived Stress Scale
- Perception of Shelter Community Scale

Providers

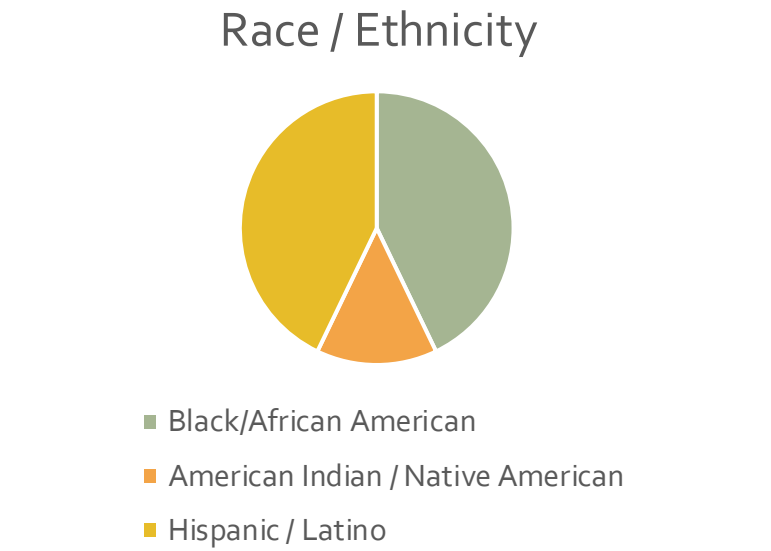
- Demographic Survey
- Semi-Structure Qualitative Interview
- Attitudes Toward Trauma Informed Care
- Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale
- Early Childhood Mental Health and Trauma Informed Care Training Needs/Wants

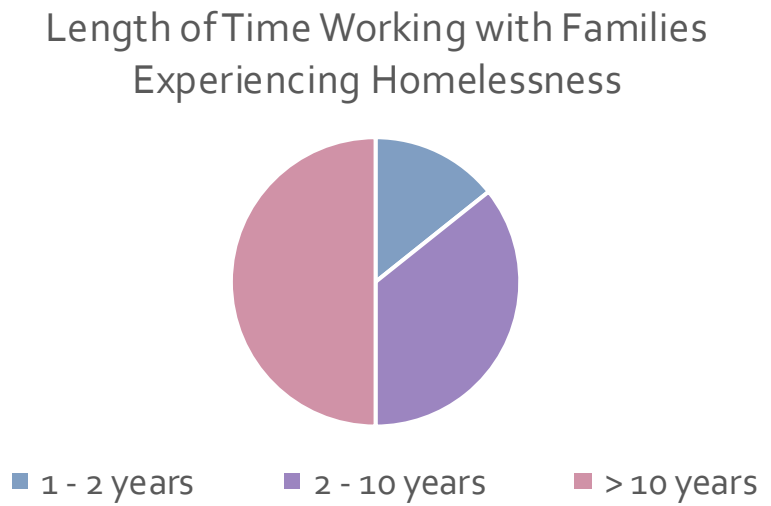
(Cohen et al., 1983; Vrabic et al., 2022; Goodman, 1997; Baker et al., 2016; Bride et al., 2004)

Service Provider Preliminary Findings

Service Provider Demographics (*n* = 13)

- Case managers, intake specialists, in-house mental health providers, in-house child classroom workers, and chaplains.
- Working in an emergency or transitional shelter
- 92% Female
- 46% Speak Spanish
- 38% Experienced Housing Instability / Homelessness
- 69% Have Children





Provider Qualitative Themes



Theme:

Early childhood developmental disability

"I have never in my life since I worked here realized how many children are on the spectrum. And that is a difficult thing. Especially here because we're not equipped for that. So, when they come in here, it takes us a lot longer if they are on the spectrum to get the needs they do need …

the mom can't start learning or programming or anything because … the kids need supervision…

Getting them daycare…different spaces may not be accepting them or being unequipped to it."

Theme:

Navigating Parenting

"I have observed some moms sit back and just let us do the work and so I'm like 'go!' you know ' go interact! Go kickball! Go jump rope or do something' but I think the struggle is … some of them just don't know how … if no one ever told them how to , they don't know! … so that is what we support … because when they [the children] see mom they're like they get so happy!"

Theme:

Government climate / fear

"With our new government and all that kinda stuff, a lot of them are very fearful. You know, I've had kids of Spanish-speaking moms come and ask me '[PERSON], are they gonna take my mom away?', and that hurts my heart because I can't say yes or no … for them to even have to worry about things like that … Scared to go to school because they don't know if they come back mom's gonna be here."

Examples of Other Themes

Supportive co-workers and management

Parents Navigating Stigma

Transportation and Follow Up Barriers to Care



Service Provider Interest in Additional Training

1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5 – Strongly Agree

My workplace provides me with adequate resources to learn about child development and trauma if I would like to

Mean = 3.69

I want to learn more about early childhood development

Mean = 4.46

I want to know more about the impact of trauma on child development and parenting

Mean = 4.69

There are adequate services for Spanish speaking families in Los Angeles County

Mean = 2.92

Conclusions and Summary

More ***on-site*** resources for families and service providers on early childhood developmental disabilities.

Supports for navigating parenting

Intersectional concerns (e.g., immigration, structural barriers) for Spanish speaking families is high

Ongoing work and Future Directions

- Continue collecting data with families and analyzing that data!
- Meet with HEAR CAB and community partners to review interpretations / findings
- Provide feedback to community partners and identify resources
- Use information to tailor a preventative intervention



Thank You!
Questions?

Have resources, support, or advice? Please reach out!

Our Community Partner

Families and Community Partners who Participated

UCLA HEAR –CAB

Study Co-I's

Dr. Sugey Gomez

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Service Provider Quantitative Descriptive Information

Attitudes Towards Trauma Informed Care - 10

- Possible Range = 1 – 7
- Higher = More Trauma Informed Attitudes
- Observed Range = 4.3 - 7

Mean = 5.71, SD = 0.84

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

- Possible Range = 0 - 68
- Observed Range = 19 – 43
  - 19 = No Secondary Traumatic Stress
  - 43 – Moderate Secondary Traumatic Stress

Average Sum = 32.42, SD = 7.95

Mild Secondary Traumatic Stress

(Baker et al., 2016; Bride et al., 2004)