



*Sources, patterns, and impact of support systems
in adolescent youth who entered out-of-home
care prior to 4 years of age*

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LONGSCAN

- **LONG**itudinal **S**tudies on **C**hild **A**buse & **N**eglect
 - NCCAN first funded in 1990
 - Multi-site study
 - Antecedents and Consequences of Maltreatment
 - Common procedures
 - Recruit at age 4
 - Administer common measures to youth and caregiver every 2 years through age 18
- **S**amples
 - Vary from high risk to San Diego sample
 - Removed from home and placed in substitute care for a minimum of 5 months
 - Prior to 3 ½ years of age

20 Year Longitudinal Study: Research Context

- Problematic outcomes for foster care youth (*Pecora et al., 2009*)
 - Problem behaviors
 - Mental and physical health
 - Involvement with criminal justice system
 - Cycle of maltreatment
 - Focus on youth exiting foster care to independence (*Courtney, 2009*)
 - Homelessness
- Potential explanations
 - Negative impact of foster care (e.g., foster care drift)
 - Vulnerabilities (early adversities)
 - Lack of resources
 - While in foster care
 - When transition from adolescence to early adulthood

Policy Context

- Federal Acts (and funding for states)
 - Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (1980)
 - Adoption and Safe Families Act (1997)
 - Promoting Safe and Stable Families (2001)
 - Foster Connections to success and Increasing Adoptions Act (2008)
- Practice Goals
 - Expand Objectives: Protect, Family Maintenance, Permanence & Child Well-Being
 - Reduce # youth in foster care (Children's Bureau)
 - Maintain in home
 - Promote adoptions, kinship care, and expedite permanency for children (within 3 years)
 - Increase flexibility

LONGSCAN: Unique Opportunity

- Birth to 18 (Sample entire childhood and adolescence)
 - Follow involvement in foster care
 - Identify exits (e.g., reunification, adoption, relative care)
 - Examine
 - Outcomes
 - Risk and protective factors
- Observations
 - About a third were adopted, reunified, and remained in relative/non-relative care within the first 12 years of life
 - Approximately half remained in the care of the same person from age 6 through age 14
 - Chaotic childhoods
 - Homes (people coming in and out, moves)
 - Caregivers (substance use, health, changes)
 - Schools (changes, services)
 - Problematic outcomes
 - Substance use
 - Arrests, incarceration
 - Disruptive Behavior Disorders

Transition from Adolescence to Early Adulthood

- Importance and challenges for all (*DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005*)
- Specific interest in former Foster Care youth
 - Exit from foster care (*Courtney, 2009; Keller et al., 2007; Munson et al., 2010*)
 - As well as those who exited earlier (reunified, etc.)
 - Social Network Disruption (*Perry, 2006*)
- Focus on factors (e.g., Support Systems) that may serve to buffer or exacerbate adaptive and maladaptive outcomes (*Ahrens et al., 2008; Beam et al., 2002; Brown & Bakken, 2011; Cook et al., 2009; Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010; Levitt et al., 2005; Mayberry et al., 2009*)
 - Parental (Caregiver)
 - Peer
 - Adults outside the home/family

Objectives: Preliminary

- Identify sources of support (Caregiver, Peer, Outside Adult) at age 16
 - Examine their relationship
 - Determine patterns (person-centered)
 - See if they are related to caregiver living situation
- Evaluate their association with outcomes at the transitional age of 18
 - Adaptive outcomes (Life Skills, Self-Esteem)
 - Maladaptive outcomes (Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior Problems)

Methods

- Sample (n=205)
 - Represent children who entered foster care in San Diego
 - 18 month period in 1990-1991
 - Birth to 3 ½ years of age
 - Remained in foster care for at least 5 months
 - 52.3% Female
 - Black (43.4%), White (28.3%), Hispanic (25.9%), Other (2.5%)
 - Living situation at 16
 - Reunified (26.7%), Adopted (34.7%), Relative (21.3%), Non-relative (8.4%), Group/Incarcerated (8.9%)

Methods: Measures

- Support Systems (Age 16)
 - Peer Relationships (Network Relationships Inventory, *Furman & Burhmester, 1985*)
 - Overall satisfaction with
 - Same-sex friend
 - Opposite sex friend
 - Outside Adult (Project Developed)
 - “adult other than parent or guardian who you feel closest to or who has helped you the most”
 - Respond: no one like this, grandparent, other relative, teacher/coach, another adult
 - How much (a lot, some, a little. not at all) did they:
 - Show they cared about you, showed you how to do things, spent time with you, helped you with problems, provided instrumental support

Methods: Measures

- Support Systems (Age 16)
 - Parent Relationship
 - Parent report (*Adapted from Add Health, Resnick et al., 1997*)
 - 8 items (how close feel, how much care, how often trust, how often understand, how often get along)
 - Respond on 5 point scale (never to always)
 - Factor Analysis (Two Factors)
 - Trust/Understanding
 - Communication
 - Youth report (*Resnick et al., 1997*)
 - Same 8 items
 - Plus activities in last 4 weeks (go shopping, played sport)
 - Single Factor for
 - One Mother figure (in home or out of home)
 - One Father figure (in home or out of home)

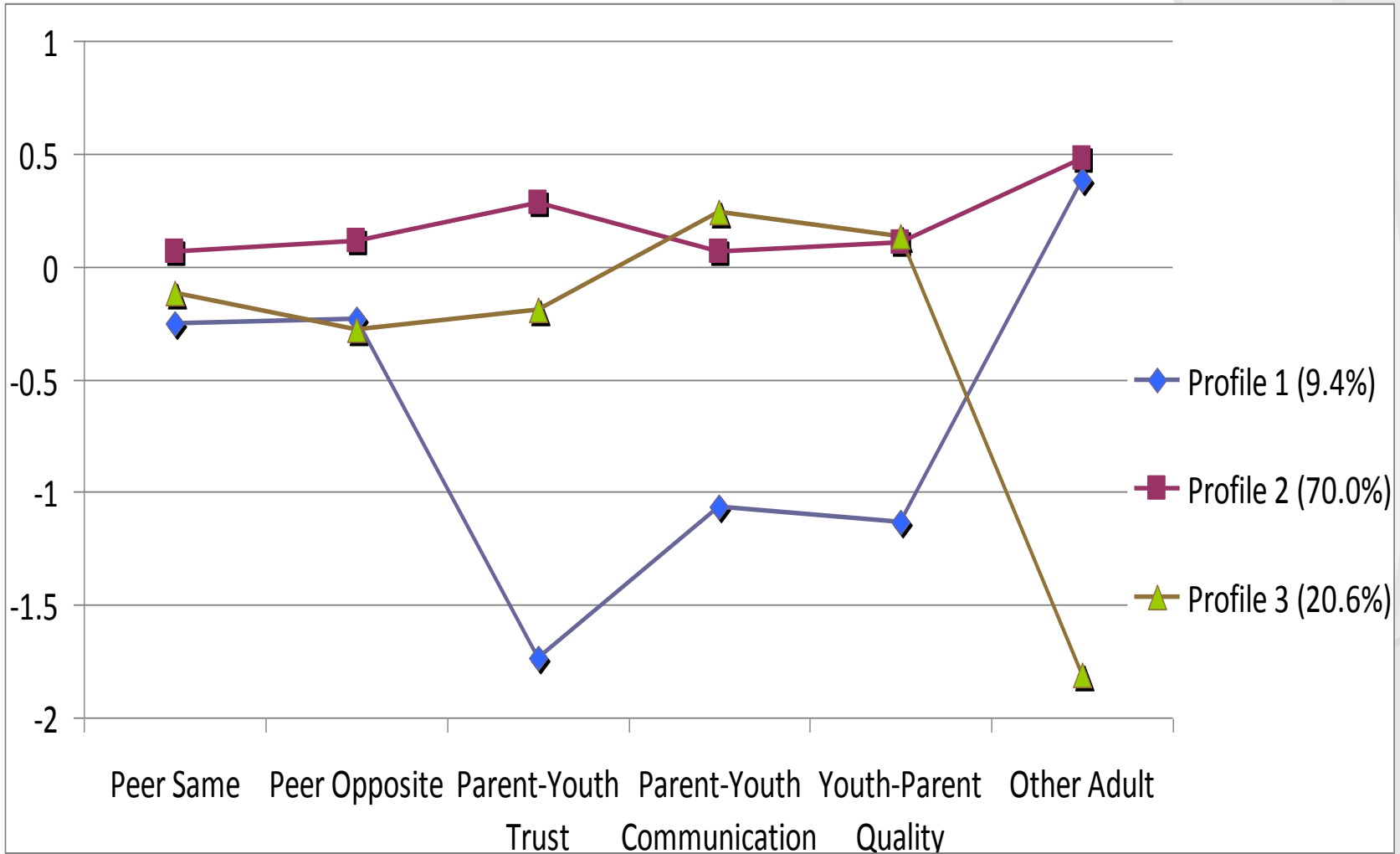
Methods: Measures

- Outcomes (Age 18)
 - Adaptive
 - Ansel-Casey Life Skills Assessment (*Casey Family Programs, 2000-2005*)
 - 26 items short form (not, somewhat, very much like me)
 - E.g., I fix meals on my own, I ask for help when I need it, I can complete a rental agreement or lease
 - Self-Esteem (*Rosenberg, 1965*)
 - 10 items (4 point response strongly agree to disagree)
 - E.g., On the whole, I am satisfied with myself, I feel I have a number of good qualities
 - Maladaptive
 - Youth Self-Report (*Achenbach, 1991*)
 - Internalizing Behavior Problems
 - Externalizing Behavior Problems

Findings: Patterns of Support (Correlations)

	Peer Same	Peer Opp	Y-P Qual	P-Y Trust	P-Y Comm	Other Adult
Peer S		.24				.18
Peer O						.23
Y-P Ql				.27		.20
P-Y Tst					.31	
P-Y Co						
O-Adlt						

Findings: Patterns of Support (Classes)



Support: Related to Living Arrangement?

	Peer Same	Peer Opp	*P-Y Trust	*P-Y Com	Y-P Qual	Other Adult
Reun	46.6	43.0	20.4	5.5	23.9	13.9
Adopt	46.5	42.4	19.9	5.8	21.9	12.8
Rel	46.4	42.3	20.1	5.6	24.3	15.0
NonR	45.5	41.8	20.9	5.9	24.2	15.0
Grp/ Incar	45.0	40.3	17.4	4.1	23.3	11.3

Age 18 Outcomes: Correlations

Age 18	Self-Est	Life Skills	Int BP	Ext BP
Self-Est		.49	-.49	-.32
Lf Skills			-.14	-.14
Int BP				.54
Age 12				
Int BP	-.40	-.24	.51	.26
Ext BP	-.29	-.16	.29	.30

Support (Age 16) & Outcomes (Age 18): With and W/O Age 12 BP Controls

<i>Peer Same</i>	Peer Opp	P-Y Trust	-	Y-P Qual	<i>Other Adult</i>	→	Self-Estm
Peer Same			-	<i>Y-P Qual</i>	<i>Other Adult</i>	→	Life Skills
	<i>Peer Opp</i>	P-Y Trust	-	<i>Y-P Qual</i>	<i>Other Adult</i>	→	Int BP
		P-Y Trust	-	<i>Y-P Qual</i>	<i>Other Adult</i>	→	Ext BP

Summary of Findings: Sources of Support

- Small to moderate relationships between support systems
- Little relationship to living situation except for those in Group Home/Incarcerated
 - Caregivers lower on Trust/Understanding and Communication
- No clear advantage for reunified, adopted, relative in comparison to non-relative caregiver
- Three classes from LPA (70% relatively high levels of support from all sources)

Summary of Findings: Sources of Support Associated with Outcomes

- Adults (both parent figures and other adults) related to subsequent adaptive and maladaptive outcomes
 - Even after accounting for earlier (age 12) behavior problems
- Peer support also important
 - Same sex peer support predicts self-esteem
 - Opposite sex support protective for internalizing behavior problems

Conclusions

- Transition from adolescence to early adulthood
 - Critical for all former foster care youth
 - Support from adults and peers can help them navigate the challenges of this transitional period
 - Peer support led to positive outcomes
 - The quality of the supportive relationship is more important than who the specific parental figure or other adult is
- Policy & Practice Implications
 - Promote quality caregiver-youth relationship
 - Facilitate development of relationships with other caring adults
 - Promote stability to help establish peer support systems

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The End

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