



Chambers of
MARIA D. HERNANDEZ
PRESIDING JUDGE OF JUVENILE COURT

Superior Court of California County of Orange

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ORANGE, CA 92868
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Orange County Juvenile Court Miscellaneous Order M-2014-6

Re: Understanding Resiliency: How Very Important People Moderate Decision Making Skills in Former Foster Youth

Research indicates that outcomes for youth who leave the child welfare system at age 18 are very poor. It is reported that 33% are unemployed, only 50% have a full-time job, and 25% have problems with the criminal justice system.

Resiliency theory suggests that having the ability to effectively cope with problems allows people to lead successful lives even after experiencing problems or stressors. A critical concept in resiliency theory is that there are certain protective factors that increase one's ability to cope and therefore be resilient. One protective factor that has been deemed important in providing youth with a foundation for adulthood is decision making skills. Research further suggests that there is no "reliable and consistent model for resilience enhancement."

While resiliency is important for everyone, a population for whom resiliency may be particularly important is former foster children. Emancipated foster youth are nearly two and one half times more likely to have mental health problems, are less than one tenth as likely to graduate from college, and are nearly six times as likely to be on public assistance. Other reports indicate that between 40% and 50% of these same youth are homeless within 18 months of emancipating, and less than 1% ever graduate from college.

This research will broaden the understanding of how resiliency may develop and/or be affected by the presence of any caring adult (VIP) in a young person's life. This study will explore the moderating effect that VIPs have on decision making, thereby increasing resiliency. By examining the moderating impact that the presence of a VIP has on decision making, a gap in the research will be filled, allowing practitioners of resiliency theory to have a foundational piece of information about the theory that will give them the opportunity to more effectively assist clients.

In an effort to address the gap in the literature, and to provide potentially valuable information to child welfare practitioners and service providers, Mr. Michael Meyers has decided to complete his Doctoral Dissertation research in this important area. Mr. Meyers'

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study is entitled Understanding Resiliency: How Very Important People Moderate Decision Making Skills in Former Foster Youth.

Applying the theory of resilience may help to improve outcomes for former foster youth, and that if it were possible to provide these youth and/or their social workers and other service providers with training, insight, skills or resources that would increase their chances of success, then this research would be invaluable to each of these youth, and to the child welfare system as a whole.

The population to be studied will be a convenience sample of young adults who have emancipated from foster care in Orange County, California, ages 18-25. Former foster youth in Orange County, California encompass a relatively diverse ethnic group, and therefore represent many ethnic strata of the overall population.

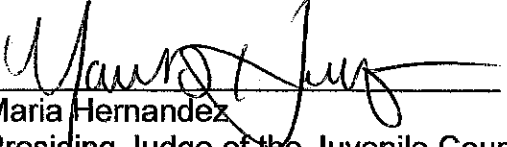
The testing will take place in a private office setting, at the Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF) building. The research will take place over as many days as necessary to reach the desired number of participants (68-75 subjects). Mr. Meyers has the support and backing of the Orangewood Children's Foundation and their Chief Program Officer, Robert B. Theemling will be providing assistance and facilitating access for this study. Participants will be provided with information regarding the purpose of the research and their role in the study. On the date(s) of the testing, the researcher will provide the subjects with the testing material and will assist by answering questions about filling out the three different instruments. Once the instruments are completed, the researcher will secure them in a safe location until sufficient numbers are received to be able to begin the data analysis. Once the research has been concluded, the information will be destroyed. The undersigned has received IRB approval from Northcentral University to complete this research.

FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, THE COURT HEREBY AUTHORIZES Mr. Meyers to complete his research study with emancipated foster youth.

FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, THE COURT ORDERS that the testing materials shall only be used for this research, and that all materials shall be destroyed upon completion of testing.

This Court's authorization and order shall expire on May 7, 2017.

Dated this 18th day of February 2015.



Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court