Impact of Support

Islington Families is a support services organization that provides support to families in the area dealing with issues of housing, access to benefits, financial trouble, mental health, parenting, and many more. This study will examine the level of long-term impact the services have had on closed-cases. Individuals whose cases were closed six months prior to the study or more will be interviewed about how they feel the support services they received impacted their lives. The study will focus on three main topics of development as a result of receiving support services; impact on personal development, impact on family development, and impact on coping and problem solving. The interview will be split into two parts, the first being an open ended discussion about personal growth and confidence and family development. The second part is a survey that will use a 1-10 rating scale to determine exactly how impacted the individual feels as result of working with the organization. The overall results will show what areas of life the service users feel impacted by working with the support services, and to what degree. The implications for practice are in relation to how successful support services are, and potentially what areas need to be developed or depleted.
Exploring the Relationship between Level of Social Support 
and Adjustment to Vision Loss

In general plentiful research has assessed adjustment to disabilities, yet little attention has been paid to how those with vision loss adjust to this impairment in their daily lives, both physically and emotionally. This study examines the relationship between level of social support and adjustment to vision loss in clients who have completed the Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training Program or who have received services at the Low Vision clinic at Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh (BVRS). Results report participants perceived level of social support, as well as their adjustment to vision loss as measured by the implementation of two surveys pre- and post-program participation. Study implications provide a guide to methods of practice when working with clients with visual impairments.
In Allegheny County, African American children are referred to the Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) twice as frequently as Caucasian children, despite the fact African American make-up only fifteen percent (15%) of the population in the county. Further, African American families are accepted for services at disproportionately higher rates than Caucasian families. This study reports an assessment of this disproportionality as it relates to the race of the worker assigned to a case. A random sample of fifteen cases was selected for the study. A chart review was conducted of these cases examining the rates of acceptance for services when the family was Caucasian or African American, controlling for worker’s race. Implications of the existence of worker bias are presented.
Are the Lives of Women Changed after Completion of the Transitional Housing Program?

Transitional housing programs for women and their children are designed to help advance the lives of the women and allow them to provide a better life for their children using the knowledge and skills they develop while in the program. This study will try to measure how much (if at all) the lives of these women were changed for the better after the completion of the transitional housing program. The sample size will consist of 20 women with varying ages, all having between 1 to 4 children whom are all under the age of 17. The data will be gathered using a questionnaire consisting of questions covering current information about income, employment, housing, education, and education status of the children. The results will be compiled and scored using a benchmark ratings chart. The findings of the research will be shared upon completion of the study.
Evaluation of the Medication Adherence and Distribution Process at AGH Positive Health Clinic

The Positive Health Clinic (PHC) at Allegheny General Hospital is dedicated to serving patients that have a positive HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) diagnosis. Adherence to HIV medication plays an important role in improving a patient’s quality of life. Therefore, HIV clinics need to have an effective method to promote patient medication adherence. This study will examine the medication distribution process utilized by PHC staff. The method used to evaluate the distribution process will be a survey of all eighteen employees at the Positive Health Clinic. Measurement of the results will be quantitative for the closed-ended questions, while open-ended questions will be analyzed to determine if the question was answered correctly. Results of the survey will identify the specific parts of the PHC medication distribution process that require alteration. These results will help the clinic improve and solidify its medication adherence practices.
Children Youth and Families’ Caseworker Satisfaction with the Juvenile Court System

This study will look into caseworker satisfaction with the juvenile court system and what tasks or situations contribute to caseworkers’ satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the juvenile court system. A lot of concern and research has gone into caseworker satisfaction and burnout specifically within child welfare/protective services, however research has not gone into how much time and effort caseworkers put into their court work. Hopefully with this research, supervisors will become more aware of the frustrations that can contribute to an unpleasant court experience. If some caseworkers who are dissatisfied can receive help with what they are struggling with, their overall experience can be improved, and turnover could be decreased. Sources of information will be the caseworkers and their experience with the juvenile court system. Any person in the office who does casework, regardless of how often they are involved with court, will be asked to complete a survey. Court is not a perfect entity and the amount of time waiting for hearings, doing paperwork, and being at court should be assessed and visited to see if it can be improved for a better work experience. Child welfare caseworkers already have a huge burnout rate, and if court work is at all contributing to this, and if it can be fixed, it should be assessed and fixed.
Does Regular Attendance in S.H.H Youth Development Programs Promote Positive Youth Outcomes?

The Sarah Heinz House (S.H.H) is a Boys & Girls affiliated organization which offers a variety of afterschool programs to the youth of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The purpose of this study is to determine whether regular attendance in S.H.H youth-development programs promote positive youth outcomes. In pursuit of this query, two (2) primary variables have been operationalized: (1) youth social skill-set and (2) youth behavior. Regular-attendance is operationalized as being 60% or above in "Club" programs, while irregular-attendance are all rates 59% that fall below. This is a cross-sectional, observational study. Data will be collected via questionnaire. The observers (which consist of "Club" program staff) will be randomly assigned to youth and required to complete an observational survey with thirteen (13) Likert-type response categories. It is hypothesized that regular attendees of the Sarah Heinz House's "Club" programs display a broader social skill-set and display fewer behavior abnormalities than irregular attendees. If such is noted, then it has the potential to assist the Sarah Heinz House in the promotion of its existing programs and petitions for future funding.
Does the High Price of Gas Lead to Hunger in Allegheny County?

Does the high price of gas lead to hunger in Allegheny County? Hunger means to have a need or desire for food. In this study I will collect data about hunger utilization at the food bank and high gas prices that effect people in Allegheny County. Hunger in Allegheny County is a problem. Gas prices may be contributing to the hunger crisis. It is important to find a link between high gas prices and hungry people so that a solution can be established to help the Food Bank and hungry people. We know some of the effects of hunger in Allegheny County. Gas prices, poverty, food prices, and unemployment are associated with hunger. Within three months there were 7,328 clients that came to the Food Bank that are in the study. This is a chart review design study. I will count the number of people that got food each month. I will also observe the gas prices from the local gas stations that are located by the Food Bank. I will take one measurement from the number of clients. The measurement is taken when the clients arrive at the distribution sites to get food. They sign their name on a piece of paper to add to the Food Bank’s records. The client secondary data sources and gas price measurements are conducted once a month for three months. Gas prices will be measured by driving in the car and looking at the gas prices at local gas stations. In August the gas price was 2.67 cents a gallon, September the lowest gas price 2.61 cents a gallon, and October the lowest gas price was 2.89 cents a gallon. Hunger will be measured by reviewing the number of people that came into the Food Bank to get food, according to the records in August, September, and October. Overall the increase of gas prices correlated with the number of people that came to the Food Bank, and I expect to find a correlation between high gas prices and hunger in Allegheny County.
The Effect of Workplace Stress on Family Relationships

Working as a protective services social worker in the public child welfare system is often categorized as a stressful job. This study examines the relationship between employment at the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) and a caseworker’s relationship with his/her family. Caseworker stress is measured by the Pressure Management Indicator while the quality of family relationships is measured by the Quality of Relationships Inventory. Implications for perceived level of job-related stress and its’ relationship to the quality of family life are presented and discussed.
A plethora of studies examine adolescent pregnancy. However, none could be found that examined status as a client in the public child welfare system as an antecedent of adolescent pregnancy or as a potential adolescent pregnancy prevention opportunity. This study fills this gap. To be selected for this study, cases had to meet two criteria. First, they were currently open cases of adolescent mothers from the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF). Second, these same adolescent mothers must have been OCYF clients themselves during their own childhood. Fifteen OCYF cases, meeting both these criteria were randomly selected. An examination of the case when the mother was a child assesses programs that were in place at the time, the child’s placement in or out-of-home (if out-of-home, the length of this placement), in-home worker involvement, and prevention program or sex education program participation. The opportunities or costs of OCYF involvement as a child subsequent to adolescent pregnancy are presented and discussed.
In the field of public child welfare we find a large number of the adults using and abusing drugs and alcohol, with this use /abuse limiting their ability to provide for the care of their children. Some research suggests that nearly 80% of all parents who are public child welfare-involved use and/or abuse alcohol or other drugs. Therefore, public child welfare workers attempting to reunify children with their parents are often dealing with parents who are both using and/or abusing alcohol or other drugs. This study examines the most common substances used and or abused by parents who have had their children removed by the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF). Implications of this use and or abuse by type of drug and/or alcohol for social work practice are presented and discussed.
The Effect of the Lunar Cycle on Received Referrals of the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

Common folklore states that human and animal behavior is affected by the full moon, leading humans and animals to act more aggressively and irrationally. This study will examine whether common folklore is applicable to the child welfare system by determining whether a correlation exists between the three-day full moon period and the number of child maltreatment referrals received by the Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families Lexington Intake Office. The study will follow the number of referrals received by Lexington Intake over three full 20 day lunar cycles. Averages will be compiled for non-full moon days and compared with the three-day full moon periods to determine whether a correlation exists. Findings will be shared upon completion of the study. Should a positive correlation exist Lexington Intake will be able to better staff its office in preparation for the full moon. Should a negative/no correlation exist caseworkers will be able to ease their anxieties of their caseload increasing drastically at the full moon and may boost overall caseworker satisfaction.
How to More Effectively Reach Out to Pittsburgh’s Hispanic Population

Neighborhood Legal Services (NLSA) has had very little contact with Spanish speaking clients; the purpose of this study is to provide valuable insight on how to more effectively reach out to Pittsburgh’s Hispanic population. Information on whether the low income Spanish speaking community has heard of NLSA, ways NLSA can better advertise the organization to this demographic, and the ways in which our agency can best assist the population would help Neighborhood Legal Services better achieve their stated mission of meeting the civil legal needs of the poor and vulnerable in the community through effective legal representation and education. The specific approach used for this study design is based around establishing contacts within a Hispanic cultural agency or community center in Allegheny County and work together to establish a sample of the low income Spanish speaking population within the Pittsburgh area. Contacts will be established with several case managers within two agencies in the Pittsburgh area to distribute the surveys to their clients as part of the client’s intake process. The surveys will be translated from English to Spanish by NLSA staff before they are distributed. The participants of the study will be defined as residents of Allegheny county who used Spanish as a first language and who are established as intake clients of the organizations partnering with NLSA for this study. Due to the nature of the study being based around how NLSA can better assist the selected population, anyone whose income level is at 125% or below the federal poverty line will be eligible for the study. The answer categories for each subject item within the administered survey will be designed in a multiple choice type questionnaire with spaces for the participating subjects to fill in any extra information they wish. Through this assessment, the ways in which Neighborhood Legal Services can better advertise themselves and assist low income Spanish speaking individuals will be determined. Up until this point, most NLSA clients have had issues pertaining to employment and income, housing, utility shutoffs, access to affordable medication and medical assistance, childcare, and nutrition.
At the top of Abraham Maslow's theoretical *Hierarchy of Needs* is self-actualization: the final level of psychological development achieved when basic needs (such as hunger, shelter, warmth, and love) are fulfilled and the person is then able to realize their full personal potential. The person may then move towards independence. Erik Erikson's *Ego Integrity versus Despair* stage for late adulthood is a time when elderly people move into life's last stage of psychosocial development and continue to self-actualize. In turn, actualization may contribute to independence.

This research assesses whether the North Hills Community Outreach Free Rides for Senior Shuttle (FRFS) helps riders feel a sense of independence (defined as, “less dependence on family members or others for rides”). Sample size was determined by the number of riders (maximum 14) on the shuttle, on a different day of the week, each week, for a total of 6 weeks. Riders were asked to complete a survey regarding their FRFS use and subsequent dependence on family members for rides. Discussion includes implications for senior citizens of FRFS use.
Little current literature exists addressing the relationship between a felon’s post-outpatient success rate and prior offenses. This project assesses such a relationship. Data were drawn from fifty (50) cases of male clients who were discharged from Renewal Inc.’s Outpatient program. Client’s files indicated prior offenses. Post-treatment success was assessed via a telephone interview. Implications of these relationships are presented with discussion focused on those prior offenses that appear related to successful post-treatment outcomes.
Factors Influencing Failed Adoptions at the
Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth & Families (OCYF)

The Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) opens, transfers, and/or closes multiple cases each day. One of the most positive reasons for a child that his/her case may close is because of adoption. Yet, not all adoptions result in happy endings. Sometimes adoptions fail. This study examined the factors that influence a failed adoption and re-entry into the OCYF system. The study was conducted by examining fifteen case files from OCYF’s Eastern Regional Office to determine factors associated with failed adoption. Findings suggest the more disruptive the behavior of an adopted child, the more likely it is the adoption will fail. Implications of the results for OCYF’s understanding of how to use these challenges to encourage successful adoptions are also presented.
Are Employees at Bayswater Families Centre Overall Satisfied with their Workplace?

Working in the field of social services, there are many stressors that can cause employees to have low levels of worker satisfaction. There are also many aspects of the job that workers find gratifying. The overall worker satisfaction at Bayswater Families Centre in London was explored using data collected from nine employees in the form of a twenty question survey. Results, which were based on a Likert scale, were analyzed to reveal the following results. Findings show that the majority of employees at Bayswater Families Centre are satisfied with the supervision and training which they receive, as well as the overall morale of the workplace. Many workers, however, are concerned with their salaries, their large caseloads, and the security of their positions. Results also suggest that employees with children living at home have higher levels of stress and a more difficult time balancing their work and home lives.
Client Outcomes for Those Whose Needs were Matched with Appropriate Services

Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Family gets cases from neglect to truancy and abuse; it is the case workers job to find beneficial resources to better the client. This study will examine what the outcomes were for clients whose needs were matched with appropriate services and compare them to outcomes for clients whose needs were not adequately matched. The specific approach that will be used to investigate the research question is a non-experimental design. I will examine randomly selected cases using data from 7 select cases in which outcomes would be considered not good, for example out of home placement for children. And also seven cases in which outcomes were positive, for example, reunification or completing parenting classes. Then look into services provided to see if there was a difference. Findings revealed will be presented upon completing of the study. In this research the outcomes will be the dependent variables and the independent variable will be if adequate services were presented. It is my hypothesis that over half of the clients involved with OCYF are not placed or adequately matched with the best services for them; therefore over half of the cases will result in “bad” outcomes. It is valuable to a clear understanding of the client’s core issue and the best way to approach them.
Characteristics of Parents who Abuse or Neglect their Children as Determined by the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

This study identifies characteristics of parents who abuse or neglect their children. Closed case records from Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) were examined for characteristics common among parents who have been found to have abused or neglected their children. Characteristics include domestic violence, mental health issues, and/or drug and alcohol use and/or abuse. Results suggest which characteristics are more likely to lead to abusive or neglectful situations. Discussion and implications of these results for effective child protective services case management are also presented.
Torrance State Hospital (TSH) is a state-owned and operated in-patient psychiatric hospital which treats individuals with severe and chronic mental illnesses. Diagnoses for these patients are primarily schizo-affective disorder, paranoid schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, severe depression and drug and alcohol addiction. This study will use survey methodology to measure the patient’s family member’s satisfaction with the hospital’s Social Services Department. A brief satisfaction survey will be mailed to the primary contact of each patient. Respondents will be asked to rate, on five point Likert scales, the Social Services Department in three key areas: Availability, Professionalism, and Overall Satisfaction. Upon their completion and return, the surveys will be analyzed. A similar study was undertaken in 2006 by an intern in the Social Services Department and the results were reported to the TSH Executive Committee, which requested this study be done. Data from this survey will be used to determine if the hospital’s Social Services Department is meeting the needs and expectations of the patient’s family members. More specifically, the data will help to possibly reprioritize the social worker’s workflows, determine if additional policies and procedures are needed, or simply to provide valuable positive feedback to the social workers.
Client Satisfaction with the “Earn While You Learn” Program

This study examined client satisfaction with a particular program at the Crisis Pregnancy Center, the “Earn While You Learn” program. “Earn While You Learn” is an educational program which involves parenting skills classes and education seminars, as well as provision of infant material goods provided by the center. The women served by the “Earn While You Learn” program are predominantly low-income single mothers. Eight former participants were queried utilizing a client satisfaction survey. Results are presented with a discussion of implications for client satisfaction of various program components.
An Examination of the Intersection of Domestic Violence Service Provision and Military Families that Use Crisis Center North’s Services in Regards to Future Practice

Domestic violence is widespread through many communities, regardless of race, age, class, religion or ability. This study seeks to find a relationship between military involvement (including Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard) and an increase in domestic violence among families and communities. Previous research suggests a connection between military involvement and domestic violence against intimate partners. Data will be collected via evaluation surveys given to counseling and case management clients; clients will be asked if they, a partner, or a family member is a member of the military as well as the level of violence they experience. Anticipated findings are that those who have a family member in the military will have experienced higher levels of violence.
Assessing the Effectiveness of Service Learning Lectures in Preparing Student Athletes for Service Learning Experiences

The mission of the Panther Game Plan is to develop and prepare student-athletes for success while in college and for life after college, utilizing academic, athletic and community resources. Each week a different student athletic team will conduct a sports clinic to surrounding children in the community. For my research I am assessing the effectiveness of service learning lectures in preparing student athletes for service learning experiences. In order to complete my research, I will prepare and conduct a preparation lecture and administer two different surveys to certain teams immediately following the PAWS sports clinic. One survey will research what the client gained from learning about the population prior to the clinic. The other will be administered to the student athletes that were not given the lecture. I will be measuring how well the student-athletes felt prepared with the lecture prior to the clinic, also comparing the results to the student athletes who did not have the lecture. Overall the information gathered would help my department on how preparation lectures could improve the impact of service learning activities for both the children served and the student athletes.
Survey and Evaluation of a Shelter Stay on the Perceived Stress of Female Domestic Violence Survivors

Extensive domestic violence research exists, yet there is little information available on the efficacy of shelter stays. This study will evaluate the effect of a shelter stay on the perceived stress of a sample of 124 female domestic violence survivors. The 4-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-4), found in tests to have adequate reliability and validity, is administered as each resident enters shelter, then again at two weeks into her stay, and finally upon exit of the shelter. Hypothesizing a 10% reduction in perceived stress, results so far have surpassed expectations. There is a statistically significant reduction in total perceived stress between entering shelter and two weeks (18% decline), and a further decline (3%) between two weeks and exit of shelter. This suggests that the initial stage in shelter stays offers the greatest relief from stress for many residents. Implications for the shelter include proof of efficacy to offer to funders and perspective on potential changes in programming and support offered after the first two weeks.
Drug and Alcohol Use and the Type of Exit from Shelter
Among Domestic Violence Survivors

At Women’s Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S), a woman’s stay in the shelter may be terminated if she shows aggression towards staff and residents, uses drugs on WC&S grounds, or takes an unauthorized overnight. This explanatory study seeks to understand: Is there a correlation between drug and alcohol use and the type of exit from shelter among the women who reside at WC&S? The hypothesis is that there is a positive correlation between drug and alcohol use and unauthorized overnights. All women residing at WC&S during a five month period will be participants in the study. Drug and alcohol use will be measured through a self-reported response to a Shelter Advocate and the type of exit from shelter will be determined by a Shelter Advocate when completing the resident’s exit plan. This data will be available through accessing client records. Findings will be shared upon completion of the study.
Is a History of Childhood Sexual Abuse a Precursor to Future Perpetrations of Sexual Misconduct as a Juvenile?

Annually, there are thousands of juveniles who are brought into the justice system and are represented by attorneys at the Public Defender’s Office. As of now, it appears that there are a growing number of adjudicated adolescents of sexual crimes, including rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, and indecent exposure. In addition, adult sex offenders are admitting to performing their first deviant sexual act before the age of 18. A relationship between childhood sexual abuse and future allegations of sexual misconduct may exist against juveniles under the age of 18, with childhood sexual abuse in fact leading to future sexual misconduct. To test this hypothesis and to determine if this relationship does exist, psychiatric evaluations of, as well as interviews with, the clients of the Public Defender’s Office will be used. Ten measurements of clients in a sex offending group and ten measurements of clients in a non-sex offending control group will be assessed. The study will consist of 20 cross-sectional chart reviews of secondary data and will examine the frequency of childhood sexual victimization in the sex offense group as compared to the non-sex offense group. It is hypothesized that a history of childhood sexual abuse is a precursor to future perpetrations of sexual misconduct as a juvenile. If this relationship is found, more preventive measures could be taken to halt the cycle of sexual abuse.
Older Adult Satisfaction with Care Managers

Older adult consumers (aged 65 and older) in Pittsburgh are the recipients of many county- and state-sponsored programs and services. Among these services are care management services provided by Ursuline Senior Services. This study reports client satisfaction as measured by quality assurance completed by non-case managers and this student. Five-to-seven consumers were randomly selected from the caseloads of each care manager. Consumers responded to a scripted survey regarding their satisfaction with care management services. Results are presented with a discussion of implications for care management.
Co-occurrence of Homelessness and Substance-Use Disorders  
Among Pittsburgh Veterans: Prevalence and Implications for Treatment

While the number of veterans experiencing homelessness appears to have been declining over the past two years, an estimated 107,000 former service men and women were homeless on any given night in 2009 (Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Home, 2009). Further, approximately 70 percent of homeless veterans suffer from substance-use disorders with more alcohol use and/or abuse found among homeless veterans when compared with their non-homeless counterparts. Yet, public perception suggests veterans are protected and cared-for given the array of services available to them as veterans. But the estimates of homeless veterans are not proportional to the numbers receiving services with the reasons for this being unclear. This poster reports on a study of the co-occurrence of homelessness and substance-use disorders among Pittsburgh veterans. The study sample includes every client who has utilized the Homeless Veterans Day Program (a service funded by the Veteran Administration’s Homeless Providers Grant and Per Diem Program) since the program opened October, 2010. Results of client’s self-reported past and/or current substance-use, treatment history, and homelessness are aggregated from client intake assessment forms. Implications of findings for intervention and treatment strategies are presented. Discussion also focuses on options for more effectively reintegrating veterans back into society as healthy, self-sustaining, and productive citizens.
Characteristics Among Sexually-abused Children Which May Facilitate
Later-Life Sexual Abuse: An Exploratory Assessment

There is little research on explaining how sexual abuse impacts a child on becoming a future sexual abuser. There is little research because of the fact that children are still vulnerable when they are young. This study will examine the relationship between certain factors in a sexually abused child’s life and whether or not they have gone on to perpetrate. The sample size in this study will be ten of each group, the sexually abused children who have gone on to abuse and the sexually abused children who have not. This study will examine twenty total kids ranging from the ages of five to twenty. I will be using case files to pull out the data I need to complete my study. I will be assigning points for certain factors that could ameliorate a child from perpetrating. My factors will include strong family support, peer support, school support and other factors that I find when looking over the case files. I have based my factors and point system on the research I have already done regarding the types of support systems perpetrators that have been sexually abused lacked.
North Hills Community Outreach (NHCO) is a community organization located in northern Allegheny County. The goal of NHCO is to provide services for struggling families and individuals including food, emergency financial help, Family Savings Accounts, college scholarships for nontraditional adults, support groups, employment coaching, and utility assistance. Services are generally provided to families living at or below 150% of the federal poverty level (FPL), currently less than $30,000/year for a family of four. This study presents results of a satisfaction survey administered to clients of one of NHCO’s services, utility assistance. Client’s applying for either the Consumer Assistance Program (sponsored by Duquesne Light) or the Dollar Energy Program (sponsored by Equitable Gas and Duquesne Light) were queried regarding their experiences with NHCO, the application process, and ultimate service delivery. Results and implications for improved effective service delivery are presented.
Outcomes of Sexual Abuse Cases in the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families:  
Is the Outcome Different Based on the Non-Offending Parent’s Status?

My research paper will investigate sexual abuse cases in the agency of Children, Youth, and Families. I will be exploring if there is a difference in outcomes based on the non-offending parent’s status. Possible outcomes I will be looking at are reunification, how long it took for reunification, if the parent rights were terminated, and if the parents followed the goals of Children Youth families to protect the abused child.

Children, Youth and Families, services thousands of clients in Allegheny County every year. Many of our clients have experienced sexual abuse. I will be examining a sample of these cases to assess if and to what degree there are differences in outcomes based on whether or not the non-offending parent is supportive of the child. What I will be looking for in the case files are incidents where the non-offending parent is in denial about the sexual abuse, if they side with the perpetrator, or if they blame the child for the abuse. Some of the outcomes I will be looking at are: if after the abuse children were removed from the home; was their reunification or not; how long it took for reunification; did parents adhere to the goals set by CYF; and how often parent’s rights were terminated in sexual abuse cases. The outcomes will be based on whether or not the non-offending parents support the abused child.

I am using a non-experimental design, I will review case files to carry out this study. The approach I will be using to investigate my research question is to simply ask the caseworkers in the Mon-Valley office to provide me with a sample of sexual abuse cases. I will examine the files and separate them into categories according to the outcome, and the position of the non-offending parent. It will not matter how long clients have been involved with the agency. I will be reviewing current cases.
High staff turnover has been a long standing issue in direct service positions. Staff turnover is not only monetarily expensive for an agency; it also disrupts the quality of services received by the consumers. My study utilizes survey methodology to assess consumer satisfaction and explain the effects of staff turnover on consumer comfort. I will distribute a survey to investigate the effects of staff turnover on consumer comfort. All of the surveys will be hand delivered and assistance will be available if necessary. The survey will consist of eleven questions and it is cross-sectional. Survey questions will ask how the presence of new staff affects the consumer’s level of discomfort performing daily tasks like taking medication, calling in medication, and discussing present issues. I will quantify staff turnover by including one question asking the consumers view on staff turnover at Baldwin Supportive Housing. I hypothesize that as the consumers’ negative view of staff turnover increases the level of consumer discomfort will increase as well. This will be, in part, an explanatory study because it will try to identify the cause and effect of these two variables and predict how consumer discomfort varies in response to staff turnover. Cross tabulation will be used to view the data showing the distribution of consumer discomfort across each category of staff turnover. Gamma will be used to measure the association. Much more research is needed on staff turnover in all types of organizations. Understanding the effects of staff turnover and how to minimize its effects can save all types of agencies money and help them serve their customers more effectively.
Employee Satisfaction with KiDS

Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Children Youth and Families (OCYF) caseworkers use the Key Information Demographic System (KiDS) to document casework. KiDS is a computer software program that was implemented in 2009. Before the launch of KiDS, Allegheny County caseworker documentation was paper-based. The research proposes the completion of an individual employee satisfaction. According to research, for any agency to be effective, its employees need to have high satisfaction with their employment. KiDS documentation is an enormous factor of OCYF employee satisfaction. Thus, this research will determine satisfaction with KiDS to aid in determining employee satisfaction within the Office of Children Youth and Families.
Effects of Client Investment in Employability/Marketability During Early Recovery from Substance Abuse Compared With Their Rate of Recidivism into Re-Incarceration

Over a half million incarcerated people will be released from jails and prisons this year (approximately sixteen hundred individuals per day). The United States Department of Justice estimates that over one-half (and perhaps as many as two-thirds) of these released inmates will recidivate or, return to a life of crime and the criminal justice system. The existing literature suggests much of this is due to legal and practical barriers to employment leaving many to return to criminal activity and re-incarceration. This study compares recidivism rates for those who, upon initial release, elect to accept training/educational opportunities with those who do not. The sample for this study is drawn from 100 men who have resided at Michael’s Place Recovery Home for at least one year. Program participation is determined by case records. Public records are cross-referenced for re-incarceration. Results suggest commitment to investment in sustainable employment result in lower rates of recidivism into re-incarceration.
Comparing Cooperation Levels of Parent with Children in Kinship-Care & Non-Familial Care

Over the past few decades, child protective services have increasingly looked toward family members to serve as a foster care placement for youth-in-need. This study examines the cooperation levels of parents with children in kinship care compared with that of children placed in non-familial care through Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF). Data were drawn from an inter-office survey of case workers to assess cooperation levels, as well as from available case file information. For the purposes of this study, “cooperation” has been defined as, “parent’s compliance with provider services and the Family Service Plan (FSP) provided by OCYF and any active court orders involving the family.” Results suggest implications for treatment planning and case management.
Successful Job Retention for Welfare-to-work Clients

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) implements a program called EARN. EARN provides services for out-of-school, school-aged, pregnant women receiving TANF (welfare) or SNAP (food stamp) benefits. This study examines the success of welfare-to-work (TANF) clients in obtaining and retaining employment with a focus on comparing those clients who move directly from welfare (TANF) to paid employment with those who move from welfare (TANF) to school and/or training then, subsequently seek paid employment. The study utilizes existing data available on 100 welfare-to-work clients who participated in the Pittsburgh EARN program during 2009. Results and discussion suggest implications for program utilization and delivery.
Decreasing the Probability of Victimization for
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons

Approximately 10 Million Americans are considered Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Of this population, one out of every 10 individuals is functionally deaf and has difficulty perceiving “normal conversations” (Mitchell, 2006). The Deaf and Hard of Hearing are traditionally known to be more vulnerable to certain types of discriminatory practices and victimization. Therefore, there is a need to improve the quality of life of the Deaf and hard of hearing population in order to reduce the disadvantages they have in society. This one-group pre-experimental, pre-post design study is intended to evaluate the effectiveness of safety awareness education programming within a Deaf partial hospitalization setting. Using a series of interaction role-play sketches, 13 voluntary Deaf and hard of hearing participants will be educated on the application of skills to decrease their probability of victimization. Individual responses will be recorded and assessed to whether a change in their understanding and awareness of safety has changed. Results are expected to be presented in May 2011.
**Instances of Crime in Allegheny County: Where are Clients of the Center for Victims of Violence & Crime (CVVC) Most Likely to Live?**

The Center for Victims of Violence and Crime (CVVC) is a community-based crime victim and witness assistance program as well as a Pennsylvania-designated rape crisis center that provides critical services to men, women, children who are victims of all forms of violence and crime. Recently merged with Pittsburgh Mediation Center it has expanded its service delivery continuum of violence prevention to include conflict resolution and mediation services. This study provides a description of the occurrences of crime across Allegheny County in order to determine the highest concentrations of clientele as well as the types of victimization that are experienced by agency clientele by county location. Data were drawn from closed client files for the years 2008 and 2009. Results aggregated crimes-by-type using zip codes available in these case files. Zip codes were then assessed for the location’s SES. Implications for service delivery with particular sensitivity to race and incomes, are presented given results suggesting most clients came from locations with high numbers of low-income African Americans.
Improving Behavior and Socialization Skills in Autistic Young Adults

Autistic young adults often have issues with their behavior and socialization skills which can be hard to improve, especially if the adult has a severe case of autism. This study will seek to analyze and improve these skills with an intervention carried out by staff members at the local community center. The eligibility criteria that will be set for participation are that the person needs to have experience working with the autistic population and have knowledge of the typical behaviors exhibited by autistic young adults. The concepts the study will assess are the efficiency of cues and reinforcement, using a behavioral checklist as well as a functional behavioral assessment. Findings revealed will help to reduce negative behavior and increase positive behavior. It will also identify what factors influence behavior and what can be done to prevent the negative behavior.
Prevalence of Abuse and Homelessness in Adolescents

At present, adolescent homeless youth have been under-represented in research. Little is known about this population, and most research and literature to date focuses on drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness. This study examined (will examine) the prevalence of abuse (physical, sexual and verbal) and homelessness using a sample size of 10 homeless adolescents, ages 18-21. A face-to-face interview was (will be) conducted with each of the participants. Questions were (will be) scored on a scale from 1-5; one being no abuse at all and five constant abuse. Other information gathered (that was gathered) during the interview included race, sex, age and current living situation. The results will show a moderately high prevalence among abuse and homeless youth. Further research must be done on this population; however prevention efforts should be made immediately. The findings suggest that more programs must be put in to place in order to avoid future incidents.