

Gang Interrupted:

An Investigation of What Helps and Hinders Girls' Prosocial Connectedness

by

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Gang Interrupted: An Investigation of What Helps and Hinders Girls' Prosocial Connectedness

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ABSTRACT

Women and girls are being implicated in gang-related operations at alarming rates. Issues such as drug trafficking, sexual exploitation, gun violence and street entrenchment are of particular concern for this population. British Columbia has seen a rise in gang-associated violence and homicide directed at, or involving women over the last decade. Over a 3-month period in 2009, 4 women were reportedly killed due to their affiliation with B.C. gangs. The Surrey Wraparound Program (WRAP) a school-based Positive Youth Development (PYD) initiative, was established in 2009 in response to increasing gang-activity and youth crime in Surrey, B.C. The program aims to support youth at risk of gang involvement, youth displaying gang-associated behaviors, and youth currently involved in gangs, by attaching them to an adult mentor who works with the youth and their family to facilitate prosocial connections to five life domains: a) school b) community c) home d) peers and e) the self. A 2012 evaluation report determined the program to be effective in reaching its objectives with a predominantly male population (84%). However, within the last two years the program has dramatically increased its responsiveness to girls, with a nearly 50% increase in female clients. While this response is both urgent and timely, this important work has yet to benefit from local, evidence-informed research to shape and support its efforts. The present study contributes to this effort by making use of the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) to capture the voices of eight female identifying clients, and nine staff/ program affiliates who were asked to respond to the question: What has helped/hindered/would have better helped facilitate a) your prosocial connectedness? (clients) b) the prosocial connectedness of your female clients? (staff). Findings were organized into 34 categories: 15 demonstrated those incidents that were helpful to participants, 10 demonstrated

those incidents that were hindering, and nine demonstrated wish list items across the two groups. Parallel analyses point to the effectiveness of using a relational/attachment model to inform strategies for gang prevention and intervention in female youth.

LAY SUMMARY

This study was interested in finding out whether the Surrey Wraparound Program (WRAP) – a school based program for gang prevention—is meeting its relational goals with female clients. WRAP believes that by forming healthy relationships with clients (youth between the ages of 11 and 17), they will be more likely to seek out prosocial alternatives to the gang lifestyle that will enhance their self-worth and well-being. Using an Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) methodology, eight female client participants and nine WRAP staff members were asked about those incidents that helped and hindered the formation of healthy connections, both within the program and outside of the program, in the community. They were also asked if anything was missing from the program that could have helped to form these relationships. Findings were organized into 34 categories: 15 helping, 10 hindering and 9 wish list. The results of this study point to the benefit of healthy relationships on female youth development and the role of attachment in gang prevention.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original, unpublished, independent product of the author, Rebecca Barrett-Wallis, who completed all work, including research design, participant recruitment, data collection, analysis, and manuscript write-up.

This research received ethics approval from the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) and the Surrey School District 36 Research Review board. The certificate number of the ethics certification obtained for this study under BREB was H17-00413 under the title "Prosocial attachment and the facilitation of connection to five domains among girls in the Surrey Wraparound Program".

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This study was made possible with the assistance of two grants. Thank you to the John and Doris Andrew's Research and Development Award and to the Faculty of Education Graduate Student Research Grant for seeing the value in this project and contributing financially to its completion and success.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my ‘mum’, Maggie and my partner, Nigel. Mum, thank you for always picking up the phone and for continuing to believe in me no matter what. Nigel, thank you for your continuous support and for always letting me know how proud you are of me. Finally, thank you of course to my dad, for reminding me to “just get it done” and all my friends and family for their motivation and encouragement. Without all of you this would not have been possible.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The organizational structure and demographic of the Canadian street gang is changing. Once considered a male-dominated arena, the street gang¹ or “youth gang” as it is otherwise known, is no longer “off limits” to girls and women (McKee, 2010). British Columbia has seen a rise in gang-related violence and homicide over the last three decades. In 2002, Public Safety Canada submitted a report in which they estimated 12% of BC’s gang population to be female (Public Safety Canada, 2016). Today, this number is thought to be much larger, with young women and girls being recruited for gang-related operations at alarming rates (Hoogland & desLibris, 2010). While it remains somewhat unclear what roles these girls are occupying in their gang affiliation, we do know that this population faces unique risks such as forced drug trafficking and sexual exploitation—in comparison to their male counterparts—when it comes to gang involvement (Hutchison, 2013; Batchelor, 2009). A paradigmatic shift in our conceptualization of gangs and gang-related behaviours is underway, necessitating a re-evaluation of our approach to intervening.

The Surrey Wraparound Program (WRAP) was created in 2009 in response to gang activity and youth crime in Surrey B.C. A 2012 evaluation determined the program to be highly effective in reaching its objectives with a predominantly male population (Malatest, 2011).

Within the last two years the program has dramatically increased its responsiveness to girls.

¹ [A gang is] any denotable...group [of adolescents and young adults] who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighborhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name), and (c) have been in a sufficient number of [illegal] incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighborhood residents and/or enforcement agencies (Shelden, Tracy and Brown, 2004).

While this response is both urgent and timely, this important work has yet to benefit from local, evidence-informed research to shape and support its efforts. The WRAP program asserts that offering youth opportunities for establishing healthy attachment bonds can enhance prosocial connections that prevent youth from becoming involved in gangs and/or promote the purposeful withdrawal from anti-social gang affiliations that have already been established (Wraparound, n.d.). For the purpose of the present study, “prosocial connectedness” has been employed as a term to describe any relationship that has proven to be positive or helpful and that is intended to promote a positive lifestyle and self-worth for youth.

I interpret WRAP’s expressed objectives as operating under the purview of an Attachment perspective. The WRAP program seeks to connect their youth to the following 5 life domains: a) family b) school c) peers d) community and e) themselves as a means of promoting prosocial connectedness. These 5 domains are also applied in the WRAP referral process to determine risk and protective factors. The purpose of this study is to learn from WRAP female clients and staff members which factors in particular helped, hindered and were wished for in the development of client prosocial connectedness. Critical Incident findings will help inform the use of a relational/attachment model with this unique population.

At its inception, 84% of the WRAP population identified as male, and 16% female. In recent years however, the program has seen a marked 50% increase in female referrals (Mackay, S. Personal Communication. Oct 3, 2016). Today, approximately 30% of The WRAP program’s participants are female (Mackay, S. Personal Communication, Oct 3, 2016). While WRAP has been ultimately successful in reaching its young, predominantly male, constituents – a 2012 evaluation report saw a 67% decrease in negative police contact among participants, and in one instance facilitators even stopped the formation of a gang (Public Safety Canada, 2012)—there

has yet to be a study examining its effect on young gang-involved girls. WRAP's primary goal of facilitating trusting and positive relationships between the youth's and their families, school, communities and peers has proven to be helpful for preventing and keeping young men out of gangs (Public Safety Canada, 2012). However, it remains unclear whether this relational goal, and the practices implemented to achieve it, are suitable and/or helpful for young women. Given WRAP's emerging responsiveness to girls, it follows that research such as that of the present study, be performed to assess the benefits and challenges of using their attachment model with this population.

A review of the literature reveals gender-specific gaps in gang programming and research. According to Mark Totten (2009), typical program models, aimed at curtailing gang activity, are male-centric, and fail to address the unique needs of women and girls. Moreover, national gang prevention programs are seldom evaluated for their effectiveness with girls. Of those programs that have been evaluated, outcome studies reveal "minimal benefit," and, in some cases, have even shown subsequent increases in gang membership for both genders (Klein, 2009; Totten, 2009). The WRAP program is exceptional in its success with young men. Thus, the extension of such an effective program to young women follows as reasonable.

1.2 Background

The Wraparound Philosophy

The Wraparound process was first adopted in the United States in the early 1980s. The process was designed to improve the lives of individuals and their families with complex needs through a collaborative and team-based approach. As outlined by the official Wraparound resource guide, the process can best be described as one which aims to:

- Create, implement, and monitor an individualized plan using a collaborative process driven by the perspective of the family;
- Develop a plan that includes a mix of professional supports, natural supports, and community members;
- Base the plan on the strengths and culture of the youth and their family; and
- Ensure that the process is driven by the needs of the family rather than by the services that are available or reimbursable.

(VanDenBerg, J., Bruns, E. & Burchard, J., 2003).

Use of the term “wraparound” has, according to VanDenBerg and colleagues (2003), become common shorthand for any flexible and comprehensive service delivery which “wraps around” the youth and family as a way of keeping them engaged in their communities. There have however been a number of major developments in the use and application of the Wraparound process, especially in the United States and Canada, over the past 20 years. Agency and community groups in British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan most notably, began to adopt the Wraparound approach through the 1990s (WRAP Canada). In 2000, effectiveness studies demonstrated positive outcomes that led to the maturation of the approach and the implementation of WRAP processes across the country (Debicki, 2009). Even more recently, Canada has developed a High Fidelity Wraparound Model aimed at maximizing the effects of the approach for children, youth adults and their families (WRAP Canada).

The Surrey Wraparound Program

The Surrey Wraparound Program (WRAP) was initiated in 2009 in response to increasing gang activity and youth crime in Surrey, B.C. In an attempt to “maximize public safety, curb violence, and curtail criminal activity” (Public Safety Canada, 2012), the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police (RCMP), in partnership with the Surrey School Board, established a school-based program, guided by research-informed literature on Wraparound processes. The WRAP program participant, a youth between the ages of 11 and 17, is at the center of his or her care planning. The program provides youth opportunities to be mentored by prosocial adults, whose job it is to engage the youth through recreation, volunteer and leadership, individual and family counselling, substance and mental health support and life skills training. Supported by a team of staff facilitators including a Manager, a Youth Diversity Liaison, a Substance Abuse Liaison and a Youth Interventionist from the RCMP, the young person is encouraged to have “voice and choice” when making important life decisions throughout their engagement with the program. Parents, caregivers and/or guardians are included in goal setting if and when appropriate.

The collaborative Wraparound Team (WT) strives to meet the program’s aim of building healthy relationships that translate into a “positive lifestyle and self-worth for youth” (Wraparound, n.d.). WRAP’s objective hinges on the belief that through forming at least one “trusting and positive relationship,” (to counsellors, parents, caregivers and/or guardians etc.), youth may develop more prosocial attachments to the following 5 domains: a) family b) school, c) peers, d) community, e) themselves (Wraparound, n.d.). By offering an alternative arena to the gang, for establishing human connection, the program hopes to prompt the purposeful withdrawal from antisocial and gang-related affiliations and promote self-worth and wellbeing among youth.

WRAP staff are typically the first line of contact with whom youth share their ongoing stressors and prior traumas (Mackay, S., Personal Communication, Oct 3, 2016). Because of this pattern of disclosure, the WRAP program distances itself from the more categorical, inflexible therapeutic programs for youth delinquency (Totten, 2008), and instead strives to “wrap around”

the youth in ways that address the aforementioned 5 domains. Youth Diversity Liaisons (YDLs) consult the participant on his or her personal care planning. Activities in education, health or recreation are chosen collaboratively, and performed together or in groups. For example, mentors may accompany a student to the gym, play basketball with him or her, or even cook in a recently acquired community kitchen. Clients may also be invited to take part in various organized group activities that involve experiences such as camping, kayaking, white-water rafting, and taekwondo.

In order to be referred and admitted to The WRAP program, students must exhibit what the Surrey School District refers to as “gang associated behaviours” (Wrap Referral Form, n.d.). It is important to recognize that the WRAP program takes both a prevention and intervention approach and therefore while some clients may have previously been involved in gangs, gang-involvement is not a requirement. Resources permitting, those youth determined “at-risk” based on a rubric-style referral form will be invited to join the program. The literature points to both strengths and challenges to using a risk factor approach and this will be taken up in the following chapter.

Teachers, staff members and/or other concerned parties are asked to rate the “risk and protective factors” for students using a 5- point likert-type scale response format (Appendix A). Factors fall under the following 5 life domains (one of six examples from each domain has been provided for clarity’s sake): a) Individual (“difficulty in accepting responsibility”) b) Peer Factors (“has recently shifted social circles to delinquent peers”) c) School Factors (“Low educational aspirations”) d) Family Factors (“Family violence, neglect or drug addiction”) and e) Community Factors (“High crime Neighbourhood”). Students who score within a range that would suggest they are “at-risk” are typically admitted into the program. While the referral form

itself does not serve directly to answer the question of how WRAP defines gang-involvement, it does illustrate an understanding of this phenomenon as multifaceted and idiosyncratic. In other words, it highlights the multitude of risk factors that may contribute to youth gang-involvement.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Of the few researchers who study female gang involvement, there is a shared tendency to advocate for a gender-specific theory to capture the lived experience of these girls and women (Bell, 2009; Curry, 1998). This shared request for a gender-specific theory however, is often called for in response to the question: Why do girls join gangs? While this question is an important one, and one that will help inform intervention efforts, from a Counselling Psychology perspective, I argue that the more urgent need is knowledge about what factors best contribute to the prevention and intervention of female gang involvement. The field of Counselling Psychology is known for its strengths-based, collaborative capacity to support clients through a non-linear change process. While it is important to understand the antecedents and risk factors that contributed to a client's situation, I would argue that change occurs is more likely to occur when we consider what has yet to be done and how best to implement new ways of thinking and being in the world.

According to Totten (2009), gender-responsiveness in gang-related programming is essential and must be “rooted in the developmental, psychological and social characteristics of [gang-involved] females” (p. 268). Jane Wood and Emma Alleyne (2010) suggest that what is missing from existing research, and theories of gang-involvement, is the discipline of Psychology. Specifically, they argue: “a broadening of discipline involvement will shape and expand knowledge in a way that can only benefit [gang research]... psychologists need to become more involved in the study of gangs” (p. 101).

The present study is both relevant and timely. Women and girls are being implicated in gang-related activity in British Columbia and around the world in myriad ways including, substance use and trafficking, sexual exploitation and physical abuse (Hoogland et al., 2010). Overall, there remains a lack of consensus regarding what roles girls are truly occupying in gangs. This discrepancy requires critical attention for its capacity to reinforce harmful narratives that serve to further marginalize an already vulnerable group. Examples of harmful language are rampant in the media. Sources either tend to glorify women as “appendages to male gangs” (Hoogland et al., 2010) “pampered as wives or girlfriends” (Ferguson, 2009), or suggest they are being “exploited as prostitutes, drug runners and other bottom-of-the-barrel players” (Macdonald, 2009). Recent scholarship has indicated that young females are increasingly self-reporting as “gang members”, and are “not just girlfriends, groupies, gun/drug holders, ghetto rats, ‘guy-like’ (i.e., tomboys), or gays (i.e., lesbians)” (Peterson & Howell 2013). Regardless of what roles these girls are occupying or being claimed to occupy, the concern for the individual and community should be one of safety and productivity.

Not only can gang-related activity lead to societal harm such as homicides, burglaries, and assaults, perhaps more importantly, it can lead to tragic outcomes for the girls themselves such as trauma, sexual exploitation, and even death. Jody Miller (2001) expands, “whereas many opportunities for legitimate success are already gravely limited for young women living in impoverished communities, the negative consequences associated with gang membership, as well as public response to gangs and to women... can exacerbate the situation further” (p. 12).

Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs are those which hold preventative, positive and holistic philosophies and focus on the developmental assets and competencies in all young people (Best Practices: Positive Youth Development). WRAP’s objectives and target population

place it within the purview of PYD programs more generally. Unfortunately, although both Wraparound and PYD approaches have been increasingly identified in the research for their capacity to promote prosocial development in youth (Anderson-Butcher, Cash, Saltzburg, Midle & Pace, 2004) “little is still known about what program characteristics specifically create positive outcomes for youths” (p. 84).

Research such as this, which seeks answers to such questions as: Is this program working the way the team and its constituents would like it to?; If so, how do they know what works best, under which circumstances, and from whose point of view?; Is there a way to enhance the program’s implementation to reflect these circumstances and points of view?; and What specific activities and experiences enhance the program overall? will not only help fill this void, but will help program developers and stakeholder make informed decisions about best practices in female gang-intervention efforts globally.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to learn from WRAP female clients and staff members what helped, hindered and were wished for in the development of client prosocial connectedness. With this in mind, the following research question was developed:

1. What has helped/hindered/would have better helped facilitate the development of prosocial connectedness among female clients of the Surrey Wraparound Program?

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction to the Literature

A review of the literature reveals the gang as a place where girls seek connection, safety, and love. Research unanimously illustrates the ways in which the gang serves as an escape from a disorganized, isolating, and typically violent home life. The common sentiment that links gang girls' narratives is one of feeling isolated and left behind by their family: "I felt that my family didn't care for me...that when I was on the streets I felt that I got more love than when I was in the house so I felt that's where my love was, on the streets, so that's where I stayed" (Miller, 2001, p. 50). Understanding female gang involvement is complex, but even more complex are the topics of female gang prevention and desistance (withdrawing from the gang), subjects which have been grossly overlooked in the literature. At present, it is not well known what specific factors contribute to the success or failure of gang prevention programs from girls, nor is it well understood what theoretical models function best to fill this void. The following review of the literature will begin by introducing theories that have been applied to youth gangs, with special attention to one specific theory for its relevance to the present study. Following this, a discussion of the complexities in defining "youth gang" and the problems associated with it will help situate the current study within a critical framework. Next, a brief history of the youth gang epidemic both globally and locally, with a discussion of the antecedents and risk factors to female gang-involvement will be offered. Finally, I discuss the complex subject of girls' roles in gangs followed by an overview of the promising intervention efforts that are already in existence.

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

A large number of theories have been applied to youth gangs and the processes by which we intervene in them. Historically, theories which had strong links with conventional institutions

such as Social Control Theory and Social Disorganization Theory were more readily taken up in the gang literature and research. More recently, theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Social Ecology Model have gained traction in gang research for their constructivist paradigms which see the human as inseparable from his or her community. The present study finds value in both epistemologies but has determined one theory in particular to be most useful for conceptualizing female gang involvement and the mechanisms through which intervening may be made possible: Attachment Theory.

Attachment Theory. Drawing on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992) developed a Theory of Attachment based on the premise that the quality of the child-caregiver connection could either enable or inhibit the healthy social, cognitive and physical development of the child. To the best of my knowledge, Attachment Theory has yet to be applied to the study of female youth gangs. I see Attachment Theory offering an exceptional foundation for understanding the broad intervention goals of WRAP and the mechanisms through which change is believed to occur in their female clients. Further, I believe Attachment Theory may be particularly useful for its contributions to the knowledge gap in gender-responsive gang programming and research.

At its most basic level, Attachment Theory posits that in order for an individual to develop in a healthy trajectory, he or she must have established a strong emotional and physical bond to at least one primary caregiver early in life. Many of the youth who enter into WRAP have had limited access to healthy attachment figures and models for prosocial connections early in life. Luckily, recent research has begun to acknowledge the role that non-parent adults can have in helping children and adolescents form secure attachment bonds in the absence of familial ones. In fact, multiple studies point to the capacity of non-parents mentors, or leaders to help

modify the internal working models of attachment for youth who have had particularly negative, or insecure, patterns of attachment with their caregivers (Rhodes, 2005; de Vries, Hoeve, Stams & Asscher, 2015). This component of Attachment Theory helps us understand how older children and even adolescents may become resilient to such negative life events as sexual abuse, violence, and neglect. I see the core principles of Attachment theory as paralleling the ideologies of WRAP, the most powerful of which lies in its conviction that through the development of trusting and positive relationships, even in the absence of familial bonds, female youth may develop a sense of self-worth and well-being that can counteract the effects of negative life events and promote more prosocial behaviours.

More so than for boys, girls report that one of the primary purposes for joining the gang is for its potential to fulfill a role that the family never could – one of love, connection and purpose (Miller, 2001). Attachment theory may therefore be an especially valid lens through which to conceptualize the subject of gender in youth gangs.

2.3 Defining Youth Gangs and the Problems Associated with it

At present, we lack a universal definition for “youth gang,” which critical researchers identify as problematic (Henry, 2015; Gebo & Bond, 2014; Deuchar, 2009; White, 2008); particularly, for the way in which it opens up certain racialized minorities to particular kinds of social profiling. Because practitioners, policy makers and researchers have yet to agree upon a shared definition for “youth gangs”, policies to reduce gangs and gang related behaviors are at risk of aiming their efforts in ineffective directions. Currently, the most common approach to distinguishing possible gang involved youth from non-gang involved youth is by way of a risk factor analysis like the one employed by WRAP. This process by which youth are being targeted for gang programs however, has been shown to be inherently flawed insofar as it depends on

harmful stereotypes (Henry, 2015; White, 2008). Those characteristics that most typically form the catalog of “at-risk” signifiers will always already target racialized minorities in communities with entrenched poverty (Henry, 2015). Rob White (2008) takes up this problem by suggesting that what risk assessments actually end up targeting is not the “gang member” but rather an “empty signifier”; a placeholder for a certain *type* of person who may or may not exist outside the realm of the stereotype. “Social profiling in the name of risk assessment assumes certain things about ‘normality’ and the inherent legitimacy of the status quo”. The consequence: “Inreas[ing] the range of those potentially placed under surveillance and subject to possible intervention” (White, 2008, p. 158).

The comparative approach to servicing gang members is complicated by the multilayered nature and dynamics of youth associations. According to Erika Gebo and Christopher Sullivan (2014), “gang membership is fluid, and commitment to the gang varies between individuals and within individuals over time” (p.194). Because of the fluid nature of the gang identity, gang prevention and intervention strategies may struggle to translate theoretical findings into practice (Gebo & Sullivan, 2014). The question of how best to respond is a complex one but White (2008) suggests that by “focusing on the social conditions that give rise to gang formation, and developing responses that affect communities, not just individuals” (p. 159) we may be able to mitigate social profiling.

2.4 History of Youth Gangs

The term “youth gang” is often used to describe “any denotable...group [of adolescents and young adults i.e., between the ages of 12-21] who (a) are generally perceived as a distinct aggregation by others in their neighbourhood, (b) recognize themselves as a denotable group (almost invariably with a group name), and (c) have been in a sufficient number of [illegal]

incidents to call forth a consistent negative response from neighbourhood residents and/or enforcement agencies” (Sheldon, Tracey & Brown, 2004, p. 58). Youth gang membership not only negatively affects those involved, but also impacts the community, justice system and health care system.

In comparison to our nearest neighbour, the United States, issues related to youth gangs in Canada seems comparatively insignificant. In 2001, the Canadian youth gang population was some 1% of the youth gang population in the United States. With an estimated 7,071 youth gang members in Canada in 2001, as opposed to 772,500 in the U.S. (Canadian Police Survey, 2002), we may not believe we have a problem at all. However, what Canadian community leaders need to be aware of is just how fast these gangs proliferate once cemented. For example, between 1980 and 2001, the U.S. gang member populations increased an entire 673%, and the estimated number of youth gangs saw a 1,125% increase (Canadian Police Survey, 2002).

Recent reports have documented the growth of gang involvement among girls in both Canada and the United States (Totten, 2008; Abbotsford Youth Commission, 2010). In 2001, approximately 12% of the Canadian, and 10% of the American, youth gang population, were female (Totten, 2008; National Youth Gang Center, 2007). More recently, data was collected from seven cities across the U.S. within the Gang Resistance Education and Training program (G.R.E.A.T), and reports revealed as many as 41.4% of gang members as female. Whereas statistics differ depending on the manner in which data is collected (e.g., self-report vs. observation), the population drawn from, and the operationalization of gang involvement, what is evidenced by these numbers, is the need for immediate female gang intervention and gendered program reform.

In British Columbia

Vancouver's notable crime rate is being linked with youth gang involvement (Totten, 2008). In 2015, The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSE) released their annual report, revealing 30 gang-related homicides and attempted homicides in B.C. in the first six months of the year (CFSE, 2015). This is more than the recorded total amount for the previous two years. Moreover, the age at which youth are entering into gangs is younger than ever before, with 48% of gang members in Canada being under the age of 18 ("Youth Gangs in Canada", 2016). According to Dr. Alanaise Goodwill of Simon Fraser University and Dr. Ishu Ishiyama of The University of British Columbia (2016), youth between the ages of 13-15 are at the highest risk for joining a gang and, high schools with larger student populations are four times more likely to host gang activity than smaller schools (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). The Surrey School District has some of the largest high schools in the province. Of the 19 high schools, the student body ranges from 1,245 to 1,944, making this a high priority area. Moreover, Surrey census data from 2016 demonstrates 58.5% of residents in Surrey to be visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2016). Some of the most populous visible minority groups in Surrey are: South Asian (37.6%); Philippines (10.8%); and Aboriginal (5.4%). Youth from racialized minority groups experience higher levels of social and economic disadvantage and are at higher risk for social exclusion, negative physical and mental health outcomes, and joining gangs (Dunbar, 2017). Gangs have been shown to most often form in communities where "an accumulation of different forms of disadvantage (e.g., economic disadvantage, lack of opportunities, family disruption, racial discrimination) come together" (Dunbar, 2017, p. 14). For Aboriginal youth in particular, risk factors for gang involvement are further compounded by the wider historical, structural and cultural issues relating to settler colonialism and structural violence (Goodwill, 2016; Dunbar, 2017; Henry, 2017). According Laura Dunbar (2017), citing the work of Pyrooz et al., (2010)

“the emergence and sustainability of gangs and gang membership rely on the extent to which these disadvantages are more prevalent in communities” (p. 15).

Over a 3-month period in 2009, 4 women were reportedly killed due to their affiliation with gangs in B.C. Media coverage of the events stated that all four women had ties to criminal gang-related elements. In a 2009 *CTV* article following the shootings of these 4 women, Rob McKee (2010) wrote, “If there ever was a street code that women and children are off limits – it’s no longer obeyed by those responsible for B.C.’s gang war. The bullets are flying and they don’t care about age or gender”.

2.5 Antecedents and Risk Factors to Female Gang-Involvement

At present, our understanding of the risk factors² and pathways to female gang involvement remains broad and unrefined. For this reason it can be difficult to determine priorities for gang prevention and intervention for this population. According to Dana Peterson (2012), “the life experiences of girls who join gangs are consistently more negative than those of girls who avoid gang life” (p. 493). As well, unlike male gang members, who typically come from “conventional working-class families,” gang-involved girls are more likely to come from impoverished households that “are abusive as well” (Bell, 2009). It should also be stated that race, ethnicity, immigrant status and class intersect with gender in ways which serve to render the individual multiply disadvantaged.

² A risk factor can be defined as “a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, community, or cultural level that precedes and is associated with a higher likelihood of problem outcomes” (O’Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009).

Compared to their male counterparts, girls are more likely to cite the following as reasons for joining gangs: they provide a “social outlet” from an otherwise boring or frustrating existence (Peterson, 2012); they provide a safe haven from a tumultuous and often violent home life (Brotherton & Salazar-Atias, 2003); and they provide a “surrogate or alternate family” to their biological families that are ultimately failing them (Brotherton & Salazar-Atias, 2003; Miller, J, 2001; Nurge, 2003). In sum, it would appear that girls join gangs to feel connected. Boys on the other hand, are more likely to join gangs because they are “exciting”, provide “protection” and help them “gain respect” (Peterson, 2012).

Whereas the literature does not overlook these self-reported antecedents, research highlights a multitude of “unique and special” risk factors that should be carefully considered when assessing and intervening in female gang involvement (Chaterjee, 2006). According to a Consultation Paper completed by the Abbotsford Youth Commission in 2010, factors that have been shown to contribute to women and girls’ heightened vulnerability to gang involvement include, but are not limited to:

“...a history of victimization...;academic failure, truancy, school drop-out; running away; prostitution; unstable family life (lack of connectedness, isolation, other family members involved in the justice system); a history of unhealthy, dependent relationships, primarily with older males; mental health issues; and a history of substance abuse” (Chaterjee, 2006 as cited in Hoogland & desLibris, 2010).

Moreover, as compared to boys, girls were reportedly more likely to come from gang-exposed neighbourhoods and be the daughter of at least one substance user, who was frequently violent, physically and/or sexually towards her (Peterson, 2012; Bell, 2009; Moore & Hagedorn, 1996).

The relationship between gender and gang involvement is an important one, as is the relationship between race and class. Pernilla Johansson and Kimberly Kempf-Leonard (2009) argue that experiencing these risk factors in combination may propel “a subgroup of girls toward serious, violent and chronic juvenile offender careers” (p. 221). I would also be careful not to ignore the traumatic effects of these experiences, and the impression that trauma can leave on the mind and body. If girls are made to feel worthless and victimized as children, they are more likely to accept and even seek out, similar treatment as adolescents (Peterson & Seligman, 1993).

2.6 Role of Girls in Gangs

Traditionally, gang research has restricted and subjugated girls to tertiary, “bottom of the barrel” roles (Bjerregaard, 2002). The stereotypical representation of girls as “lesser-than” in the gang context is understood by some to be a magnified representation of the society in which we live. As Peterson (2012) explains, “the gender oppression and sexual double standards present in our society often are amplified in the gang context, where masculinities play out and intersect with the female gang experience” (p. 75). There exists an inherent paradox in the ways in which girl’s gang involvement is typically understood. On the one hand, joining in with gang-related behaviour has been called a liberating act, one that defies the status quo and rejects the stereotype of girl as submissive. This representation of gang girls is one of “street feminists, blazing a trail of equality through their adoption of violence and aggression” (Miller, 2001, p. 1). On the other hand however, once “girls find themselves constrained by cultural and societal expectations adhered to not only by males in the gang, but by themselves and other females”

(Peterson, 2012, p. 75), they become “hapless and pathetic, sexually mistreated on the streets as a result of their individual maladjustment” (Miller, 2001, p. 3).

One of the most significant complicating factors when it comes to understanding the role of girls in gangs is that research, for the most part, and like in so many other fields, has remained male-centric. In other words, we understand girls’ roles in gangs only as they relate to boys’/men’s. Susan Batchelor (2009) explains, “there has been a tendency in such discussions to ignore the experiences of girls and young women, or to write about them solely from the perspective of young men” (p. 399). This further highlights the importance of engaging directly with girls in order to get a clearer picture of what gang involvement looks like for this often overlooked population. Unfortunately, there are only a small number of studies that have striven to bring the voices of these girls and women to the forefront (Batchelor, 2005).

Despite the fact that research on female gang involvement has been male-centric there remains within the literature an overwhelming portrayal of the female gang affiliate as “sexual slave”, “traded amongst members for coercive sex” (Totten, 2008, p. 15). Two United Kingdom based qualitative studies (Batchelor, 2009 and Young et al., 2007) uncovered evidence for this unfortunate phenomenon from the girls themselves. Not only was coercive sex found to be routine, exposure to violence was also common among the girls represented in these studies. If this depiction of female gang-involvement is even remotely accurate, it places even greater urgency on the requirement for program reform and a gendered response.

In British Columbia

In recent years, there has been growing interest from various Canadian governmental departments and researchers on the role of girls in gangs (Abbotsford Youth Commission, 2010). In fact, The Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit’s

(CFSE) 2015 annual report was dedicated to this very topic; titled *Youth, Girls, and Gangs*, it included a special issue story on one woman's experience trafficking drugs for a prominent BC-based gang. In the story she speaks of her constant fear, manipulation, and physical and mental abuse. Stories of this nature are not uncommon in the literature and media. A 2013 publication in *The National Post* discussed the involvement of a high-school-aged girl who personally reported running a "dial-a-dope" business around Metro-Vancouver with the street gang the Red Scorpions. She also admitted to helping "clean bullets" and "destroy cell-phones" after a 2007 massacre involving 6 men in Surrey, B.C. (Hutchinson, 2013).

Notwithstanding these often shocking narratives, there remains a deficiency in knowledge surrounding the effectiveness of gang prevention and intervention strategies for the female population. Though we may have access to the girl's personal stories, we have yet to translate the knowledge gained from these narratives into a comprehensive gang strategy. The risk of this oversight is the further marginalization of these girls and women.

2.7 Disrupting Bonds and Gang Desistance

While there has been sufficient research performed on the factors that may draw individuals to gangs, the topic of gang exit, or "desistance", has been grossly overlooked (Huff, 1996). Eryn O'Neal and colleagues (2016) argue that research on individual experiences during the disengagement process is "the most underdeveloped area of gang research" (p. 44). This gap could be seen as a result of the difficulties involved in operationalizing gang desistance. In other words, it can be very difficult to know when someone has truly withdrawn from his or her

involvement in gang-related behaviours (Pyrooz & Decker, 2011; O'Neal et al., 2016; Carson et al., 2013).

Of those few studies that examine gang desistance, the topic has typically been conceptualized within theories of life course transitions and role theory (O'Neal et al., 2016). Scott Decker and colleagues (2014) discuss the applicability of these theories to gang desistance in their study of 84 former gang-involved individuals and find that while conceptualizing gang-involvement under the purview of these two theories can be helpful, there is a need for a typology for understanding the “back-end” of this phenomenon. Their proposed typology consists of the relationships between gang ties, gang membership and involvement in crime. From this perspective they identify the role of family and employment as critical in most gang-desistance narratives. However, they stress a need for further research on the desistance process and the “post-gang” lives of individuals.

Decker et al's (2014) research is consistent with Ebaugh's (1988) perception that an individual's gang exit takes place in four stages: doubts, seeking alternatives, turning points and creating the role of “ex”. The “seeking alternatives” phase has also been called “anticipatory socialization” (Decker et al., 2014) in the literature. This term is used to represent the phase in which individuals seek out new roles and weigh alternatives to their current lifestyle. Decker et al., (2014) in a compelling interview, found one individual speak of his gang desistance like “being in recovery from addiction” (p. 274). Just like in recovery from addiction, surrounding oneself with individuals who endorse the new identity of the individual is crucial. The role of relationships in gang exit is unmistakable and deserves attention (Carson et al., 2013). It is in the stage of seeking alternatives that The WRAP program believes they can play a pivotal role in

assisting in the desistance process: by providing an alternative arena to the gang for developing relational bonds and social affiliations.

In O’Neal et al’s (2016) study of 143 at-risk and gang-involved adolescents and young adults in Los Angeles, CA, and Phoenix, AZ in 2011, they found that the decision to withdraw from gang-related behaviour was “prompted by different experiences...complicated by beliefs surrounding the concept of identity and self, consistent with role exit theory” (p. 50). They found no significant gender differences in reasons for leaving the gang, and parenthood was the most common instigator for gang desistance across genders. Family was reportedly the largest support in the disengagement process, and the vast majority of participants never cited social service agencies as being helpful.

This finding was of concern to the researchers. O’Neal et al., (2016) concluded, “findings support existing research regarding the relatively ineffective role social service agencies and law enforcement play in encouraging gang disengagement” (p. 54). This does not however, suggest that all intervention efforts are futile. Rather, it necessitates a re-focusing of efforts that are sensitive to the disengagement process, and which hold relationships as foundational. Both Decker et al., (2014) and O’Neal (2016) believe that program efforts must enhance and increase prosocial ties in order to decrease ties with gang-involved individuals.

2.8 Promising Intervention Efforts and Programs

Of those gang intervention and prevention programs currently in operation, very few have been evaluated for their effectiveness with girls. Totten (2008), in his extensive Canadian provincial action plan, summarizes the practices and programs that present hopeful results for gang prevention among boys and girls, as well as those that do not. He observes and attributes

the overall lack of data on gang formation and desistance to be “indicative of the absence of theoretical foundations driving these programs” (p. 6).

In brief, Totten (2008) finds that programs that embody a “get tough” approach, as well as those that are curriculum based, are shown to be ultimately ineffectual. Gang suppression programs that prosecute and convict, although effective in the short term to suppress crime rates, have failed to address important psychosocial issues such as child maltreatment, mental health and substance use. Incarceration has not shown to decrease future criminal behaviours. In fact, in a 2004 Canadian study researchers found that those gang members who were incarcerated were more likely to re-offend upon prison exit (Nafekh, 2002).

On the other hand, programs aimed at community mobilization, social intervention, and those that facilitate organizational change and development have been shown to be effective for gang intervention and prevention. Engaging youth with their communities, through forming bonds with existing organizations and leaders, has had a positive outcome (Spergel & Curry, 1991; Spergel, 1995). Programs that practice on multidisciplinary teams to engage youth in social activities (such as sport and other forms of recreation), and provide services such as counselling, tutoring and advocacy, have been shown to be highly successful. If the program operates in and around areas that the youth frequents, they are generally even better received and attended. Programs that aim to address overarching issues such as employment, malnutrition, and mental health, see the problem of gang involvement as stemming from ecological concerns. It is these programs that tend to show the greatest results.

Of those particular programs shown to be the most successful, the *Little Village Project* (Spergel, 2006), *Wraparound Initiative* (Portland State University Research and Training Center, 2003), and *Connections* (Koroloff et al., 2004) were found to produce the most promising results

(Totten, 2008). Ultimately, what these programs hold in common is their multi-disciplinary and multi-systemic community approach. Surrey's Wraparound Program was modelled on two U.S. youth programs: Wraparound Milwaukee and the Philadelphia Youth Violence Reduction Partnership (YVRP) (Crime Prevention in Action, 2012). These programs offer individual counselling and joint-interest leisure opportunities, which have been shown to promote and assist in the development of healthy communication patterns, improving the likelihood of gang prevention (McClanahan, Kauh, Manning, Campos & Farley, 2012; Snethen, 2009). Countless studies reveal the school and youth's access to positive adult mentors as central to their prosocial development. These, and other important factors such as the ones cited above, are further taken up in the discussion chapter of this paper.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology and procedures that were used to inform and conduct the present study. I begin with a discussion of how the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) was employed to answer the research question: What helps/hinders/would help facilitate the development of pro-social connectedness for WRAP female clients? Following this, I review research procedures including participant selection and recruitment, data collection, data analysis, rigour and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Enhanced Critical Incident Technique. The Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) (Butterfield et al., 2009) is a qualitative research method based on that of Flanagan's (1954) original Critical Incident Technique (CIT). Applied to his work with the U.S. Army and the Aviation Psychology Program, Flanagan (1954) first used the CIT technique as a means of identifying factors that either facilitated or hindered successful job performance. Flanagan (1954) described the approach as "flexible" and able to be modified to suit the needs of the researcher and situation at hand (Butterfield et al., 2005). It is considered in part, due to the method's flexibility, that CIT has evolved and shifted from its origins in organizational and industrial psychology and been taken up in various other disciplines including, but not limited to, nursing, counselling, education and teaching, and marketing (Butterfield et al., 2005). According to Butterfield et al., (2005), the CIT method has seen "four major departures" from the way Flanagan, (1954) originally envisioned it (p. 479). The first departure is understood to have occurred when CIT began to be seen as useful not just for exploring behaviours, but also human states or experiences such as emotions, motivations, and cognitions (Butterfield et al., 2005).

Lorette K. Woolsey (1986) was the first to advocate CIT's use in Counselling Psychology research and declared it unique to the field due to its capacity to remain true to the "skills, values and experiences of counselling psychologists" (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 480). The second departure is considered to have occurred when CIT researchers began to place less emphasis on direct observation and more emphasis on retrospective self-report (Butterfield et al., 2005), lending greater authority to the research participant's account. The third departure is with regards to the manner in which data is analysed. In a review of over 125 articles, theses, dissertations and book chapters ranging in date from 1949 to 2003, Butterfield et al., (2005) concluded that most publications did not include a description of their data analysis procedures, thus causing some confusion amongst those considering using the method in their own studies. The fourth departure in how CIT is being used today relates to the use of credibility checks and trustworthiness of findings. Over the past thirty years, faculty and students at the University of British Columbia in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education have been using the CIT method with great rigour. As a result, nine credibility checks have evolved from their work that are considered to "enhance the robustness of CIT findings" (Butterfield et al., 2005, p. 486). In 2009, Butterfield et al. published their article "Using the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique in Counselling Psychology Research." In this article they detail those additions to the CIT that render the method "enhanced": a) the use of 9 credibility checks b) implementation of a contextual component and c) the use of wish list items.

In this research, the original CIT method was applied, but enhanced by the aforementioned three items. The Enhanced Critical Incident Technique was considered especially useful for research such as this, because it aims to: "Focus on critical events, incidents, or factors that help promote or detract from the effective performance of some activity or the experience of a

specific situation or event” (Butterfield et al., 2009). An ECIT study which asks what is helpful, what hinders, and what would have helped (wish list), can accurately highlight impactful, influential, redundant, or missing aspects of a program. Known for its unique ability to straddle the divide between qualitative and quantitative research disciplines, ECIT makes use of narrative data, but compiles it in a systematic way. In the present study, ECIT was exceptional in capturing participant voices, feelings, knowledge and experience (Goodwill, 2016; Butterfield et al., 2005). The extensive use of quotations helps to provide rich and meaningful contextual information, informing our understanding of the effectiveness of using an attachment approach in facilitating young female WRAP clients’ prosocial connectedness.

Due to limitations of time and scope, the present study could not meet the demands of a full Program Evaluation. However, just like research which aims “to reach conclusion about some aspect of an evaluand’s quality” (Lin Miller, 2017) the present study was informed by Program Evaluation Research that asks: 1) Is the program working the way the team would like it to? 2) If so, how do they know what works best, under which circumstances, and from whose point of view? 3) Is there a way to enhance the program’s implementation to reflect these circumstances and points of view? 4) What specific activities and experiences enhance the program overall? The present study therefore – while not a comprehensive program evaluation—still maintains similar properties in that it seeks to enhance our understanding of individual and organizational approaches to the social problem of female youth gangs and influence change in practice with the intention of improving how WRAP implements it’s program and policies for this particular population.

3.3 Participants

Participant selection. This study engaged with 17 participants: 4 current and 4 former female participants of the WRAP program (“clients”) and 9 staff and community program affiliates (“staff”) (WRAP Substance Use Liaison/Counsellors, RCMP Liaisons, WRAP Clinician, WRAP Social Worker, WRAP Youth Diversity Liaisons, WRAP Supervisor). The reason for interviewing both current and former client participants was that the researcher felt this would allow for varying perspectives based on how close the participant is to the program at present. It is conceivable that those clients currently involved, versus those clients who are no longer enrolled might report a wider scope of critical incidents based on present as opposed to past experiences. Participants met the inclusion criteria so long as they were aged thirteen and older and had been affiliated with the WRAP program for at least six weeks, either presently or at some time in their past. Six weeks was chosen because it was considered to be a reasonable amount of time that would allow participants to accurately report on their experience in the program. Clients had to self-identify as female to be included in the study. Clients and staff had to be willing and able to participate in the interview process. Participants were required to speak English. 20 Interviews is the UBC Counselling Psychology standard for use of the ECIT method but is not an arbitrary number. The ECIT method allows for ongoing saturation checks to adjust for the number of participants necessary for the study. This study met saturation goals for both groups being studied. The WRAP program was exceptional in its willingness to assist in recruiting individuals for interviews.

Recruitment of participants took place on site at the Surrey School District Education Centre with the help of WT members. A formal letter requesting participation and outlining the researchers intentions for the study was provided to any individual who may fit the studies parameters for participation (Appendix C). Written materials outlined participant’s role in the

study and incentives for participation. Any individual who wished to take part in the study was asked to sign informed consent documents prior to participation (Appendix D). All participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time and to see a copy of the results upon completion of the study. Clients of WRAP were provided with a \$50 dollar gift certificate to the Guildford Mall for participating in the study. The amount and locale of this gift card was chosen collaboratively by the researcher, WRAP program staff and the researcher's supervisor and was considered a fair remuneration for the participants' time and effort. These gift cards were made possible because of the two grants awarded to this project. The gift card amount was passed by two research ethics boards: the University of British Columbia's (BREB) and the Surrey School Board's.

Participant Demographics. Participants were asked to respond to 3 demographic questions: 1) How old are you? 2) What gender pronoun do you identify with? 3) How would you define your race and/or ethnicity? All nine of the staff and six of the clients disclosed this information. Client demographics were as follows: All six clients identified as female (this was a prerequisite to being in the study). Three clients were 19 years of age, two were 16 and one was 15. Clients ranged in ethnic/race identity: two clients identified as Caucasian, one Black, one Sikh/Punjabi, one Metis and one Cree Coast Salish. Staff demographics were as follows: 7 female identifying, 2 male identifying. Ages ranged from 26 to 54, with a mean age of 38. Staff identified with the following races/ethnicities: 5 Caucasian, 3 South Asian/Indo-Canadian and 1 Jewish.

3.4 Data Collection

This study used a convenience sampling strategy under the purview of a post-positivist epistemology. ECIT data collection hinges on a semi-structured interview process that asks

participants to verbally reflect on their experience taking part in a particular activity. In the case of this study, participants were asked to respond to a set of open-ended questions related to their experience making connections in The WRAP program, and how these experiences facilitated/hindered/helped to facilitate their own, or their client's, pro-social connectedness. For the purpose of the present study, "prosocial connectedness" was the term used to describe any relationship that was proven to be positive and/or helpful and intended to promote a positive lifestyle and self-worth for youth.

Two separate sets of interview questions were used, one for the female clients and one for WT staff member interviewees. The reason behind having two separate interview protocols was that while clients were asked to reflect on their own personal experiences within the program—what has helped/hindered in their achieving certain relational outcomes and what may have been missing that would have helped them achieve these outcomes— staff were asked to reflect on their observations about what has helped/hindered their client(s) in reaching her relational outcomes and what might have been missing that could have helped her achieve these goals.

Interviews took place over a 2-month period and each interviewee was asked to dedicate an average of 1-1.5 hours for their interview. 13 of the 17 interviews were conducted at the Surrey School Board of Educational Center between the hours of nine and five, weekdays, whereas the other 4 were conducted over the phone. All data was kept on a secure device (the researcher's laptop) and protected with encryption software to ensure confidentiality. Data was collected using a digital recording device and was subsequently transcribed verbatim prior to analysis. Data was kept separate for these two distinct groups (clients vs. staff/community affiliates) for the sake of performing a parallel analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

As the primary researcher, I was responsible for the analysis of interview data following the criteria outlined by Butterfield et al. (2009). Consistent with the ECIT framework, I began with one transcript and methodically extracted the helping and hindering critical incidents (CIs) and wish list items (WL), using the coloured highlighter function in my word processor to group incidents into logical and discrete categories. Categories were determined based on the degree to which they referred to similar behaviours or experiences and whether their corresponding items were considered helpful, hindering or “wish list”. After performing data extraction from the first transcript, I followed suit with each subsequent transcript in the same fashion.

Data was kept separate for the two distinct groups (students vs. staff/community affiliates) and parallel analyses were conducted. Patterns, themes and similarities were attended to by adhering to a system of coding that simply, and strategically linked each incident back to its original location in the transcript. All incidents were supported by quotations from the transcripts. An electronic document was used to form tables that correspond to each Critical Incident (helpful and hindering) and Wish List item mentioned in the transcripts. Incidents, categories and the number of individuals who endorsed them were tracked; again keeping client data separate from staff data. Categories were operationalized to ensure clear demarcation and interpretation and to determine “the level of generality or specificity to be used in reporting the data” (Butterfield et al., 2009). Viable categories for reporting were those that were endorsed by at least 25% of participants (Borgen and Amundson, 1984). For CIs and WL items that did not fulfill this requirement, efforts were made to find an alternative category, or a new category that better encompassed them.

3.6 Trustworthiness and Rigour

In order to ensure my research was trustworthy and credible, I adhered to the 9 credibility checks set out by Butterfield et al., (2009). These 9 credibility checks, as well as the addition of contextual questions at the beginning of interviews, and questions regarding wish list items, are what constitute the enhancements made to Flanagan's CIT method. Wish list (WL) refers to "those people, supports, information, programs, and so on, that were not present at the time of the participant's experience, but that those involved believed would have been helpful in the situation being studied" (Butterfield et al., 2009).

Audiotaping interviews. All interviews were audio recorded to ensure accuracy of the account and promote what Maxwell (1992) calls "descriptive validity in qualitative research". These recordings minimized the possibility for misinterpretation of dialogue and allowed me to return to any dialogue I may have missed or misunderstood. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Interview fidelity. An interview protocol was followed closely to ensure consistency in question order, and promote thoroughness. A protocol promotes equal opportunity for participants to tell their stories. Creswell (1998) explains that it is important to follow an interview protocol in order to "strengthen the robustness of the findings, which concerns the accuracy of the account" (as cited in Butterfield et al., 2009, p. 274). Following a protocol also avoids the possibility of the interviewer making adjustments or asking leading questions based on participant responses. 25% of the interview transcripts from both groups being studied (clients and staff) were chosen at random and reviewed by an independent judge who has performed extensive ECIT research. This was done to ensure that the researcher followed the interview protocol and to ensure no leading questions were asked. The independent judge reported no concerns or objections.

Independent extraction. 25% of the interview transcripts from both groups being studied were randomly selected and given to an independent coder who extracted what they believed to be CIs and WL items. This was done to ensure the independent coder agreed with those CIs and WL items identified by the researcher. In this case, the independent code checker was a peer in the Master's program who was familiar with ECIT research and who exchanged their time for my time as a code checker for their thesis research. While initially following extraction there was a 90% agreement between what the researcher and the coder identified as CIs and WL items, after discussing the discrepancy we were able to swiftly resolve the difference and reflect a 100% match.

Exhaustiveness. Saturations checks, which involve initiating categorization early, checking for new types of events, and withholding 10% of CIs to check for ease of categorization within preliminary category schematizing, was conducted throughout data collection to determine if further interviews were necessary. In this case, CIs and WL items were placed into a category scheme and tracked for exhaustiveness. In the present study, no new helping or hindering categories emerged after the fourth client transcript and after the third staff transcript. Only one new WL category emerged past the fourth client transcript but it was only backed up by one WL item and therefore will not be reported on. No new WL categories were found past the fourth staff transcript. According to ECIT standard, exhaustiveness was therefore achieved for both groups in this study.

Participation rates. As per the criteria set by William Borgen and Norman Amundson (1984) 25% of participants must identify with the CI or WL item to be considered credible. Table 1 in the Findings Chapter reports the participation rates calculated for each category across the two groups.

Placing incidents into categories by an independent judge. One masters level student trained in the ECIT method was recruited to sort 25 percent of CIs into the category scheme generated by the co-researcher for both group being studied. A concordance rate of 95% was established in the present study, but both the researcher and the independent judge agreed that for the outstanding items, the incident quotations could be separated out into two parts to better fit into the scheme or could be placed in two different categories. After applying this, a concordance rate of 100% was reached. A concordance rate of 75% or more is satisfactory according to ECIT standards (Woolsey, 1986).

Cross-checking by participants. After the initial interview, each participant received a follow-up email with their transcript attached. Individuals were asked to read over the transcript to ensure accuracy of the account. They were offered to add or remove from the transcript at their will. Seven of the eight female WRAP clients responded simply stating they approved of the transcript, and seven of the nine staff responded with no additional changes or concerns. Subsequently, summaries of the CIs and WL items were sent to all participants. Three out of the nine staff participants and one of the eight clients replied. Those who did reply stated they agreed with the researcher's summaries and the categorization of their CI's and WL items.

Expert opinions. Content and thematic verification from two experts in youth wellness intervention and Wraparound processes were sought out. Dr. Robert Henry (B.Ed., M.Ed., PH.D) of the University of Calgary and Cathy Blocki-Redeke (B.A., B.S.W, M.S.W) were recruited for feedback as to the usefulness of the emerging results. Dr. Henry was chosen for his experience working with primarily Indigenous Ex-gang members. Henry's research focuses primarily on violence, trauma, identity, and how it is impacted by the health and justice systems. Henry has recently completed a photo voice project with nine women who were involved within street

gangs at different levels - mothers of gang members and female ex-gang members. Cathy Blocki-Redeke was chosen for her in-depth knowledge of Wraparound practices and processes. She currently holds the position of Director of Wraparound and Social Enterprise Initiatives at SKYLARK, a leading Toronto-based charity dedicated to children, young people and their families struggling with complex mental health and developmental needs. Data analysis was an iterative process involving expert auditing. As is suggested by Butterfield et al., (2005) I asked experts the following questions:

- 1 . Do you find the categories to be useful?
2. Are you surprised by any of the categories?
3. Do you think there is anything missing based on your experience (Butterfield et al., 2005; Flanagan, 1954)

Expert opinions will be presented, when applicable, in the discussion section of this paper.

Theoretical agreement. Categories that met the 25% rate of agreement are compared to the relevant scholarly literature in the Discussion chapter. Those that did not meet this rate of agreement are described in the appendices section of this paper.

Participant Confidentiality. Participant confidentiality was ensured through the informed consent process. Participants were offered detailed information about the study one week prior to the commencement of the first interview. This meant participants had one week to decide whether or not they consented to participate. one week was established to be an adequate amount of time by the researchers of this study as what was being explained was not very complex and there was minimal probability of harm. One week allowed participants to ask any questions they may have had, receive a response, and consider their desire for involvement

before signing the informed consent form. In addition, all participants were allowed to remove themselves from the study at any point in time.

All consent forms were kept in a locked filing cabinet at the home of the co-researcher. Audio-recordings were saved on the co-researcher's password protected computer as MP3s and encrypted. Transcriptions were kept on the co-researcher's password protected computer, and protected with the encryption software to ensure confidentiality. Any identifying information was erased and names were replaced with numbers.

3.7 Researcher's Subjective Stance

The idea for this study came as a result of working with my original supervisor Dr. Alanaise Goodwill (Currently Simon Fraser University, Formerly University of British Columbia). Dr. Goodwill's extensive work in gang research—predominantly with Indigenous populations—paired well with my interest in trauma-informed, feminist counselling and community approaches. Dr. Goodwill facilitated my connection with WRAP and particularly two of their staff members, Sarah Mackay (Youth Diversity Liaison) and Jonathan Ross (Director). Together, we established a need for further evidence-based research that would support and inform WRAP's important work with female clients. I became determined to use my research as a platform through which the untold narratives of these girls and their allies could be heard.

As a Caucasian, middle-class, cis-gender woman I recognize my privilege. I operate from a feminist lens, wherein I see female disempowerment and gender normativity as challenges in our society. While I cannot claim to even begin to understand the experiences of gang-involved girls, my desire to have them be seen and heard drives this research. As a woman, I fight for voice and visibility in my life. I understand what it is like to want to belong and to connect with

others. Though I have never, and likely will never, share the experiences of my population of interest, I am performing this research in an effort to minimize the knowledge gap and lend voice to those who have been too often silenced in both research and the wider society.

3.8 Ethics

This project met the strict ethical standards of two different Ethics Review Boards: the University of British Columbia's (BREB) and the Surrey School Board's.

3.9 Data Presentation

A variety of methods will be employed to ensure clarity and thoroughness of data presentation. Categories are used to represent the larger meaning of the data and are presented in the following Findings chapter in the form of tables. Further, vignettes with direct quotations from the interviews accompany category descriptions to connect the participant's words to the category titles chosen. Categories are operationalized in writing and a thorough discussion of the results can be found.

A copy of the final report will be made available to all participants of this study. A summary will be produced at a grade six English reading level, and distributed to all participants, in order to ensure those individuals who may not be able to fully comprehend the full report have equitable access to the findings.

3.10 Dissemination of Research Findings

The resulting data will add to the breadth and depth of literature on female gang intervention and prevention. Results will inform change or help maintain practices involved in The WRAP program, or similar programs for this population. The emerging categories will help inform future research endeavors, especially around topics of risk and protective factors, as well

as hooks for change in this population. Findings have implications for the practice and implementation of female gang prevention and intervention strategies.

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

A total of 17 participants were interviewed for this study: eight female WRAP clients and nine WRAP staff or affiliates. Findings are presented separately for these two distinct groups in this chapter. Results will be discussed in further detail in the Discussion chapter of this paper. This comparison will also translate into a comprehensive overview of the helpful, hindering and wish list factors for this particular population as it encompasses both the personal and second hand accounts of those involved in the WRAP program. Across the two groups there was a total of 381 critical incidents (CIs) and wish list (WL) items uncovered. Female WRAP clients reported 96 total helping incidents, 24 hindering and nine wish list. WRAP staff reported 132 total helping incidents, 82 hindering and 38 wish list. Of those helping and hindering categories that emerged, none were specific to only one group (clients or staff). There are however definite discrepancies in how heavily weighted certain categories are depending on group. Of the wish list categories that emerged, four were unique to staff or not at all endorsed by clients.

These CIs and Wish List items are organized into 34 categories: 15 helping, 10 hindering and nine wish list. Tables 1, 2 and 3 display the breakdown of the CIs and WL items in their respective categories as well as the rate of endorsement for each category across both groups. Only those categories that achieved a 25% participation rate or higher will be discussed in this chapter. This is the suggested level of endorsement set out by Borgen and Amundson (1984) for reporting practices. Findings that achieved this level of endorsement are bolded in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Those categories that did not achieve 25% are displayed in regular font and will be detailed in the Appendix.

This chapter will begin with a report of those findings that resulted from the contextual questions that were asked at the beginning of the participant interviews. For clients this included

questions about the most memorable aspects of the program, the goals of their WRAP team, and four scaling questions relating to the five domains of peers, school, home and community, and themselves. For staff, contextual questions included general information about their role, the goals of their WRAP team, and two scaling questions regarding student engagement and their own personal goal attainment. Following the contextual findings, the critical incidents and wish list items in the helping, hindering, and wish list categories will be reported with supporting quotations from the interviews. It should be noted that this is both a self-report and other-report study. While clients were asked to report on what has helped/hindered their own prosocial connectedness, staff were asked to report on what they believe has helped/hindered their female clients based on their own observations. Wish list factors were more personal in nature, since I was interested in what, individually, each participant believes was missing from their experience of the program that could have better contributed to achieving the goals of their WRAP team.

Table 1. Helping Categories Clients and Staff

Helping Category	Clients			Staff		
	Participants	Participation Rate	Incidents	Participants	Participation Rate	Incidents
Consistency/Advocacy	7	87%	13	9	100%	34
Support Seeking Behaviours	6	75%	7	5	55%	5
Moments of Self-Realization/Growth	6	75%	7	3	33%	6
Connection to Community	5	62%	11	7	77%	20
Role Model	5	62%	8	5	55%	7
New Opportunities	4	50%	9	5	55%	5
Non-hierarchical Relationship/Friendship	4	50%	9	2	22%	4
Belief in Abilities/Feelings of Competence	4	50%	8	4	44%	8
Staff Authenticity	4	50%	6	4	44%	6
Connection to Peers in the Program	4	50%	5	1	11%	2
Trust/Attachment Bond	3	37%	4	8	88%	22
Non-Judgment/ Empathy	3	37%	4	2	22%	2
Connection to School	3	37%	3	1	11%	1
Connection to Family/Home	1	12%	2	4	44%	7
Wraparound Approach	1	12%	1	3	33%	4

*Helping Categories that achieved the minimum 25% participation rate are displayed bolded. Helping Categories that did not achieve the 25% participation rate are displayed unbolded. Categories are listed in order of client rate of endorsement.

Table 2. Hindering Categories Clients and Staff

Hindering Category	Clients			Staff		
	Participants	Participation Rate	Incidents	Participants	Participation Rate	Incidents
Family Delinquency/ Toxicity	4	50%	4	7	77%	18
Antisocial Peers/Conflict with Peers	3	37%	4	5	55%	7
Issues with School	3	37%	3	3	33%	3
Dysfunctional Intimate Dating Relationships	2	25%	4	7	77%	9
Antisocial Lifestyle	2	25%	2	5	55%	8
Differing Goals among Affiliates	1	12%	1	7	77%	12
Lack of Trust/Attachment	1	12%	1	5	55%	10
Mental Health	1	12%	1	5	55%	8
Stigma	1	12%	1	4	44%	5
Social Media	1	12%	1	2	22%	2

*Hindering Categories that achieved the minimum 25% participation rate are displayed bolded. Hindering Categories that did not achieve the 25% participation rate are displayed unbolded. Categories are listed in order of client rate of endorsement.

Table 3. Wish List Categories Clients and Staff

Wish List Category	Clients			Staff		
	Participants	Participation Rate	Incidents	Participants	Participation Rate	Incidents
Greater Financial Resources	2	25%	3	4	44%	5
Greater Female Outreach/ Capacity	2	25%	3	4	44%	4
Greater Community Partnerships	1	12%	1	7	77%	12
Children could Remain Children	1	12%	1	1	11%	1
Faster/Easier Access to Care				4	44%	6
Restructuring of the System				3	33%	4
Opportunities for Staff Education				2	22%	2
Visible Minority Leaders				2	22%	2

*Wish List Categories that achieved the minimum 25% participation rate are displayed bolded. Wish List Categories that did not achieve the 25% participation rate are displayed unbolded. Categories are listed in order of client rate of endorsement.

4.1 Contextual Findings

All 17 participants responded to the contextual findings reported here. Only one client participant declined answering a question regarding her level of connection to her peers.

Contextual questions were different for clients and staff, therefore findings will be reported separately below.

Client Contextual Findings

At the beginning of the interview and as a way of getting started, participants were asked to recall the most memorable aspects of the WRAP program for them. They were also asked to respond to the question: In your own words, what would you say are/were the goals of your WRAP team? Further contextual scaling questions were developed with the five domains in mind: a) peers b) school c) family d) community and e) themselves. For the first four domains, client participants were asked to rate their connection to the specific domain on a scale from zero to 10, where zero is not feeling connected or doing poorly with that connection/relationship, and 10 is feeling very connected, or doing very well with that connection/relationship. These questions were intended to provide a quantitative overview of how well connected WRAP clients feel they are to the 5 domains. Although a causal relationship between the program and the connections cannot be established, answers nevertheless provide insight into how successful the program is at reaching its goals. The results of these questions are outlined below, as well as in Table 4. At the end of the interview, and as a way of closing, clients were asked to respond to a similar scaling question regarding goal attainment, with zero being doing very poorly with attaining the goals of their WRAP team, and 10 is doing very well. The results from this question are discussed below and highlighted in Table 5.

Memorable Aspects

Female client participants shared similar memorable aspects of the program. For example, 62% (N=5) of girls referred specifically to at least one recreational activity as being the most memorable component for them. Examples of those activities most commonly mentioned include: hiking (N=4), camping (N=3), kayaking (N=3), white water rafting (N=3) wakeboarding (N=2), and skiing (N=2). One participant mentioned gardening as being memorable for her. Oftentimes, these experiences were framed as significant due to their novelty. For example one participant described the importance of taking part in these activities:

“They definitely took me to do lots of things that I wouldn’t normally have been able to do, like things you know I didn’t have parents that would be able to take me to do those things that you know some kids normally would and that was pretty awesome.”

Similarly as memorable were the connections made with peers and staff (“leaders”) of the program. Three participants described how the program enhanced their relationship with their peers, especially those with whom they shared experiences with in the program. For instance, one participant stated:

“I struggled to make female friends a little bit in high school other than my friends who I’d already had from elementary school and I definitely made some good friends [in WRAP] that were girls.”

Another individual noted how the program served to bring unlikely friendships together: “like the girls that you’re in the group with, you become really close and you kind of like would never have thought you’d be friends with these people right because you’re all so different”.

Of the eight female participants interviewed, five (62%) of them specifically described their relationship with a staff member as being highly memorable. Leaders were even given “shout outs” by a number of girls who wanted to make it clear just how impactful their time together had been. One girl recounts:

“it has been a very positive experience. All the moments I have with her are very positive. She gives me really good advice and she helps me a lot. She’s just like always there for me when I need her.”

Connection to 4 Domains

Table 5 summarizes client answers to the scaling questions discussed above. It should be noted that although connection to oneself is a goal of the program, what constitutes connection to this domain is idiosyncratic and highly personal. In other words, defining what it means to be connected to oneself is complex and therefore this domain was not specifically queried in the contextual questions. However, evidence of client self-connection was uncovered in numerous narratives throughout the interviews. Results demonstrate that clients feel most connected to their peers (M=8.7, SD=1.38) out of the four domains. Connection to school held the lowest average (M=6.7, SD=2.21), followed by connection to home (M=7.2, SD= 2.64) and connection to community (M=7.6, SD= 3.15).

Table 4 Client Self-Reported Level of Connection to 4 Domains

Client	Connection to Peers	Connection to School	Connection to Home/Family	Connection to Community
S1	9	8	7	10
S2	10	5	10	10
S3	10	10	10	10
S4	10	7.5	5	8
S5	7	4	8	1
S6	8	9	9.5	8
S7	No response	5	5	9
S8	7	5	3	5
	Average: 8.7	Average: 6.7	Average: 7.2	Average: 7.6
	SD: 1.38	SD: 2.21	SD: 2.64	SD: 3.15

WRAP Team Client Goals

Goals are established collectively and clients are always at the center of their care planning. Client goals varied greatly amongst participants. While some of the girls described holding more concrete, measurable goals such as “to graduate high school”, others discussed their goals in more holistic, indistinct terms, such as “to better myself” or “to make peace with myself”. Results indicate that female clients feel very positive about their goal attainment, an average of 8.9 out of 10. While participants were not required to provide context or evidence for their answers, some chose to. One participant for instance rated her goal attainment at a nine and followed up with:

“Nine - Definitely a huge change. I went from not really finding any importance in myself or life or anything really. Not caring about much to being really inspired to do better for myself and for other people just in general really.”

Table 5 Client Self-Reported Goal Attainment

Client	Goal Attainment
S1	9
S2	10
S3	10
S4	8.5
S5	7
S6	10
S7	10
S8	6.5
	Average: 8.9
	SD: 1.43

Staff Contextual Findings

At the beginning of the interview and as a way of getting started, staff participants were asked to define their roles within the WRAP program and discuss some of the most important aspects of the program as they see it. Staff described the goals of their respective WRAP teams and responded to two scaling questions.

Staff Roles

No two individuals' roles were exactly the same. The nine participants held the following roles/titles: a) Clinician: Counsellor for youth and their family b) Social Worker: WRAP program Supervisor c) Substance Use Liaison d) Youth Diversity Liaison e) RCMP Officer: Gang Task Force f) Outreach Worker g) Case Manager and Substance Use Liaison h) Park, Recreation and Culture Liaison for City of Surrey i) Case Worker. It was often the case that in describing their roles, staff would allude to the fact that their title could never account for the multitude of roles they truly assume in day-to-day practice.

Important Aspects of the Program

Staff varied in their responses to the question of “what are some of the most important aspects of the program for you?” Most commonly staff cited the ability to create meaningful connections with the young people with whom they work as being most important (N=5, 55%). Almost as important for staff was the aspect of collaboration and staff synergy (N=3, 33%): “You’re only as strong as your weakest link. The fact that the program has developed so many external partnerships is very important to me”. Youth empowerment (N=1, 11%), community engagement (N=1, 11%) and Mentorship (N=1, 11%) were also cited as important by staff members.

Rating Client Engagement

Staff were asked to rate their clients' engagement with the program on a scale from zero to 10 where zero is no engagement at all and ten is high engagement. Engagement was broadly defined in this case by such things as clients showing an interest in their own case planning, turning up for meetings, communicating with staff and WT associates, involvement with other peers in the program and interest in involving themselves in activities in the community.

Ultimately, participants were allowed to define “engagement” for themselves, based on their experience working with youth. Ultimately, staff ranked student engagement in the program at an average of 7.6/10 but the majority of those interviewed insisted that “engaging is just different for every kid”. Reasons for a possible lack of engagement were discussed by some staff who cited such things as “anxiety”, “isolation” and “lack of social skills” as preventing young people from engaging fully in the program. Table 8 illustrates the results of this question.

Table 6 Staff-Reported Observed Client Connection

Participant	Observed Client Connection
P1	8
P2	8
P3	6
P4	6.5
P5	8
P6	10
P7	6.5
P8	7.5
P9	8
	Average: 7.6
	SD: 1.19

WRAP Team Goals and Goal Attainment

Staff were asked to describe the goals of their WRAP teams as part of the contextual component of the interview. Oftentimes, goals echoed those most important aspects of the program. For instance, building trusting and positive relationships with adults was cited by 55% of participants (N=5), equal only to building client confidence and self-esteem (N=5, 55%). Other goals included: Connecting youth and their families to resources in the community (N=4, 44%); Client respect for themselves and their bodies (N=3, 33%); Client self-regulation and independence (N=3, 33%); Facilitating positive change and safety planning (N=3, 33%); and

highlighting the youth’s accomplishments (N=1, 11%). Table 7 illustrates the breakdown of goals endorsed by staff and their participation rates. It should be noted that although some individuals reported only one major goal, others detailed multiple goals. When multiple goals were mentioned these were included in the tally.

Table 7 Staff-Reported Goals of WRAP Team

#	Goal Title	Participation Rate	Participants
1	Build confidence and self-esteem	55%	5
2	Respect themselves/their bodies	33%	3
3	Build trusting relationships in adults	55%	5
4	Connect families/youth to resources in the community	44%	4
5	Self-regulation (Independence)	33%	3
6	Facilitate positive change/safety planning	33%	3
7	Highlight the girls’ accomplishments (Strengths based)	11%	1

To conclude the interview, staff were asked to report on their own level of goal attainment on a scale from zero to 10. Interestingly, the average self-reported goal attainment by staff—7.6/ 10—mimics the average result of the earlier question of client engagement, which also turned out to be 7.6/10. This was no coincidence, as many staff claimed they could only be doing as well as their students are engaged: “I’m only doing as good as how much they’re engaging”. A common thread in the narratives of goal attainment was the opinion that there is always room for improvement: “I believe that life and growth are about constantly learning and constantly trying to do better, and yeah so I give myself a seven”.

Table 8 Staff Self-Reported Goal Attainment

Staff Participant	Goal Attainment
P1	7
P2	8
P3	7
P4	7
P5	8
P6	10
P7	6.5
P8	7
P9	8.5
	Average: 7.6
	SD: 1.08

4.2 Helping Categories

Among client participants, 13 major helping categories were established. Two further categories were identified but did not meet the minimum standard of a 25% endorsement rate and therefore will not be discussed in this section. Among staff, 11 major categories were established, and four were identified that did not meet the minimum standards for reporting. What follows is a discussion of those categories deemed helpful by clients and staff. Categories are listed and discussed in order of importance based on *client* rate of participation. Discussion of staff findings follows client findings under each category heading.

Consistency/Advocacy. The Consistency/Advocacy category is defined by participant accounts of the helpful impact of the presence and/or consistency of a staff member who was there to advocate on her/the clients behalf and who would follow-through with action on promises made. This category contains the most helpful incidents of all the categories among both clients and staff. Eighty-seven percent of client participants (N=7) collectively described 13 helping incidents within this category. Client narratives center around staff members “being

there” for them and share a common theme of staff going beyond their professional duties (especially their availability outside working hours) to ensure client well-being.

“My stages through I guess life. She's like been there, whenever I needed something she's been there. She's there to help me. I don't even know how to explain all of the love that she's gave me but I think like more than my parents have ever, so...”

“Like to know if I'm having like a problem like I need advice I'll just call her and she'll get back to me like right away. It's great...And then like I don't know I've had like a very bad point in my life and like it was on a weekend and she doesn't work. And she came out to see me so like you know that they actually care.”

Advocacy terminology was not explicitly used in client narratives, but it was nevertheless implicit. One girl explained:

“And then talking to them they'll get you the help that you need. So like even if it was like on her own time she'd do whatever she needed to do, so even if she needed to drive pick you up and take you there. She's going to do it. Just make sure you get that extra help.”

One-hundred percent of staff participants (N=9) described 34 helping incidents within the category Consistency/Advocacy. This participation rate was the highest of any category among staff, signaling its significance. Staff narratives that fit within this category pertain to their ability to advocate for their clients and be consistent in their practices. For example, one staff member explained:

“I think that having her know that I'm an advocate for her and working for her within other systems. So I'm at every ICM [Integrated Case Management] with the ministry family case planning. You know there is custody stuff with the baby now I'm in the meetings with a lawyer like there is... she can tell me things that she doesn't know how to articulate in a bigger group setting and she trusts that I can [do that] for her...So having her know at the end of the day I'm always fighting for her.”

What I have chosen to call “consistency” can be clearly seen in the following staff account:

“We often see sort of one foot in, one foot out. And I think that's the essence of the WRAP program actually is to not say OK we've stepped backwards now we're not going to work with you, you know, now we are forgetting about you. That's not who we are. And it's tough for some people in the regular world to see that, “why do you still work with these kids when they're making poor choices?”. We say well that's why we work with these kids.”

It is this theme of “not giving up” on clients, even those that may pose the most challenges, that can be seen in both the client and staff narratives. Many girls remarked on how surprised and grateful they were to have staff members answer their calls outside of professional working hours. Staff echoed this sentiment in statements such as:

“She actually mentioned this to me yesterday and it kind of melted my heart but she's like you're one of the only people who when you say you're going to do something you'll do it. So it's that consistency and from day one she's like I just need structure and consistency, because she doesn't have that in her home life.”

Support Seeking Behaviors. The Support Seeking Behaviors category is defined by participant accounts of seeking help as being important for her/ the client's prosocial connectedness. This could include a decision or a willingness to seek counselling, or make a phone call to a staff member when in need of support. Seventy-five percent of client participants (N=6) collectively described seven helping incidents within this category. Client narratives that fit this category centre around the valuable impact of a decision to reach out for help, oftentimes from a Counsellor.

“I find it helpful. It gives me someone to talk to and like get everything that's been on my mind that I can't let out.”

“They've helped me a lot too. Like there's times like I'd go crying there and she's like no it's going to be OK you're going to get through this kind of thing... she'll tell me strategies and stuff to use and like oh like there's this you can cope with your feelings like there's this way you know like hey there's - I know you're not taking your meds - but there's like ways to cope with it kind of thing.”

Fifty-five percent of staff (N=5) described 5 helping incidents within the category Support Seeking Behaviors. Staff encouraged Support Seeking among their clients and described the act

as indicative of a level of maturity and self-awareness. As you can see from the accounts below, staff shared in the conviction that asking for help, especially from a healthy adult, can lead to healthier decision making practices overall.

“Most recently the one that comes to mind is a young person, she had somebody in her life pass away who was very near and dear to her and she felt comfortable enough and attached enough to make that phone call to myself and say “hey I’m struggling. This, this is happening to me and I need someone to talk to and that someone is you and you know I don’t want to make a bad decision, so I’m giving you a phone call”. So, that’s exactly what we hope for is that when a young person is you know at a crossroads and you know sort of at a space where they’re questioning their emotional, their emotions and where, what decisions they might make. Yeah. I often say you know good wolf, bad wolf, what part of themselves they want to feed and if making that phone call and asking for help or support or just even a conversation, they’re doing that, that’s a lot, that’s enough sometimes.”

“And if they’re calling you, far better that they’re calling you because they’re reaching out to someone that they know is a positive, healthy person. And so there is a side to them that wants to make a healthy positive decision, if they’re phoning. Even if they are phoning you after the fact they are recognizing really quickly like I need to talk to somebody that is a healthy individual.”

Moment of Self-Realization/Growth. The Moments of Self-Realization/Growth category is defined by participant accounts of the prosocial impact of taking a new perspective or realizing something about herself/themselves. These moments were often made possible as a result of connections made in the WRAP program. Seventy-five percent of clients (N=6) described seven helping incidents within this category. One client recalled the helpful experience of realizing that she could be herself around others:

“Just, well the fact that I felt like comfortable enough to like scream lyrics in the car with people feels great. Cuz like you know normally people just have a barrier. Sometimes you just want to be yourself. And this was one of those moments. It’s just you don’t even, you don’t even realize what you’re doing you’re just doing it because it feels good and then you just get that moment when you realize like oh this is awesome.”

Moments such as this, in which clients felt comfortable enough to be themselves around others were often the result of healthy connections to peers or leaders in the program. Importantly

though, they were also the impetus for personal growth and further prosocial connectedness. For instance, one girl recalls:

“And when you’re in there and like there’s other girls that are like more lower income and they’re not wearing what your wearing you like realize and they talk to you about it right like you don’t need it, it’s just a label it’s not worth anything. It’s the same as if you got to Walmart and you buy a pair of jeans. It’s the same. So like it’s just like saving money and then they kind of like talk to you about school and stuff and like what you want to be when your older and they’ll help you out with it right so like if you’re saving up for school why do you need a Louis Vuitton bag when that can go to tuition right? They kind of give like a real life... realism.... And then we do like media classes where they show us like about fake people and then like they actually got a model come in from like America’s Top Model and they like talked to us about like how like they’ve changed and what media want us to be and how like we need to change how the media sees us.”

This particular client’s narrative highlights the ways in which the WRAP program opened her up to new ways of seeing the world. In this example, her growth comes from realizing that she “doesn’t need” things like designer label jeans and bags in order to be of worth: “it’s not worth anything”. Thirty-three percent of staff (N=3) described six helping incidents within this category. Staff tended to frame these incidents as “ahha moments” for the girls - times when they come to realize something important about their situation or ability. Also important to staff was the notion that these realizations had to result of the client’s own volition, not be forced upon them.

“Like for me it’s like the ahha moment, like cuz I’ve had oh actually a girl say, yah look you know what every time I’m with her I get in trouble like the police are always ... I’m like well what is that then let’s talk about that and you know getting them to explore that um, the whole realization I would like for them to, for it to come from them I don’t want to tell them, I’d like them to kind of recognize and realize that cuz if at the end they feel that these negative influences are best for them they are going to pick that.”

“Moments. Yeah those moments where you know that there’s a click. Where you see them be like ahha like OK I get it...Like a sort of growth and recognition that she’s capable of so much more than maybe she thought she was initially.”

Connection to Community. One of the five life domains central to the WRAP program, the Connection to Community category is defined by participants implicating a community connection as being helpful to her/their client's overall prosocial connectedness. Community connectedness included anything from volunteering to getting involved in a sport at a recreation center. Any time there was evidence of community collaboration or a service being bridged it was also coded as Connection to Community. Sixty-two percent of client participants (N=5) described 11 helping incidents within this category. Narratives centered around the degree to which getting involved with an activity or a group of people in the community enhanced their self-awareness or pro-social connectedness.

“Hiking, kayaking, water rafting, you know going on hikes in nature. I always loved nature but I never like went out in it. [00:05:26] And just like going in mountains, like going hiking everything, it just feels so good. Like that's who I am.”

“Not before Girls Group kind of connected us because we would go out and do gardening and stuff like that and we helped the community so that was like a push towards it.”

Seventy-seven percent of staff (N=7) described 20 helping incidents in this category. Staff accounts describe community connectedness as an antidote to an anti-social lifestyle for their clients.

“And now today actually she is attending her third acting class that builds on social skills through drama. And it's so far removed from the life that she and the peer group that she was associating with a little bit less than a year ago and maybe as near as four or five months ago and now she's in a room filled with 10 other young people from very different walks of life all struggling with very, very different things.”

Facilitating a connection with the community was seen by staff as integral to their client's success, especially for its capacity to instill confidence and promote learning and growth.

“We actually because she is doing so well in her high school course with sort of beginner carpentry, we had a connection in the community that wanted to hire some WRAP students in construction. So we leveraged our connection with her to be open to meeting this contractor to see if it would be a good fit, he needed some labour. And I think we brought three boys and one girl and she'd been the one girl. And, after one month she was the last

one still working in that crew. And she found it amazing, the autonomy... There was a lot of learning, like lessons there that I think were helpful and she was open to working around some of those hiccups.”

“Another one of the young girls I work with she, as a result of some court orders, she was on probation and doing some community service at a soup kitchen. And just having conversations with her around that and how that felt that giving back principle and sort of seeing the world from a different perspective was really powerful for her. And something that she has expressed a desire to do above and beyond her community service, because she recognized that it made her feel good about herself.”

Role Model. The Role Model category is defined by participant accounts of the helpful impact of having someone to look up to and learn from. This role model was often characterized as “being positive” or “inspiring” by youth. 62% of client participants (N=5) described eight helping incidents within this category. For clients, the role model was typically someone with whom they could identify with and learn from:

“Yeah because you meet them and they kind of tell you their story right, and then you realize like not like everything in life is bad you know what I mean? Like they had to work for what they have. And like you're going to have to work for what you want. No one's just gonna hand you what you need in life, you have to work for it.”

The two accounts below demonstrate the ways in which role modelling empathy and kindness can translate into greater self-awareness and even the desire to transmit affect onto others.

“The workers were so nice and they were all there and they would all give you one-on-one time to talk if you needed to talk like their ears are always there and they give you hope, they like, I don't know they inspire me to do better in myself. Just like from seeing them do what they do like with other kids and helping families.”

“And I'm closer with my little sister, she's three years old. Yeah I'm so happy like I'm this right now. I don't want to be a bad fucking influence on my sister. I don't want her to do the same shit I've been through or I did. I wanna be that support like [WRAP] gave me, like I'm always here for you. Talk to me about anything right? I'm always here.”

Fifty-five percent of staff (N=5) described seven helping incidents within the category Role Model. Staff considered the act of role modelling as integral to their work with youth. Staff narratives centered around the impression that the majority of their clients have had limited

access to adults on whom they can model their behavior, and particularly limited representations of healthy relationships.

“...Because we just need these relationships and you know we always make mistakes and we just kind of learn from them so it’s just about building that healthy relationship and role modelling what a healthy relationship looks like and just being there. And you know once that happens, providing them, like by role modeling and maybe teaching them you know look at look at the people that are around you and are they healthy relationships and kind of getting them to figure out whose more positive and whose negative and what that does for them, you know down which path they are going down.”

“And so I think about that, that’s like a really big piece of where that relationship can help is that you're able to role model you know conflict resolution skills or through some of the conversations in girls group we were able to challenge some of the thinking.”

New Opportunities. The New Opportunities category contained a variety of incidents that could arguably also be placed in the Connection to Community category. However, unlike in the Connection to Community category, for incidents to be considered New Opportunities, participants had to describe the importance of an experience for its novelty. Youth often describe experiences as “taking them out of their comfort zone”, while staff tended to use the vocabulary of “unique opportunities” to describe their clients’ experiences. Fifty percent of clients (N=4) described 9 helping incidents within this category. What appeared to be so helpful about these new opportunities for clients seemed to be how they opened up alternatives to the behaviors that were not serving them and allowed them to form prosocial connections:

“They showed me something outside my box, like I was like no, like what’s being sober, what’s going out in nature like, what is all of this and they would take me out and it feels so different it’s like a different world out there, you don’t even know rather than partying all the time it’s just like yo, like now I get it, like yo there’s this part to life, there’s this and that, just seeing all those things come together I’m just like oh I get it now, you know like you grew up out of your teenage age I guess all the partying stuff and just like wow...”

“I don't really think that like if I didn't, if I wasn't in Girls Group, I by now wouldn't be thinking of these things to do with my spare time. Like who just like all of a sudden thinks to go kayaking when they have never been before.”

The girls had an excellent self-awareness when it came to understanding why it was that that these activities had not been options for them before this program. As will be further discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, many of the clients in the WRAP program come from marginalized families and low income homes. Families who face a multitude of barriers are less likely to be able to afford the high cost of things like camping, white water rafting, or water skiing. Even hiking, although free in all BC parks, requires things like a vehicle, time off work, an able body, all things which may be less available to the families of WRAP clients than the wider population. For instance, one girl commented:

“They definitely took me to do lots of things that I wouldn’t normally have been able to do like things you know I didn’t have parents that would be able to take me to do those things that you know some kids normally would and that was pretty awesome.”

Fifty-five percent of staff (N=5) described five helping incidents within the category New Opportunities. Staff accounts help to enhance client narratives by highlighting the ways in which these experiences offered their clients a new outlook on life, which in turn helped them form prosocial connections. The following account demonstrates the power of changing our surroundings:

“So there was one time around a campfire, and so one of the things that we always did in Girls Groups is we would start our day or end our day going around the group and talking about your highs and lows. And it was just sort of a routine that we had and it was at least for the first few years that I did, I don’t know if they still do it but, and it was just a way to check in with the girls, to get an idea of what was going on in their life. Where they were at when we were coming to the program and so we would go around the group and say OK name one high and one low from your last week. And so at camp we did that around the campfire so name one high, one low, of your time here and the girls all went around and oh kayaking was the best, and you know we hated going hiking and this and that and the one girl said, who had never been on a ferry before, like going over to the Sunshine Coast, for the first time ever going on a ferry and driving a car on to a boat kind of blew her mind and she said you know when I wake up in the morning at home I would go outside and I see garbage outside my window and I see an old mattress and I see prostitutes and I see drug users and drug dealers and drug needles, when I wake up in the morning. And when I wake up here I step out of the cabin and I see the ocean and the mountains. And she said you

know just being here and having that difference in what I see in the morning when I wake up was her high. And I thought that was so interesting because you know it wasn't what a lot of the other girls were picking up on and I just sort of gave you a little bit more of an insight on how important these types of experiences are.”

Similarly, another staff member discussed how her client’s decision to attend a social skills acting class allowed her to see the world as less limited than she had previously thought:

“And it's just cool to see her connecting you know with people with developmental disabilities or social anxiety and just being in that room willingly and attending (social skills acting class) on her own, by herself. It's just really cool to see, to see her growing so much and doing something that's so out of her comfort zone... I think it provides her with an understanding that a variety of people exist that it's that the world is not as limited as maybe she felt that it was before and that she is not so limited to her decisions and the opportunities that come her way...I think of personal growth, self-esteem, seeing the world as a bigger place than maybe she did before, more opportunities.”

Non-hierarchical Relationship/Friendship. The Non-hierarchical Relationship/

Friendship category is defined by participant accounts of the importance of feeling equal in the staff-client relationship. This was often brought up in the context of the relationship feeling “more like a friendship” than a hierarchy. Fifty percent of client participants (N=4) described eight helping incidents within this category. Clients acknowledged the ways in which WRAP staff disrupted the hierarchies typical of most of their other relationships. By treating them as equals, staff fostered a climate of trust and respect.

“They talk to you and like it's kind of like on a different level than like teachers or friends and they become kind of like a best friend for you. And so like if you like have problems or something you can always go to them.”

“Yeah definitely and I think that they had talked to us about it as well. And it wasn't even like very formal you know a teacher would always sit you down with your parents and let’s all have a chat. No, just talk to us like one on one and see what we we’re thinking and try and talk some sense into us in a good way.”

Despite not meeting the minimum 25% rate of endorsement, staff narratives confirm that what clients are defining as “friendship” is mutual and sincere. The following accounts demonstrate the intentionality of treating clients as equals:

“And another big thing that I always do is like if we’re out in public and people will ask like how do you know each other? I would just say we're friends. I think that's like a huge factor for them or like even going like I've taken kids to hospital in Bovine like. Yes, if I said I’m their outreach worker I'm sure things will be a lot easier. But I'm like I'm just a friend. You know like you can see them. Because then they're normal and they're not the people that are being taken somewhere by a staff member.”

“And for me I think she for us we just kind of, I'm not higher or lower. We're just kind of here to support her and help her. And so she doesn't feel that from them. So she immediately rejects that and very harshly.”

Belief in Abilities/Feelings of Competence. The Belief in Abilities/Feelings of Competence category is defined by participant accounts of the importance of having someone believe in their/her ability to make prosocial changes, and/or when increased feelings of competence were determined to be helpful for the client. Fifty percent of client participants (N=4) described eight helping incidents within this category. Clients discussed how they were motivated to change because they did not want to let down staff who had confidence in them:

“You wanted to be at school, you wanted to be there because you knew like if you missed a certain amount of days like they, your principle would notify them and they would talk to you about it and you didn’t want them to think you’re like a bad student or anything so it like motivated you to go to school.”

“Yeah, because like going there you didn’t want to show that you were like messed up you know what I mean? And then talking to them they'll get you the help that you need... Because like if you don't want anyone to see you that way, so you need to change. But like having people you care about see you like that, it mentally like sets something off.”

Feeling that someone was proud of her accomplishments proved helpful for one client who stated: “When they say they're proud of me that makes me feel happy because I don't really hear

that a lot at home right?”. The effect of having someone believe in you is evidenced by the following client’s account of how WRAP increased her feelings of competence and motivation:

“Definitely a huge change. I went from not really finding any importance in myself or life or anything really. Not caring about much to being really inspired to do better for myself and for other people just in general really.”

Forty-four percent of staff (N=4) described eight helping incidents within the category Belief in Abilities/Feelings of Competence. Staff accounts further our understanding of the helpful effect of having someone believe in you. One staff participant succinctly explained: “the fact that somebody believes in them so they can believe in themselves”. Other staff helped clarify why it can be so difficult, but so crucial, to cultivate feelings of competency for their clients:

“They're not only just doing it for themselves who necessarily they don't like... So now they're doing it for this other person who is saying you can't you can't treat yourself that way. I care. You know like you can't...I want better for you. I expect better from you. And I believe in you, you know better.”

“When I find a kid that's got one little even an ounce of talent in something if you just like build them around that then because their identity and like so many of these kids are like so like they're just empty. They don't have the family to go home to; they don't have anything that they can really call strong on their own. So then if they're, if they find a little bit of art where they are like awesome at it then it's just like dude constantly build them up, put their art places you can and then like find an art club, find that and then it's like oh you're good at that, go there and then that's kind of how I like to do it. It's cool, like to get them feeling like they can bring something to the world because I think sometimes they don't feel like they're going to make a difference and they're going to be anything.”

Staff Authenticity. The Staff Authenticity category contains participant accounts that acknowledge the importance of staff “being themselves” in their interactions. This includes for example, instances when staff were willing to self-disclose and this was seen as helpful for the client’s development. Fifty percent of client participants (N=4) described six helpful incidents within this category. In asking one client what it was that contributed to her ability to create a relationship with one particular staff member, she responded: “I think it's because her personality

was just so real. She's a real person. She's not like you know, fake, tries to like sugar coat anything, she just tells me what's up". This sentiment was echoed by another client who appreciated her leader's authenticity: "It is really good knowing that the person's not fake or anything, like it's just the best feeling ever you know?". One participant clarified what was so helpful about staff authenticity for her: "They kinda just they were themselves. So you could kind of relate to all of them in a way." The capacity to "relate" and be ones authentic self was also seen as helpful by 44% (N=4) of staff who described six helping incidents.

"You can't sugarcoat life for the relationship but you know you have to really be transparent and demonstrate to them that you're a human being that you have a life outside of you know the work that you do."

"It's nice we have few people on our staff that like maybe have like a criminal background so they're able to actually like talk about life experience... You're just like you get it and to be related to on that level too by someone else and have them turn full circle. Like our staff have gone to jail, like our staff have done that whole thing, been in a gang and pulled that around full circle... Oh man they [the clients] all want this job and we're like yeah and you can have it. There'll be no better success story of us than for you to have this job you just have to become emotionally stable."

Connection to Peers in the Program. One of the five domains central to the WRAP program, The Connection to Peers category is defined by participant accounts of the development of healthy connections with peers in the program. These relationships had to be described as helpful for their capacity to connect youth in prosocial ways in order to qualify for this category. While this category proved significant for clients—50% (N=4) described five helping incidents – findings were not reproduced in staff interview, where only one participant endorsed this category. Client accounts centered around the influence that peers had in creating a sense of "family community" within the program. Clients described being surprised that certain connections endured past the program:

“like the girls that you’re in the group with you become really close and you kind of like would never have thought you’d be friends with these people right because you’re all so different. And you’d hang out with like different groups and everything. But like we would go out on like kayaking or like hiking. And I remember we all were complaining because we were like oh it's going to be like 10 minutes, it was like two hours, but after we were all so close. It was great.”

Healthy peer relationships that developed in the program ended up replacing anti-social peer connections that were not serving clients:

“Oh I became best friends with someone in Girls Group and we would have been complete opposite people to become best friends too... Because we went through like a lot of the experiences together we’ll be like hey you want to go hiking, or hey you want to go kayaking just because we did it with them... I don't really think I’d have someone that I could do all that stuff with because all my friends are more about going to the mall and going shopping, and getting their nails, eyebrows and eyelashes done. It's kind of like unrealistic for me because like I don't know, I’ll get my nails done but I’m not gonna go all out. So I don't know. It’s just different. People that haven't done it, they don't want to do it because they are so used to what they know and already do. And people that have done it before want to do more because they know how fun it is.”

Creating meaningful relationships with people different from oneself was seen as helpful in its capacity to promote growth and healthy communication:

“I'm like an open person right? And like I didn't know everyone in my program, I didn't know anyone. So it was like new to me but like I grew, everyone grew on each other. Started talking, and when we started it was, there was no drama like it was really good.”

Trust/Attachment Bond. The Trust/Attachment Bond category is defined by participant accounts of the staff-student relationship as “trusting”, “caring” or “supportive”, and when these characteristics contributed to an attachment bond that was helpful to the clients prosocial connectedness. Thirty-seven percent of clients (N=3) described four helping incidents within this category. Clients described “trust” as being critical in their overall change process. One client reflected: “Because like when you're older you're going to need those skills in life. You're going to have to be able to trust somebody, and you know work with who they are.” The staff-student

attachment bond was helpful for clients who previously had nobody to talk to about their stressors and traumas:

“That’s why we made this, we built this trust and like this friendship and like it’s just like I’m not even embarrassed to talk to her about anything... I would always keep it, keep it in me, because I can’t tell my mom. I need someone there and like I can share this with and that’s something a girl should always have”.

The Trust/Attachment Bond category was fervently upheld by staff for its capacity to promote prosocial connectedness among their clients. Eighty-eight percent of staff (N=8) described 22 helping incidents within this category, making it the second most endorsed category among staff. Staff narratives highlight the degree to which female clients have experienced repeated violations of trust in their lives. The trust/attachment bond was therefore described as foundational to their work with clients:

“Just recognizing that they can trust someone. I think is massive because a lot of the girls that we have, have issues trusting whether it’s with the police or you know different agencies, but if they can tell you certain things that you can relay over to the appropriate resources...Fantastic.”

“Because trust is a huge issue for a lot of the girls. And knowing somebody for a certain period of time really helps. That they’re going to stick by them.”

Non-Judgment/Empathy. The Non-Judgment/Empathy category is defined by participant accounts of having a non-judgmental and/ or empathic person to talk to as helpful for the client’s prosocial connectedness. This was often brought up in the context of “feeling accepted” by clients. Thirty-seven percent of client participants (N=3) described four helping incidents within this category. Staff member endorsement did not meet the 25% rate required to discuss here. One client described how good it felt not to be judged by her WRAP worker:

“She was very understanding and she’s not judgmental so like that was like the greatest thing about it. She never judged us...And like when you’re looking to talk to someone you don’t want to be judged. Because that’s the worst feeling afterwards. So she never judged us. You could tell her anything and she she’d keep it just between us.”

When I asked this client if she could explain what exactly was so helpful about this understanding and non-judgmental relationship she replied:

“Gotten me to the point I am now, so like having my license, having like a place to stay, going to school to get my diploma, like actually like doing something with my life you know? Quitting drugs is huge, like a huge life change.”

For this client, having someone who she could talk to without fear of judgment was the catalyst for enormous prosocial development.

Connection to School. One of the five domains central to the WRAP program, the Connection to School category is defined by participant accounts of the development of a healthy connection to their school as being helpful in its facilitation of their prosocial connectedness. Thirty-seven percent of clients (N=3) described three helping incidents within this category. Staff member endorsement did not meet the 25% rate required to discuss here. Oftentimes clients described an old school environment as hindering but expressed how helpful it was when they were placed in an alternative learning environment to mainstream school.

“I had to really work hard. And it was hard at first but then I like got the swing of it because my school they were so nice...Like my counsellor at the time [name]. He was such a good, like he helped me a lot too. And like all my teachers were really supportive of me, if you know TREES, like next door, the principal everybody like they were all so supportive... It made me really focus way more because I had a lot of people like supportive and like they were all so nice so then I just worked harder and achieved it. Got it over and done with....high school.”

Staff Only Helping Categories

The following two helping categories were those in which only staff accounts met the 25% minimum rate of participation for reporting.

Connection to Family/Home. One of the five domains central to the WRAP program, the Connection to Family/Home category is defined by participant accounts of healthy connections with the client’s family as being helpful for her prosocial connectedness. Forty-

four percent of staff (N=4) described seven helping incidents within this category. Staff narratives highlight the impact that unconditional familial love and boundaries can have on the client's change process.

“I think, I think you know mom being open a little bit about the counselling she was getting and was a way that you just showed her that she was trying, trying to get some insight and trying to deal with her own stuff, trying to be a better parent. And these are all guesses because you know of course you know we know that her daughters sensitive and you know but as far as her actually articulating this I don't know. It's just that I think mom being open that she's getting help and loves her and its unconditional love. So yeah I know that was helpful and also that her daughter our youth client, knowing that we are all in touch together, for everybody's betterment. So you know it kind of closes the gap of possible deception that she could be doing to maybe get involved in risky behavior. And it was just another way to help them not fall through the cracks.”

“It was a long, slow process but because she had some solid connections even though they were torn apart by the separation she at least as an individual had some personal solid working connections to draw from. Unlike some of the other kids that don't have family ties per say really. So that helped with that, her having connections with family.”

Wraparound Approach. The Wraparound approach category is defined by participant accounts of the helping capacity of the program itself – particularly its flexibility with regard to there being no strict time limit on caring for clients. Thirty-three percent of staff participants (N=3) described three helping incidents within this category. Staff endorsed the Wraparound Approach for its ability to accommodate clients who may take longer to engage or connect:

“But the neat thing about Wrap is you know because we don't have an expiry date you know as long as there is the need and they are engaging.”

“The reason I'm telling you that story is because she is one of two kids where it took a long time to develop that attachment, it was because of the program I had the luxury of that time to keep hammering away at it, like I didn't have to meet the end goal by a certain date, or a certain number of meetings.”

4.3 Hindering Categories

Among client participants, seven major hindering categories were established. Three further categories were identified but did not meet the minimum standard of a 25% endorsement

rate and therefore will not be discussed in this section. Among staff, nine major categories were established, and one was identified that did not meet the minimum standards for reporting. What follows is a discussion of those categories deemed hindering by clients and staff. Categories are listed and discussed in order of importance based on *client* rate of participation. Discussion of staff findings follows client findings under each category heading.

Family Delinquency/Toxicity. The Family Delinquency/Toxicity category is defined by participant accounts of the client's family or home life as hindering her prosocial connectedness. This could include delinquent family members, or toxicity in the home such as abuse, arguments or lack of role modelling. Fifty percent of client participants (N=4) described four hindering incidents within this category. In comparison to staff accounts which revealed incidents of abuse and delinquency, clients were less likely to disclose issues beyond minor familial arguments – this is not at all surprising given that the interviewer had not established a relationship before the interview and that this information was being recorded. One client participant did not hesitate when answering the question of what has hindered: “I would say my parents. Mostly my mom.” In particular this client described her mother as getting in the way of her managing her issues with anxiety, which has prevented her from making prosocial connections in the past.

“We don't really have a good relationship. Sometimes like she's I would say because she's from India she doesn't really know about here. So her mind is like the Indian way you know? And then sometimes the stuff she says comes out in a negative and, like a negative way so it doesn't really go good on me. Cuz I would say I'm a really a sensitive person when it comes to the things my mom says to me. And sometimes the things she says just kind of brings me down.”

It was not uncommon for clients to provide some background or insight as to why they thought the family toxicity occurred. This suggested to the interviewer that clients had explored issues such as cultural differences and generational differences with their WRAP workers as a way of overcoming hostility towards their families. As we can see in the account above, this client has

come to understand her mother's behavior as relating to her cultural background, though she does not dismiss its negative impact on her.

Seventy-seven percent of staff participants (N=7) described 18 hindering incidents within the category Family Delinquency/Toxicity. This was the most highly endorsed hindering category by staff. It is important to note that many of the accounts presented here also relate to the category Mental Health. Oftentimes familial delinquency or toxicity results from unmanaged mental health concerns such as trauma or addictions, which can be passed down to children of sufferers. Differentiating incidents between these categories depended on the degree to which the hindering incident was stated to occur in the family or home environment specifically, versus the mental health of the client herself. Addiction in the home was described as hindering by a number of staff:

“Another hindering relationship probably comes to parents. Yeah and again I can think of lots of different, lots of different examples, but a young person that I'm working with her, she's doing really well. Come a long way. But her dad is an alcoholic and she struggles with that, and being living in the home with him and trying to balance her emotional and you know her needs. And then trying and just being in that environment that can be very toxic and witnessing somebody who she cares for and wants to care for really hurt himself and the people that she loves and cares for and internalizing that.”

“And the family dynamics were incredibly complicated. So mom was struggling with addiction and very present in everything, and so the way the school administrators and teachers and support staff just didn't want to deal with it like she was just so volatile and out there and show up drunk in the middle of the day.”

One staff participant described the family as not only facilitating, but encouraging an antisocial lifestyle of drugs and prostitution:

“Her mom is still around but she hadn't seen her in months and the other's mom and boyfriend were quite involved and they were providing a lot of the drugs and the party go-tos. There was some suspicion that they were actually part of kind of prostituting their daughter and her friends out like setting all that up.”

Abuse in the home was not uncommon in the staff narratives either. The following account brutally depicts the experience of one young woman, whose father was highly abusive towards her:

“The young young girl had was massively struggling at home, dad was abusive and definitely mental health going on in the home. He would think, he would see or think she was possessed so he cut all her hair off or physically abused her to the point where she could have possibly like bled out, so it was really, really, really bad. And this girl would confide in [staff name] about it and beg her not to tell the ministry because nothing ever happened or it got worse because she was never removed from the home, and then Dad would know that she told someone and then the cycle continued and escalated and got to the point where she could have been killed multiple times.”

One staff member clearly defines how issues in the home can cause youth to pull away from those prosocial connections that do exist:

“Lack of healthy structures outside of you know support workers and schools. So if home is chaotic it's easier to lose everything that you worked on and find yourself right back at [the beginning].”

Antisocial Peers/Conflict with Peers. The Antisocial Peers/Conflict with Peers category is defined by participant accounts of the peer-client relationship as problematic to her prosocial connectedness. This is often due to peer pressure to engage in delinquent behaviors and/or conflict with peers as reinforcing a belief that they are underserving of healthier connections. Thirty-seven percent of client participants (N=3) described four hindering incidents within this category. Client narratives centered around peers as negative influences:

“Of course, my friends they always want to party, go out and like, do some stupid stuff that I don't really want to do. I want to become a CPSA officer so having a clean record is really important to me and me hanging out with like party people, that like you know those kind of people it just it did stop me from reaching my goals, stopped me from where I really want to be.”

“I have but like, I don't know the people from my first high school. I don't talk to any of them now they're useless. They didn't do anything good for me... They just got me into trouble.”

Fifty-five percent of staff participants (N=5) described seven hindering incidents within this category. Staff accounts help detail the degree to which delinquent peers can influence client's relational behaviors. A common theme among staff narratives is one of internal client dialogue about "knowing what the right decision is," but continuing to behave in ways that promote antisocial, sometimes gang-related, affiliations.

"So another girl she was like the highest flyer we have ever had in terms of gang involvement she was next to two adult males who were shot dead, when they were shot dead she was partying with the bacon brothers, they were picking her up at school, it was ridiculous. But and it all started for her because she was always a daddy's girl and then dad re-connected with high school girlfriend, left mum when she was 13 and she went to a party and these older adult males were like hey you know, they told her how great she was and she always used to say I wish I never went to that party... She was just rocking the lifestyle but then things started really going sideways, getting scary for her. She saw things she shouldn't see, she wound up hiding in closets a few times... And then, so it was a long process to unattached her from that lifestyle and also her fear of, all her fears if she did become unattached to that lifestyle. Like physically and also financially."

"So those two met and then these two met and met some older guys who started running them for prostitution and stuff and so the one girl was, we were coming back around. She was on her way to make it and then just a matter of meeting a new student whose, who she wasn't all the way bought in to, she was still torn between what mom's expectations and cultural expectations and Canada and boys and all that so she met the individual that took her back the other way."

In trying to understand what leads their clients to associate with negative peer influences, staff participants surmise:

"They jump into these friend groups because they're so desperate for connection. And then they just do whatever that friend group does."

"OK. Here's one thing we find, is our clientele associate exclusively with other peers that engage in antisocial behavior and likely the reason is there's a comfort in that, you know they've assessed that individual to be in just as bad shape as they are so there won't be any judgment. There may be a sense of protection that this reputation that they have that will keep them safe or offer some opportunity for financial gain."

Issues with School. One of the five life domains of the WRAP program, the Issues with School category is defined by participant accounts of her own/ a client's relationship with school as being a hindrance to her prosocial connectedness. This could be due to such issues as the type of learning environment, truancy, or expulsion. Thirty-seven percent of client participants (N=3) described three hindering incidents within this category. For clients, school posed many challenges that caused them to retreat.

“I actually wasn't very good at, like school wasn't a very good factor in my life. Like two years ago I stopped going to school for like a year, a year and a half ish and now I just started going but it's still not going very good for me...I got into the learning center now, it involves still like more comfortable for me but I still don't have the motivation to like go to school. I'm still skipping and skipping most of the time, even though I miss so much.”

Thirty-three percent of staff participants (N=3) described three hindering incidents within the category Issues with School. Staff accounts highlight how mainstream school can be a hindering factor in their clients lives.

“My office was at a high school that we got her into so that I could be sort of her advocate in the school because she wasn't doing well in mainstream. She was always thinking people were underestimating her and big, big fighter.”

One staff remarked on the resilience of her client who had been to nine different high schools

“I gotta say for one thing too we don't give them enough credit for how many times like because they get kicked out of, bounced out of places, they start fresh all the time and most of us couldn't even switch high schools. These kids go to nine different high schools, right? So for that it's like no connection, all that stuff like.”

For many of these girls, alternative learning environments are crucial to their successful completion of high school. Issues with school, especially mainstream public school, hinder their prosocial connectedness.

Dysfunctional Intimate Dating Relationships. The category Dysfunctional Intimate Dating Relationships is defined by participant accounts of intimate dating relationships (often

with a delinquent male) as being harmful and/or unhelpful to the client's prosocial connectedness. Twenty-five percent of client participants (N=2) described four hindering incidents within this category. Client narratives highlight the ways in which these relationships promoted isolation and kept them from engaging with the WRAP program.

"I was in a really, really bad relationship and I was just like I was completely blind by it and I didn't really care what anyone would say to me. I would still just be with that person... And I wasn't kind of really with the WRAP program, like I was with them but I kind of like distanced myself because I was just like so into the relationship that I didn't really know what to do."

"Yeah, I mean I ended up skipping a whole week of school at one point because he was at my house for like a week... That whole week I just wanted to lay in bed and sleep, and it didn't help because he was there too and so we.. it was like if he gets to stay there then why can't I?"

Seventy-seven percent of staff participants (N=7) described nine hindering incidents within the category Dysfunctional Intimate Dating Relationships. Staff determined dating relationships to be a significantly hindering factor in a lot of their client's lives. Narratives focused on the destructive nature of their clients becoming involved with predominantly older adult males who were involved in risky or illegal behavior. In response to the question "what have you witnessed as hindering the prosocial connectedness of your clients?" staff responded in the following ways:

"Definitely one is boyfriends. That one is just so...examples of that are so readily available with so many of the young women that we work with. One in specific comes to mind is a young person I was... She's 15 and she's dating somebody who's twenty six or seven. Very unhealthy relationship. They broke up after some self-realization and sort of from both sides back and forth they came to a place where they broke up. Which was a very positive thing. But she became very depressed as a result of that and eventually came to a place where she knew that it was good for her to not be in this relationship. But the second he added her back on snap chat you know, re-introduced himself into her life at his convenience, she went right back there. And has now, is now back in a relationship I guess we can call it, with this individual. And that's taking a few steps back...She, he is priority and she is not. Her success and her happiness are identified through him versus herself."

"She got involved with a bad, bad, bad guy where it was so bad that there would actually be surveillance from me when she was out with him, because we were concerned for both

of their safety. So, she was in a very scary, scary situation like her life was endangered probably all the time she had to check in every ten minutes, so she couldn't focus on school because the school would take her phone away and she would flip out because she thought she was, well she probably was going to get pounded if she didn't report in all the time. This was a bad guy, like he drove around the city with guns; he made her go out with him sit in the back of his car while he went out working all night every night and then she had to go to school so... but of course dad was unaware there was a boyfriend because then dad would have killed him."

One staff participant explained that her client was only able to see the negative impact her relationship was having on her when she could finally distance herself from him as a result of his incarceration:

"One of my girls and this is the one that I actually just met in September that I've been working with for a while but she was in her relationship for almost a year with a boy, well actually a man now. Now he ended up in jail in May, and that was when she cleaned up because she finally realized [00:21:01] OK something's not right and this is what's getting me in trouble and having all these police contacts and I don't want that. So it was a lot of self-realization but it was after the fact right? After the police contacts, after the drug use. Yeah, but now that he's not even in the picture things have changed, but then there's that fear of OK what's going to happen when he comes out."

In considering possible reasons for their clients continued involvement with these harmful relationships, one staff participant suggested it was a result of "years of witnessing typically unhealthy relationships" and added, "for us trying to change it that quickly we still unfortunately see a lot of just poor choices in partner, poor choices in relationship".

Antisocial Lifestyle. The Antisocial Lifestyle category is defined by participant accounts of her own/a client's lifestyle as a hindering factor. This often included, but was not limited to, drug and alcohol abuse, street entrenchment or gang related activities such as drug trafficking or violence. Fewer students endorsed this category than did staff. Twenty-five percent of client participants (N=2) described two hindering incidents within this category, both to do with their alcohol and drug use prior to getting involved with WRAP. One client explained:

“Yeah cuz I’m pretty much on the WRAP program cuz of alcohol and drug use, but she’s really helped me a lot with that I was like I never used to go to school I would always like go to drugs and alcohol.”

Staff narratives serve to contribute to a more complete picture of how an antisocial lifestyle has hindered client prosocial connectedness. Fifty-five percent of staff participants (N=5) described eight hindering incidents within the Antisocial Lifestyle category. Staff describe their clients lifestyles as being difficult to intervene in and hard to withdraw from:

And I guess that other another harm of that would be the drug and alcohol use and abuse and we would see that as still a barrier, an issue. Again just from 16 years of programming and then being with us for a couple of months it's tough to shake that. So drug and alcohol issues are certainly a hindrance for us on occasion.”

“I work with another youth but she's she has a really hard time with connections. She's not living a healthy lifestyle right now. And I don't know how much she wants to have a healthy connection because I think when you have a healthy connection you might feel a bit accountable or guilt for what you're doing.”

Staff Only Hindering Categories

The following four hindering categories were those in which only staff accounts met the 25% minimum rate of participation for reporting.

Differing Goals Among Affiliates. The Differing Goals Among Affiliates category is defined by participant accounts of one or more affiliates having conflicting goals in their client’s care planning and when these goals serve to hinder the client’s prosocial connectedness. In this case, “affiliate” refers to any individual who is involved in the youth’s WRAP team or case planning. Seventy-seven percent of staff participants (N=7) described 12 hindering incidents within this category. Staff participants explain the hindering impact that it can have on the client when affiliates become involved who do not understand or subscribe to the goals of the wider

WRAP team. In the following account for example, affiliates refuse to include the youth in her own case planning:

“But even in family meetings are like ICMS or case management meetings, she has not connected with her social worker or her psychiatrist or, it's a huge team. She is quite vocal in not a positive manner in these meetings and doesn't feel... she says to me they talk down to her, their tone of voice. You know we talked about what that looks like, her body language. You know things like they talk about her while she's sitting right there and the fact that she recognizes that is huge.”

Other narratives describe the impact of being let down by adults:

“At a point they are being told you need to trust adults and adults are there for you. But, over and over and over again they're finding that that's not the truth. And adults who are supposed to be there to protect them are letting them down and actually sometimes further facilitating and putting them in danger so...”

One staff participant described the hindering effect of one client's group home living situation, in which a clear difference in goals can be seen simply in the way that youth were treated:

“She was in a closet, is the best way I can describe it with a tiny bed and no windows and very strict rules on when she could be in the kitchen and what she could cook and things she could use to cook. And I picked her up one day and she was in tears and that's when she said if I have to go back there no one's ever gonna find me again like I'm out of here” (P4).

Lack of Trust/Attachment. The Lack of Trust/Attachment category is defined by participant accounts of their client's lack of trust and attachment to adults as hindering. This was often described in reference to hierarchical relationships or lack of attachment as being responsible for the client's lack of trust and inability to form prosocial connections. Fifty-five percent of staff participants (N=5) described 10 hindering incidents within this category. Interestingly, incidents in this category resemble those in the Differing Goals Among Affiliates category in that they tend to stem from repeated violations of trust by adults. Staff explain:

“A lot of the girls that we have, have issues trusting whether it's with the police or you know different agencies.”

“So there are people for her to go to but she's very picky in who she chooses to let in because of hurt and you know attachment stuff.”

“It takes a while to build her trust because she's been so heavily involved in the school system, and I think probably in the larger social system with social workers and things like that and you know with law enforcement for her entire life. And so she had some skeptical and jaded views of support.”

Mental Health. The Mental Health category is defined by participant accounts of their client’s mental health as hindering her prosocial connectedness. When the mental health of family members was mentioned, it was not included in this category, unless it was clearly related to the mental health of the client. In some cases, family mental health was assessed for its relevance to the Family delinquency/toxicity category and categorized as such only if it had a hindering effect on the client. Fifty-five percent of staff participants (N=5) described eight hindering incidents within this category. The following account shows how mental health symptoms are enduring and can resurface and interfere at any point in time with client progress:

“And then trying and just being in that environment that can be very toxic and witnessing somebody who she cares for and wants to care for really hurt himself and the people that she loves and cares for and internalizing that. Results in her being very upset, and she hasn't been attending school since because she's manifesting psychosomatic stuff now. So she is struggling and her depression has kicked in again after months of it being sort of at bay and now she's struggling quite a bit.”

Other staff discussed the hindering effects of things like intergenerational trauma, drug induced psychiatric concerns and borderline personality disorder. Many defined these as hindering in their capacity to interfere with client connectedness and healthy communication.

“But this particular student I think attachment is really hard. She hasn't been diagnosed but borderline personality disorder, which makes it difficult for her to attach to...”

Stigma/Discrimination. The Stigma/Discrimination Category is defined by participant accounts of their clients being stigmatized or discriminated against and how these incidents

hinder their prosocial connectedness. Forty-four percent of staff (N=4) described five hindering incidents within this category. Staff were especially aware of the degree to which the program itself might serve to categorize clients as “gang members”, often leading to their marginalization in the wider community.

“There's also five alternate schools. So a range of administrators. And sometimes when they find out that WRAPs involved it can be a stigmatizing thing that you know maybe there's an assumption that you know they can't be trusted that they're going to start trouble. And it can sometimes bar access to certain opportunities unless we stick handle it in a very careful way...because their, if the individual just doesn't have a strong understanding of the program, there's an assumption that you know there are gangs involved, that they may have been up to very serious things that could impact their school and bring other people down. I think that's the worst fear. So we're very careful about how to approach certain people and the way it's going to be for the betterment of the youth.”

As well, staff participants described how stigma can affect a client's ability to seek out new and healthy alternatives to their antisocial connections:

“Because it's a struggle for these kids to make friends... and I've had kid after kid say to me you know what like if they want to play volleyball, like lets go play volleyball but they have to try out for the team, and they don't have an athletic background so they don't usually make the team, that makes them feel worse and then they say you know, why don't you make some new friends and they're like what kids would hang out with me because now that they have social media everybody knows what kind of, what kind of “person” they think you are, and so are they going to bring you to their house to hang out with them or what are their families going to say when they see the way they dress, the way they talk, the things they've done in the past it's very hard to recover from your past now.”

4.4 Wish List Categories

Among client participants, two major wish list categories met the 25% standard for reporting. Three further categories were endorsed that did not meet the minimum 25% endorsement rate for reporting. Staff participants described four major wish list categories. Five further categories were identified by staff but did not meet the minimum standards for reporting. What follows is a discussion of those major wish list items identified by clients and staff. Categories are listed and discussed in order of importance based on *client* rate of participation.

Discussion of staff findings follows client findings under each category heading. It is interesting to note how few client participants could come up with any wish list items at all. In fact, only nine wish list items were found across all client interviews. The following quotation demonstrates a common response of gratitude from the clients who were asked to consider what was missing from their experience:

“With the Wrap program? To be honest I pretty much had a lot going for me with the WRAP program. They did a lot for me, they took me grocery shopping, like they did so much so there's nothing that I would have asked for more than what they gave me. Like they're really nice so I don't really have nothing, even to think about that they didn't do anything.”

Greater Financial Resources. The Greater Financial Resources category is defined by participants accounts of wishing they had access to more funding in order to enhance the client experience. Twenty-five percent of client participants (N=2) described three wish list items within this category. Clients perceived that more money would mean more resources for girls who were not as lucky as them to have gone through the program:

“Oh I think definitely like finances, because it would be like there wasn't that many girls in the group, and I know that there are lots of girls that would have benefited from that group. And it must be hard for them to just pick a couple you know.”

“More money for more girls because like so many girls you go to high school with, they have like issues and a hard time making friends right? And honestly it just makes you like a leader and a better person all in one. It just makes you a better person. Before that I really didn't care about anybody and like it changes you it honestly does.”

Forty-four percent of staff participants (N=4) described five wish list incidents within this category. Staff were very careful not to suggest that current funds were lacking, however, they did express the degree to which greater funding could support even greater opportunities and facilitate greater outreach:

“I think of going about the opportunities that are above and beyond. So there's opportunities that we can provide daily or during spring break or Christmas or summer that

don't cost money but that's nothing to write home about. You know this summer we took kids white-water rafting in Squamish and mountain biking and you know we did the coolest stuff that costs a pretty penny. Kayaking in Deep Cove where there is seals around us and stuff like that. Those are things we took photos and printed off pictures and framed them for kids in the summer program and we go to these homes now and those are on the mantelpiece, like those experiences are what keep them feeling connected and special and they haven't felt that before and they don't get those opportunities. They're not going to Portland with their family for the weekend or you know Mexico for a week at spring break. Like that's not an option for them so just giving them something to make them feel like they're part of something bigger than themselves and that their special is where that funding comes into play.”

“Funding is a barrier, it is a barrier for everybody with what you can work with. Again I think that there would be a need to have more members if we had a larger team we can, we can service a larger group. That's just math.”

Greater Female Outreach/Capacity. Related to the wish list category Greater Financial

Resources, Greater Female Outreach/Capacity is defined by participants indicating a desire to reach more girls in the community. This wish list item was often furthered by a desire for girl’s programming to be taken more seriously. Twenty-five percent of client participants (N=2) described three wish list items within this category. Client narratives focused on the degree to which the program helped them reach their goals and insisted that others could benefit from it in a similar way:

“Like I don't know some girls that I've met they have no respect and others that I’ve met are total sweethearts, but all of them still like they just need to know themselves. I want them to be able to know who they are and like what they're going to achieve in their lives and not just like focus on other people's lives. With all this drama it’s like unnecessary... because this program is supposed to bring you happiness and peace with yourself and like get you out of doing like drugs, or like jail or like whatever...I mean it put me in a better place with myself, with my family. Yeah I mean I'm very pleased.”

Forty-four percent of staff participants (N=4) described four wish list items within this category. Staff narratives focused on the lack of female referrals. Staff suggested that female referrals are not as common due to issues of stigma and ignorance around female risk factors:

“Yeah, and also just to see the girl’s side be taken a little bit more seriously. Unfortunately there's a stigma around it like they're asking for it or oh it's just daddy issues or, girls aren't

violent. And so with the gang and the prostitution and the drugs and the girl fights like those are I'm so aware of it and I think that other people don't take it as seriously. Other people in power unfortunately just see it as "Oh they're just girls". Yeah but that's not the case."

"Awareness. I think more referrals would come in and more kids would get supported because it would be identified as something to be taken seriously and not just teenage behavior or just a girl fight or just fighting over a boy or provocative clothing or you know severe weight loss, like those are things that are like these kids are being groomed to fit into this mold because they want to feel like they're a part of something and if we can have that identified as something serious early, there's more chance for intervention and prevention. I would be thrilled if we got 50 female referrals tomorrow because that means there's 50 girls that need help and we can figure out a way to find resources and supports for them. It's just because the referrals aren't coming it doesn't mean it's not happening. So that's a huge thing."

"But there is to me the question to be asked of is the referral --does that take into account the complexities of the female student?... And so often we see the girls once they've done a number of things that either get them in trouble with the law or that they've been doing some things at school or there's stuff going on. But how are we seeing that bubble and those behaviors sort of, how are we seeing that evolve over time? And how are we being able to sort of point out like OK this is someone that we need to start working with before we get to the point where now they're you know they've been arrested or now they're on probation or we're having to send them to detox or whatever. You know, are the schools referring the girls the same way that they're referring the boys?... Because for a long time you know and I don't know what the ratio is right now of WRAP clients, of girl to boys, but for a long time it was you know really like there was maybe like a handful of girls on the WRAP caseload. [01:21:43] And it's not because there is no issues for the girls. So then it's sort of like well why aren't there more girls being referred?"

Staff Only Wish List Items

The following two wish list categories were those in which only staff accounts met the 25% minimum rate of participation for reporting.

Greater Community Partnerships. The Greater Community Partnerships category is defined by participants indicating a desire for greater collaboration and coordination between different youth serving agencies and programs in the community. Seventy-seven percent of staff participants (N=7) described 12 wish list incidents within this category. Staff were careful not to minimize those community partnerships presently in place which they describe as paramount to

the success of the WRAP program. However, a number of staff described what they imagined could be achieved with even greater, more tailored, partnerships in the community:

“I think having some ‘go-tos’ in the community with various skill sets that can be transferred upon our youth from arts to hands on trades. And maybe you know job shadowing or training and we've done that organically just sometimes through our relationships we have with the community people, or very rarely but once or twice someone's comes to us to say we have this opportunity for your youth. But I think when it comes to an identity shift, that's pretty powerful when you can pick up a new skill or something, intrinsically like valuable like through creativity or sports related stuff. Yeah but especially in the employment sector that a lot of our kids are money driven. And you know having them get some exposure to real people that are doing something that they will be interested in doing down the road, learning from them.”

“A lot of our youth really have in my opinion a very low chance of living a healthy life if they remain in Surrey. And that's not Surrey's fault. It's just by the connection they've made in their community and, you know there is a little more development in really interesting cool and supportive programs outside the city maybe even some lower mainland where they can be gainfully employed. Maybe they could be part of a program where you know there are programs but there's not we haven't really you know like we have one you know one student a job up at Whistler through an agency you know was working the rental shop and snowboarder on his lunch breaks and he got away from everything while his friends were dealing drugs here and getting in trouble right. It has been done but you need to have that partnership and you have to have something that's really, really dynamic and flexible.”

“I wish we could, I wish a few more like I've been really trying to connect with a lot of old folks homes. I think a lot of our kids would do well to go there and read. I think it would put a lot of perspective and I cannot get any buy-in, like I am not... And I'm like why, like I think it's the ideal thing they're young... I mean I don't know, I've thought of it all. No one will have us like I've got, they will work for free like we can even just wash dishes in the back because a lot of them just need the work experience too. No, not having us.”

Faster/Easier Access to Care. The Faster/Easier Access to Care category is defined by participants indicating a desire for quicker and more streamlined access to, and integration of, youth support services. Forty-four percent of staff participants (N=4) described six wish list incidents within this category. Staff were consistently disheartened and frustrated by the process of connecting youth with services outside of WRAP:

“It's a pretty easy one and it's better systems outside of our hours. So we can do all of the work on our end but our hands are tied to a certain degree. So when it comes to stuff with MCFD, when it comes to stuff with the criminal justice system, when it comes to supports

being put in place to help kids and families. Very much so lacking. I am constantly at, just it is frustrating how broken our systems are.”

Another common area of dissatisfaction was with the speed at which referrals were seen to for those clients who were at especially vulnerable junctures in their lives:

“I think one big one that I'm really struggling with right now is trying to find kids a family doctor. I can't fathom that one. Another one is directly being able to do referrals to youth mental health and actually getting appointments in a better window of time rather than six to 18 months. And I believe there's always a window of opportunity you have with every kid right? So when you do this referral it's like yeah we're not going to talk about this again until you know six or eight months down the road and then things are going to be OK at that very moment and then that's gone again.”

“OK so as an example we tried to get a student into treatment to do detox. Right? So if the wait times are so long and a kid is saying OK, I'll go, I'll go, I'll go and they give you that for three, four days and you don't do it and they can't get in. A week later when they're not feeling so crappy and they're under the influence or not [yeah] they're just done with it and they're like: “No I'm fine” So then they've lost out but then they come It's a cycle. Right? So it's getting happening and we're just going to keep missing out on that opportunity every time. It's the same for like mental health referrals. So I think this would just kind of help to diagnose and to intervene as early as possible.”

Restructuring of the System. The Restructuring of the System category is defined by participants indicating a desire for a change in the organizational structure and/or systemic underpinnings of the WRAP program or affiliated youth serving agencies. Thirty-three percent of staff participants (N=3) described four wish list items within this category. Staff accounts demonstrate their frustration with what they see to be systemic flaws in how at risk youth are cared for:

“So my wish I guess would be I wish for an entire overhaul of the system. Just coming from a more holistic space whereas now it can be very cold and not very productive.”

“So in order to get referrals let's just say for youth mental health or any other sort of specialist services, especially relating to mental health, it has to go through a family doctor. And when that doesn't happen a kid is not seen and that's it, End of story. Too bad so sad. Or a kids aged out. Oh that's another one to add. Kids age out at 18. That needs to change. If the government is saying youth are considered ages 12 to 24. It needs to hit 24 then.”

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to learn from female clients and staff members of the WRAP program what helped, hindered and were wished for in the development of their own/ their clients prosocial connectedness. Findings assist in evaluating the appropriateness of using a relational/attachment approach with this particular population. This chapter begins with a discussion of how the major findings of the present study compare to the existing literature on: prosocial connectedness and development in at-risk youth; female gang prevention and intervention processes and practices; risk and protective factors; and the relational processes of adult-youth mentorship and education. Contextual and Critical Incident Findings are then examined for their contribution and applicability to WRAP objectives and the five life domains: a) school b) peers c) community d) home and e) self. Following this, a brief comment on the relevancy of discrepancies between client and staff critical incidents will be included. A discussion of this study's unique contributions and implications for programming and practice in female gang prevention and intervention strategies followed by the strengths and limitations of this study will conclude the chapter.

5.1 Situating the Findings Within Previous Research

This section will begin by situating the critical incident categories that met the minimum 25% participation rate within the extant literature. Due to the complex and interconnecting nature of my findings, categories will be discussed in order of importance based on client rate of endorsement followed by a brief summary outlining their relationship to one another and to the five life domains of the WRAP approach. While the findings of this study are, for the most part, corroborated by the existing literature, it should be noted that although youth development

programs such as the Surrey Wraparound Program have been increasingly identified as valuable institutions in the literature, very little is known about what *specific* program characteristics create the most positive or most negative outcomes for youth (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2004). Moreover, less is known about how those components may change based on the social categorizations of gender, race, class etc. While the present study aims to help fill this void, the comparative literature in the section that follows represents a distillation of a vast and imprecise collection of material related, but not limited to, theories of prosocial development; the relational processes of adult-youth mentorship/education and youth development programs; female gang prevention and intervention strategies and processes; and risk and protective factors for gang involvement. Where weak connections to the literature are established, findings of the present study are considered to be unique and are presented separately.

Helping Findings

Consistency/Advocacy. The Consistency/Advocacy category was endorsed by 87% of clients and 100% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the helpful impact of the presence and/or consistency of a staff member who was there to advocate on the client's behalf. James McPartland and Sandra Nettles (2001) provide a helpful definition of "advocate" that corresponds with the profile of those staff involved in the present study: "a supportive relationship wherein a resourceful adult provides intensive instrumental, material, and emotional support that can include assessing students' needs for academic and social services, intervening on the students' behalf in schools and other institutions, monitoring students' participation in programs, and identifying and brokering formal services" (p. 569). Having access to an advocate has been demonstrated in literature on school-based programming to effectively increase students' "motivation and achievement in school, remove barriers to student

progress in school and the wider community, and help students refrain from self-destructive and illegal actions” (McPartland, 2001, p. 570). In a Two-Year evaluation report of a mentoring program for at-risk youth (RAISE), researchers found that implementing one-on-one mentoring or advocacy for youth provided positive results in areas of prosocial development (McPartland, 2001).

The literature likewise supports the finding that staff consistency/presence promotes trust and attachment bonds necessary for prosocial connectedness. Eccles and Gootman (2002) in their book, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*, present a provisional list of eight program features that they believe to be important for adolescent development. Based on theories of positive development processes and empirical research from a variety of settings they affirm that clear and consistent structure is a key function of youth development: “Without stability and order, adolescents cannot engage in physical, cognitive, emotional, or social growth, and they are at risk for the development of negative behavioral patterns” (Eccles & Gootman, 2002, p. 93). They conclude, an underlying essential element to youth development is the degree to which adolescents experience attentiveness and responsiveness to his or her subjective world.

Support Seeking Behaviors. The Support Seeking Behaviors category was endorsed by 75% of clients and 55% of staff. A willingness to seek support among girls in the present study proved helpful to their overall prosocial connectedness, since disclosures of need led to staff mobilization and presence. Literature on Support Seeking in adolescents at risk of gang involvement or juvenile delinquency is surprisingly scarce. Support seeking behavior is more likely to be cited as helpful in literature on adolescent suicide prevention (Goodwin, Mocariski, Marusic & Beauvais, 2013; King, Strunk & Sorter, 2011) or where self-disclosure to parents has proven helpful in parent-child monitoring (Laird, Pettit, Dodge & Bates, 2003) or knowledge of

the child's life more generally (Hunter, Barber, Olsen, McNeely & Bose, 201; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Interestingly, Hunter et al., (2011) explain that until Håkan Stattin and Margaret Kerr (2000) published two seminal articles in 2000, most researchers of the time were claiming parental monitoring (i.e., efforts to know) to be the reason for greater parental knowledge (e.g., child's whereabouts). However, Stattin and Kerr (2000) in their study of 703 14-year-olds in central Sweden, reinterpreted this work and found that in fact, parental knowledge was better predicted by child *willingness* to self-disclose (Hunter et al., 2011). Moreover, they concluded that adolescent self-disclosure is consistently correlated with "lower levels of adolescent antisocial behaviour" (Hunter et al., 2011, p. 448). While self-disclosure is a necessary part of support seeking, the two are not synonymous. Support seeking implies that a person is not only willing to share, but is also seeking the help of the person with whom they self-disclose. Still, literature on the effects of voluntary self-disclosure in the parent-child relationship may be useful in understanding the positive effects of support seeking among youth in the present study. This will be further discussed in the unique contributions and suggestions for future research section below.

Moments of Self-Realization/Growth. The Moments of Self-Realization/Growth category was endorsed by 75% of clients and 33% of staff. This category was defined by incidents of clients taking new perspectives or learning something about themselves that contributed to their prosocial connectedness. Literature on the importance of identity formation in adolescents is helpful for understanding the relevance of this category, for this population. Seth Schwartz, Alan Meca, Miguel Ángel Cano, and Elma Lorenzo-Blanco and Jennifer Unger (2017), drawing on the work of Eric Erikson (1950), explain that "identity development is a key task of adolescence and the transition to adulthood" (p. 899). Identity coherence, or "the sense of

knowing who one is”, has been linked to such outcomes as positive psychosocial functioning, and prosocial attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz et al., 2017). The importance of moments of self-realization, or epiphanies, has yet to be acknowledged however in research on gang prevention and intervention. Therefore, this category will be taken up in the unique contributions of this study.

Connection to Community. The Connection to Community category was endorsed by 62% of clients and 77% of staff. This category was primarily defined by participants stating the helpful impact of their/ the client’s involvement in the community doing such things as sports, art, volunteering and other recreational activities. These community connections were seen as helpful to the clients for their capacity to offer alternatives to antisocial connections and promote healthy peer relations, self-efficacy and prosocial inclinations. As was introduced in my literature review, those gang prevention programs which encourage youth to engage with their communities have been shown to have more positive outcomes (Spergel & Curry, 1991; Spergel, 1995). Engaging youth in social activities such as sport and other forms of recreation is an intentional form of social intervention in many programs, aimed at making the gang seem less attractive (Hamel, Cousineau, Leveillee, Vezina & Savignac, 2010). Sylvie Hamel and colleagues (2010) in their discussion of the Youth Street Gangs Project –a gang prevention program based in Montreal Quebec –endorse offering youth “real and concrete opportunities to integrate into the community” as one of five fundamental objectives they see as being crucial to the development of “a positive social environment for youth” (p. 213). A recent publication out of New Zealand supports findings of the present study. Jane Canning, Simon Denny, Pat Bullen, Terryann Clark and Fiona Rossen (2017) found that in neighborhoods with a higher proportion

of youth involved in activities such as art, sports, drama, volunteering and belonging to community organizations, there were increased self-reports of student well-being.

Role Model. The Role Model category was endorsed by 62% of clients and 55% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the helpful impact of having someone to look up to and learn from for/by clients. Role modeling has long been acknowledged as important for healthy child and youth development. Albert Bandura's (1965) Social Learning Theory formalized the important behavioral impact of "modeling", a term he used to describe the process whereby the "model" reinforces and encourages positive actions in the observer simply by engaging with them him or herself. In their article "The Protective Influence of Gangs: Can Schools Compensate?" Jill Sharkley and colleagues (2011) suggest that when youth do not have access to positive role models, they may seek out a gang in order to "feel good about themselves" or "find support" (p. 50). A review and summary of school-based gang interventions by Donald Kodluboy (2004) concluded that people other than parents have the capacity to provide at risk youth with the "caring and role modelling necessary to steer them away from gangs" (Sharkley et al., 2011, p. 51). As in the findings of the present study, other researchers have found that adults leaders and program staff in a variety of youth development programs tend to take on a "quasi-parental/guardian role" when it comes to guiding and role modeling at-risk youth (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2004, p. 86). Studies confirm that for youth who do not have regular access to role models, "the impact of a mentoring relationship could be life altering" (Sharkley et al., 2011, p. 51), providing "second chance opportunities" for youth to become well-functioning adults (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2004, p. 86).

New Opportunities. The New Opportunities category was endorsed by 50% of clients and 55% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the helpful nature of

experiencing new and unique environments and/or activities for clients prosocial connectedness. This study revealed the experience of going camping as especially meaningful for clients. This section therefore draws on literature regarding youth development outcomes from the experience of camp, but also recognizes that camping was seen as particularly helpful due to its novelty and capacity to take the youth “out of her comfort zone”. Therefore, research on the importance of novel activities is also incorporated.

In a study measuring the ‘pre-camp’ and ‘post-camp’ growth of 3,395 camp attendees, researchers found that parents, youth and camp staff reported significant positive change in the 4 domains of Positive Identity, Social Skills, Physical and Thinking Skills and Positive Values and Spirituality. It was also determined that growth in these four domains was not only maintained 6 months later, but was also “more than would be expected by maturation alone” (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler & Henderson, 2006, p. 241). Findings from this study confirm those in the present study that camping is a unique activity that should be considered a particularly strong institution and social movement by which to promote potential long-lasting and prosocial developmental experiences among youth.

To return to Bandura’s (1965) Social Learning Theory, he believed development happens in “proximal zones”, or moment in which one is both simultaneously challenged and capable of meeting that challenge (especially with the help of a role model). As seen in findings of the present study, novel experiences such as camping, are, crucial for fostering zones of proximal development. This can be seen in client narratives highlighting the importance of being taken “out of their comfort zones”. Research on similar community programs have confirmed that the availability of a variety of novel activities increases youth’s active participation and nurtures a

sense of self-efficacy (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). As Eccles and Gootman (2002) make clear, efficacy is a necessary condition for youth development in any setting.

Non-Hierarchical Relationship/Friendship. The Non-hierarchical Relationship/Friendship category was endorsed by 50% of clients. Staff endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. This category was defined by participant accounts of the importance of feeling equal in the staff-client relationship, or when clients depicted their relationships with staff as “like friends”. Literature supports these findings in its depiction of positive outcomes from “youth-centered” relationships with adolescent mentees (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Especially pertinent in the narratives of the youth in the present study was their depiction of the staff-client relationship as being different from other adult relationships in that it felt “equal”, they were not being “told what to do”. Eccles and Gootman (2002) found that adult “overcontrol” was related to less positive outcomes among youth in a variety of studies, underscoring “the importance of qualities of communication, respect and long-term stability” (p. 93).

Belief in Abilities/Feelings of Competence. The Belief in Abilities/Feelings of Competence category was endorsed by 50% of clients and 44% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the importance of having someone who expressed belief in the clients abilities to make prosocial changes, and the degree to which this fostered feelings of competence and efficacy in forming prosocial connections. Using a strengths-based approaches to promote self-worth and highlight accomplishments is well-regarded in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy. Applying a strengths-based approach to working with gang-affiliated youth has been taken up in the literature, and results appear promising. Gira Bhatt, Roger Tweed, and Stephen Dooley (2010) in a Community Consultation Paper discuss the use of strengths based

approach to Gang Prevention in British Columbia. They found that literature on youth strengths points to “three major themes: i) Social strengths, ii) Personal strengths, and iii) Strengths of belief” (p. 5). Social Strengths, such as the ones indicated in the present study, include those strengths related to social relationships with peers, with other community members, with household members, and with people at school, they explain. These social strengths have been related to “a number of positive outcomes including higher grades, and lower levels of physical fighting, and substance use” among youth (Bhatt et al., 2010). Self-esteem, not to be confused with narcissism, was also seen to “increase pro-social behaviour and promote well-being, which may further reduce the likelihood that youth will opt for negative identities that include violence” (Bhatt et al., 2010).

Staff Authenticity. The Staff Authenticity category was endorsed by 50% of client participants and 44% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the importance of staff “being themselves” in their interactions with clients and the degree to which this enabled more freedom in their self-disclosures. Carl Rogers, one of the founders of the humanistic approach to Psychology, believes Authenticity, or therapist genuineness to be one of five necessary conditions for therapeutic change. Though not all staff in the present study were designated, nor qualified, as therapists, the staff-client relationship was not unlike that of a therapist-client in both function and quality. Rogers (2007) explains that within the confines of this relationship a “congruent, genuine and integrated person”, someone who is “freely and deeply him [or her]self” - “the opposite of a façade” - is necessary to initiate constructive personality change. In the present study, clients felt more deeply connected to staff who they felt were genuine and honest. Especially those staff who were willing to self-disclose, regardless of the degree of intimacy of the disclosure. This enabled clients to see them as a “real people”.

Carla Herrera, Cynthia L. Sipe and Wendy S. McClanahan (2000) in their two-part study on the positive effects of mentoring school-aged children, found that youth who claimed to know something personal about their mentor were more inclined to confide in them. Also in support of the present study's findings, Renee Spencer (2006) found that higher quality mentoring relationships were marked by "authenticity, engagement and empowerment". In her qualitative interview study of 24 pairs of adults and adolescents in a mentoring relationship, Spencer (2006) found that those pairs who self-identified as "emotionally close" embodied the relational process of authenticity, or "engaging with the relational partner in a genuine way". The degree of authenticity was shown to be associated with the level of trust in the relationship. In fact, the only pair in Spencer's study who had "not grown as close, was differentiated from the others as missing the element of authenticity" (Renick-Thomson & Zand, 2010, p. 435). Ultimately, the literature on relational theories and mentoring, points to the characteristic of authenticity in relationships as central to healthy psychological development (Spencer, 2006).

Connection to Peers in the Program. The Connection to Peers in the Program category was endorsed by 50% of clients. Staff endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. The importance of peer prosocial relationships as a protective factor receives unprecedented support in the literature, especially literature on protective factors in youth. Though reversely, association with antisocial peers has shown to have detrimental effects, fortunately, according to Eccles and Gootman (2002) research more often points to the fact that "peer influence towards positive behaviours (finishing school, excelling at something, not using drugs) is much more common than influence toward deviant behaviors" (p. 101). Social learning theory proposes that youth obtain their belonging and identity through friends (Sharkey et al., 2010). Prosocial norms in a peer group are reinforced and propagated through the status quo. For example, Mark Snyder

and Arthur A. Jr. Stukas (1999) found that positive social norms and peer modeling is an important motivating force for participation in service activities such as volunteering.

Trust/Attachment Bond. The Trust/Attachment Bond category was endorsed by 37% of clients and 88% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the staff-student relationship as “trusting”, “caring” or “supportive”, and when these characteristics contributed to an attachment bond that was helpful to the client’s prosocial connectedness. The importance of attachment for healthy adolescent development has been well established in the literature for decades. John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth’s joint Theory of Attachment (1991) formalized the importance of secure attachment with a caregiver for healthy psychosocial development. More recently, theorists and researchers alike have begun to recognize the role that nonfamily member adults can play in providing secure attachment bonds and patterns for youth. For example, in the absence of a secure attachment relationship at home, studies have shown that a warm and supportive leader like a coach or teacher can help compensate for the possible negative outcome effects (Obsuth et al., 2016; de Vries et al., 2016). In fact, a recent study conducted by Oberle et al., (2014) found that across a range of relationships within 3026 fourth grade participant’s family, school and neighborhood, the strongest predictor of emotional wellbeing was the child’s relationship to teachers or other adults in the school. A study funded by the U.S. department of Justice on understanding and responding to girls’ delinquency found that girls who had access to at least one caring adult during adolescence were “less likely to commit status or property offenses, sell drugs, join gangs, or commit simple or aggravated assault” (Zahn, Hawkins, Chiancone & Whitworth, 2008, p. 4). Overall, research supports the findings of this study, in that trust and attachment to a caring adult has been proven to serve as a protective factor for youth,

decreasing the likelihood that they will engage in problem behaviours (Obsuth et al., 2016, Oberle et al., 2014, Tiet et al., 2010; Zahn et al., 2008).

Non-Judgment/Empathy. The Non-Judgment/Empathy category was endorsed by 37% of clients. Staff endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. This category was defined by participant accounts of the importance of having a non-judgmental and empathic person to talk to in times of need. Carl Rogers, one of the first psychologists to formally identify empathy and non-judgment as central to the change process in therapy, proposed that all individuals require empathic understanding for any constructive personality change to occur. In the present study, clients found it much easier to connect with those individuals who did not pass judgment on their choices and mistakes. Likewise, feeling heard and understood led to more prosocial connectedness, especially with staff. Spencer (2006) identifies empathy as a key ingredient for the building of close relationships. Moreover, she makes clear the ways in which relational theories help us understand the “joining-with dimensions of empathy” or the concept that individuals are drawn closer to one another through empathy. It is through these experiences, she asserts, that “people learn they matter to each other and gain a sense of relational competence, or feeling effective in building relationships” (Spencer, 2006, p. 289).

Connection to School. The Connection to School category was endorsed by 37% of clients. Staff endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. The Connection to School category was defined by participant accounts of the helpful nature of feeling connected to their school or some aspect of their school such as a relationship with a teacher or a principle. The connection a student feels with his or her school can be the result of a combination factors from environment to peers to school success. Supporting the findings of the present study, risk and protective factor analyses point to school connectedness as related to a number of prosocial

outcomes. Longitudinal research points to the degree to which student's school connectedness reduces their engagement in risk taking behaviours in adolescence, including "cigarette smoking, alcohol and marijuana use, delinquency, and violent behavior" at a 1 year follow up (Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird, & Wong, 2001). Other research represents the school as an important socializing venue which has the capacity to nurture "character strengths such as kindness and compassion" in students.

Further research demonstrates the significant role schools can play in protecting youth at particular risk of delinquency. Perkins and Jones (2004) explain that school connectedness appears especially important for youth who experience adversity at home. In fact, Tiet et al., (2010) provide evidence to suggest that the prosocial effects of teacher-student relationships can outweigh those negative effects associated with delinquent peers, adverse life events and negative parenting.

Staff Only Helping Categories

Connection to Family/Home. The Connection to Family/Home category was endorsed by 44% of staff. Client endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. The category was defined by participant accounts of healthy attachments with the clients family as being helpful for client's prosocial connectedness. We need not look much further than Bowlby's Attachment Theory to find evidence that supports these findings. Developmental psychologists have spent years demonstrating the strong positive effects of affective ties between youth and their parents. Among others, Familial attachment has been consistently shown in the literature to promote such prosocial outcomes as reduced adolescent delinquency (Sogar, 2017) and greater self-esteem (Lee & Hankin, 2009).

Wraparound Approach. The Wraparound Approach category was endorsed by 33% of staff. Client endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. This category was defined by participant accounts of the helping capacity of the nature of the program itself. As was thoroughly discussed in this paper's literature review, the Wraparound approach has been proven to be highly effective for promoting prosocial behaviours in youth from a variety of backgrounds (Snethen, 2009; Spergel, 1995; Spergel & Curry 1991; Totten, 2008).

Hindering Findings

Family Delinquency/Toxicity. The Family Delinquency/Toxicity category was endorsed as hindering by 50% of client participants and 77% of staff. This category was defined by participant accounts of the client's family or home life as hindering her prosocial connectedness. Research on risk factors for female gang involvement and delinquency unanimously cite family delinquency as a strong predictor of youth deviance and gang membership (Chaterjee, 2006; Thornberry et al., 2004; 2002; Wyrick & Howell, 2004). In a longitudinal study conducted by Thornberry and colleagues (2004) which sought to understand the causes and correlates of delinquent behaviour in youth, they found that those individuals who self-reported as delinquent were 69.8% more likely than their peers to have experienced maltreatment as a child, and 71.4% more likely if they experienced maltreatment in both childhood and adolescence (e.g., physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect). Wyrick and Howell (2004) concluded that factors of family structure, child abuse or neglect and poor parental supervision (all of which are factors related to parent-child attachment) were among those family characteristics most predictive of gang membership.

Antisocial Peers/Conflict with Peers. The Antisocial Peers/Conflict with Peers category was endorsed as hindering by 37% of client participants and 55% of staff. This category was

defined by participant accounts of the hindering impact of negative and delinquent peer relationships on client prosocial connectedness. Peer delinquency is one of the most commonly cited risk factors for gang membership in the literature (Esbensen et al., 2009). Association with antisocial peers was found in the Denver Youth Study - a longitudinal study of 1,527 youth residing in high-risk neighborhoods - to be one of the most salient predictors of gang membership at a 2 year follow up (Huizinga, Weiher, Espiritu, & Esbensen, 2003). This effect has been explained by theories of peer pressure and the existence antisocial norms.

Issues with School. The Issues with School Category was endorsed as hindering by 37% of clients and 33% of staff. In the present study, issues with school generally stemmed from clients not feeling heard by teachers, drop out and truancy. Dorbusch (2001) found that adolescents low in school connectedness were more likely to find opportunities to engage in problematic antisocial behavior. As one staff participant pointed out in the present study, it can be especially challenging for youth who undergo multiple school transfers in a given year - due to issues with truancy, violence, negative peers etc.- to find the motivation to continue. As supported by Yossiter and colleagues' (2010) investigation of youth's perceptions of their experience of "Wraparound", the experience of multiple absences can often lead youth to consider dropping out of school permanently. For these youth, school represents "a fertile ground for the kind of despair that leads to gangs, drugs, violence and guns" (Yossiter et al., 2010).

Dysfunctional Intimate Dating Relationships. The Dysfunctional Intimate Dating Relationships category was endorsed by 25% of clients and 77% of staff. This category was most often defined by staff reporting a client's relationship with an older, delinquent male as particularly harmful to her prosocial connectedness. Dysfunctional intimate dating relationships are not only upheld as hindering in the literature on risk factors, they are supported as a gender-

relevant factor as well (Kerig, 2004). In other words, far more so than for adolescent boys, girls' delinquency has been shown to depend greatly on the quality of their romantic relationships and their partners' antisocial propensities (Cauffman et al., 2008; Haynie, Giordano, Manning & Longmore, 2005). In their study of a diverse sample of 1,354 adolescents, Cauffman, Farruggia and Goldweber (2008) found that "girls who engage in self-reported delinquent behavior are more likely to experience a high degree of antisocial encouragement exerted on them by their current romantic partner" (p. 699). This was upheld in participant narratives in the present study in which it was not uncommon for the girls and staff to report romantic partners being manipulative and coercive in their relationships. Recent scholarship has also pointed to the effects of childhood attachment on romantic relationships in later life (Simpson & Rhodes, 2002; Milkulincer & Shaver, 2003). For instance, disorganized and/or insecure attachment in childhood have been shown to predict similar behaviours (anxiety, avoidance, fear) in romantic relationships in adulthood (Paetzold, Rholes & Kohn, 2015).

Antisocial Lifestyle. The Antisocial Lifestyle category was endorsed as hindering by 25% of client participants and 55% of staff. The Antisocial Lifestyle category was most often defined by the use of alcohol, drugs and "partying" by participants of the present study as being hindering for clients prosocial connectedness. The literature on the influence of lifestyle on antisocial behaviours clearly supports the findings of this study. Literature points to behavioural life choices such as who youth choose to hang around with, what activities they partake in, and their use of substances as indicative of the likelihood of them joining a gang (Esbensen et al., 2009). The accessibility of drugs and alcohol influence the likelihood of adolescent engagement. Monica Swahn and colleagues (2009) conducted a study on the self-reported alcohol and drug use and related exposures among 4131 public school students between the ages of 11 and 17.

They found that those who reported gang membership (N=8.8%), were more likely to have “initiated alcohol early, to have reported a high prevalence of alcohol use, to have engaged in alcohol-related physical fighting, peer drinking, drug use, drug selling, peer drug selling, and having seen drug deals in their neighborhood” (p. 353).

Staff Only Hindering Categories

Differing Goals among Affiliates. The Differing Goals among Affiliates category was endorsed by 72% of staff participants. Client endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. This category was defined by staff accounts of the hindering impact that it can have on a youth when associated agencies, or affiliates, do not share in the goals of the child’s WRAP team. As was detailed in this study’s literature review, those youth serving programs that show the greatest collaborative efforts, especially cross agency, have been shown to be more effective than those gang prevention programs that employ suppression-based responses or zero tolerance policies (Spergel & Curry, 1995). Differing goals can lead to a lack of collaboration or differences in opinion on how best to handle the young person’s situation. As was made clear in the present study, this discord among affiliates is often internalized by youth as a indicative of a problem with them, rather than with the system. The literature most commonly points to the problems that can arise when police and community agencies differ in their approach to intervening (Varano & Wolff, 2012). While this was not a conflict commonly discussed in the present study, it nevertheless indicates one area where contentions may interfere with the goals of the youth and his or her team.

Lack of Trust/Attachment. The Lack of Trust/Attachment category was endorsed as hindering by 55% of staff. Client endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. Not surprisingly, support for this category draws on much the same literature as did the helping

category of Trust/Attachment. In the present study the lack of Trust/Attachment category was defined by participant accounts of how the experience of repeated breaches of trust, and lack of attachment in key developmental stages, ultimately lead to setbacks and problems in client prosocial progress. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1959) helps us understand the processes by which children learn about safety and security. Eccles and Gootman (2002) explain that “at the most basic level, safety is essential for positive development”. For those individuals who lacked secure attachment as a child, experienced violence of abuse, neglect and other forms of maltreatment, the world can become a “comfortless and unpredictable” place (Savage, 2013). This, Savage (2013) claims, causes these individuals to either shrink away from it, or do battle with it. She further explains that unlike those children who form internal working models of their caregivers as “trustworthy and dependable and the self as worthy of care”, youth who are met with repeated exposure to unhealthy attachments are much more likely to fall into unhealthy patterns of delinquent behaviour and violent offences (Savage, 2013). In her quantitative comparison of gender differences in gang involvement, Bell (2009) supports the findings of this study when she finds that “less parental attachment is associated with a greater likelihood of gang membership” across both genders.

Mental Health. The Mental Health category was endorsed as hindering by 53% of staff. Client endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. This category was defined by participant accounts of the hindering impact that mental health has or has had on their clients prosocial connectedness. Most commonly cited diagnoses in the present study included Anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The extant literature on mental health among female gang members supports the findings of the present study. For example, Teplin et al., (2002) asked specifically about the prevalence of

mental health disorders in 1,829 arrested juveniles and found that approximately 30% of the females studied had a diagnoses of some form of Anxiety Disorder (Teplin et al., 2002). A multivariate analysis by Pernilla Johansson and Kimberly Kempf-Leonard (2009) found that having mental health problems was positively related to serious, violent and chronic offending in both females and males. While violent offending and gang membership are not mutually exclusive, a close association has been established in the literature (Howell & Egley, 2005; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Thornberry et al., 2003).

Stigma/Discrimination. The Stigma/Discrimination category was endorsed as hindering by 44% of staff participants. Client endorsement did not meet the 25% minimum participation rate. The Stigma/Discrimination category was primarily defined by staff accounts of the hindering nature of clients being labelled “gang members” by other school personnel and peers due to their involvement in the WRAP program. Research which speaks to the prevalence of practices of the social exclusion of gang members, especially in the school context, demonstrates the ways in which labelling practices effect youth’s acceptance into various types of important school-based programs that promote prosocial development. Buckle and Walsh (2013) in seeking a strategy for educating youth gang members through prosocial activities, found that, “once labeled a gang affiliate, [youth] are often targeted for immediate school suspension, expulsion, removal, and arrest for any misbehavior, real or perceived” (p. 53). As was indicated in the present study, youth can find it especially challenging to get involved in non-gang related activities like sports and art because of the stigma associated with the peer crowd they are presumed to belong to. Eccles and Gootman (2002) point to the fact that “One of the first issues for an adolescent walking through the door or even thinking about trying a community program is whether he or she can belong to this group of people: “Will I fit in, will I be comfortable?” (p.

97). Research confirms that these considerations can act as “significant barriers that keep adolescents from joining youth activities” (Eccles & Gootman, 2002, p. 97). Even the community has responded negatively in some instances due to what participants in the present study believed to be a stigma around the program being for “gang members”. However, the removal and banning of these youth from prosocial activities merely acts to reinforce a stigma that was often already prevalent in their lives to begin with. As Buckle and Walsh (2013) ask: “how does it make sense to immediately remove and block struggling youths from these opportunities?” Their consensus: “It does not” (p. 53).

Wish List Factors

Wish list factors of the present study should be considered unique to the WRAP program itself and the people within it. However, themes did emerge that are worth noting for their association with, and similarity to, the extant literature on unmet needs and barriers to gang prevention and intervention processes. The wish list categories that met the 25% rate of endorsement in the present study were indicative of organizational weaknesses. They identified the need for: Greater Financial Resources, Greater Female Outreach/Capacity, Greater Community Partnerships, Faster/Easier Access to Care, and a Restructuring of the System. What unites these wish list factors is two common, and mutually-reinforcing problems: limited funding and systemic and institutional barriers. These problems have been addressed in countless arenas, but have been especially salient in areas of Social Work, Child and Family Development and Education. Research on barriers to gang prevention suggest that “significant cultural and policy changes are needed” (Sharkey et al., 2011) that target the dynamic and complex processes of gangs and gang violence.

The research is clear about one thing: Gangs shift in activity and structure across time and place (Bond & Gebo, 2012), making it especially difficult to establish a ‘one-size-fits-all’ gang strategy and model. Community responses, including those school-based initiatives, appear at this time, to be our best known solution to gang problems. However, as is found in this study and supported by the literature, there are a multitude of challenges associated with multi-agency arrangements (Bond & Gebo, 2012), most notably, that of collaboration.

A 2010-2011 Evaluation of the Youth Gang Prevention Fund Program, initiated by the Canadian Department of Justice, found collaboration challenges to be “frequently mentioned” among staff. Erika Gebo, Brenda J. Bond and Krystal S. Campos (2015) cite collaboration challenges as one of four major barriers affecting the implementation of a Comprehensive Gang Model. They explain, “Collaboration requires a genuine investment from those in the broader community. Engagement of the community (i.e. residents, clients, formal agencies, and grass-roots groups) is paramount in implementing the CGM or any CCI” (Comprehensive Community Initiative). How collaboration comes to be defined has, thus far, been based on the agency and it’s theoretical underpinnings. Especially among justice versus non-justice partners, collaboration can look very different (McDevitt & Wolff, 2012). One proposed strategy gaining headway in the literature is that of linking public health and criminal justice approaches. This, Gebo (2016) believes, may mitigate some of the current challenges associated with carrying expectations around collaboration. An important benefit of a public health approach is its focus on prevention, rather than suppression and the involvement of a range of stakeholders in coming up with solutions (Gebo, 2016). She also explains that communities may be more incline to “buy-in” to efforts of public health because of the emphasis on community “wellness rather than individual blame” (Gebo, 2016, p. 376).

Funding impacts outreach capacity. A great number of participants in the current study wished for greater financial resources, especially insofar as it would allow them to reach more female participants, a group they see as being especially vulnerable and overlooked. Participants were clear however, just how grateful they were for the current funding the program does receive. A CBC news article from August, 2017 outlines recent funding in the amount of \$500,000 per annum, provided to the WRAP program by BC civil forfeiture grants in effort to eliminate the “35 person wait list”. This represents a doubling of what was previously given to the program prior to August, 2017 (CBC News). A Global News article from 3 months later reported the wait list being down to “about a dozen youth” (Little & Benning, 2017). It is almost impossible for me to speak to whether or not the WRAP program is currently receiving adequate funding. It is clear however, that the demand is not yet being met, as wait lists have yet to be eliminated.

The issue of faster/easier access to care comes down to a resource supply/demand narrative that has permeated the social service industry for decades. According to April Elliot (2013) “Inadequate health care, education and advocacy for street-involved youth who present in various health care settings every day in Canada is one of this country’s great unmet needs” (p. 317). Barriers facing street-involved youth are ultimately not that different from those facing gang-involved youth. Among others, these can include: the need to supply a permanent address, the need for adult consent or involvement, and services that are poorly coordinated or difficult to access (Elliot, 2013). Amelia Curran, Evan Bowness, and Elizabeth Comack (2010) report, “a key element to the well-being of youth lies in the provision of support and resources made available to them” (p. 1). To understand what prevents youth from accessing such support, Curran and colleagues (2010) asked members of the Coalition of Community-Based Youth-

Serving Agencies (CCBYSA) in Winnipeg the question: “what are the difficulties youth- serving agencies encounter when helping the populations of youth they serve?” (p. 2). As was found in the present study, responses revealed the degree to which the shortcomings lay in the system and not the individual workers. Ultimately they acknowledge that change is required at a structural level – “both in terms of helping with the issues youth face and the struggles agencies encounter in accessing funding” (p. 1).

Taken together, what the wish list items of the present study and their counterparts in the literature reveal is the need for a commitment from everyone that resides within a given community, from law enforcements to formal agencies, to come together to encourage and facilitate opportunities for youth that promote their engagement as prosocial and active members of society.

5.3 Relationship Between Findings and the 5 Domains

Upon asking for feedback from 2 expert reviewers as to the usefulness of the present study’s results, one thing became abundantly clear. Both reviewers felt that what was missing from the present study was a clear indication of how the results inform our understanding of the 5 targeted life domains set out by the WRAP program: a) school b) peers c) home d) community and e) self. In an effort to respond to my reviewers, what follows is a brief discussion of how the frame of reference for this study led to the formation of categories that exist outside the 5 domains.

Consistent with the ECIT framework, data analysis in the present study was conducted by “determining the frame of reference, forming categories that emerge from data, and determining the specificity or generality of the categories” (Butterfield et al., 2009). In determining the appropriate frame of reference – or the use that was to be made of the data—this study turned to

the goals and objectives of the WRAP program for guidance. Their aims are twofold: 1) “to positively attach youth to school, their community and the home by building a trusting and positive relationship” (WRAP), and 2) to offer “opportunities to be mentored by positive adult allies” (City of Surrey) as a way of promoting a “positive lifestyle and self-worth for youth” (WRAP). It was determined that results of the present study would be most useful for their capacity to point to whether or not the relational goals of the WRAP program (“to build trusting and positive relationships”) were being met. The frame of reference in this study can therefore be seen as the building of trusting and positive relationships for their capacity to facilitate prosocial connectedness.

Other than in the contextual questions, the 5 life domains were not directly queried in the interviews. The reason for this was threefold 1) using an ECIT framework and interview protocol that would take into account all 5 domains would have been a massive undertaking, beyond the scope of an MA thesis and 2) the 5 domains were not intended as the frame of reference for this study and 3) the researcher believed that even without being prompted, the 5 domains would make their way into the narratives of participants in illuminating ways. This last point was proven correct in that participants did in fact report critical incidents that related to their homes, communities, peers, schools and themselves despite not being asked directly about these. However, participants also reported on other incidents that do not fit as neatly or discernably into these 5 domains. Most notably, incidents related to the *quality* of the staff-student relationship, and the participant’s *experience* of that relationship. Therefore, had categories been informed only by the 5 life domains, a number of highly informative critical incidents would have been overlooked.

Ultimately it can be helpful to consider the relationship between findings in the following way: The Wraparound approach aims to foster at least one trusting and positive relationship with youth, whether it be to a family member, a peer, a community member or a staff member of the program. In finding out what helps and hinders clients and staff in forming these relationships, incidents can be seen as fitting into the following three overarching brackets a) the quality of the staff-client relationship (consistency/advocacy, non-hierarchical relationships; staff authenticity; non-judgment/empathy; role model) b) The client's social-ecological system (community, family, school, peers) and c) the client's psychological system (self-realization, support seeking, self-efficacy).

5.4 Discrepancies, Unique Contributions and Suggestions for Future Research

Part of what sets this study apart from other research on female gang prevention is its focus on the perspectives of two different groups of individuals, operating in the same domain: a) female youth who are gang-involved or at risk of becoming gang involved, or the "clients" of WRAP; and, b) their leaders and mentors, or the "staff" of WRAP. The choice to interview these two groups was intentional and based on three interrelated convictions: 1) Clients and staff will inevitably hold varying narratives based on their social locations and the intersections of race, class, and gender 2) These differences will help elaborate findings in unique and constructive ways and 3) The voices, feelings, knowledge, and experience of girls and their allies have too often been silenced in the literature. This study seeks to counteract this harmful oversight.

Discrepancies in the narratives of staff and clients are important for their contribution to WRAP reform and future female gang intervention efforts in general. The present study found four major discrepancies: 1) Non-Hierarchical Relationship/Friendship, 2) Support Seeking Behaviours, 3) Connection to Peers in the Program and 4) Trust/Attachment Bond. Other

discrepancies - such as those related to WRAP processes and implementation - were uncovered, yet were determined to point more so to differences in positionality. For example, staff were more likely to employ specialist language related to WRAP objectives, or to cite biopsychosocial implications in the lives of their clients. This is likely due to their social location as employees and stakeholders of the program. Clients on the other hand were more likely to focus on the quality of the experience and their personal growth. For instance, Moments of Self-Realization/Growth was endorsed by 75% of clients and only 33% of staff. This discrepancy points to one of the strengths of self-report data in that self-realization is something that is unique to the individual and experienced internally.

1) The Non-Hierarchical Relationship/Friendship category was endorsed by 50% of clients but fewer than 25% of staff. This discrepancy is interesting for its capacity to point to the underlying importance that staff genuinely embody equality in their relationships with clients. For example, not only did clients appreciate the felt sense of friendship and equality they received from staff, but this experience is rendered even more valid by the fact that the staff did not recognize the importance of this factor as a strategy. What this seems to demonstrate is the importance of the genuineness of the friendly feelings and sense of equality on the part of the staff.

2) The Support Seeking Behaviour category was endorsed by 75% of clients and 55% of staff. While this discrepancy is ultimately not very large, the high degree of client endorsement, along with the apparent lack of support in literature on gang prevention, renders this category worthy of further exploration; especially insofar as it may prove to be a unique and potentially untapped area for future research and may have implications in gender-specific gang programming. The existing research on topics of adolescent development and familial

attachment points to the importance of adolescent willingness to self-disclose on the quality of the parent-child relationship (Hunter et al., 2011).

While research on gang prevention and intervention has yet to examine the effects of support seeking specifically on outcomes in female youth, one study in particular has demonstrated positive outcomes among gang involved men who reported *receiving* support. Goodwill and Ishyama (2016) in their CIT study on the facilitation of gang exit among Indigenous male ex-gang members found that a) accepting support from family or girlfriend and b) accepting guidance and protection, were highly endorsed categories related to gang exit among this population. While their study represents a different population than that of the present study, these findings are curious for two reasons: Firstly, they appear to concur with the finding that support from others is a necessary condition for change. But secondly, and perhaps more importantly, for how the comparison points to potential gender differences. It is generally accepted that men are less likely to admit the need for help than women. This may hold implications for why the men in Goodwill and Ishyama's (2016) study reported receiving support, but made no indication of seeking it out, whereas the girls in the present study were willing to disclose their active support seeking. Future research may benefit from exploring the mechanisms by which individuals feel empowered to actively seek out and receive support, as well as examine any potential influences that gender may have on these behaviours.

3) The Connection to Peers in the Program category was endorsed as helpful by 50% of clients and only 11% of staff. On the other hand, the Antisocial Peers/Conflict with Peers category was endorsed as hindering by 55% of staff and only 37% of clients. The importance of this discrepancy lies in what it might be able to tell us about WRAP's operations. Staff participants were far more likely to cite peers as being a hindering factor than a helpful one,

whereas clients were more likely to cite peers as being helpful to their prosocial connectedness. Even though what differentiates these categories is a) peers being in the program (helpful according to clients) versus b) peers being delinquent and outside of the program (hindering according to staff), there are many possible reasons for this discrepancy. One possibility is that having prosocial peers to interact with in the program may be more beneficial to clients than staff recognize. Clients rated their connection to peers as highest of all 4 queried domains ($M= 8.7$, $SD=1.38$), which has strong implications for its positive effects. Alternatively, these findings may relate to differences in how clients and staff understand these peer relationships. For instance, one particular staff explained:

“if we introduce ‘so and so’ to ‘so and so’ that may actually make it worse, the trajectory could even go in like a really negative way... we can't have certain kids be together. Is it just a hard line. But if we're thoughtful about who we introduced to who and we're there and we're doing something like really cool and you know experiential learning in the community and whatever it's been super awesome.”

What this account demonstrates is the degree to which the forming of peer relationships may actually be more deliberate than the clients recognize. Because staff understand the intentionality behind peer connections, this may render them less likely to cite these incidents as helpful.

4) The Trust/Attachment category was endorsed by 88% of staff and only 37% of clients. This discrepancy is especially notable for what it reveals about the influence of vocabulary on category formation. In other words, staff consistently employed “trust” and “attachment” as ‘catch-all’ terms to describe something about the overall *quality* of the staff-client relationship. I would argue that clients used these terms far less frequently, not because the qualities of trust/attachment were not felt, but because they manifest in other, more discernable ways, in experience of feeling heard, advocated for or equal to. Because clients were willing to describe specific incidents—with a focus on the *experience* of the connection (what it meant to the client)

and not just the *quality* of it—more often their critical incidents were better suited to alternative categories and are discussed under those headings.

This study is unique in its capacity to consolidate a large number of helpful/hindering and wish list factors across two groups of individuals operating under the same domain. The result is a comprehensive list of the key factors and their outcomes for supporting a population that is generally underserved and overlooked. The findings of this study contribute to the limited knowledge base of what features, and combination of features specifically, are responsible for the success or failure of programs seeking to increase prosocial connectedness in female youth. Future research would benefit from examining these findings in light of the intersections of gender, race, class and other issues related to the marginalization of certain peoples.

5.6 Implications for Practice

Critical incident and wish list findings of the present study assist in evaluating the appropriateness of using a relational/attachment model to inform strategies for gang prevention and intervention in female youth. In keeping with this study's frame of reference—the building of trusting and positive relationships—results indicate that the overall and combined influence of the client-staff relationship may have profound implications for shifting youth away from antisocial, harmful connections and into more prosocial, self-affirming ones. This was evidenced by this study's contextual findings, which explicitly demonstrate the strong degree to which girls indicate the WRAP program has helped them connect with their families, peers, school, and community as well as facilitated the achievement of their goals. Staff and client narratives continued to share in their endorsement of developmental assets for their capacity to evoke prosocial connections among youth and the people around them. Attachment theory lends itself well to conceptualizing these findings. Given the findings of the present study, PYDs, especially

those whose efforts lie in female gang prevention, may want to consider focusing their attention on providing girls with opportunities to connect with secure attachment figures by way of role models, counsellors or other program leaders. Facilitating the development of trusting and positive relationships should be considered central to any gender-informed gang strategy.

Taken together, I have formulated a list of some of the key qualities that should be considered in any PYD interested in supporting the unique needs of gang-involved girls. This list should be considered provisional, as findings need to be replicated before any claims can be made as to the effectiveness of these suggestions.

- 1) Offer youth a variety of opportunities to connect with trusting and positive adults in their communities.
- 2) Offer youth an environment grounded in the principles of safety and security so that they may feel heard, supported, and free from judgment.
- 3) Encourage links with other prosocial individuals who operate in the same ecological domains as the youth (e.g., peers, family, teachers).
- 4) Offer youth interesting and unique opportunities to integrate into their communities through experiences such as camping, hiking, sports, art, gardening etc.
- 5) Facilitate youth's self-exploration and encourage support seeking behaviours through the use of modeling and authentic positive regard.

5.5 Strengths and Limitations

The strengths of this study lie in its unique contributions to the field of gang prevention and intervention, specifically for young women. While this study is exceptional in that it draws on both first and second-hand accounts to draw conclusions about best practices, I see two major limitations that should not be overlooked. Firstly, the fact that this study relied on the director

and fellow staff of the WRAP program to supply female participants, meant that the researcher was only able to access those individuals who the program deemed “fit” for interviewing. In other words, it is very possible that for the sake of maintaining its integrity and producing the most positive results, WRAP yielded only those girls who had demonstrated the most positive outcomes. Secondly, this research was able only to account for gender insofar as it limited participation to those individuals who self-identified as female. To truly gauge whether or not results are indicative of gender differences, boys needed to have been included in the study and a cross sectional analysis would have shown if the categories are unique to girls or consistent across genders.

5.6 Concluding Comments

This study sought to examine the helpful and hindering impact of a school-based program for gang prevention in female youth. It was also interested in what might be missing from the program that could better serve its relational/attachment goals and promote client well-being and connectedness. Helping critical incident findings demonstrate how the forming of healthy attachment bonds can manifest as prosocial connections in other domains of client’s lives (school, home, peers) as well as promote greater self-awareness, trust and growth among youth. Hindering and Wish List critical incident categories tended not to reside in any aspect of the program itself – practices or staff characteristics for example – but rather in the ways in which the external community and other youth serving agencies interact with WRAP and its clients. These findings suggest that one area that may benefit from greater critical attention is that of collaborating with external supports and the best practices associate with forming these trusting partnerships. This should however, not detract from the very positive findings which ultimately point to WRAP’s apparent success in meeting its goals with this unique population. Taken

together, the findings from this study contribute to, and advance a comprehensive model for female gang prevention and intervention efforts that sees healthy relationships as antidotes for gang affiliations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Initial Contact

Email correspondence to staff and program affiliates

To Whom it May Concern:

You are receiving this email because you have indicated that you are interested in participating in my research study titled: “Gang Interrupted: An Investigation of What Helps and Hinders Girls’ Prosocial Connectedness”. The goal of this study is to examine what helps and what hinders in girls’ prosocial development in the Surrey Wraparound Program. By allowing participants to talk about their experiences in the program, this research will provide useful information to the SWP that could help them improve their services to the female population.

In order to participate you must acknowledge that you meet the following criteria in order to be eligible to participate in this study:

- A current or former female participant of the SWP OR
- A staff member, or program affiliate with the Surrey School District who is involved with at least one female SWP participant and is familiar with her goal attainment
- Fluent in reading and speaking English
- Willing and able to participate in the study
- Willing to devote an average of 2-2.5 total hours over 3-6 months to participate in the study
- Willing to talk about their experiences participating in the SWP (confidentially)

If you would still like to be involved in this study please forward your availability, as well as any questions or concerns to myself, Rebecca Barrett-Wallis. The principal investigator for this study is Dr. Norman Amundson, Professor at the University of British Columbia. The Co-Investigator and Interviewing Researcher is Rebecca Barrett-Wallis, Master’s Student in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Barrett-Wallis
MA Student in Counselling Psychology
University of British Columbia

Appendix B: Client Assent Form

*“Gang Interrupted:
An Investigation of What Helps and Hinders Girls’ Prosocial Connectedness”*

Principal Investigator:	Dr. Norman Amundson, Professor University of British Columbia Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education
Co-Investigator and Interviewing Researcher:	Rebecca Barrett-Wallis, MA Student University of British Columbia Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education

We are doing a research study about your experience participating in the Surrey Wraparound Program. A research study is a way to learn more about people, places and organizations and can help to improve our way of life. This particular study is being conducted by Rebecca Barrett-Wallis, a student from the University of British Columbia. If you decide that you would like to be a part of this study, you will be asked to attend a 1 – 1.5 hour interview where you will be asked a variety of questions about school, your community, your peers and your home. The information gathered will be used to improve the services offered by the Surrey Wraparound Program. Identifying information such as your name and date of birth will not be recorded. The researcher will tape record the interview in order to make sure she has enough information. These tapes will be erased after the study is over.

There will be a second telephone/e-mail contact with you, which will last approximately thirty minutes- 1 hour. At this time you will be given the opportunity to verify that what we recorded was true and that there is nothing more you want to say. The total participation time we expect from you is approximately 2-2.5 hours within a 3 to 6 month period.

What you can expect to receive for your hard work:

You will be provided with a \$50 gift card to Guildford Mall before the beginning of the first interview. You can keep this gift card even if you do not complete the interview.

Privacy/ Confidentiality

Any information that might identify individuals participating in this study will be kept confidential. Only trained Research Assistants on the research team will have access to the data. Participants will not be identified by the use of names or initials in any reports of the completed study. All research documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at the University of British Columbia. Computer data files will be encrypted and password protected for the participants privacy.

Benefits/Risks to Your Participation

Data collected from this study will contribute to the SWP’s decision making regarding your programming. Findings might show that there is room for improvement, or that they should keep up the good work. There are not many risks known if you choose to participate in this study. The researchers do not think there will be any discomfort associated with this study. But if at any point you feel you want to stop, you can. You will still be able to keep your gift card. When you finish the study you will be given a list of community resources such as counsellors and crisis lines in case anything we asked you has made you sad, angry or has brought back hard memories.

Contact for Information About the Study

If you have any questions or would like more information about this study, you may contact Rebecca Barrett-Wallis (Interviewing Researcher and Co-Investigator).

When we finish this study we will write a report about what we learn. If you would like to be contacted with the results of the study once the study is complete, please check this box

Contact for Concerns About the Rights of Research Subjects

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Assent

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after we begin, that’s okay too. Your parents know about the study too.

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.

(Sign your name here)

(Date)

Your signature indicates that you consent (agree) to participate in this study.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

Appendix C: Consent Form

*“Gang Interrupted:
An Investigation of What Helps and Hinders Girls’ Prosocial Connectedness”*

Principal Investigator:	Dr. Norman Amundson, Professor University of British Columbia Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education
Co-Investigator and Interviewing Researcher:	Rebecca Barrett-Wallis, MA Student University of British Columbia Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education

This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of Rebecca Barrett-Wallis’s Masters of Arts in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. The results of this research will be included as a master’s thesis that will become public documents in the University library once completed. The results of this research may also be published in appropriate professional and academic journals.

Purpose

This study aims to gather information about female participant experiences in the Surrey Wraparound Program that could help improve their services to this population. The SWP wants to help connect students with peers, families/homes, schools, communities, and themselves in a healthy way. Questions in the interview will relate to these 5 areas of the participants life in order to find out about specific aspects of the program/ instances from the participant’s experience, that have helped, hindered, or that were missing from the program that could have enhanced student engagement with these 5 domains.

Procedures

This study will require one interview that will last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in length. During the interview, you will first be introduced to the purpose of the study and upon giving signed consent for participation, you will be asked about your experience in the Surrey Wraparound program. Following this, you will be asked to recall specific factors that helped or hindered you or your student(s) in forming healthy relationships, and connecting with the 5 domains, as well as examples of these helping and hindering factors. You will also be asked whether you can identify anything that might have helped you or your student(s) but was not available at the time. This interview will be tape recorded, transcribed and given a code number to ensure confidentiality. Upon completion of the study these tapes will be erased and disposed of. All files relating to the data obtained from these interviews will be encrypted to ensure confidentiality.

There will be a second telephone/e-mail contact with you, which will last approximately thirty minutes- 1 hour. At this time the researcher will allow you to verify that the information she is using from your personal interview is accurate and complete. As well, the interviewer will let you know of the categories she found and give you the opportunity to comment/agree/disagree with them.

Your total participation time will be approximately 2-2.5 hours within a 3 to 6 month period.

Confidentiality

Any information that might identify individuals participating in this study will be kept confidential. Only trained Research Assistants on the research team will have access to the data. Upon signing the informed consent you will be given a code number to ensure the maintenance of confidentiality. Participants will not be identified by the use of names or initials in any reports of the completed study. All research documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at the University of British Columbia. Computer data files will be password protected.

Benefits/Risks to Your Participation

Data collected from this study will contribute to the SWP's capacity to evaluate itself. Findings may not only indicate areas for improvement, "Wishlist" items will help identify those specific areas, and even specific behaviours, activities, and actions that might enhance the program's overall success with its female participants. There are minimal risks known for participants of this study. Researchers do not foresee the level of psychological discomfort to exceed that of other minimal risk research studies. Upon completion of the interview you will be given a resource sheet outlining community resources such as affordable community counsellors and crisis lines.

Compensation to non staff members of the SWP

The student participant will be provided with a \$50 gift card to Guildford Mall before the beginning of the first interview. The participant can keep this gift card even if she chooses not to complete the interview.

Contact for Information About the Study

If you have any questions or would like more information about this study, you may contact Rebecca Barrett-Wallis (Interviewing Researcher and Co-Investigator).

If you would like to be contacted with the results of the study once the study is complete, please check this box

Contact for Concerns About the Rights of Research Subjects

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice of any kind.

By signing below you are letting me know that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent (agree) to participate in this study.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

I agree to be contacted in the future for research participation in similar studies by the same researcher.

Initials: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

Appendix D: Participant Interview Guide (Client)

Participant #:

Date: _____

1. Contextual Component

Thanks for agreeing to be part of this study on your experience in the Surrey Wraparound Program. What were some of the memorable aspects of the program for you? As a way of getting started perhaps you could tell me a little bit about the goals of your wraparound team?

Peers: On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not feeling good about your relationships with peers in the program at all, 5 is OK, and 10 is feeling very good about your relationships, where would you place yourself now?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Doing Poorly					OK					Doing Well

School: On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not feeling connected to school at all, 5 is feeling somewhat connected and 10 is feeling very connected, where do you place yourself now?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Doing Poorly					OK					Doing Well

Home: On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not feeling connected to your home at all, 5 is feeling somewhat connected and 10 is feeling very connected, where do you place yourself now?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Doing Poorly					OK					Doing Well

Community: On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is not feeling connected to your community at all, 5 is feeling somewhat connected and 10 is feeling very connected, where do you place yourself now?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. Critical Incident Component

Tell me about a time, since being involved in the SWP, that you experienced a good connection with someone (can be a teacher, SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in your community?)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Can you tell me about another time, since being involved in the SWP, that you experienced a good connection with someone (can be a teacher, SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in your community?)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Hindering Factors

Tell me about a time, since being involved in the SWP, when you felt hindered from feeling connected with someone (can be a teacher, SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in your community)

Hindering Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so unhelpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Can you tell me about another time, since being involved in the SWP, when you felt hindered from feeling connected with someone (can be a teacher, SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in your community)

Hindering Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about ...that you find so unhelpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Wishlist Factors

We've talked about what has been helpful (name them), and some things that didn't work so well for you (name them). Are there other things that you wished were a part of this experience that you feel would have helped you connect more with others?

Wish List Item & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How would it help? Tell me what it is about .. that you would find so helpful.)	Example (In what circumstances might this be helpful?)

Summary of interview information. To summarize what we have discussed so far, you have identified several factors that have helped you including:

Is there anything else that you believed helped you? You have also identified factors that have weren't as helpful including

At this point, is there anything else that you would like to add? Lastly, you mentioned some factors that you feel would have been helpful and these included:

Is there anything else that you believe would have been helpful?

On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is doing very poorly with attaining these goals, 5 is OK, and 10 is doing very well, where you place yourself?

0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Doing Poorly
OK
Doing Well

Interviewer's Name: _____

Appendix E: Participant Interview Guide (Staff/Program Affiliate)

Participant #: _____ Date: _____

1. Contextual Component

Thanks for agreeing to be part of this study on your experience in the Surrey Wraparound Program. What are some of the important aspects of the program for you? As a way of getting started perhaps you could tell me a little bit about the goals of your wraparound team?

Program: On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is observing no student engagement with SWP, 5 is OK, and 10 is high engagement with the SWP, where would you place the students you work with now?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No engagement			OK				High engagement			

2. Critical Incident Component

Tell me about a time, since being involved in the SWP, that you observed a wrap student engage in a good connection with someone (can be you, a teacher, other SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in the community?)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Can you tell me about another time, since being involved in the SWP, that you observed a wrap student engage in a good connection with someone (can be you, a teacher, other SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in the community?)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

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Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Hindering Factors

Tell me about a time, since being involved in the SWP, when student engagement was hindered (can be with you, a teacher, other SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in the community?)

Hindering Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so unhelpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Can you tell me about another time, since being involved in the SWP, when student engagement was hindered (can be with you, a teacher, other SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in the community?)

Hindering Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about ...that you find so unhelpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

Wishlist Factors

We've talked about what has been helpful (name them), and some things that didn't work so well for students (name them). Are there other things that you wished were a part of this experience that you feel would have helped student engagement (can be with you, a teacher, other SWP staff, peer, parent/caregiver and/or someone in the community)?

Wish List Item & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)	Importance (How would it help? Tell me what it is about .. that you would find so helpful.)	Example (In what circumstances might this be helpful?)

Summary of interview information. To summarize what we have discussed so far, you have identified several factors that have helped students including:

Is there anything else that you believed helped? You have also identified factors that have weren't as helpful including

At this point, is there anything else that you would like to add? Lastly, you mentioned some factors that you feel would have been helpful and these included:

Is there anything else that you believe would have been helpful?

On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is doing very poorly with attaining these goals, 5 is OK, and 10 is doing very well, where you place yourself?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Doing Poorly OK Doing Well

Interviewer's Name: _____

Appendix F: Resource List of Lower Cost Community Counselling Centers

The Surrey Youth Resource Centre

Community Counselling Clinic providing easy and free access to both individual and family counselling.

Guildford Youth Resource Centre
205-14727 108th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3R 1V9
9:00am to 7:00pm Monday through Friday

Newton Youth Resource Centre
114-13479 76th Avenue
Surrey, BC V3W 2W3
9:00am to 7:00pm Monday through Friday

Surrey Mental Health & Substance Use Services

Gateway Station on Tower, 11th
Floor 13401 - 108th Ave.,
Surrey BC Tel: 604-953-4900

SFU Surrey Counselling Centre

9484 122nd St. Surrey BC (L.A. Matheson Secondary)
Tel: 604-587-7320 www.surreyschools.ca/ParentServices/FreeFamilyCounselling/ Students in the Surrey School District and their parents or guardians have access to free counselling through Simon Fraser University. Counselling available for a range of issues, including parenting, bereavement, depression, anxiety, bullying and sexual orientation.

Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre @ Options

9815 140th St. Surrey BC
Tel: 604-584-5811 [www.opons.bc.ca/counselling/sexual-abuse-counselling-centre\(sacc\)](http://www.opons.bc.ca/counselling/sexual-abuse-counselling-centre(sacc)).
Provides both short and long-term counselling to Surrey children and youth (ages 3-18) who have experienced sexual abuse. Also offers support and psycho-educational information on to non-offending members and caregivers. Self-referral welcome.

Moving Forward Family Services

Tel: 778-321-3054
Sliding scale fees and no one is turned away due to financial need. Counselling services provided in English, Cantonese, Farsi, Hindi, Punjabi, Mandarin, Spanish, Vietnamese and Urdu.

The Care Centre @ NightShift

10635 King George Boulevard, Surrey, BC V3T 2X6
Tel: 604-953-1154, con den al @ TheCareCentre.org

Access to affordable, confidential, professional counselling for individuals, couples or groups. Free, no-obligation on intake interview and sliding scale rates based on income.

Counselling Programs @ DiverseCity

Tel: 604-547-1202 counsellingservices@dcrs.ca www.dcrs.ca/services/family-services/
Provide short-term, solution-focused counselling and support services to immigrant and refugee clients in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Farsi, and French.

Online and Telephone Resources

MindCheck.ca

www.mindcheck.ca

Online website aimed at teens. Assists teens in identifying and understanding mental distress and linking them to resources.

Fraser Health Crisis Line

Tel: 604-951-8855 Toll Free: 1-877-820-7444

Offers e-support, crisis intervention on and resource information.

Suicide Help Line

Tel: 1-800-Suicide or 1-800-784-2433

Also has chat services available online as well as other crisis lines.

Appendix G: Demographic Questionnaire (Client and Staff)

1) What is your age?

2) How would you best define your gender identity?

3) What race(s) and/or ethnic group(s) do you identify with?

Appendix H: Critical Incidents and Wish List Items Below 25% Participation Rate

The following is a list and brief description of those incidents and wish list items that were identified by participants but did not meet the required 25% participation rate for reporting. In the present study, all helping incidents (HE) were endorsed at a rate of 25% by either clients or staff and therefore all HEs were reported on. One hindering incident (HI) was reported on by at least one client and staff but did not meet the 25% rate for either group: Social Media. Three wishlist (WL) items were discussed that did not meet the 25% rate for either group: Children could Remain Children, Opportunities for Staff Education and More Visible Minority Representation among Leaders. These 4 categories will be discussed below.

HI Category: Social Media. The category “Social Media” was endorsed by 12% of clients (N=1) and 22% of staff (N=2). This category was defined by participant accounts of social media as hindering the client’s prosocial connectedness. Staff accounts focused on the ways in which social media makes it challenging for clients to rid themselves of potentially harmful stereotypes or labels. For example, one participant stated: “...they can’t shake off what they were here so it gets harder to have that change in the environment, be successful, with social media now. It’s harder for kids to have a fresh start because there is no fresh start with media”. One client depicted social media as hindering for its capacity to turn her focus away from herself and onto what other people were thinking about her: “Yeah, I always like cared what the next person says. Like, I’d be like “yo what the fuck are you saying to me”, all the time... and I would care about my reputation, Instagram everything.”

WL Category: Children Could Remain Children. The WL category “Children Could Remain Children” was endorsed by 12% of client participants (N=1) and 11% of staff (N=1). This category was defined by participants indicating a desire for widespread societal change, specifically in regard to the multiple ways in which children are forced to mature too early. One staff participant explained, “kids aren't kids anymore they're growing up sold quickly, unnecessarily. And I'm constantly telling them you only get to be a kid once”. This participant was concerned by the ways in which children are given “far too much jurisdiction over their own lives” and how this can strip youth of opportunities to “just play and let their guard down”. It is in these experiences she says, she witnesses the most growth. One client participant reported feeling similarly about the forced rate of maturation expected of our children and youth today. In speaking about her peers she stated:

“It's just why are they acting like they're 20 years old when you're like 12 years old. There's no reason to be acting like you're grown up. They need to know that. You're young, stay young, like you don't want to grow up. You really don't.”

WL Category: Opportunities for Staff Education. The WL category “Opportunities for Staff Education” was endorsed by 22% of staff (N=2) and no clients. This category was defined by staff participants describing a desire for greater opportunities for WRAP staff to access further education in areas that would support them in their work with youth. Specifically, the desire was for this education to be at least partially funded by WRAP and not require them to leave their current position. For example, one participant explains how greater opportunities for staff education would enhance the program as a whole:

Maybe having staff opportunity to a degree in youth care work if that's what they wanted. And to help you know sponsor that. Get some education, pedagogy, background, I think that's you know all of our staff learn about you know child development, you know Psychology, best practices for trauma, through being on the job and also through our in-

services. I think though, having a more formalized education, with our sponsorship would be great.

WL Category: More Visible Minority Representation among Leaders. The WL category “More Visible Minority Representation among Leaders” was endorsed by 22% of staff participants (N=2) and no clients. This category was defined by participants indicating a desire for greater representation of visible minority individuals, both within WRAP and out in the community, who could act as leaders for youth. Participants indicated the degree to which clients of WRAP often represent more disadvantaged and marginalized social locations as a result of the intersections of gender, race, class, immigration status etc. in our culture. Staff believed that clients may feel more willing to connect with leaders who more closely resemble their unique positionality. Staff indicated a desire for example for a “constable who represents the demographics of our caseload more” and

“some go to’s of meeting people in the police force of maybe a visible minority more specifically who they can just meet as human beings. And you know just say hey you know this is someone in authority position that is really into them and maybe inspiring them”.

Another participant recognized the importance of female representation in WRAP staff:

“So but having been there for five years I was able to sort of see the team sort of grow and evolve and the relationships and the program grow and evolve and there was a period of time where there was not a lot of female staff. And that was a struggle and so always having the ratio and the ratio of female staff to be able to support the number of female clients that, that are out there being referred”.