



## Volume 1: Summer 2020

### KENT SCHOOL MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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*Homes with multiple adults raising the children may need additional supports to strengthen their relationships which may be affected by the stress of raising children exhibiting challenging behaviors.*

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*Policy efforts focusing on low-income families should also work in tandem with criminal justice policies to ensure optimum family and children's outcomes especially among Black fathers.*

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### MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH

Social work and couples and family therapy are practiced within the context of interpersonal relationships. On a macro level, interorganizational relationships may influence service provision. We are engaged in scholarship related to the nature of these human connections. In this issue, we explore a variety of ways in which relationships influence other aspects of people's lives.

### FOSTER PARENTING

Antle, B.F., Barbee, A.P., Sar, B.K., & Sullivan, D.J. (2019). Exploring relational and parental factors for permanency outcomes of children in care. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044389419881280>

This research examined the impact of individual and relational characteristics of foster parents on self-reported permanency outcomes for the children in their care. The results of surveys completed at the end of training showed that couple relationship quality and altruism were predictive of reunification of foster children with biological parent. The significant predictors of placement in a residential facility were age, education, and avoidant attachment style of the foster parent.

### BLACK FATHERS

Williams, D.T., & Perry, A.R. (2019). More than just incarceration: Law enforcement contact and black fathers' familial relationships. *Issues in Race & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.34314/issuescomplete2019.00005>

The study examined the association between law enforcement contact and Black fathers' familial relationships. Results show, for fathers, both measures of law enforcement contact are associated with lower levels of relationship quality but not co-parenting. For mothers, only fathers who were previously incarcerated were associated with lower levels of relationship quality whereas both measures of law enforcement contact were associated with lower levels of co-parenting.

## **YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN**

Sterrett-Hong, E.M., Birkett, M., Kuhns, L., Zhang, D. & Mustanski, B. (2020): The Impact of Closeness to Non-Parental Adults in Social Networks on Substance Use among Young Men Who Have Sex with Men, *Journal of Homosexuality*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1705670>

Using survey and social network data from a sample of ethnically diverse young men who have sex with men (YMSM), this study examined longitudinal associations between emotional closeness to non-parental adults (NPAs). After controlling for race/ethnicity, closer relationships with NPAs were associated with a lower likelihood of binge-drinking and marijuana use six months later.

## **INTERORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS**

Winters, A.M., Collins-Camargo, C., Antle, B.A., & Verbist, A.N. (2020). Implementation of system-wide change in child welfare and behavioral health: The role of capacity, collaboration and readiness for change. *Children and Youth Services Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104580>

Guided by implementation science, this study found statistically significant differences in the perceptions of workers from each system in capacity for trauma-informed knowledge, collaboration, and organizational readiness for change. Leadership and policy change can facilitate growth in these implementation drivers through out the stages to full implementation and ultimately sustainability.

## **SOCIAL DISCONNECTEDNESS**

Storer, H.L., McCleary, J.S., & Stallings, A. (2020). “That’s why I stay to myself”: Marginalized youth’s meaning making processes of social disconnectedness. *Clinical Social Work Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-019-00740-0>

There is limited examination of how social isolation manifests in the lives of disconnected youth in urban communities. Youth reported an overarching theme of “staying to oneself,” and constructed isolation as a complex cognitive and physical process utilized to stay safe from community and interpersonal violence. Self-isolation functioned as a tool of self-protection and as being essential to surviving amidst adversity. The consequences of self-isolation include perceptions that participants are alone to deal with life’s challenges and purposeful disengagement from community life.

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*Particularly important to health risk behaviors may be specific aspects of relationships with non-parental adults, such as relationship quality, and types and frequency of social support provided within relationships.*

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*Implementation in real world child welfare and behavioral health settings present a vast array of contextual factors that may influence [capacity, collaboration and readiness for change], both related to and totally external to the project being implemented.*

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*While social service agencies aim to reconnect youth economically and academically, these findings underscore the importance of addressing upstream drivers of social disconnectedness, as well as integrating healing-centered clinical interventions.*

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