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HIST 339

Interview Guide 2: Criminal Justice

Interview with child

(to ease into this topic, I may start out by reading a book aloud with/to the child or get him/her to draw me a picture of what we will talk about)

I. Biographical Information

- a. Birth, birthplace
- b. Father's name; mother's maiden name; siblings
- c. Birthplace: father, mother
- d. Narrator's education (probably elementary age)
- e. Family of origin: special remembrances (vacations, holidays, birthdays, Sundays, etc)
- f. Family of origin: cultural life (favorite book, radio programs, church experience)
- g. Chores and favorite social events

II. Loss of parent(s)

- a. What do you remember about life before your parent went to prison?
- b. What do you remember about your parent while they were living with you at home?
- c. What was it like when you first heard that they were going to prison?
- d. What do you know about your parent(s)'s crime and arrest?
- e. How did you find out (someone told you? Read about it? Teacher discussed? Heard about it from neighbor?) Who told you? How did they tell you? Are there questions that have not been answered?
- f. Were you aware of anything illegal taking place? If so, what did you know and did you take any actions (yes – why did you choose to take this action and do you regret it? No – why did you not? How were you feeling?)
- g. Were you there when he/she was taken away? How did you feel? What did you see?

III. Affect

- a. Are you able to keep in contact with your parent(s)? Who made this decision – you or another person of authority? If so, what are you “allowed” to do? What emotions do you deal with? How has the prison treated you? What do you talk about? What is the environment like? How are visiting hours? Who takes you to see him/her? If not, what would you like to happen, or do you not want to be in contact with him/her?

- b. What do you know about the police? Prison? What have you witnessed versus what have you been told? How do you feel now after this has happened? Have your feelings changed?
- c. Who has custody over you? How is life different? How is it the same? (Chores, school, “better”/”worse,” location, separated family?)
- d. Has your school work been affected by your loss?
- e. Are there people you can speak with about your feelings? What do you do when you miss your parent(s)?
- f. How is your teacher/school helping you? Are there areas that are lacking?
- g. Do your friends and classmates know what has happened? How are you treated? Are you glad they know/don’t know?
- h. Are you able to do anything special for holidays with/without your parent(s)?
- i. What is unfair in your eyes?
- j. Are there any “fears”? (abandonment, disloyalty, etc)
- k. Has your relationship with your parent changed since they first went to prison?
- l. If mommy/daddy were here, what would you tell them?