Growing Up In Families That Foster: Exploring the (E)motions of Young Adult Sons and Daughters of Foster Parents

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Foster care is designed to provide safety and security for maltreated children through a temporary, transitional home placement where a healing experience can occur through family-based care. Development of relationships and connections are encouraged between foster family members and the foster child. One of these relationships is with the sons and daughters of foster parents (herein sons/daughters). The central aim of this exploratory study was to explore the emotions of sons/daughters and how they cope with their fostering experiences. Theoretical sampling was used until theoretical sufficiency was obtained at 15 participants who were young adult sons/daughters (18-33 years) who temporarily or permanently resided outside of the current, public foster homes in Ontario. This cross-sectional, qualitative research design was descriptive and interpretative in nature through a constructivist grounded theory approach. Data collection methods included open-ended interviews, demographic questionnaires, object sharing, photographing the object, photo-feedback, and memo-writing. Initial coding, focused coding, memo-writing, theoretical sorting, and diagramming were used to analyze the data. Emerging codes and concepts within the textual data and photographs were input and analyzed using Dedoose, an evidence-informed web application data management system. Analysis of findings using a neuroscience lens, led to the identification of a foster schema - 'you can get attached, but only up until a certain point' for sons/daughters. Repeated
exposure to foster siblings arriving in sons/daughters' homes, living with them, and then leaving resulted in the participating sons/daughters being apprehensive and cautious about developing relationships with new foster siblings. This fostering schema was also applied to non-fostering relationships with friends and romantic partners, as young adults. To regulate their emotions, sons/daughters tended to rely on strong, stable, and supportive relationships with their mothers. Recommendations are discussed relating to child welfare service delivery, research, and policy.

*Keywords*: emotions, foster care, foster siblings, sons and daughters of foster parents, grounded theory, neuroscience
Let's not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it.

~ Vincent Van Gogh, 1889
Dedication

To my Granddad,
who always asked, “How are your studies coming along?”
Well, Granddad – I’m proud to say, “My dissertation is done!”

and

To my parents,
for their continued sense of curiosity, openness, acceptance, and love about my dreams.
I gratefully say, “Thank you!”

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and

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As I always say, “I love you forever and always!”
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Journal articles

This dissertation incorporates material published by this author in peer reviewed journals as part of the thesis process. These materials are identified, fully referenced, and is included within this dissertation exactly as it was written, reviewed, and published. As a result, parts of these previously published sections may not be fully aligned with the style, perspectives, and conventions within the broader thesis. These materials have been reprinted with permission:


Photographs

The participating sons and daughters of foster parents within this dissertation research maintain the copyright to their digital photographs that they took of their objects during the interview. All participants have given written permission to the researcher to use and publish these images within the dissemination activities.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.0 Growing up in families that foster as the sons and daughters of foster parents

In Ontario, foster care is a temporary, transitional home placement to provide maltreated children with the opportunity to heal within a family-like setting. The focus of foster care tends to be on the foster child to create a 'normalized' experience as most children are raised in a family setting, and family-based care is the preferred care model by Children's Aid Societies (CASs). However, there is another group of children who are growing up in foster care that are rarely considered by the child welfare sector. These children, adolescents, and young adults are the biological, adopted, step, and/or half sons and daughters of foster parents (herein sons/daughters).¹ Growing up in families that foster presents a unique family arrangement for sons/daughters:

A foster family is a... UNIQUE family arrangement that creates opportunities for much joy and learning, as well as some very real and stressful demands. Simply stated, in most families there is not the expectation that children share with other children who, at least initially, are total strangers; they do not have to share their belongings, their siblings, their parents, their space, and their time. They do not have to live with strangers who may hate them for what they have. They do not, as a general rule, have to explain the arrival of a new brother or sister and try to figure out how to help that person become part of their family. Most young people do not have to cope with hurt feelings, when these efforts are rejected. They are not generally required to deal with pain and loss associated with separation. They are far less likely to be personally injured and abused, or to hear their parents verbally denigrated by someone they are supposed to understand and make welcome in their family. They are less likely to be exposed to the complexities of life's problems at an early age; and far less likely to be exposed to the raw pain and rage associated with childhood trauma. They are generally not accountable to a variety of strangers about how to behave and conduct family life. They are not required to navigate their adolescence, and at the same time deal with the feelings that these kind of experiences generate. When your parents do not foster, you are not required to find your place in this chaotic situation (Swan, 2000, p.42 – emphasis added).

In the above quotation from Swan (2000) that describes some differences between families that foster and non-fostering families, she highlights several emotion words that may be experienced by sons/daughters, including: hate, hurt, joy, loss, (raw) pain, rage, and stress. Emotions are always in a state of flux, or motion when fostering (e.g., Riggs & Willsmore, 2012). To emphasis this, the term emotions has been written within this dissertation as (e) + motion. (E)motions shift and change depending upon the fostering transitions. For instance, the arrival of the foster child into the homes of sons/daughters can be filled with mixed feelings of joy, uncertainty, anxiety, and fear. Living as a foster family can result in a diverse range

¹ In this study, sons and daughters of foster parents does not include kinship caregivers' own children.
of (e)motions within the day-to-day fostering practices. When a foster child/foster sibling leaves, there tends to be feelings of sadness, sorrow, loss, distress, grief, and sometimes feelings of happiness and relief. These (e)motions, as well as others, will then need to be processed by sons/daughters in order to develop and/or maintain their emotional well-being (Fredrickson, 2004; Siegel, 2010). Therefore, it is important to explore the (e)motions and experiences of sons/daughters because we do not know the nature of these (e)motions and outcomes on their emotional well-being.

In a foster home, relationships between foster family members and the foster children are encouraged, but also expected by child welfare workers. In so doing, interpersonal relationships can develop between foster children and sons/daughters. The development of these relationships are similar to a sibling relationship (e.g., Reed 1994). When sons/daughters spend time with their foster siblings, the relationship can be enjoyable (e.g., Armorer, 2005; Kraemer, 1999; Nuske, 2010; Part, 1993). These sibling-like relationships can also be a source of conflict when sons/daughters have to share their physical space/bedroom with a foster sibling (e.g., Sumner-Mayer, 2003), they experience a lack of privacy (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006), and they have less time with their parents (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003). Unlike regular sibling relationships, sons/daughters are exposed to multiple foster siblings that frequently change and they sometimes display challenging behaviours (e.g., Fox, 2001; Gross, 2007; Norrington, 2002). The relationships between sons/daughters and their foster siblings are infused with an emotional landscape that continually changes. Sadly, the child welfare field does not know much about sons/daughters and their relationships with their foster siblings, despite evidence that sibling relationships are one of the most important in life and in child welfare (Shlonsky, Bellam, Norman, & Elkins, 2005).

1.1 Importance of conducting research about the sons and daughters of foster parents

Research about sons/daughters is an important topic to explore within child welfare because it has potential impacts on foster children placement stability and foster family retention. Previous research suggests that sons/daughters could be a contributing factor to placement breakdowns for
foster children and reduced retention rates for foster families/ foster home closures (e.g., CWLC, www.cwlc.ca). For instance, some foster parents with children of their own worry about how fostering may negatively impact their own children (e.g., Heidbuurt, 1995; Mauro, 1985; Swan, 2002; Wilkes, 1974). Although the threshold of ‘impacting my child too much’ has not been empirically established, if that threshold is crossed, some foster parents may request that the foster child be removed from their homes or they will contemplate whether they should quit fostering all together (e.g., Ingley & Earley, 2008; Lemieux, 1984; Watson & Jones, 2002). Issues pertaining to placement stability, foster family retention, and termination/ retirement of foster families are key issues within child welfare that should require continued research and evaluation.

Additionally, conducting research about sons/daughters is important to ensure the well-being of these children, youth, and young adults, who are part of a care team that supports children who have been maltreated. Practitioners, researchers, and foster parents have suggested that fostering positively impacts sons/daughters because they are able to hone their empathy abilities (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006). Research and practical experience, however, also suggests that fostering may negatively impact sons/daughters, such as putting them at risk of physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological harm when children who are maltreated temporarily reside within their homes (e.g., Pugh, 1996). Research about sons/daughters may provide some clarification about the well-being of this important group of individuals.

1.2 Research questions

Overall, little is known about the (e)motions and experiences of sons/daughters, their relationships with their foster siblings, and the impacts of fostering on their well-being. This dissertation research strives to provide additional insight into these foster care team members. In particular, the central aim of this exploratory study is to assist in better understanding the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout their fostering realities. The main research questions proposed in this study were: “How do young adult sons/daughters (aged 18-35 years) make sense of their emotions,
when looking back at different transitions within their experiences fostering for a children's aid society?" and “How did sons/daughters cope with their emotions when they were living within the foster home?”

1.3 Methodology

The methods within this study were carefully selected to stimulate and elicit a strong emotional response from participants with hopes at obtaining thick description and rich data about sons/daughters' experiences growing up in families that foster. The qualitative research design was descriptive and interpretive in nature throughout a constructivist grounded theory approach. This design lent itself well to allowing for more creative, arts-based methods. Demographic questionnaires, photographs of sons/daughters' meaningful fostering objects, photograph captions/ photo-feedback, and oral communications were collected and included within the data analysis process. Sampling, initial coding, memo-writing, and data collection with focused coding occurred simultaneously. The findings answered the research questions identified within this dissertation.

1.4 About the Researcher

My interest in exploring the (e)motions of sons/daughters is grounded in my personal and professional experiences over the past fifteen years. I have been the daughter of foster parents who welcomed children who have been maltreated into my home and family. I have been the child protection worker who works with children and their families who are involved in the child welfare system in the community, and when children are placed in out-of-home care (e.g., foster care). And, I have been the research project coordinator who has sought out the perspectives of different members of the foster care system (e.g., sons/daughters, foster parents, foster children, child protection workers, birth parents, kinship parents) on a variety of topics. These personal and professional experiences have laid the groundwork for my academic curiosity about sons/daughters and is the primary reason for me to pursue my PhD in social work. From a stance of curiosity, I believe that the
participating sons/daughters are truly the experts of their own fostering realities. Sons/daughters and the issues that they face means a lot to me; thus, I have tried within this dissertation to be transparent, reflexive, nonjudgmental, and honest.

1.5 Contributions to social work knowledge: Why conduct this study NOW?

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, as recognized by the United Nations in which the world is refocusing their perspectives on the role of families and more critically examining practice, research, and policy. This dissertation research is about foster families and is hopefully challenging the child welfare sector to refocus and rethink about the impacts fostering has on sons/daughters’ (e)motions, relationships, and well-being.

Over the past 40 years, there has been sporadic research about sons/daughters (Swan & Twigg, 2011) and mainly unpublished student-lead dissertation research (Serbinski, 2012a). However, there appears to be a growing interest about sons/daughter within child welfare research to date. Evidence-informed and evidence-based training for foster families has started to include curricula on sons/daughters (e.g., PRIDE training; Mills, 2013). The number of published and non-published studies produced each decade, from the 1970s, has increased to suggest that sons/daughters are starting to be considered more of an important area of research.

Awareness of what it is like growing up in families that foster has also started to gain attention through the American pop culture television series, The Fosters. This dramatization provides some insights into the strengths and struggles associated with being sons/daughters, as well as foster children and foster parents. The content of the series appears to be loosely based upon the empirical research.

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2 For more information about the International Year of the Family: [www.family2014.org/home.php](http://www.family2014.org/home.php)

3 PRIDE or Parenting Resources Information Development Education is a standardize competency-based program used by child welfare agencies in Ontario to recruit, prepare, select, and train foster and adoptive parents. For more information on this program, visit: [www.cwlc.ca/en/projects/pride](http://www.cwlc.ca/en/projects/pride)
Closer to home in Ontario, the child welfare field has undergone several changes: child welfare reform (1998-2000), child welfare program evaluation (2002-2003), child welfare secretariat (2004-2005), child welfare transformation agenda (2005), and commission to promote sustainable child welfare (2009-2012). Presently, the child welfare field is evolving and improving itself by implementing several recommendations made over the past few years (OACAS, 2013). In so doing, it is important that the child welfare sector be appraised of the (e)motions and experiences about sons/daughters in order to continue enhancing foster care services.

Ideally, this dissertation research has the potential to make several contributions to the social work knowledge. The study findings could help: sons/daughters to better understand their (e)motions that arise throughout fostering; foster parents to better understand the (e)motions that may arise within their own children due to fostering and learn how to emotionally support their children; social workers to better understand the (e)motions associated with fostering and learn how to relate more effectively with sons/daughters; and child welfare agencies to better understand the emotional impact fostering has on sons/daughters which could impact training and recruitment initiatives, and retention approaches.

1.6 Overview of this dissertation

In total, there are eight chapters covering key areas in this research. In this Chapter 1 – Introduction, it provides background and purpose of this study, research questions, methodology, information about the researcher, and contributions to the field of social work.

In Chapter 2 – A scoping review, a comprehensive and replicable scoping review was conducted in order to establish a better understanding of the research available that use sons/daughters as actual participants. The search included: scholarly databases, hand-searches of reference lists, Google Scholar, and personal communications with key foster care stakeholders from around the globe. Over 5,500 articles were screened for inclusion. After removing the studies that did
not fit the inclusion criteria, there were 46 articles, describing 39 different studies. An analyses of these studies indicate that: (a) there is insufficient demographic data about sons/daughters to create an accurate profile of these foster care members; (b) there is minimal evidence available about the needs, feelings, and opinions of sons/daughters; and (c) there is evidence to suggest both positive and negative experiences are felt by sons/daughters throughout their fostering realities. The results indicate that, little empirical evidence exists about sons/daughters who are growing up in families that foster. This chapter was previously published as “Is it that we are afraid to ask? A scoping review about sons and daughters of foster parents” (2014) in Children and Youth Services Review, 36C, pp.101-114.

To better understand the frameworks, methods, and findings across the 28 identified qualitative studies, Chapter 3 – A systematic synthesis of the qualitative studies provides a systematic synthesis of the literature using the Qualitative Research Quality Checklist tool (Saini, 2011). A synthesis of these studies evaluated the quality of the studies based upon key quality and rigor variables: qualitative framework, study setting, study design, sample procedures, data collection, ethical issues, reflexivity of the researcher, data analysis, findings, authenticity, fairness, and promotion of justice (Saini, 2011). Additionally, this systematic synthesis builds upon the previous themes identified in past literature reviews from Höjer, Sebba, and Luke (2013), Merrithew (1996), Mosleshuddin (1999), Swan and Twigg (2011), Thompson and McPherson (2011), and Twigg and Swan (2007). An analyses of the 28 qualitative studies indicate that: (a) fostering does effect the interpersonal relationships of sons/daughters with their parents, as well as with their foster siblings; (b) fostering impacts the well-being of sons/daughters both positively and negatively, depending upon the specific fostering event; and (c) sons/daughters are able to cope with the adverse and auspicious impacts of fostering on them. The results indicate that fostering does impact the relationships of sons/daughters and their well-being; however, sons/daughters have developed coping mechanisms to survive and thrive while growing up in a home that fosters.
Chapter 4 – Conceptual framework highlights the relevant theories that influenced the researcher's worldviews about fostering. Three theories were used to develop the initial conceptual framework for this dissertation: emotion theory, the foster family life cycle, and the foster family systems theory. Drawing upon the framework of Interpersonal Neurobiology, the subsection on emotions explores how the available research on sons/daughters can be applied to potential issues related to emotional well-being. Focus was on communication, fear modulation, empathy, and insight. Other aspects of emotional well-being, such as bodily regulation, emotional balance, moral awareness, intuition, and response flexibility were rarely explored within the available research.

Influences from the foster family life cycle framework propose that sons/daughters, as individuals and family members, are transitioning from one stage to another which are accompanied by strong emotions until they are able to reestablish their familial relationships. Lastly, the subsection on the foster family systems framework explores Heidbuurt's (1995) theory that foster families are always in a state of flux; thus, resulting in four potential responses by the fostering families: open boundary, partial seclusion, solid nucleus, and selective integration. This chapter ends with an initial conceptual framework/ concept map that combined the evidence from the scoping review (see Chapter 2), the systematic synthesis of qualitative studies (see Chapter 3), and the review of theories (see Chapter 4) that was used within this dissertation. The subsection on emotions has been previously published as “A new beginning: How to support sons and daughters of foster parents through the framework of interpersonal neurobiology” (2012) in Journal of Interpersonal Neurobiology Studies, 1, pp.27-33.

The details of this cross-sectional, qualitative research design have been outlined in Chapter 5 – Design, Methods, & Analysis. Methods of data collection included a demographic questionnaire to create an accurate profile of the study participants, in order to develop a context for the study. Eliciting emotional responses from the participants and to minimize interview fatigue, the open-ended interview between the researcher and participants also included object sharing, photographing the object, and photo-feedback. The sampling procedures were also discussed in this section and the
participant inclusion and exclusion criteria. This study specifically sought out sons/daughters who were the biological, adopted, or step children, of current fostering parents in Ontario, aged 18-35 years; and were residing outside of the fostering home on a temporary or permanent basis, and who has experienced the arrival and departure of at least two foster children from their parents' home. Data collection included a pilot study with two participants to 'test' the interview procedures. The stories obtained from these participants were not included in the data analyses process. The main study had three stages: Stage 1 - consents and demographic survey; Stage 2 - Object sharing, photographing the object, photo-feedback, and the interview, and Stage 3 – Member-checking and prolonged engagement. All data collection stages carefully followed an ethics protocol that was pre-approved by the Office of the Research Ethics at the University of Toronto.

Chapter 6 – Findings presents the data analysis process whereby the researcher grappled with the data, and re-reviewed, re-coded, and re-defined the concepts until theoretical sufficiency was reached. This section combines the stories shared by the young adult sons/daughters who participated within the study, but also integrates the researcher's social location and social identity into the process. The endpoint of the data analysis process leads the researcher to supporting the (e)motions of sons/daughters with the use of neuroscience concepts.

Interpretation of meaning, (e)motions, and impact fostering has on sons/daughters occurs in Chapter 7 – Discussion and Implications for Social Work using a neuroscience lens. Taking into consideration the limitations of the findings, implications for child welfare service delivery (e.g., importance of engaging with sons/daughters), research (e.g., importance of including sons/daughters), and policy (e.g., important areas of improvement to consider) are also discussed.
CHAPTER 2: Scoping Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter incorporates material published by this author in a peer reviewed journal as part of the thesis process. This material is identified, fully referenced, and is included within this section exactly as it was written, reviewed, and published. As a result, parts of this previously published chapter may not be fully aligned with the style, perspectives, and conventions within the broader dissertation.

Knowledge development and practice interventions in foster care tend to focus on birth families, kin parents, foster parents, child welfare workers/supervisors, and the structural mechanisms that support the child welfare system (e.g., Sutton & Stack, 2012). Areas of inquiry predominately explore motivations for fostering (e.g., Daniel, 2011; Mauro, 1985; Rhodes, Cox, Orme, & Coakley, 2006), training (e.g., Cooley & Petren, 2011), and recruitment, retention, and support (e.g., Cox, Buehler, & Orme, 2002; MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006); connection to the agency and workers (e.g., Rhodes, Orme, & Buehler, 2001); satisfaction (e.g., Denby, Rindfleish, & Bean, 1999), and the increase in complex needs of foster children (e.g., Trocmé et al., 2010). Missing from the research and practice knowledge are the experiences of sons and daughters of foster parents.

A major challenge in this area is that there is no consistent terminology used to identify sons and daughters of foster parents. These individuals have been referred to as many things, including:

- adopted children
- biological children
- biological children within a therapeutic foster family
- birth

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1 This chapter was previously published as “Is it that we are afraid to ask? A scoping review about sons and daughters of foster parents” (2014) in Children and Youth Services Review, 36C, pp.101-114. Dr. Shlonsky contributed to the manuscript by providing constructive feedback, suggestions, and editing.

2 The term 'foster children' will be used to denote children and youth placed in out-of-home care as a result of child maltreatment or parental incapacity.
children, careproviders’ children, children who foster, foster parents’ own children, home grown
children, natural children, sons and daughters of foster parents, and unknown soldiers of foster care.
Irrespective of the terminology used, much of the research has lumped together both biological
children and adopted children of foster parents into one category. Each of these categories of children
may have experienced fostering differently; however it is difficult to tell based upon the evidence to
date. Acknowledging these limits, this study will use the terminology ‘sons and daughters of foster
parents’, which includes biological, adopted, and step-children of foster parents (herein
sons/daughters).

Relative to the knowledge about foster children, sons/daughters have received minimal
empirical attention. Ellis (1972) and Wilkes (1974) initially raised concerns about the impact that
fostering may have on this sub-population, but there has only been sporadic research over the past 40
years (Swan & Twigg, 2011). Children in foster care have taken the spotlight when talking about
child welfare issues, and rightly so. Child maltreatment is a serious and often harmful experience that
is associated with a wide range of negative outcomes that can last a lifetime. The main reason for
foster care is to provide what amounts to a corrective experience for children who have been
maltreated by offering a safe, nurturing, family environment (Wolins, 1963). In order to increase the
likelihood that the fostering environment can provide an optimal experience, quality standards are
required and support, in the form of training and other services such as respite care, are often given to
foster parents (Shlonsky & Berrick, 2001). However, mention of the sons/daughters are noticeably
missing from quality standards and support efforts. There are some isolated examples of efforts being
made within child welfare practice, including the “Sons and Daughters of Foster Parents Fostering
Week” (e.g., recognized by The Fostering Network), support groups (e.g., Barlett, 2005), and recent
development of a training curricula for sons/daughters (e.g., Mills, 2013). Overall, though, inquiry
remains limited about sons/daughters.

There is conceptual, policy, and practice value in differentiating between sons/daughters and foster children. Sons/daughters are part of the fostering family yet minimal policies govern their involvement in fostering beyond being occasionally required to complete a police check (if age appropriate) or to formally acknowledge the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of experiences within the fostering home. The child welfare field should be more inclusive in its thinking about all of the relationships that are developed for foster children while in the care of the child welfare agency. The impact of fostering on sons/daughters can affect whether foster parents continue to foster, and some will terminate placements should they feel that the foster children are having a negative impact on their own children (e.g., Heidbuurt, 1995; Mauro, 1985; Swan, 2002; Wilkes, 1974). Sons/daughters may also influence placement stability for foster children (e.g., Ingley & Earley, 2008), facilitating or inhibiting the match between foster child and foster home.

There is also reason to consider the well-being of sons/daughters. Concerns from foster parents and social workers have been raised about the potential disruption of family roles and birth order, impacts of behaviours presented by foster children, the effects of separation and loss between sons/daughters and the foster children, and adjustments to changes in discipline (e.g., Lemieux, 1984; Poland & Groze, 1993; Swan, 2002; Wilkes, 1974). Sons/daughters may have similar emotional reactions to the experiences of fostering as their parents (Swan, 2002) because it is the whole family that fosters, not just the parents (Fox, 2001).

Before researchers can conduct outcome studies on sons/daughters, it is important to know the basic demographic information about this sub-population. The most important question – how many sons/daughters are there? Without knowing this information, there is no data on prevalence, quality standards, or outcomes.
The first step toward developing a new research area is to systematically take stock of what
has been done and to contextualize this information within current practices and policies. Scoping
reviews, to a greater or lesser extent, use systematic review methods that are transparent and
replicable to map existing evidence across potentially relevant questions within a given content area
(Saini & Shlonsky, 2012). To the best of our knowledge, there exists no scoping review about
sons/daughters. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive summary of research
involving sons/daughters as study participants. In particular, three guiding research questions are
broadly explored: (1) What are the demographic characteristics of sons/daughters? (2) How and to
what extent are the needs, feelings, and opinions of sons/daughters considered as part of the fostering
process? (3) What are the experiences of sons/daughters? This review lays the groundwork for
emerging research in this area by systematically identifying the known research and identifying the
gaps in the literature. In doing so, it builds a foundation for the design and implementation of future
research with sons/daughters.

2.1 Methodology

Methods for this review generally followed the guidelines proposed by Levac, Colquhoun,
and O'Brien (2010). These include clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria; a detailed
accounting of the search, study selection, and data extraction processes; and a narrative synthesis of
findings that maps the literature in a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable manner.

2.1.1 Inclusion and exclusion. All English language empirical studies that incorporated
sons/daughters in their sample were included in this review. Sources were excluded if they were
literature reviews, non-empirical policy-based documents, conference abstracts, non-English studies,
training materials, or were not accessible.
2.1.2 Search strategy. The search strategy included four key sources: scholarly databases, hand-searches of reference lists, Google Scholar searches, and personal communications with key foster care stakeholders from North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. Due to the limited indexing likely available for this less mainstream sub-population, an inclusive search strategy was undertaken in order to increase sensitivity (the likelihood that existing studies would be located). While this approach was less efficient, resulting in a large number of irrelevant studies, it provided greater certainty that relevant articles were found. All screening and data extractions were conducted by the first author (SS).

Twenty-two key social work scholarly databases were used within this review. No restrictions were used during the searches with respect to date limits, research design, source (e.g., article, dissertation, report), peer review status, geographical location, or language. The databases used were: ASSIA, Campbell Collaboration, Child Development & Adolescent Studies, CINAHL, Cochrane Library, Directory of Open Access Journals, EMBASE, ERIC, FRANCIS, Gender Studies Database, Humanities and Social Sciences Index Retrospective: 1907-1984, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, MEDLINE Ovid, OpenSIGLE, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, PsycINFO (Ovid), Scopus, Social Science Abstracts, Social Science Citation Index, Social Service Abstracts, Social Work Abstracts, and Sociological Abstracts. There were two constructs used within the searches: sons and daughters of foster parents and foster parents, and these were configured into keyword searches (title, abstract, subject heading) for entry into each of the scholarly databases listed. Table 2-1 provides examples of the search terms used in PsychINFO (Ovid) and Google Scholar.
A hand-search of the reference lists was performed on each included article. Each citation on the reference list was reviewed for any keyword that might be applicable to sons/daughters. If an article was a possible match, the full article was retrieved and the methods section reviewed for inclusion. In addition, a Google Scholar internet search was performed in May 2012. The search terms used were similar to the ones used within the scholarly database searches. Thirty-five authors were also contacted to inquire about studies that might have been missed. Attempts were made to contact all identified authors; however, only 11 authors responded. In addition, requests for additional literature were sent to three relevant listserves: Child-Maltreatment-Research-L (CMRL) listserv (June 2011) is organized through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at Cornell University and has provided a forum for scholarly exchange among hundreds of child protection professionals for almost twenty-five years; Indigenous Child Welfare Research Network (May 2012) is organized through the University of Victoria and the Faculty of Human and Social Development and has provided a forum for connecting resources, people, and Indigenous research projects within
communities; and Evidence-Informed International Network (June 2012) is a group of global academic professionals across the world who discuss evidence-informed research.

2.1.3 Screening for study inclusion. This section details how the studies were obtained for this scoping review (see Figure 2-1). During the initial screening (S1), a total of 5,535 studies were located during the database search (n=4,984), Google Scholar search (n=206), and study recommendations from experts in the field of child welfare (n=345). The second screening process (S2) consisted of reviewing all study titles and abstracts to see if they addressed the topic of birth/adopted children. This resulted in 5,148 studies excluded. Among the 387 studies included to this point, 53 were excluded for the following reasons: literature review (n=5), lacking detail about sons/daughters (n=6), non-empirical policy-based paper (n=3), abstract about research on sons/daughters (n=9), non-English study (n=4), training/support material about sons/daughters (n=16), and unable to locate study (n=10). This resulted in a total of 334 studies that were assessed for eligibility. After removing the duplicates (n=288), there were 46 studies. The full studies were reviewed based upon the eligibility criteria. All studies met the inclusion criteria. The last screening process (S3) involved a hand-search of the references of the 46 studies. Among the 248 hand searched references, no new studies were identified. These 46 articles represent 39 different research studies produced from 1980 to 2012: 18 (46%) published, 3 (8%) unpublished, and 12 and 6 doctoral and master's theses respectively (46%).

2.2 Results

As a scoping review, this study provides a preliminary overview of the studies in this area. Research on sons/daughters has occurred in many different countries: United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Scotland, Belgium; Britain; England; South Africa; and Sweden. The diversity of countries belies the fact that the overall number of studies is quite small
Fig. 2-1. Search strategy. This figure illustrates how the literature was obtained for this study.
GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER: CHAPTER 2

(N=39) and that approximately half of them are doctoral or master's theses (n=18; 46%). Overall, these studies represented 1,728 sons/daughters from the 1980s to the present (though there could be some unknown sample overlap between studies). There appears to be a growing interest about sons/daughters within the literature as reflected in the increase in the number of articles produced each decade: 1980s (n=7; 15%), 1990s (n=16; 35%), 2000s (n=21; 46%), and 2010s (n=2; 4%). This suggests that sons/daughters are slowly emerging as an important area of research, especially for doctoral and masters-level students.

The information from each of these studies were consolidated into a table based upon the study's design, purpose, and main study findings (see Appendix A). The objectives of the studies tended to explore the experience of sons/daughters throughout the fostering process. This meant that studies obtained information predominately about the decision to foster, the application process to become a foster family, the arrival and departure of foster children, and the experience of living in a home that fostered. Other authors focused on areas specific to fostering such as adjustment, attachment, coping, emotions, family boundaries, roles/responsibilities, relationships, perceptions, satisfaction, and supports. The research designs of the studies included a large proportion of qualitative approaches, followed by mixed-methods approaches and only a small number of studies that used quantitative approaches. The exploratory nature of the studies meant that they almost exclusively used non-probability samples (e.g., convenience, purposive, snowball) with data collection methods consisting of one-to-one interviews (n=25; 64%), questionnaires (n=9; 23%), focus groups (n=6; 15%), and discussion groups (n=6; 15%). Other methods (e.g., sentence completion, observed interactions) were sometimes used to augment studies.

3 The number of identified articles in 2010s is lower than previous decades because data on the full decade is not available at this time.
2.2.1 Research Question #1: What are the demographic characteristics of sons/daughters? There is insufficient demographic data about sons/daughters and what little is available does not paint a clear picture of this sub-population. Sons/daughters and their families had fostered from less than a year to more than 30 years. Most studies covered a time span of fostering of more than five years difference. Sons/daughters within the studies ranged in age from approximately 7 years to 30+ years. Most studies had participants from various developmental stages, including childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. The majority of sons/daughters participating within the studies were in currently fostering families (24 studies), followed by a mixture of both currently fostering and former fostering families (6 studies), and the remaining studies did not indicate the fostering status of the sons/daughters. Fifteen studies did not indicate gender of the sons/daughters. Of the remaining, 24 studies that did, all had representation of both males and females, except Gross (2007) who only had male participants. Typically, there was equal representation from both genders. Lastly, the majority of the studies (28 of 39; 72%) did not indicate whether or not the sons/daughters were the biological, adopted, or step-children of foster parents.

2.2.2 Research Question #2: How and to what extent are the needs, feelings, and opinions of sons/daughters considered as part of the fostering process? Minimal evidence is available about the experiences of sons/daughters when their families are deciding to become foster families. Of the research that retrospectively ascertains information about sons/daughters and how they felt about the fostering process, they typically indicated that they were informed by their parents that their family would be fostering, rather than including them in the decision-making process (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Doorbar, 1999; Höjer and Nordenfor, 2004). That is, they were told but rarely asked.
The application process to become a foster family (e.g., training, home visits, assessments), and the role of sons/daughters in this process, is also another area within the literature that is rarely studied. Some hints at the feelings of sons/daughters can be found in Norrington (2002), who retrospectively examined the foster care application process and asked sons/daughters what could have been done differently. Overwhelmingly, study participants recommended that, similar to what is offered to foster parents, sons/daughters should be provided with more information. Specifically, information pertaining to: “the reasons why children come into care; what to expect with the addition of a new foster child into the family; the nature of behavioral challenges presented by children who come into care; [and] the need to share parental attention and the potential that they would receive less of this” (Norrington, 2002, pp.39-40). Also recommended was being included in training or discussions that focused on family changes that occur when fostering (Poland & Groze, 1993). In summary, sons/daughters tended to state that more information about fostering would have been helpful.

2.2.3 Research Question #3: What are the experiences of sons/daughters? Research suggests that the arrival of the first foster child within the home is a unique experience when compared to future placements. For instance, Reed’s (1997) study found that approximately a quarter of the sons/daughters (6 out of 23) initially were excited about the arrival of the first foster child; however, their perceptions changed to a more negative stance over time.

The majority of the research explored what it was like for sons/daughters to be a member of a family that fostered. The research suggests that experiences, both positive and negative, are a function of the quality of interpersonal relationships that occur during fostering. While not an exhaustive account, several key relationships emerged as most important.
2.2.3.1 Sons/daughters’ relationship with the foster children. The relationship between sons/daughters and foster children who live together can be similar to a sibling relationship which has a mixture of positive and negative emotions. Sons/daughters generally report that they do care for the foster sibling being raised in their homes (Armorer, 2005) and that they enjoy helping their foster sibling (Part, 1993), being role models (MacPhee, 1993), and being “surrogate parents” (Lemieux, 1984, p.93; also Nuske, 2010; Reed, 1994). Sons/daughters have also indicated that they liked spending time with the foster sibling (Kraemer, 1999; Part, 1993). As a result of these sibling-like relationships, there can also be negative emotions that arise for sons/daughters. They frequently report disliking having to share their physical space/bedroom with a foster sibling (e.g., Sumner-Mayer, 2003), a lack of privacy (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Johnston, 1989; MacPhee, 1993; Norrington, 2002), reduced quality time with their parents (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003; Kraemer, 1999), and being jealous of all the attention foster siblings received from social workers, including receiving pocket money and being taken out for meals/treats/activities (Part, 1993). In addition, it was reported that sons/daughters can struggle with their foster sibling’s challenging behaviours, which may include aggression, anger, attempted suicides, attitudes, bad tempers, bullying, drug and alcohol abuse, self-harming behaviours, selfishness, swearing, yelling, and stealing (Doorbar & Associates, 2003; Fox, 2001; Gross, 2007; Johnston, 1989; Norrington, 2002).

2.2.3.2 Sons/daughters’ relationship with their parents. Some sons/daughters claimed to be proud of their parents and their ability to be competent caregivers (Höjer & Nordenfor, 2004). However, they have also reported wanting more quality private time with their own parents, as they are a major source of emotional support (Gross, 2007). Sons/daughters cited frustration with frequent cancellations of scheduled and unscheduled time with their parents in order to address issues pertaining to the foster child (Fox, 2001). Resentment may build over rescheduling of special time.
with parents, an inability to participate in spontaneous activities, a decrease in treats from their parents, and private time that seems to occur only when everyone is tired (e.g., Höjer & Nordenfor, 2004; Mauro, 1985; Norrington, 2002; Twigg, 1993). Some sons/daughters report privately questioning whether they are still loved (Doorbar & Associates, 2003). Overall, the research suggests that sons/daughters can be emotionally conflicted. They are proud of their parents for caring for children who have been maltreated, but also they are frequently disappointed by the loss of attention and decreased time with their parents (Reed, 1994).

The research also suggests that sons/daughters report feeling that they cannot always express their true emotions to their parents because they want to avoid adding more stress to, or creating a greater burden on, their parents (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Gross, 2007; Höjer & Nordenfor, 2004; Swan, 2000, 2002; Tadros, 2003). While this sub-population may often speak to their parents, Fox (2001) found that sons/daughters only sought support from their parents if it was serious. Diepstra (2007) found that approximately two-thirds of their sample felt that they could openly talk to their parents about their negative experiences with the fostering process. The remaining one-third of sons/daughters could not talk to their parents or were selective in what they told their parents. When sons/daughters were able to honestly communicate their emotions with their parents, even if it was something that their parents did not want to hear, they tended to have a more positive experience related to fostering (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003; Heidbuurt, 1995).

### 2.2.3.3. Sons/daughters’ relationship with the child welfare workers

The research suggests that the relationship between many sons/daughters and social workers is limited, and it may be a rare social worker who makes sons/daughters feel important and connected to the fostering process (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2006; Norrington, 2002; Twigg, 1993). In addition to the limited interactions between sons/daughters and social workers, this sub-population reported worrying that social workers
were failing their foster sibling (e.g., returning them to unsafe living environments; Fox, 2001), rarely having contact with the foster child (Lemieux, 1984), and displaying a non-supportive attitude toward them or their parents (Swan, 2000). Clare, Clare and Peaty (2006) found that older sons/daughters (adolescents and adults) often expressed anger towards the social worker who had an adversarial relationship with their parents, including not supporting or respecting their parents. Gross (2007) found that when social workers challenged the authority of sons/daughters' parents, it resulted in mixed emotions. The non-supportive attitudes of social workers were also noted by their lack of understanding of what it is like to be a son or daughter of foster parents (Swan, 2000).

A high proportion of children placed in care end up reunifying with their birth parents (Needell et al., 2013) and, considering the additional likelihood that children who are not reunified quickly are fairly likely to experience a placement move (e.g., Children's Bureau, 2012), a high proportion of children who come into a foster home will end up leaving that home. The sons/daughters’ experiences of foster youth departure from their home were influenced by a number of factors: whether the placement move was planned or not planned (Fox, 2001), the foster child’s length of stay (Kraemer, 1999), and the connection established between them (Heidbuurt, 1995). Similar sentiments are also referenced in other studies (e.g., Diepstra, 2007; Doorbar & Associates, 2003; Heidbuurt, 1995; Johnston, 1989; Norrington, 2002).

2.3 Discussion

The child welfare system is designed to provide safety and security for vulnerable children and, for those who are maltreated and placed in foster care, an attempt is also made to provide children with a healing experience through their exposure to family-based care. In so doing, interpersonal relationships can develop between foster children and the other children in the home. The major finding of this scoping review is that the field does not know very much about
sons/daughters and does little to engage them in the fostering process. This shortcoming comes despite evidence that the sibling relationship is one of the most important in life and in child welfare services (Shlonsky, Bellamy, Norman, & Elkins, 2005) and that studies on the foster family continue to suggest that sons/daughters play a pivotal role in placement stability for foster children (Ingley & Earley, 2008). Basic demographic characteristics about sons/daughters is notably absent from the literature, let alone the benefits and risks of growing up in a foster home as a son or daughter of foster parents.

The scant literature found in this scoping review seems to indicate that sons/daughters can be positively and negatively affected by the fostering experience, and the effects seem to cluster around key decision points in the lives of foster families and within the child welfare system itself. These include the decision by families to foster, the arrival of foster children into the foster home, dealing with changes in roles and family structures, how to deal with difficult behaviour problems, and the departure of foster children from the foster home. Ultimately, there was very little in the way of rigorous information about the outcomes, for sons/daughters, of becoming a foster family. While the information found in this scoping review is valuable in its own right, it leaves child welfare researchers with very little rigorous research with respect to engaging sons/daughters in decision-making processes or improving their experiences as foster siblings.

2.4 Implications for future child welfare research

Based on the evidence within this scoping review, it is apparent that the research about sons/daughters is still at the exploratory stages. There is insufficient demographic data, no outcome studies, and emerging themes about the different transitions within the fostering process (i.e., decision to foster, application process, arrival and departure of the foster child, and living as a fostering family) are fairly underdeveloped, may not represent the experience of the majority of
sons/daughters, and have not been adequately tested. Furthermore, solutions to some of the known difficulties faced by sons/daughters have not been adequately developed and formalized, let alone tested.

Future child welfare research should begin obtaining far more information, preferably using samples that are representative, about the experiences of sons/daughters throughout the foster care process. For instance, when a foster child comes to stay within the sons/daughters' homes, some sons/daughters report changing their perspective on fostering to a more negative stance. This may be related to the types of challenges that foster children bring to the homes of sons/daughters, such as bullying, drugs, physical outbursts, sexualized behaviour, and swearing (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003; Fox, 2001). It may also be attributed to a more relational stance where sons/daughters struggle with developing a strong, positive relationship with a foster child who will eventually leave the home without any further contact. In other words, the distress of broken relationships may cause sons/daughters to be cautious about how they interact with new foster children who enter their homes (Serbinski, 2012a).

Research also needs to explore the interpersonal relationships that are developed between sons/daughters and foster siblings. Living together in these circumstances can create a mixture of positive and negative emotions, and these emotions can occur simultaneously for sons/daughters and, perhaps, for foster siblings as well. It is likely that the quality of the relationship between sons/daughters and foster siblings is a major predictor of the positive and negative experiences of foster care, and even high quality relationships may prompt painful moments that are experienced negatively. For instance, if sons/daughters have a good relationship with their foster sibling, they may experience distress or loss when their foster sibling leaves the home (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006) due to the loss of the relationship or concern about their foster sibling's well-being (e.g.,
Diepstra, 2007; Höjer & Nordenfor, 2004). On the other hand, if sons/daughters have a poor relationship with the foster child, they may be relieved that the foster child has left. Another interpersonal relationship to consider is between sons/daughters and their parents. In particular, when sons/daughters are hesitant to share their emotions with their parents, sons/daughters may be left to deal with issues on their own, which can mean removing themselves physically or emotionally from the home (Nuske, 2010). Analyses of the positive and negative coping mechanisms of sons/daughters while fostering would seem to be an important area of inquiry that can be used to develop helpful practices and programs.

This scoping review also highlighted that the poor relationships between sons/daughters and social workers may predominately be due to the fact that sons/daughters are frequently not involved in discussions about the placement (e.g., Fox, 2001). This exclusion leaves out a valuable member of the fostering team (e.g., disclosures to sons/daughters may not be carried forward). Developing a better understanding of how sons/daughters could be included within the foster care team could minimize the risk of harm towards them, decrease them feeling excluded from the fostering process, and increase the support network for the foster child. Future child welfare studies that explore these proposed areas may clarify non-substantiated claims about sons/daughters made by the field and may also provide practical suggestions to sons/daughters, foster parents, child welfare workers/supervisors, and policymakers on how to truly support all members of the fostering team. The primary focus does not necessarily have to be on the sons/daughters, but they should be included as one of the key stakeholder groups investigated.

2.5 Implications for child welfare policy and practice

The main finding of this scoping review is that information about this very important group of children, youth, and young adults is largely absent from the extant research literature. The few
studies that do exist have not been conducted in a manner than lends itself to a well-considered set of policy and practice recommendations beyond the typical 'more research is needed' lament. That said, there are some obvious areas for improvement.

First, child welfare practitioners and administrators should strongly consider ways to engage sons/daughters in the fostering process. They are clearly present in many, if not most, foster homes and if, they can be brought into the fostering process in a positive and constructive manner, there may be benefits for all parties including: improved well-being of sons/daughters; better relationships between sons/daughters and foster children; and improved foster caregiver retention. At the policy level, there should be an exploration of creative ways to include sons/daughters in the decision-making process. This could include more complex questions about sons/daughters in home studies, requirements for information about sons/daughters in placement documents and case plans, and perhaps funding for support groups.

Second, paying attention to relationships other than birth parent/child and foster parent/child is crucial. If sibling relationships are important both in terms of the life course and during children’s stay in out of home care (Shlonsky et al., 2005), then surely the relationship between foster youth and foster siblings is also important. Court reports could ask to document such relationships, forcing case workers, supervisors, and the court to consider their importance. Family-based approaches that look to strengthen healthy sibling relationships (McBeath et al., 2014) could be employed for use with sons/daughters and foster youth. Continued relationships, even when placements end, could be facilitated if desired by both parties.

Third, the development of a funded program of research in this area is crucial. Experiences of children, as elucidated in the few qualitative studies that exist, need to be used for theory building and model development. These models then need to be tested and this requires funding. At the same time,
basic epidemiological and survey data needs to be collected about the entire foster family, not just the adults in the home, so that the field has a good grasp on how foster families are structured, the various roles within families and how they shift over time, and the observed and perceived outcomes of sons/daughters who experience fostering at various stages of their lives (i.e., sons/daughters may fare better if fostering begins at a younger or older age, if there are other siblings in the home, or if children are the same gender).

2.6 Limitations

This scoping review had three main limitations that should be considered when interpreting the description and summary of research on sons/daughters within this article. First, this study is a scoping review and not a systematic review. Its purpose was to map the literature, not synthesize it using the methods detailed in the Cochrane Handbook (Higgins & Green, 2011) or other high quality guide to systematic reviews. Second, due to time and funding constraints, only English studies were included opening up the possibility that important studies in the area were missed. Third, only one screener and one data extractor (SS) were used, possibly introducing an unknown level of bias with respect to included studies and the interpretation of data contained within them. In regards to the articles located within this scoping review, many of these studies used small, non-representative samples and data collection methods and measures with low levels of reliability and validity. These limitations, and others, should be considered when generalizing these findings to the larger population of sons/daughters.

2.7 Conclusions

This scoping review is an important first step toward establishing a major research agenda in child welfare. By providing a comprehensive summary of research involving sons/daughters as study participants, our hope is to prompt new and rigorous inquiries into the benefits and risks to
sons/daughters that are associated with the fostering experience. By honestly appraising well-being outcomes, risks to sons/daughters can be minimized and benefits expanded upon. Furthermore, the experience of maltreated youth in foster care can be improved through the creation and maintenance of healthy sibling subsystems. Fostering is an interpersonal relationship process that involves all members of the fostering family, including sons/daughters. We should not be afraid of asking tough questions. Rather, we should be afraid of not asking them.
CHAPTER 3: Systematic Synthesis of the Qualitative Research

3.0 Introduction

After conducting a comprehensive scoping review to determine the scope and depth of literature about sons/daughters (see Chapter 2), three key findings emerged:

- there is minimal information about sons/daughters within the child welfare community;
- research is still at the exploratory stages about sons/daughters; and
- there is insufficient demographic data, no outcome studies, and the transitions within the fostering process are underdeveloped (e.g., arrival and departure of foster children).

The scoping review did not synthesis the findings. It merely identified the literature available. A more systematic synthesis is required to understand the frameworks, methods, and findings across the identified qualitative studies. This chapter provides the results of a systematic synthesis of qualitative studies identified in the scoping review about sons/daughters, as well as an additional search of the databases in March 2014. The objective was to evaluate the quality of these studies to identify key findings within the research about sons/daughters.

Literature reviews have already been completed about sons/daughters (i.e., Höjer, Sebba, & Luke, 2013; Merrithew, 1996; Mosleshuddin, 1999; Swan & Twigg, 2011; Thompson & McPherson, 2011; Twigg & Swan, 2007). These literature reviews have identified several important themes about growing up in families that foster, including: the impacts fostering has on sons/daughters and their family units; impacts of living with foster children; loss of parental attention; issues pertaining to separation and loss; issues related to age and gender differences between sons/daughters and their foster siblings; benefits to fostering; relationships with social workers; and recommendations from sons/daughters. Refer to Table 3-1 for a summary of how past literature reviews were conducted and the main themes identified.
Building upon the existing literature reviews known to this researcher, as well as informal discussions the researcher has had with sons/daughters, foster parents, and social workers over the past four years, there were three research questions that guided this systematic synthesis of these qualitative studies: (1) What are the effects of fostering on the interpersonal relationships of sons/daughters? (2) How does fostering impact the well-being of sons/daughters? and (3) What are the coping mechanisms of sons/daughters while fostering?

3.1 Methodology

Methods for this systematic synthesis generally followed the guidelines proposed by Saini and Shlonsky (2012). These include an initial screening, strict screening, and sorting by type of study into data extraction processes, quality appraisal, and data synthesis. The search strategy and inclusion and exclusion criteria have already been identified in detail within the scoping review (see Chapter 2). To summarize, the search strategy included scholarly databases, hand-searches of reference lists, Google Scholar searches, personal communications with key foster care stakeholders across the world, and requests for research were sent across three child welfare listserves. Over 5,500 articles were screened for study inclusion. After removing excluded articles and duplicates, there were 46 articles, which represented 39 different studies included in the scoping review. Another review of ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database occurred in March 2014 for any additional publications. This resulted in one more study being located. Therefore, there were a total of 40 studies identified.

3.1.2 Data Extraction of Identified Studies. All 40 studies were assessed according to the type of study (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method). Findings from the scoping review and additional review of the one database revealed that there were predominately qualitative studies about

\[\text{The three child welfare listserves used were: Child-Maltreatment-Research-L, Indigenous Child Welfare Research Network, and Evidence-Informed International Network.}\]
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<th>Methods</th>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
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| Hojer, Sebba, & Luke (2013) | Examine how fostering affects sons/daughters and how to support them | Systematic electronic database search; consultations with international experts for references | How well are foster carers’ children prepared for life in a family that fosters? | There were several themes identified and discussed:  
• Participation of sons/daughters in the decision to foster  
• Preparation for fostering  
• Appreciating their families, feeling part of a team, and making friends  
• Impact of foster children's behaviour difficulties  
• Easing the burden on parents  
• Sharing belongings, space and parent's time  
• Becoming more caring and empathic  
• Loss of innocence  
• Perceptions of foster child  
• Responsibility and worry  
• Impact of age on relationship between sons/daughters and foster children  
• Confidentiality  
• Expectations of parents  
• Coping with placement endings  
• Advice from sons/daughters |
| Merrithew (1996) | Examine the impact sons/daughters have on foster care                      | Review retention, placement, and prediction studies about sons/daughters. No further details provided | How do the perceived needs of birth children influence foster care delivery? | It was discussed that the foster children's behaviours can influence placement stability. Additionally, the negative relationship between sons/daughters and the foster child can also influence placement stability. |
|                 |                                                                           |                                                                         | What are the identified needs of birth children?                                    | It was discussed that sons/daughters must deal with disruptions to their family structure (e.g., roles, responsibilities), deal with the emotional stress of fostering, and deal with challenging behaviours of the foster child (e.g., aggressiveness, controlling, hording). |
|                 |                                                                           |                                                                         | How are those needs currently met?                                                   | It was discussed there is a deficit in how the needs of sons/daughters are met. There is minimal training for sons/daughters, written resources (e.g., books) about sons/daughters, and support groups. |

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<td>Mosleshuddin (1999)</td>
<td>Examine the references about sons/daughters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fostering can impact sons/daughters and several themes were identified:&lt;br&gt;• Daily challenges of living with a foster child (e.g., sharing parents, possessions, pets);&lt;br&gt;• Disruptions to their family structure&lt;br&gt;• Loss of parents attention&lt;br&gt;• Loss of foster children&lt;br&gt;• Exposure to abuse and neglect scenarios&lt;br&gt;• Experienced sexual abuse by foster child&lt;br&gt;• Influences of gender/age of sons/daughters and foster child can influence placement stability&lt;br&gt;• Fear of allegations/accusations of abuse&lt;br&gt;• Positive influences of fostering for sons/daughters (e.g., awareness of societal issues; being a role model)&lt;br&gt;• Need access to training, self-help groups, and information&lt;br&gt;• Need foster parents and social workers to better acknowledge the positive and negative impacts fostering has on sons/daughters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swan &amp; Twigg (2011)</td>
<td>Examine the voices of sons/daughters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Are there benefits for sons/daughters?</td>
<td>Some of the themes identified were:&lt;br&gt;• Fostering has many positive benefits for son/daughters&lt;br&gt;• Sons/daughters frequently fell into a continuum of caring roles (e.g., role model, nurturer, protector, babysitter) and this resulted in internal conflict&lt;br&gt;• Loss of foster children&lt;br&gt;• Sons/daughters frequently struggled with negative feelings related to fostering (e.g., frustration over broken possessions; being wrongfully accused/blamed by foster children; difficulty understanding aggressive acts by the foster child towards the foster parents and/or sons/daughters&lt;br&gt;• Reflecting back onto the fostering experience, sons/daughter reported feeling that they lost a 'normal' childhood, feeling that they were less important than the foster child; and feeling that they weren't able to talk to their parents out of worry that it would add more stress on them&lt;br&gt;• Sons/daughters predominately had no or little contact with social workers which may have attributed to the negative experiences</td>
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| Thompson & McPherson   | Examine empirical research that explores the experiences of sons/daughters, from their perspectives | Inclusion criteria included qualitative or quantitative studies that had sons/daughters as participants who were living in a family that fostered until 18 years old | N/A                  | It was discussed that there were five (5) themes that emerged and they included:  
  • Positive experiences (e.g., personal development; improved communication skills; developing friendships; ability to help others; feeling closer to family members)  
  • Loss of parents attention/ family closeness/ privacy. Sons/daughters may feel displaced when fostering. The loss theme has been linked to similarities within the sibling literature  
  • Conflict between the foster child and sons/daughters (e.g., violence) and between foster child and foster family (e.g., difficulties were noted, but not elaborated upon within the studies).  
  • Adjust to transitions that occur within the foster home for sons/daughters (e.g., arrival and departure of foster children; changes to roles/responsibilities; demands to be a 'good' role model; struggling with different expectations/roles; handle disclosures of abuse/neglect; how to interact with foster child – as peer, sibling or caregiver).  
  • Coping with fostering issues predominately were done on their own (e.g., keeping their emotions to themselves).  

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### Author: Twigg & Swan (2007)

**Objective**: Examine the findings of 14 identified studies on sons/daughters

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| N/A     | N/A                   | The emerging themes were separated into three sections:  
  **(1) Relationship with foster children**  
  - Benefits to fostering for sons/daughters included: positive impact on another; learned a lot; enhanced their social skills (e.g., empathy); enhanced their awareness of social issues; indicating the desire to go into the helping profession)  
  - Relationships with foster children included ambivalent feelings. These feelings arose due to aggressive behaviours of the foster children (e.g., foster children making threats); and concerns for sons/daughters own safety, but more so that of their parents.  
  - Research on age and gender differences between sons/daughters and foster children continues to remain inconsistent  
  - Loss of foster children requires the time to grieve for sons/daughters, as well as their parents  
  - Loss of role/position within family for sons/daughters creates a sense of displacement  
  **(2) Relationship with parents**  
  - Loss of parents attention often leaves sons/daughters to cope by partially excluding themselves from the family unit; they remain silent about their issues/concerns (e.g., sons/daughters may feel guilty or selfish about their feelings)  
  - Early maturation of sons/daughters is believed to occur because sons/daughters need to deal with foster children and their behaviours at an earlier age than 'normal' children  
  **(3) Relationship with social workers**  
  - Predominately negative experiences with social workers due to lack of acknowledgment of sons/daughters' feelings (e.g., worry about the foster child post-placement)  
  - Lack of recognition of sons/daughters' involvement in the fostering family by the child welfare agency (e.g., not involved in case planning) |

3.1.3 Appraising the studies: Using the Qualitative Research Quality Checklist. Prior to synthesizing the findings, an appraisal of the studies rigor and quality was completed. The Qualitative Research Quality Checklist (QRQC; Saini, 2011) was selected to assist with this process because it was evidence-informed and pilot tested (Saini, 2007). The QRQC is a 25-point tool that explores twelve categories specific to qualitative studies that are transparent and replicable: qualitative framework, study setting, study design, sampling procedures, data collection, ethical issues, reflexivity of the researcher, data analysis, findings, authenticity, fairness, and promotion of justice (Saini, 2007). The researcher is asked whether these categories are applicable by answering 'yes', 'no', or 'maybe'. There is also an open-ended section for the researcher to write comments, if desired.² All 28 studies were inputted into the QRQC and the findings are reported.

3.2 Results

This results section has been separated into the twelve predetermined areas within the QRQC: qualitative framework, study setting, study design, sample procedures, data collection, ethical issues, research questions, data analysis, findings, authenticity, fairness, and promotion of justice. The researcher is asked whether these categories are applicable by answering 'yes', 'no', or 'maybe'. There is also an open-ended section for the researcher to write comments, if desired.² All 28 studies were inputted into the QRQC and the findings are reported.

² Permission was granted by Dr. Michael Saini to use his QRQC within this dissertation. For a copy of the QRQC, please refer to: Saini, M., & Shlonsky, A. (2012). Systematic synthesis of qualitative research. New York: Oxford University Press.
reflexivity of the researcher, data analysis, findings, authenticity, fairness, and promotion of justice. This systematic process leads to answering the three questions initially proposed in this Chapter.

3.2.1 Qualitative framework. There is a clear purpose and research questions to these studies. Primary objectives are to explore the experiences of sons/daughters growing up in families that foster. All qualitative approaches are assessed as appropriate to answer the questions posed because of the exploratory nature of the studies. Many of the studies did not clearly state their theoretical frameworks. Of the studies that did report their frameworks, families systems theory and social constructionism are used most frequently. Other theoretical perspectives included: cognitive development theory, coping and resiliency theory, emergent theory, family life cycle developmental theory, family structure theory, feminist theory, psychoanalytical theory, and role theory.

3.2.2 Study setting. The setting of the studies appear to be appropriate and specific for exploring the research question(s). The majority of the studies did not require prolonged engagement or persistent observations in the setting to respond to the research questions.

3.2.3 Study design. The research designs are appropriate for the research questions pose within the studies. There are a variety of qualitative approaches used, including: action research (e.g., Swan, 2000, 2002), constant comparative method (e.g., Norrington, 2002), grounded theory (e.g., Summer-Mayer, 2003), inductive approach (e.g., Younes & Harp, 2007), narrative analysis (e.g., Diepstra, 2007), narrative framework (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006), and phenomenological approach (e.g., Fox, 2001).

3.2.4 Sample procedures. The process of sample selection is adequately described and consistent with the research design and questions of the studies. Sample selection takes place predominately through newsletters, participation within support groups for sons/daughters, and/or assistance from the child welfare agencies to identify eligible participants. While the sample sizes
ranged from five to 684 sons/daughters, overall the sample sizes and composition are justified and appropriate to the research designs.

3.2.5 Data collection. Studies adequately describe their methods for data collection which predominately consist of open-ended or semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and/or questionnaires. Less frequently identified data collection methods are workshops (including drama, visual arts, interviews, questionnaires, sentence completion, post box, graffiti wall, play-group), direct observations, drawings, archival records, and personal notes. Typically, a range of methods are not used for triangulation of the data. The majority of the studies clearly indicate who collected and analyzed the data (e.g., principle investigator) and the audit trail (e.g., audio-recordings, memo writing, researcher notes); however, rarely did the authors indicate when the data is collected.

3.2.6 Ethical issues. Approximately half of the studies are master theses or doctoral dissertations and therefore adequate consideration for ethical issues, such as informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, and protection of harm are required by the authors’ respective universities’ research ethics boards. Non-student studies appear to strive towards high ethical standards. There are a few studies that are more focused on the clinical intervention instead of the research and therefore adequate consideration for ethical issues within practice are noted.

3.2.7 Reflexivity of the researcher. While the researchers have predominately identified potential and actual biases within themselves and the research design, many did not report using a reflexive journal in the data collection and data analysis processes.
3.2.8 Data analysis. All studies, except for two, provide detail about the data analysis process. From the published articles, MacPhee (1993) only provides quotations from participating sons/daughters and Tadros (2003) states that qualitative research is used; however, no further clarification is provided. All studies did provide a wealth of quotations from sons/daughters that are used to match concepts and themes derived from the raw data.

3.2.9 Findings. All studies, except for one, describe findings that emerged from the participants’ experiences and provide a thick description of the sample. The exception is the MacPhee (1993) study because it did not present any emerging themes, only direct quotations from the participants. Member-checking is applicable in approximately half of the studies and it is adequately addressed.

3.2.10 Authenticity. A small number of studies has sons/daughters involved in the research. Support group members are actively involved in the research in Johnston (1989), MacPhee (1993), and Martin (1993). A specialized research committee is forged specifically for the research studies in Doorbar (1999) and Doobar and Associates (2003), and Swan (2000, 2002).

3.2.11 Fairness. All participating sons/daughters who are involved in the research through the support groups or specialized research committees did have equal access to the research process.

3.2.12 Promotion of justice. Studies with sons/daughters involved within the research process, also promote a sense of social justice for these individuals. They enhance their understanding of their own realities due to the research and they are empowered to act as a result of the research process. For instance, the sons/daughters within the Martin (1993) study created a training video called, *Children Who Foster* (see Martin & Stanford, 1990).³

³ Another example of the use of video about sons/daughters experiences, although no research study reported, was called, *Fostering the Facts: A guide to the sons and daughters of foster carers*. Retrieved from: [www.deadlinecommunications.co.uk/case_studies/fostering_the_facts.htm](http://www.deadlinecommunications.co.uk/case_studies/fostering_the_facts.htm)
3.2.13 Research Question #1: What are the effects of fostering on the interpersonal relationships of sons/daughters? The analysis identifies that the process of growing up in families that foster does impact sons/daughters' relationships. The nature of these relationships are ever changing. Further insights that emerged from this synthesis are highlighted below.

3.2.13.1 Effects of fostering on sons/daughters’ relationships with their parents: Balancing a sense of closeness with strains. Studies indicate that sons/daughters develop closer relationships with their parents when fostering (e.g., Beatty, 2007). Parents are perceived as a support for sons/daughters (e.g., Fox, 2001) because there is open communication within the relationship (e.g., Spears & Cross, 2003; Sutton & Stack, 2012). The fostering effects on sons/daughters' relationships with their parents leads to sons/daughters going to their parents when they are having difficulties (e.g., Reed, 1994, 1997); however, it is primarily in extreme situations (e.g., Fox, 2001). Not all studies are as positive about the effects of fostering on sons/daughters' relationships with their parents. In some situations, sons/daughters did not feel understood by their parents (e.g., Johnston, 1989), and some sons/daughters no longer feel like a family unit (e.g., Johnston, 1989). Studies also indicate that sons/daughters feel that fostering can add strain to their relationships with their parents (Anderson, 2012). In particular, sons/daughters relationships with their parents are impeded when sons/daughters have to share their family with their foster siblings (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006). Strain is also added to these relationships when parents did not have enough time for sons/daughters (e.g., Diepstra, 2007; Pugh, 1996; Younes & Harp, 2007). This sometimes lead to sons/daughters being their parents' protector in crises that arise with their foster siblings, but also with the child welfare agency (e.g., Pugh, 1996). The strengths and struggles within these interpersonal relationships are also influenced by the perceived family boundaries (e.g., Hatmaker, 1993; Heidbuurt, 1995).
3.2.13.2 Effects of fostering on sons/daughters' relationships with their foster siblings:

Mixture of positive and negative aspects. Studies indicate a relationship between sons/daughters and foster siblings will develop (e.g., Diepstra, 2007) and there will be both positive and negative aspects to that relationship (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003). Positive aspects include socializing with their foster siblings through a variety of activities, such as camping, hanging out, going for pizza, and the alike (e.g., Kraemer, 1999). Negative aspects include sons/daughters being required to be more mature/responsible, even to the point of them becoming quasi-caregivers to their foster siblings (e.g., Martin, 1993). Exposure to their foster siblings' physical aggression and acting-out behaviours (e.g., bullying, spitting, stealing, swearing) are also considered negative aspects to the relationship (e.g., Swan, 2000). Additionally, sons/daughters sometimes struggle with emotions of loss and grief when their foster siblings leave their homes (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Diepstra, 2007; Norrington, 2002; Tadros, 2003; Swan 2000).

3.2.14 Research Question #2: How does fostering impact the well-being of sons/daughters? Studies suggest that the well-being of sons/daughters are related to sons/daughters being more tolerant (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Fox, 2001), responsible (e.g., Diepstra, 2007), self-aware (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Fox, 2001; Sutton & Stack, 2012; Swan, 2000), and they have a greater understanding of community issues (e.g., Younes & Harp, 2007). Negative factors that impact the well-being of sons/daughters are predominately attributed to feelings at the individual, family, and agency-levels. In particular, fostering sometimes hinders sons/daughters' abilities to be themselves (e.g., Gross, 2007), express themselves (e.g., Heidbuurt, 1995), or gain insight into themselves (e.g., Johnston, 1989). Fostering sometimes results in foster family arguments (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006) for sons/daughters. Feeling marginalized by the child welfare agency is another impact on sons/daughters' well-being (e.g., Beatty, 2007; Swan, 2000). Other factors to take into
consideration on how fostering impacts the well-being of sons/daughters are age (e.g., Kaplan, 1985, 1988), gender, maturity levels (Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Part, 1993; Pugh, 1996), and how they process the arrival and departures of foster siblings within their families (e.g., Martin, 1993). These factors, as well as others, could negatively impact the development of sons/daughters (Pugh, 1996).

3.2.15 Research Question #3: What are the coping mechanisms of sons/daughters while fostering? Studies strongly suggest that sons/daughters are able to cope with adverse and auspicious impacts of fostering on them (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003). In fact, it was noticed by Martin (1993) that sons/daughters are quite advanced in coping with challenging behaviours of their foster siblings. Some of the coping mechanisms include: isolating themselves from the foster family by retreating to their rooms or participating in activities outside of the fostering home, such as employment, extra-curricular activities, and friendships (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Gross, 2007; Heidbuurt, 1995; Norrington, 2002; Twigg, 1993); being left to regulate their own emotions that arise due to fostering (e.g., Fox, 2001); attempting to deescalate the situation themselves (e.g., Gross, 2007); learning how to tolerate fostering experiences (e.g., Johnston, 1989); setting boundaries on their possessions (e.g., Martin, 1993); objectifying their foster sibling (e.g., Twigg, 1993); involving their parents (e.g., Gross, 2007; Spears & Cross, 2003) through conversations, but also acting up themselves to be heard (e.g., Nuske, 2010); becoming an equal within the foster care team (e.g., Swan, 2000); and by redefining what 'family' means to them (e.g., Young, 2004). Sutton and Stack (2012) find that when foster families took a short break between foster placements, that it allows for positive coping strategies, as it provides the family time to reflect on their emotions.

3.3 Discussion

The qualitative studies available for this systematic syntheses indicate care and consideration have been given to study designs, sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis processes,
ethical issues, and findings. Studies are small and lack transferability, but all identified similar themes experienced by sons/daughters while growing up in fostering families: the impacts fostering has on sons/daughters and their relationships with family members and social workers; impacts of living with foster children; loss of parental attention; issues pertaining to separation and loss; benefits to fostering; and recommendations from sons/daughters. This suggests that there are key themes that need more research.

The well-being of sons/daughters are impacted in different ways, but they learn to cope with it (e.g., Martin, 1993). Coping mechanisms of sons/daughters include participating in activities that removed them from the fostering home (e.g., Norrington, 2002), learning to manage/deescalate the conflict within the foster home (e.g., Gross, 2007), and seeking support from others, such as their parents (e.g., Spears & Cross, 2003). While the information found in this systematic synthesis is valuable in its own right, it leaves child welfare researchers with little depth about the (e)motions of sons/daughters.

3.4 Limitations

This systematic synthesis of the qualitative studies had two main limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings within this Chapter. In regards to the selection of articles, only English studies were included opening up the possibility that important studies were missed. Further, the researcher was the only screener and data extractor which may have introduced an unknown level of bias with respect to included studies. In regards to the synthesis of the qualitative findings, the researcher was the only reviewer using the QRQC tool. Additionally, no user’s guide was provided to the researcher with the detailed description of each appraisal dimension; thereby, incorrect interpretation of the tool may have occurred.
3.5 Conclusions

The child welfare field is moving towards more evidence-based and evidence-informed practices. By providing a comprehensive summary of research involving sons/daughters as study participants (see Chapter 2) and exploring the rigor and quality of the studies, as well as identify themes (see Chapter 3), the researcher has been able to establish more of a research direction within this dissertation. The focus being on sons/daughters and their (e)motions, relationships, and experiences throughout the fostering transitions. Building upon this foundation, the researcher begins to explore the theories/ frameworks that influenced her perceptions of these issues (see Chapter 4).
CHAPTER 4: Conceptual Framework

4.0 Introduction

The conceptual framework for this study is informed by the researcher's past experiences as a daughter of foster parents, a child protection worker, and a research project coordinator on various child welfare and children's mental health projects. A careful consideration of the researcher's theoretical sensitivity has occurred to explore researcher bias and theoretical bias (Oktay, 2012). For this reason, this chapter highlights the initial theoretical perspectives that the researcher used in this dissertation. This provides transparency from the beginning of this study. The relevant theories that influence this researcher's worldviews about fostering are connected to emotions, the foster family life cycle, and the foster family systems theory. These theories were selected because of their frequent use within past studies as found within the syntheses of the qualitative studies (see Chapter 3). While this chapter explores the first conceptual framework used within this study, it will become apparent in subsequent chapters (see Chapter 6, Chapter 7) that over the course of conducting this grounded theory study, many iterations of the conceptual framework were created due to the themes/concepts that emerged through data collection and data analysis. Each round of data analysis was documented to illustrate how the researcher grappled with the data from the initial framework to the endpoint of applying neuroscience concepts to support the (e)motions of sons/daughters. However, for now, within this chapter, the initial conceptual framework is discussed.

4.1 Influencing theory #1: Emotions of sons/daughters

Emotions are nonverbal signals that occur within the body of the individual and include bodily movements, including eye contact, tone of voice, and facial expressions (Siegel, 2012). Emotions are subconscious stimuli that result in changes to the body, whereas “feelings are a mental representation of the physiological changes that characterize emotions” (Damasio, 2001, p.781).
Neuroscience has debunked the myth that much of the brain development occurs within the first three years of life (Strauch, 2003). The plasticity of the brain is ongoing. Thinking, feeling, events, objects, persons, tasks, and so on, cause changes to the brain (Farmer, 2009). Some neuroscientists are hypothesizing that the prefrontal cortex (PFC) is still being developed into the mid- to late-twenties and thus impairing some ability to address complex emotions. It is also noted that the PFC has an important role in emotion regulation (Strauch, 2003). It has been agreed by many scientists that the PFC is reconstructed as the brain develops for adult life, particularly regarding moral and ethical regions (Sylwester, 2007).

Advancements in neuroscience research suggest that the right-hemisphere of the brain tends to be a significant contributor to individuals’ processing of sensory information, including emotions and experiences, through a holistic and context-rich manner (Schore, 2009; Siegel, 2012). This includes processing “nonverbal, images, metaphors, whole body sensations, raw emotion, stress reduction, and autobiographical memory” (Siegel, 2010, p.108). The left-hemisphere of the brain is considered to play a major role in processing information that is more detailed-oriented through a “linear, linguistic, logical, literal, labels, and lists” manner (Siegel, 2010, p.108). A key factor to emotional well-being is the integration of emotions by the individual through a whole-brain experience. This means allowing the individual to be “horizontally integrated, so that their left-brain logic can work well with their right-brain emotions”, and allowing the individual to be “vertically integrated, so that the physically higher parts of their brain, which let them thoughtfully consider their actions, work well with the lower parts, which are more concerned with instinct, gut reactions, and survival” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011, pp. 6-7). This information about emotions were non-systematically applied to the research about sons/daughters and discussed below. Elements of emotion theory have been incorporated into the initial conceptual framework for this study.
Emotions\(^1\) are a “change in the state of integration” that occur within three stages (Siegel, 2012, p. 148). First, primary emotions are considered the initial shift within the state of mind that occurs at an unconscious level (Siegel, 2012). This is the most frequently forgotten component in emotions, but is the cornerstone of all conscious responses. Second, the appraisal or arousal system activates the brain (and other corresponding systems) only if there is an assessment of being ‘not-safe’ (LeDoux, 1996). Lastly, categorical emotions manifest into external affect and sometimes awareness. We have words for these in everyday language, such as anger and joy (e.g., Panksepp & Biven, 2012). According to Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB), emotions are “central to our well-being” (Siegel, 2012, p. 182). Much of the research on sons/daughters describes their emotions and their roles/responsibilities while fostering. Missing from this knowledge is information about the subjective state of their emotional well-being. IPNB can assist in understanding the factors that influence the emotional well-being of sons/daughters.

4.1.1 Emotional well-being of sons/daughters. IPNB indicates that integration results in a harmonious flow of energy and information. This is represented by a flexible, adaptive, coherent, energized, and stable (FACES) flow (Siegel, 2009). In general, when people experience disruption to their integration flow and they are no longer in a stance of coherence – connected, open, harmonious, engaged, receptive, emergent, noetic, compassionate, and empathic – the result is rigidity (e.g., lack of a capacity to respond spontaneously), or chaos (e.g., outburst based on dysregulation in the right-hemisphere), or both (e.g., possibly difficulty with emotion regulation followed by shifting into rigidity as a protection against overwhelming emotions; Siegel, 2009). In these latter states, the disruption of integration also leads to a significant loss of well-being.

\(^1\) This subsection on emotions has been previously published as “A new beginning: How to support sons and daughters of foster parents through the framework of interpersonal neurobiology” (2012) in Journal of Interpersonal Neurobiology Studies, 1, pp.27-33.
The research on sons/daughters has indirectly identified some issues around emotional well-being related to attuned communication, fear modulation, empathy, and insight. Aspects related to bodily regulation, emotional balance, moral awareness, intuition, and response flexibility are infrequently explored (if at all). Much of the research reflects a more left-hemisphere approach, and so is not focused primarily on the interpersonal influences on the experiences of sons/daughters. To balance this missing element, many of the hypotheses within this section include right-hemisphere issues that are more embodied and relational.

4.1.2 Attuned communication. Attuned communication requires the whole brain. The right hemisphere connects with the internal state of another individual and the left hemisphere listens and understands that individual (Siegel, 2012). The research on adolescent and adult sons/daughters suggest that they tend to seek out secure attachment figures during periods of fostering stress, including their parents (Gross, 2007), non-fostering friends (Fox, 2001), friends who foster (Johnston, 1989), and social workers (Doorbar & Associates, 2003). These individuals have been known to provide a sense of “feeling felt” for sons/daughters (Siegel, 2010, p. 27).

When sons/daughters of all ages do not have the ability to access these supports, IPNB suggests that sons/daughters may experience disintegration, meaning, that sons/daughters’ fostering experiences may become painful, frightening, or dysregulating. This may result in them feeling closed-off, isolated, alone, and unloved within their own homes (Doorbar & Associates, 2003). It is recommended that sons/daughters have access to resources for connection and love, especially when it feels like it is in short supply in the family. This may include more quality time with their own parents (e.g., Gross, 2007), the freedom to “hang out” at a friend's place when needed (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006), attendance at support groups with other sons/daughters (e.g., Johnston, 1989), and better relationships with their social workers (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003). The key here is
that these resources be with people whose own neural integration allows them to truly hear what the sons/daughters are saying. Feeling heard without being judged and without the listener trying to fix the situation provides the foundation for integrating any painful or frightening experiences occurring in the fostering environment.

4.1.3 Fear modulation. Fear modulation occurs when there is sufficient neural integration between the middle prefrontal cortex and amygdala that when something frightening occurs, GABA, a soothing neurotransmitter is released and the fear is experienced as less strong. These same circuits also provide a longer pathway between the fear arising and the person’s response, so that it is possible to find some emotional regulation even in the storm (Siegel, 2010). In general, these core circuits are established within the relationship with securely attaching parents during the first few years of life. However, without that secure base, these circuits are often fragile (Badenoch, 2008). Being a member of a foster family can be scary at times for everyone involved: sons/daughters, foster parents, foster child, and family supports (e.g., grandparents). However, one of the consistent findings that continues to emerge within the research is the frightening feelings of occasionally being exposed to the foster child's violence, bullying, and/or threats (e.g., Fox, 2001). Conflict towards sons/daughters or other members of their family can be a source of anger, anxiety, distress, fear, and panic for them.

It is unclear within the research how sons/daughters perceive the safety within their own home prior to fostering and while fostering. Hypothetically, if the sons/daughters perceive their family home as safe, then the inclusion of conflict within the home as a result of fostering may challenge their inherent mental models that their family is safe. On the other hand, if the sons/daughters perceive their family home as unsafe, then the inclusion of conflict left unattended may reinforce the feelings that their parents can’t provide safety. The following is a case example of a young boy named Charles who became fearful after an incident with a foster child in his home.
My parents told me that we just gotta bare with [the foster child]. Not, just make sure she doesn't do what she says, cuz some of these kids do what they say, some don't. But we just gotta keep him [younger brother] safe and away from her and eventually, she'll forget about the whole matter. So, at night time, me and my little brother have bunk beds. I slept on the floor next to him. Instead of sleeping on the bottom bunk, where it would be more of a thing if she did come in after him at night. So, I slept on the side closest to the door, so if she did walk in, I'd be the first one right there to make sure he was gonna be safe. (Gross, 2007, pp. 111-112).

To explore fear modulation more in-depth, let's look at this example in two different ways. First, we are going to assume that Charles had a non-secure attachment with his parents and so even before fostering, didn’t expect his parents to provide a sense of security, even though there may not have been this degree of threat. It is possible that after the discussion with his parents, Charles would show no visible signs of distress because he is used to being in this role. If his parents raised the issue again or tried to comfort him, Charles may purposely ignore his parents because he doesn’t believe that they are that concerned about his well-being. Next, we are going to assume that Charles had a secure attachment with his parents. The discussion with his parents would have proceeded differently. His parents would have truly heard his concerns, perhaps comforted him with nonjudgmental listening, and validated his emotions. They would also likely have taken some action that would not have left him with the full responsibility for his brother’s safety.

The long-term impacts of fearful events, like the one experienced by Charles, are unknown. There are no longitudinal studies exploring this issue. However, IPNB could hypothesize that if sons/daughters have an insecure attachment with their parents, they may not be able to engage their cortical override without the assistance of their parents (or a secure, supportive individual). If they do have a secure attachment, they would likely not be in the position of having to manage the situation alone. When these fearful emotions are an ongoing part of the fostering process, and aren’t mediated
by integrated adults, future placements of foster children within their home may reactivate the fear responses, possibly reinforcing them, and this could then influence their relational functioning within other areas of their lives.

4.1.4 Empathy. Empathy is the ability to “sense the internal mental stance of another person, not just to attune to their state of mind” (Siegel, 2010, p. 28). Much of the research fails to indicate the degree of support provided for sons/daughters when talking about how they demonstrate empathy. Research simply provides examples of how sons/daughters express empathy: they often help others through being caring, compassionate, and sensitive to others' feelings (e.g., Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006), but it is unclear if this happens because of neural integration or as an adaptation to the ongoing stress. Again, a more clear assessment of the attachment situation within the family would provide a more solid foundation for understanding the meaning for sons/daughters.

Swan (2000) found that sons/daughters often received talks from their parents about empathy, understanding, and caring towards others. Sutton and Stack (2012) found that sons/daughters experienced empathy towards the foster children and their circumstances. Overall, a common finding within the research suggests that sons/daughters develop a high level of empathy because their family fostered (e.g., Diepstra, 2007).

4.1.5 Insight. Insight allows individuals to “connect the past to the present and the anticipated future” (Siegel, 2010, p. 28). Research on sons/daughters indicate that as they become more experienced as a foster family, they develop their subjective life stories. It can be hypothesized that fostering allows sons/daughters to see beyond the foster child's behaviour and into his or her mind sometimes. Closely connected to empathy and insight is emotional contagion – the transfer of the internal state of another to our own (Siegel, 2010).
The brain is hardwired to experience the emotions and bodily states of others (Siegel, 2012). For instance, if foster parents find their fostering experience to be fulfilling, their sons/daughters will process their parents' sensory input (e.g., their parents saying how important fostering is to them as well as their congruent non-verbal signals). Sons/daughters will also experience their parents' satisfaction within their own bodies and emotions through being attuned to their internal state. Sons/daughters map these “fostering is important to me” sequences and know that it is important to their parents. This enables the intention that the family will continue to foster, so sons/daughters have to learn to cope with fostering. If there is a secure parent-child attachment, sons/daughters may experience the emotions of their parents about fostering within their bodies. They will naturally want to be a part of the fostering team and to continue to be attached to their parents. However, if there is an insecure attachment between sons/daughters and their parents, the reactions may be different. Sons/daughters may sense their parents' tension or conflict related to fostering (e.g., lack of support available to the foster child) and now struggle with internalized emotions of their parents coupled with the desire to remain attached to them. Research frequently indicates that sons/daughters coped with fostering by withdrawing from their families (e.g., spending time in their rooms, visiting friends at their homes) and taking on more roles/ responsibilities (e.g., acting as a role model). These coping mechanisms appear to move in the direction of more avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles.

4.1.6. Sons/daughters coping with emotions on their own. Perhaps based on the belief that foster families rest on a core of secure attachment, the research often assumes that sons/daughters ought to be able to hold their own integration without the support of other individuals (e.g., parents, siblings, friends, social workers). This so called “go-to-it-alone” perspective may in part arise from the left-hemisphere logic and linear perspective that is dominant in our culture at this time.
As we have seen throughout this section, many of the findings lack a more relational stance, which comes more into view from a right-hemisphere perspective. The “go-to-it-alone” findings are troubling, because they suggest that some sons/daughters have resorted to insecure attachment coping strategies (e.g., withdrawing from their family). After repeatedly being exposed to feelings of distress, guilt, jealousy, loss, and worry while fostering, these emotions may become ingrained into their experiences and memory of fostering. If the emotions were not balanced with positive feelings (e.g., caring, joy, nurture), then fostering can become a negative experience. As a result of repeatedly activating their emotional state of mind, sons/daughters may politely or forcefully request that the foster child be removed from their home, or that their family quits fostering (Watson & Jones, 2002). The research leaves us wondering many things, but provides few answers at this time: How do parents and social workers support integration of sons/daughters? What are the reactions of parents and social workers when sons/daughters raise valid issues about wanting the foster child removed for their home or to quit fostering altogether? IPNB would propose that there is a need for the integrated adult brain to embrace the upset in the child’s brain to deal with this level of legitimate and adaptive emotional experience.

4.1.7 Integration is key. This section explored the emotions identified within the research about sons/daughters throughout the fostering process. The theoretical inclusion of IPNB into the knowledge about sons/daughters provided a new way of thinking about all brains, minds, and relationships within the foster home. It is hypothesized that the arrivals and departures of foster children within the home should be handled relationally within the family, and also with possible external support for all, so that any emotions have a greater possibility of being harmoniously integrated. The objective of incorporating IPNB is not to pathologize the emotions of sons/daughters.
or their parents; instead, it will hopefully encourage the facilitation of including sons/daughters into
the foster care team. It is within this IPNB framework that we can better understand how
sons/daughters might access supports for their emotional well-being.

4.2 Influencing theory #2: (Foster) family life cycle

The Family Life Cycle (FLC) proposes that to understand the experience of an individual:

We must examine their lives within their individual, family, community, and larger social
and cultural contexts over time. This can be represented schematically along two time
dimensions: the vertical axis reflecting influence of the historical issues that flow down the
family tree, influencing families as they go through life (our biological heritage, genetic
make-up, cultural, religious, psychological, and familial issues that come down through our
family tree); and the horizontal axis, which represents the developmental and unpredictable
influences that affect families as they go through life (McGoldrick, Carter, & Garcia-Preto,
2011, p.7).

Transitions from one stage of the family life cycle to another are often accompanied by strong
emotions (e.g., anxiety, fear) until the individuals “rebalance, redefine, and realign their relationships”
within the family (McGoldrick et al., 2011, p.7).

This theory can be specifically adapted to the foster family, but does not appear to have been
done so within the literature on sons/daughters. For instance, the foster family is constantly in a state
of flux with the arrival and departures of foster children (Eastman, 1979; Twigg, 1994).

Sons/daughters must learn to adapt to the separation and loss of relationships with each of the foster
children that are placed in their homes (Karim, 2005). This is not an insignificant achievement and is
not ‘normal’ within typical families. If sons/daughters are not able to regulate their emotions and
realign their interpersonal relationships with family members during the transition, it may negatively
impact future transitions. For instance, if a son or daughter experiences a close connection with a
foster child who he or she felt was like a ‘sibling’ and then the foster sibling is unexpectedly moved to
another placement, then the son or daughter may associate a sense of loss, sadness, grief, or distress
during the transition when their foster sibling leaves their home. Without the time to process the
emotions during this transition, he or she may carry those emotions into their next relationship with the new foster child and future foster children. In doing so, if the transition of foster children exiting the son or daughter's home is not managed through adaptive emotional regulation strategies, then the fostering process may become a negative experience. Sons/daughters may become emotionally ‘stuck’ at this transition. Other sons/daughters may carry their negative emotions (e.g., guilt, shame) with them throughout their fostering journey in silence in order to avoid adding stress or additional burden to their parents (Clare, Clare, & Peaty, 2006; Diepstra, 2007; Gross, 2007; Höjer & Nordenfor, 2004; Tadros, 2003). There are too many scenarios that could be hypothesized about what could happen; however, there is no evidence to suggest one outcome over another if the emotions associated with one transition to another are not adequately addressed.

One resource that may assist with these transitions are friendships within the community. Friends can provide support to the individuals when the family is experiencing trauma and/or dysfunction (McGoldrick et al., 2011). The fostering experience can be isolating at times for sons/daughters. There are strict confidentiality requirements of all foster family members by child welfare agencies. This can also include police check requirements for significant family and friends of the parents thus, making it challenging to talk to others without prior approval from the child welfare agencies about emotions that arise while fostering. Research has found that during periods of stress, adolescent and adult sons/daughters seek out emotional support from a variety of sources (e.g., Doorbar & Associates, 2003; Fox, 2001; Gross, 2007; Johnston, 1989). Verbal suppression of emotions during stressful fostering situations can cause additional short-term and/or long-term problems that impact sons/daughters' emotional well-being (Sutton & Stack, 2012). The key to a successful transition is for the individual to regulate their emotions and co-regulate their emotions with others.

Some losses could be traumatic for the sons/daughters. For instance, losing a loved one is one of the most serious traumas for many people. The fostering process, for some sons/daughters, could reflect a process of several traumas.
with other family members/friends, adjust to the changes in the family, and redefine their relationships with other family members (Becvar & Becvar, 2013; McGoldrick et al., 2011). These elements of the foster family life cycle have been incorporated into the initial conceptual framework for this study.

4.3 Influencing theory #3: Foster family systems theory

The foster family systems framework emerged from the work of Judith Heidbuurt. She proposed within her master's thesis that the constant state of flux within a foster family often results in foster families redefining their boundaries. In particular, there were four distinctive boundaries that emerged within her study: open boundary, partial seclusion, solid nucleus, and selective integration (Heidbuurt, 1995). A summary of the frameworks were highlighted in Serbinski (2012b, pp.44-46):

**Open boundary:** The open boundary does not distinguish between the foster child and the foster family members. Family discussions occur among all members of the family when decisions are made (e.g., arrival of a new foster child). However, foster parents often hesitate to include sons/daughters in fostering decisions because they often do not know how to incorporate them. The foster parents of an open boundary treat the foster children exactly the same as their own children (e.g., roles/responsibilities, discipline methods). This leads some sons/daughters to feel that they are no longer special within their own family. This cohort has difficulty talking to their parents about their fostering related issues (e.g., parents are preoccupied with the behaviours of the foster child). This leads them to feel devalued and unloved. In this boundary, some sons/daughters refer to the foster child as their 'brother' or 'sister'. The length of time the foster child is considered a part of the family usually lasts until the foster child leaves the home. On some occasions, foster children are considered members after they leave.

**Partial seclusion:** The partial seclusion boundary allows for sons/daughters to be a separate entity from the rest of the foster family. This is a process that offers sons/daughters emotional separation from their families to cope with their fostering experiences. This “self-imposed seclusion” was predominately done by adolescent-aged sons/daughters (13 years and older) to deal with the negative behaviours of the foster children (Heidbuurt, 1995, p.39). This cohort also secludes themselves from their families when they are unable to accept all of the foster children into their family. When sons/daughters (or other members of the family) are unclear who belongs within their family, they create the emotional boundaries for themselves.
Solid nucleus: The solid nucleus boundary allows the foster family to remain closed to all other members. While they will welcome foster children into the home, the foster children are not considered members of the family. This boundary protects the sons and daughters (and their parents) against loss when a foster child leaves. This boundary permits sons/daughters to feel that they are a priority to their parents, unlike in the open boundary. Feeling as a priority to their parents, sons/daughters describe a positive fostering experiences. This boundary may also present some confusion for sons/daughters on how to describe members within their family. For example, some sons/daughters call the foster child 'brother' or 'sister' within the home, but outside the home there is a clear delineation of who is a real sibling and who is the foster sibling. This boundary does not pressure the foster child to become a member of the foster family; rather, it encourages them to maintain their own family identity.

Selective integration: The selective integration boundary allows foster family members to selectively include some foster children into their family and exclude others. Inclusion into the foster family is predominately based on actual length of time within the foster home, the probability of staying close to the foster family (e.g., adoption), or the foster child's behaviors. The selective boundary allows sons/daughters and their parents to decide which foster children they will emotionally invest in. This protects sons/daughters from experiencing significant emotional loss when a foster child leaves who is outside the family nucleus, but causes significant emotional pain when a foster child leaves who is within the family nucleus.

Regardless of which foster family boundary identified, these boundaries do not suggest cause and effect of fostering; rather, the boundaries propose that systems within foster families create outcomes depending upon the relationships that emerge throughout the process. At this time, there is no consensus among foster family members which boundary type is preferred to optimize their well-being in general (Heidburrt, 1995). Unfortunately, there was no further development of the foster family systems theory since Heidbuurt introduced it to the child welfare literature in the 1990s. These elements of the framework have been incorporated into the initial conceptual framework for this study.

4.4 Putting it all together: Initial concept map for this dissertation

Utilizing the knowledge acquired from the scoping review (see Chapter 2), the systematic synthesis of qualitative studies (see Chapter 3), and the review of emotions, foster family life cycle theory, and foster family systems theory (see Chapter 4), the conceptual framework/ concept map for this study, proposed by the researcher, initially started as follows:
As sons/daughters foster they will experience a continuum of emotions, relationships, and transitions. Intense emotions can signal a natural transition within the sons/daughters’ own life cycle (e.g., attending post-secondary education, finding employment, getting married) and/or family life cycle. During these transitions, sons/daughters may attempt to regulate their emotions or with the assistance of parents, extended family members, friends, and the like. Overlapping the sons/daughters’ life cycle is their family life cycle. Family issues may arise that result in transitions to occur (e.g., retirement for a parent). The family members will attempt to regulate their emotions throughout this process (e.g., negotiating the changes in role/responsibilities during retirement).

Lastly, the foster family life cycle is overlaid onto the family life cycle. Some of the foster family transitions consist of the decision to foster, the assessment/training process to become a foster family, the arrival of the foster child, the process of living as a foster family, the departure of the foster child, and the process to quit fostering. Overall, if sons/daughters are not able to adequately process their emotions to their own satisfaction throughout these different life cycles, there is a possibility that future transitions will be emotionally problematic and result in conflicts with family members and not just in transition. They could experience ongoing emotional issues that could lead to cognitive/behavioural/affective problems. Unresolved emotional conflicts and the possibility of resultant interpersonal conflicts may lead to negative emotions.

This initial conceptual framework/concept map was informed and constructed during the data collection and data analysis stages of the study based upon what themes/concepts emerged. In the end, this concept map was reflected upon during the final data analysis stages about the emotions of sons/daughters and the impact fostering had on their well-being.
Fig. 4-1: Conceptual framework of the transitions and emotions of the foster family. The proposed Foster Family Life Cycle identifies the anticipated normal transitions that occur within the foster family (rectangular boxes). At each transition the foster family must complete an emotional task to their own satisfaction prior to moving to the next transition (oval boxes).
CHAPTER 5: Design, Methods, & Analysis

5.0 Introduction

This cross-sectional, qualitative research design was descriptive and interpretative in nature through a constructivist grounded theory approach. A qualitative approach was best suited to exploring the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout their fostering experiences because this approach provided a design that was curious and open to emerging findings about sons/daughters (Oktay, 2012; Padgett, 2004).

5.1 Methods

The sharing of experiences and emotions through a relational and regulatory process should not be limited to words (Panksepp & Biven, 2012; Siegel, 2012). Siegel (2012) proposes that creative methods, such as “poetic exploration, musical expressions, and artistic creations are profoundly important even though they may not be reducible to numbers on a chart or displayed neatly on a graph” when exploring the emotions and experiences of individuals (p.xxviii). Thus, by understanding more about how the brain works, the methods within this study have been carefully selected to stimulate and elicit a stronger right-hemisphere response from participants (refer to Chapter 4). The six methods of data collection ensure triangulation of data and are described below. Refer to Figure 5-1 for an illustration of the data collection and data analysis process.

5.1.1 Method 1: Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire was developed to provide enough background information about the participating sons/daughters in order to develop a context for the study (Charmaz, 2006). Variables used within this document were based upon what was included and excluded in previous research about sons/daughters (e.g., number of siblings), foster parents (e.g., employment status), households (e.g., geographical location), and the foster children within their homes (e.g., gender). Refer to Appendix B for the Demographic Questionnaire.
This figure illustrates how the research process occurred in a fluid manner.
5.1.2 Method 2: Open-ended interview. The 1.5 hour open-ended interview with the sons/daughters was intended as an “informal and conversational” dialogue between the participant and researcher (Charmaz, 2006, p.29). An interview guide was devised, along with probing questions (see Appendix C). Depending upon the categories and themes that emerged from the data, probe questions were modified or not all asked (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Probe questions were used to explore different transitions within the fostering process and accompanying emotions, relationships, and perceived coping, adjustment, and adapting methods for sons/daughters. In conjunction with this interview, three additional methods also took place during the interview time in order to elicit more emotional responses from the participants and also assisted the participants in overcoming interview fatigue (Freeman & Mathison, 2009).

5.2.3 Method 3: Object sharing. Participants were asked to bring in an object that had meaning for them in relation to their fostering experiences. The object that they selected to bring with them could be anything that they wanted. For confidentiality purposes, they were asked to avoid any object that would be identifying (e.g., photographs of foster children). During the interview, participants were asked to talk about their object. As a contingency plan, if a participant did not bring an object to the interview, s/he was provided with a dual-sided dry erase board by the researcher and invited to take a few moments to illustrate, in words or pictures, something that had meaning for him or her about their fostering experience. After the participant had completed the illustration, s/he were asked the same questions as a participant who brought an object with them.

The use of objects is not new to research or clinical social work practice (e.g., Freeman & Mathison, 2009). The task of locating an object engaged the right-brain of the participants to elicit memories and emotions associated with the topic (Siegel, 2012). Object sharing also provided the participants with a physical object to talk about during the interview (Tammivaara & Enright, 1986).
5.1.4 Method 4: Photographing the object. During the interviews, participants were asked to take a digital photograph of the object that they shared during the interview. The researcher provided the digital camera for this activity.

Emerging from the field of anthropology, visual-based media and activities, such as photography, have been used throughout the years in research to expose the experiences of individuals and communities within a variety of disciplines, including social work (e.g., Collier, 1957; Harper, 1994). According to Lal, Jarus, and Suto (2012), researchers use photography in different ways and for different purposes. Amongst the many approaches that have been developed with photography as a central component are photo elicitation (Harper, 2002), auto photography (Aitken & Wingate, 1993; Noland, 2006), auto driving (Clark, 1999), participatory photography (Miller & Happell, 2006), hermeneutic photography (Hagedorn, 1996), and Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Other components have included: reflexive photography (e.g., Lehna & Tholcken, 2001), and photo novella (e.g., LeClerc, Wells, Craig, & Wilson, 2002). Areas of popular inquiry predominately have focused on health (e.g., Hurworth, 2003; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998), homelessness (e.g., Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000), and community (e.g., Sampson-Cordle & Vera, 2001). Other areas of inquiry have included: organizational-level research (e.g., Buchanan, 2001), identity (e.g., Clark, 1999), and sports (e.g., Snyder, 1990).

Photography was used within this study as a method to develop a more right-brain, emotional understanding of the fostering realities of sons/daughters and to elicit additional emotions and experiences throughout the interview process. All photographs were taken by the sons/daughters so that their objects were a visual interpretation from their perspective. This allowed the viewer/audience to be brought into the subjective experiences of the sons/daughters (photographer) about an emotion they identified with while fostering.
The purpose of photographing each participant's object allowed the researcher to collect all photographs and create a pictorial collage of the sons/daughters meanings of their fostering experiences (see Chapter 6). In addition, all of the photographs were combined with the other data collection methods and used in the ongoing data analysis process. One photograph from each participant can not accurately illustrate their complete fostering experiences (Tucker & Dempsey, 1991); however, it provided a starting point for establishing meaning within the fostering process.

5.1.5 **Method 5: Photo-feedback.** Participants were asked to write a short caption about the photograph they took of their object. Specifically, they were asked to write: (i) when in their fostering experience did this happen?; (ii) what emotion(s) was identified?, and (iii) any additional comments? This process is called photo-feedback (Sampson-Cordile, 2001). Photo-feedback, when used alone, often results in limited information (Tucker & Dempsey, 1991). To minimize this potential issue, photo-feedback was used in conjunction with the other forms of data collection within this study.

5.1.6 **Method 6: Memo-writing.** The researcher wrote personal, informal memos that were used within the analytic process (Charmaz, 2006). Memos were based upon patterns that appeared to be emerging within the data. Raw data, empirical evidence, and personal observations were included within the memos. Each memo was titled based upon the data to make it easier for the researcher to continue to develop the ideas. An excerpt of a memo about sons/daughters who reside outside of the fostering home has been included on the next page:
MEMO WRITING EXAMPLE

Category
Experiences of living outside of the fostering home for sons/daughters

All sons/daughters who participated within this study were either temporarily (e.g., attending and living close to their post-secondary school) or permanently (e.g., residing within their own residence) living outside of the currently fostering home. Many of the sons/daughters indicated that they were still involved in the fostering process. For instance, Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{P001} talked about attending university and being texted by her mother about an incident that was happening within the home. While this daughter indicated that she didn't respond right away, instead she waited at least 24 hours before following up with her mother. She needed to avoid the incident because she had other responsibilities (e.g., mid-term papers), the daughter shared that she felt guilty about not responding right away.

Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{P001} shared:

“I felt a little guilty because I knew that if I was there, I would be in the middle of the issue, but at the time, it is kind of a relief to know that I don't have to deal with this. It is not my problem. It felt bad, but I don't think that they really needed my opinion at that time. There was nothing I really could have done in that situation anyways. I think that my mom really wanted to just talk to someone about it.”

Whereas, Daughter, aged 24\textsuperscript{P003} talked about how she enjoyed fostering so much that she would always respond to her mother's texts and phone calls. She frequently visited her parents' home to see the foster children, offered to take them out (e.g., shopping), or asked her mother to bring the foster children over to her home, if time permitted.

Daughter, aged 24\textsuperscript{P003} shared:

“I don't see any difference [living outside of the fostering home]. I want to participate more. I want to be around them more. I'm like, 'Mom, what are you doing today? Bring me my babies. Are you home? I need to get my baby fix.' Nothing has changed. I don't see it any differently. I feel like I am group up and don't live at home and play with babies all day; although, I wish that I could.”

The above example illustrates how the researcher noted differences in how two different daughters experience fostering while living outside of the fostering home. The memo continued to elaborate on the similarities and differences within the interviews and between the interviews.

5.2 Approval of ethics protocol

Data collection commenced after an independent ethics committee at the Office of Research Ethics (ORE), University of Toronto approved this study\textsuperscript{1}. ORE is responsible for ensuring that all research involving human participants conducted by graduate students at the University, as well as faculty, comply with the guidelines of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for

\textsuperscript{1} The Health Sciences Research Ethics Board, University of Toronto granted approval of this study in May 2013.
Research Involving Humans (CIHR, NSERCC, SSHRC, 2010) released by the Panel on Research Ethics. The researcher successfully completed the TCPS 2 certificate in October 2012 and implemented those principles into her study design. There were no restrictions placed on the researcher through this doctoral research regarding access to or disclosure of information.

There were two possible risks identified within the ethics application: (1) psychological/emotional risks (e.g., feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, or upset), and (2) social risks (e.g., loss of status, privacy, and/or reputation). In regards to the emotional risks, it was believed that the process of reflecting and answering questions about sons/daughters' emotions related to fostering may trigger uncomfortable feelings. To minimize this risk, specific steps were implemented into the protocol.

**STUDY PROTOCOL**

*Minimizing psychological/ emotional risk to participants*

1. The researcher would periodically ask the participant about their comfort level and willingness to proceed.
2. The researcher explicitly acknowledge any emerging emotional difficulties related to their fostering experience, reminding participants of their choice to either not answer the question and skip to the next, or stop the interview at any time.
3. At the end of the interview, the researcher debriefed with the participant about the interview process.
4. If appropriate, the participant was asked if they would like to be connected to a support service in their community. The researcher could assist them in finding an appropriate support (e.g., counselling).
5. All participants were reminded that the "Information Sheet" has the contact information to the Ontario Mental Health Helpline that provides free health information about services in their area.
6. All participants were invited to participate in a 15 minute telephone member-checking discussion approximately 3-4 weeks after the interview. This allowed the researcher to 'check in' with the participant after they have had some time to reflect upon the interview process.

While this was a research interview and not a clinical/intervention-based interview, the researcher has been trained to respond to emotional difficulties with a flexible, adapted, curious, and empathetic approach and provide follow-up services in the community, if needed. The researcher was prepared to connect the participant with the most appropriate referral, based upon what the participant disclosure. However, the researcher would not provide therapy or engage in a therapeutic relationship with participants during the interview or afterwards.
In regards to the social risks, the interviews were held on a one-to-one basis and not in a group format so identification by other participants was not possible. If participants wanted their name to be included with their digital photograph, there was no safeguard to protect their privacy. This could result in unwanted exposure to their pictorial expression of their fostering experiences. To minimize this risk, specific steps were implemented within the study protocol.

**STUDY PROTOCOL**

*Minimizing social risk to participants*

1. Participants were asked to sign a Photograph General Release Form. This document gave permission to the researcher to use and publish their digital photographs taken during the interview of the participants' objects. The dissemination activities consisted of the final dissertation and may include article submission(s), conference(s), and presentation(s).

2. Participants could withdraw their consent at anytime, up to the point when the Master List was destroyed (March 2014). The participant would immediately contact the researcher and inform them of their decision via telephone or email. However, participants were informed at the beginning of the interview, that if they withdraw their photograph(s) after they were published, that the researcher would no longer have the ability to remove the photograph(s) as it would be in the public domain.

3. The original digital photographs taken by the participants during the interview were their property as the individual photographer. If the participant insisted that they want their name to be included with the photographs, she or he were advised that there were no safeguard to protect their privacy. They were asked to complete the "Identification of Photographer" section on the Photograph General Release Form which indicated that they consent to having their name included with the photographs.

Participants could withdraw at any stage of the study without repercussions. This information was outlined within the Information Sheet, Consent Form, and Photograph General Release Form. Participants had a copy of these documents for their own records; thus, they could reference them after they have completed the interview as well. There were no consequences for withdrawal from this study by the researcher. There were no consequences from the social workers or the sons/daughters' parents, as these individuals were not informed of the sons/daughters' participation. Participants were informed that they could withdraw up to the end of the data collection period (March 2014). After the last participant completed the interview and follow-up telephone call, the Master List of names of participants and their corresponding non-identifying code (ID) were destroyed. This information was no longer needed, as there were no further contact with participants.
Participants were provided with a $15.00 honorarium as compensation for their contributions to this study (e.g., time, effort) at the interview. This token of appreciation was thought to be respectful to participants for the 1.5 hour in-person interview. Food and/or drinks were offered to be purchased by the researcher. The in-person interviews were scheduled at a location convenient for the participants. The interview time was also scheduled around the participants’ responsibilities (e.g., childcare). Participants were aware that they could refuse to answer any question or they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. No participant who consented to participate indicated that they wanted to terminate the interview; however, if they did, they were aware that they would still be provided the $15.00 honorarium. It was the belief that the participant already gave their time with the intention to fully participate and thus, should be compensated.

All methods of data collection (i.e., demographic questionnaire, open-ended interview, object sharing, photographing the object, and photo-feedback) were self-report data obtained from sons/daughters within the interview, as well as the information shared during the follow-up interview. All data were kept confidential, under the supervision of the researcher. To minimize identification of participants, they were provided with an ID that was used within the findings section of this study (see Chapter 6). A separate master list was kept by the researcher. Letter and numeric IDs allowed the researcher to maintain some level of identification should a participant request to have their data withdrawn from the study, before the Master List was destroyed. The Master List and all other electronic documents were stored on an encrypted and password protected computer that used Linux Unified Key Setup.²

Dedoose, version 4.12.0, is an evidence-informed web application data management system for qualitative and mixed methods research (www.dedoose.com). It was selected for its secure data

² Linux Unified Key Setup is a product that uses industry standard encryption. These specifications meet the requirements of the University of Toronto's policies related to data security.
GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER: CHAPTER 5

storage methods, cost-effectiveness, and compatibility with a Linux operating system that the researcher used.3

All interactions on Dedoose with the server were encrypted, all backups were encrypted, and physical access to the server is protected by a security guard. In addition, the researcher cleaned the data and removed all personally identifying information prior to uploading the data to Dedoose for data analysis purposes. The researcher was the only one with access to the username and password for accessing the account. Dedoose secures all data in this program that meet the requirements of the University of Toronto's policies related to data management.

Participants were advised that there was a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, the researcher took precautions to minimize this risk. The researcher advised participants that confidentiality may not be kept for reasons that must be reported to the proper authorities, including: (a) if the participant informs the researcher that they have harmed or are about to harm a child/youth; that the researcher is required by law to make a report to the appropriate children's aid society; or (b) if the participant indicated that they were going to harm themselves or another adult, that the researcher was required by law to contact the appropriate services (e.g., police) and advise them of the situation; and (c) there was a slight possibility that transcripts or the researcher could have been subpoenaed for legal purposes; however, precautions to provide anonymity have been undertaken throughout this study. Specifically, to minimize this risk, data were only stored by the participants ID codes and identifying information (e.g., names) were removed from the data.

3 Other empirical studies that have used Dedoose include: Clare (2005); Daley (2005); Hay, Weisner, Subramanian, Duan, Niedzinski, and Kravitz (2008); Lieber (2009); and Leiber, Welsner, & Presley (2003).
5.3 Sampling procedures

The recruitment of participants required the assistance of child welfare agencies (CAS) within Ontario, the public provincial associations for foster families, and the local foster family associations to distribute the recruitment flyer to their foster family membership (see Appendix D). Some child welfare agencies required their own internal ethics review process to be completed prior to them distributing the recruitment flyer and the researcher complied with the specific agency's requests (i.e., complete an internal CAS ethics application).

The researcher asked CASs to assist with the distribution of the recruitment flyer by (a) post hard copies of the recruitment flyer within their agency, for foster families to see; (b) post an electronic copy of the recruitment flyer for foster families (e.g., Foster Family Intranet); (c) email electronic copies of the recruitment flyer to foster families; and/or (d) handout the flyer during any prearranged foster parent cluster meetings and/or support groups.

5.3.1 Inclusion criteria. The initial sample sought out sons/daughters who were the biological, adopted, or step children, of current foster parents in Ontario, aged 18-35 years and excluded any current or long-term foster children. Sons/daughters were residing outside of the fostering home on a temporary (e.g., staying on residence at a post-secondary institution) or permanent basis (e.g., in their own residence). The sample included only sons/daughters who were living outside of the foster home for a number of reasons. They would have experienced several personal (e.g., launching into adulthood), family (e.g., parents may be considering retirement), and foster family transitions (e.g., arrival and departure of foster siblings). Sons/daughters only living outside of the fostering home resulted in a more uniformed sample. It is possible that sons/daughters

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4 The public provincial associations consist of the Foster Parents Society of Ontario and League of Foster Families. The two private provincial associations, Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth and Ontario Residential Care Association, were excluded from the sampling procedures. There is some evidence to suggest that the experiences are different for private and public foster families (e.g., availability of support; Anderson, 2013).
who currently live within a foster home may experience and express their (e)motions about fostering differently than those sons/daughters who are living outside of it. All participants' parents were affiliated with a public child welfare agency within Ontario. Given the focus of the study was to capture the emotions of sons/daughters throughout the transitions within the fostering process, each participant had to have experienced the entrance and departure of at least two foster children while residing within the fostering home. Additionally, participants had to be proficient enough in English to participate in a verbal interview. Other than age and language, there were no restrictions on other inclusion variables (e.g., race, class, gender, ableism, sexuality).

5.3.2 Exclusion criteria. Unfortunately, due to time and funding constraints, not all individuals were included within this research. As an exploratory study, current foster children were excluded from the sample because their emotions and experiences may be different than sons/daughters. Other individuals excluded from this research were foster parents, support individuals (e.g., grandparents), and social workers. Further, any individual who lived with a cognitive impairment that restricted their ability to read, write, and talk about their fostering emotions were not included in this research.

5.3.3 Sample size. According to Charmaz (2006), “theoretical sampling pertains only to conceptual and theoretical development; it is not about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability of your results” (p.101). Thus, theoretical sampling was used throughout this study and purposeful to the emerging categories, in order to address the theoretical concerns throughout the data analysis. The sample was anticipated to include 20-30 participants or until theoretical sufficiency had occurred. Theoretical sufficiency was achieved when the data “no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveal new properties of [the] core theoretical categories

5 The concept of theoretical saturation in grounded theory has been debated within the literature (Charmaz, 2006; Dey, 1999). There was concern that theoretical saturation may be incorrectly identified by researchers, thus the concept “theoretical sufficiency” was used instead (Dey, 1999, p.257).
Specifically, only the core theoretical categories reached theoretical sufficiency within this study. Additional data was identified; however, it did not lend itself to theoretical sufficiency.

Data collection took place for almost a year, from May 2013 to March 2014. The sampling procedure yielded 25 interested participants; of which, 19 fit the inclusion criteria (76%) and 6 did not (24%). In the end, 15 sons/daughters consented to participate within this study. Interviews tended to take place weeks apart from each other. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to build upon categories that were emerging within the data analysis process with different participants.

5.4 Description of the sample

The sample within this study is comprised of 15 participants; of which, there are twelve (12) daughters and three (3) sons of foster parents in Ontario (see Table 5-1 for a summary of demographic variables about sons/daughters). The participants are young adults with three-fifths of the participants being between 20-25 years old (n=9 of 15; 60%), one-fifth being 26-30 years old (n=3 of 15; 20%), and the remaining one-fifth of participants being 31-35 years old (n=3 of 15; 20%). All participating sons/daughters classified themselves as birth children of foster parents. There are two caveats to the sons/daughters relationships to their parents; in that, (a) two participants further indicated that they are birth children, but also step-children, and (b) one participant shared that they are a birth child, but also an adopted child (not a former foster child).

Inclusion in this study required participants to either be permanently moved out of the currently fostering home (e.g., living in their own residence), or temporarily moved out (e.g., living in student residence). Two-thirds of the sons/daughters were permanently moved out of their parents' homes (n=10 of 15; 67%) and the remaining one-third are only temporarily moved out (n=5 of 15; 33%). Even though sons/daughters were not living within the fostering home, the majority of them
continued to be involved often (n=7 of 15; 47%) or sometimes (n=6 of 15; 40%). There were only a couple of sons/daughters who disclosed that they were seldom involved (n=2 of 15; 13%).

Other categories explored with the participating sons/daughters to get to know them better, included: ethnicity, religion or spiritual background, highest degree or level of schooling completed, employment status and whether they would classify their employment as in the 'helping profession', and relationship status. In regards to ethnicity, approximately three-quarters of sons/daughters self-reported that they were Caucasian (n=11 of 15; 73%), followed by Aboriginal (n=2 of 15; 13%), African American (n=1 of 15; 7%), and Black-West Indian/Caribbean (n=1 of 15; 7%).

Religion and/or spirituality of sons/daughters tended to be self-reported as Christian (n=7 of 15; 47%) or Catholic (n=3 of 15; 20%), followed by Atheist (n=2 of 15; 13%), Agnostic (n=1 of 15; 7%), and none (n=1 of 15; 7%).

Approximately half of the young adult sons/daughters (n=8 of 15; 53%) classified themselves as students. While these individuals were striving for a higher level of educational attainment, there was a diverse range of completed school to date. Many of the sons/daughters had a college degree (n=5 of 15; 33%), followed by some college, no degree (n=3 of 15; 30) and a bachelor's degree (n=3 of 15; 30). A smaller number of participating sons/daughters only had completed high school (n=2 of 15; 13%). Only one participant had a master's degree (7%) and only one participant had both a college degree and a bachelor's degree (7%).

Participating sons/daughters were asked to ‘check all that apply’ when it came to their employment status. In so doing, almost half of the sons/daughters self-reported that they were employed (n=8 of 15; 42%). There were only three sons/daughters who shared that they were out of work (n=3 of 15; 16%), primarily because they were in-between jobs at the moment. Of the eight sons/daughters who were employed, half of them indicated that they would classify their employment
as being in the helping profession and the other half would not.

Lastly, the relationship status of sons/daughters indicated that they were predominately single (n=10 of 15; 67%). This would be expected since three-fifths of the participants were between the ages of 20-25 years and typically Canadians get married for the first time around the age of 29 years for women and 31 for men (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014). The remaining sons/daughters were in a relationship as either being married (n=4 of 15; 27%) or common law (n=1 of 15; 7%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics of participating sons/daughters within this study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>20-25</td>
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<td>26-30</td>
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<td>31-35</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-West Indian/Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion/Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage | Total
---|---|---|---
Highest level of education completed
  *High school* | 2 | 13% | 15
  *Some college* | 3 | 30% |
  *College degree* | 5 | 33% |
  *Bachelor’s degree* | 3 | 20% |
  *Master’s degree* | 1 | 7% |
  *College degree AND bachelor's degree* | 1 | 7% |
Employment*
  *Employed* | 8 | 42% | 19
  *Out of work* | 3 | 16% |
  *Student* | 8 | 42% |
Out of the eight (8) sons/daughters who are employed, are they in the helping profession?
  *Yes* | 4 | 50% | 8
  *No* | 4 | 50% |
Relationship status**
  *Single* | 10 | 67% | 15
  *Married* | 4 | 27% |
  *Common law* | 1 | 7% |
Current living arrangements
  *Temporarily moved out* | 5 | 33% | 15
  *Permanently moved out* | 10 | 67% |
Current involvement with foster home
  *Often* | 7 | 47% | 15
  *Sometimes* | 6 | 40% |
  *Seldom* | 2 | 13% |

*Sons/daughters indicated a mixture of employment options; therefore, the total does not equal 15. For instance, a participant could be employed AND a student.

**'Relationship status' has been substituted for 'marital status'

Fostering involves the whole family and therefore, the demographics about the sons/daughters families has also been included (see Table 5-2). The majority of participating sons/daughters came from two-parent households (n=12 of 15; 80%), followed by sons/daughters
from single parent households (n=3 of 15; 20%). This is consistent with the 2011 findings from Statistics Canada on the portrait of families which found that foster children were more likely to be placed in two-parent households than single parent households (Statistics Canada, 2012). In regards to the 15 participating sons/daughters, this means that they had a combined total of 27 parents. Not all sons/daughters knew how old their parents were (n=3); however, for those that did report, almost two-thirds of those parents were between the ages of 51-60 years (n=15 of 24; 62%). Almost one-third of the sons/daughters' parents were between the ages of 40-50 years (n=7 of 24; 30%) and only a couple were 61 years and older (n=2 of 24; 8%). The majority of these 27 parents completed post-secondary education (e.g., college, university; n=18 of 27; 67%), followed by high school (n=8 of 27; 30%), and elementary school (n=1 of 27; 3%). Data were also collected on the sons/daughters' parents gender, ethnicity, religion and/or spirituality, current residence (e.g., in the home that fosters), and employment status; however, there was insufficient data/missing data to indicate any trends within this section about foster parents.

The majority of the 15 participating sons/daughters had non-foster child siblings within their family units (n=12 of 15; 80%) and only a small number of sons/daughters who were the only child (n=3 of 15; 20%). This means that the 12 sons/daughters with siblings had a combined total of 40 brothers and sisters. According to the Statistics Canada census (2011) in Ontario, the average number of children per home, per family structure was 1.1 (Statistics Canada, 2011). This was not the case in this sample. Two-thirds of the sons/daughters with siblings had three to eight siblings (n=8 of 12; 67%) and only one-third of the sons/daughters had one to two siblings (n=4 of 12; 33%). The ages of their non-foster siblings ranged from 0-31+ years, with half of their siblings being 21-30 years old (n=20 of 39; 51%), followed by slightly younger siblings being 11-20 years (n=14 of 39; 36%). The remainder of siblings were either 31 years and older (n=3 of 39; 8%) or between the ages of zero and 6

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6 In 2011, foster children were included for the first time in the Census (Statistics Canada, 2012).
ten years (n=2 of 39; 5%). Over half of the siblings were still residing within the currently fostering home (n=21 of 39; 54%) and the other siblings were either permanently or temporarily out of the foster home (n=18 of 39; 46%). Data were also collected on the sons/daughters' siblings' gender, ethnicity, religion, highest level of school completed, and employment status. These variables had insufficient data/missing data to indicate any trends within this section about siblings.

Many foster homes are located within rural and suburban areas. For instance, only one-third of youth, aged 13-17 years who are crown wards at the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reside in the Toronto area (Goodman & Milstein, 2014). That said, growing up in a foster home, the participating sons/daughters were predominately from suburban (n=7 of 15; 47%) or rural (n=6 of 15; 40%) geographical settings. There were only a couple of sons/daughters who lived in an urban setting (n=2 of 15; 13%).

Inclusion in the study required participants to have had at least two foster children enter and depart their homes. That said, the 15 sons/daughters belonged to families that fostered 0-30 years. Many of the sons/daughters were affiliated with families that had fostered for several years. In particular, 11-20 years (n=6 of 15; 40%) and 21-30 years (n=5 of 15; 33%). A small number of participating sons/daughters were still within the first decade of their fostering experiences (n=4 of 15; 27%). Throughout these years, foster families could provide different types of fostering services: regular, treatment, specialized, emergency/after hours, and young offenders. Indeed most sons/daughters indicated one type of foster care service provided (n=11 of 15; 73%); however, there were a few sons/daughters who would classify their homes as providing more than one type of service (n=4 of 15; 27%). As a result, participants were allowed to 'check all that apply' to the foster care services provided by their families. From their experiences, most of the sons/daughters had provided regular foster care services (n=9 of 19; 47%), followed by treatment (n=6 of 19; 32%). There were
only a few sons/daughters who classified their family as providing specialized (n=2 of 19; 11%),
emergency (n=1 of 19; 5%), or young offenders services (n=1 of 19; 5%). Data were also collected on
the households income; however, there was insufficient data/missing data to conduct any analysis on
this variable.

Table 5-2
Demographics of participating sons/daughters' families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two parent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of sons/daughters' parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highest level of education of sons/daughters' parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of non-foster child siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>3-4</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of non-foster child siblings</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31+</td>
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(continued on next page)
### Characteristics of Foster Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current living arrangements of sons/daughters' siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the home that fosters</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the home that fosters</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of foster home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years family has fostered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of foster care service provided*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young offenders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sons/daughters could indicate more than one foster care service provided by their family; thus, the total does not equal 15. For instance, one participant classified themselves as a regular home and emergency home.

Throughout their fostering experiences to date, the 15 sons/daughters estimated a range of three to 289 foster siblings stayed within their homes. This accounts for an estimated total of 743 foster siblings, with an average of 50 foster siblings per participant. This estimation excluded placements that were classified as respite or relief placements; otherwise, the estimated number of foster siblings would have drastically increased. The ages of their foster siblings ranged from newborn to eighteen years old. Sons/daughters identified many different ages ranges of foster siblings, with no pattern to be reported. Many of the sons/daughters disclosed that their homes accepted both foster brothers and foster sisters (n=13 of 15; 87%). There were only a few homes that only fostered foster sisters (n=2 of 15; 13%) and only foster brothers (n=1 of 15; 87%). Gender-specific homes tended to be associated with the gender of the sons/daughters. Lastly, the estimated
average length of stay that the sons/daughters' foster siblings were living with them in their homes range from five months to 72 months.

In the opinion of the participating sons/daughters, almost two-thirds of their foster siblings have experienced in-care placements before coming into their homes (n=9 of 14; 64%). Previous in-care placements could have been another foster home, group home, and kinship placement. The remaining one-third of sons/daughters did not believe that their foster siblings have been exposed to previous in-care placements (n=5 of 14; 36%). These sons/daughters were affiliated with foster homes that provided care to foster siblings from newborn to eighteen years old. There was only one participant who did not know whether or not their foster siblings experienced previous in-care placements. Additionally, sons/daughters knew a wide assortment of reasons why foster children came to stay within their homes. The insights of these sons/daughters are highlighted in Table 5-3 and suggest that sons/daughters are familiar with maltreatment issues.

Table 5-3
Reasons why sons/daughters believe foster children live in foster homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why foster children sometimes live in foster homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsuitable living situations; Mental abuse; Neglect; Mother gave them up/ parents' choice; Drug user parents/ drug related/ parents who do drugs; Abusive relationship with parents/ abusive boyfriend of mother/ mother has a boyfriend who is a known abuser; Father had no job; [Foster child] put herself in foster care; Drug and alcohol abuse during pregnancy/ drug test at hospital at child's birth; Poor living conditions; Abusive parent/ abusive homes; Parent capacity/ parents being mentally unfit/ parent issues/ parents unable to care for them/ unfit parents/ parents' intellectual disability; Previous child apprehension/ previous CAS involvement; Difficult diagnosis; Family emergency; Other foster home breakdown; Reuniting siblings; Crime related; [Foster children] can't be at home; Special needs; [Foster children] apprehended at home; Unsafe living conditions (home); Sexual abuse/ sexual abuse by a family member; Physical abuse (e.g., broken legs); Disowned by parents; New to the country, but have no parents in country; Conflict between parent and teen; Stealing; and Parents violating supervision order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Data collection

The use of multiple sources (i.e., oral communication, object sharing, photographs, and textual materials) allowed for rich data to be obtained from the participants. Consistent with constructivist grounded theory, and the ongoing analytic refinement of all sources of data, codes
emerged into concepts and then into categories (Charmaz, 2006; Oktay, 2012). Data collection commenced after the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto approved this study, along with any required child welfare agency's internal ethics review process.

5.5.1 **Pilot study: Testing the data collection process.** The data collection process was pilot tested on one son and one daughter of foster parents in May and June 2013. These individuals were known acquaintances to the researcher and were invited to voluntarily participate in the pilot study to assist with testing the data collection process. These individuals were informed that the information that they shared would be excluded from the final analyses. The pilot participants' feedback on the data collection process was documented within research memos. Only a minor revision to the research process was recommended. This included having a sheet of paper with different emotions on it available for the participant to glance at during the interview, if they need some assistance in putting emotion words to their fostering experiences. The participants' feedback have been referenced within the findings section (see Chapter 6).

5.5.2 **Main study: Stage 1 - Screening process.** The majority of sons/daughters contacted the researcher via email about their interest to participate in the study. These interested individuals were provided with an electronic copy of the Information Sheet (see Appendix E), Consent Form (see Appendix F), and Photograph General Release Form (see Appendix G). For those sons/daughters who contacted the researcher via telephone, they were given study information over the telephone about what is involved, confidentiality, risk/benefits, compensation, and what happens with the results. Additionally, they were invited to provide their email address to the researcher so that the Information Sheet and consent forms could be sent to them.
After reviewing the materials, if individuals were still interested in participating, they were invited to complete a two minute telephone screening interview. The screening process was done to ensure that potential participants fit the inclusion criteria. They were asked five, ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions:

1. Are you a son or daughter of foster parents?
2. Do your parents currently foster for a children’s aid society within the Province of Ontario?
3. Are you between 18-35 years old?
4. Do you temporarily or permanently live outside of your parents’ home?
5. Have you had at least two foster children come into and depart from your home?

If potential participants did not qualify for the study, they were politely thanked for their interest and advised that they did not meet the inclusion criteria. If potential participants did match the inclusion criteria, they were asked if they had any additional questions about the research study. After answering any of the individuals’ questions, a date, time, and location was arranged for the interview. Typically, the interview took place within one week of the screening process and was conducted at the request of the participants in public places, such as local coffee shops, libraries, university classrooms, and occasionally in private places (e.g., within the homes of the participants).

**5.5.3 Main study: Stage 2A - Consents, demographic survey, and compensation.** An one to two hour, face-to-face meeting was arranged with participants from June 2013 to March 2014. Prior to any data collection, the participant was asked to read the Study Information Sheet. The participant was free to ask any questions about the study. After the participant indicated satisfaction that she or he knew what this doctoral research was about, what was involved, confidentiality, risk/benefits, compensation, and what happened with the results, and all of their questions were answered, the participant was asked to sign the Consent Form and Photograph General Release Form. All participants had copies of these forms for their own records. After all of the consents had been reviewed and signed, participants were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire.
5.5.4 Main study: Stage 2B - Object sharing, photographing the object, photo-feedback, and interview. The remaining time scheduled with the participants was allotted to the interview. Through an open-ended interview, participants were asked to discuss the object they brought with them and how it connected to their fostering experience. After the participant had completed sharing their experience, the researcher asked additional probing questions. These probing questions were asked from a position of curiosity and openness to explore the participant’s emotions and fostering transitions more in-depth and elicit rich, thick data.

Participants were asked to take a digital photograph of their object. A short break in the interview occurred for the researcher to transfer the photograph from the camera to the researcher’s tablet. The transfer of the image was done to increase the size of the photograph beyond what was available on the camera’s viewing screen. Participants were then provided with a paper and pen and asked to write a caption for their photograph.

The rest of the interview time was used to further explore the participant’s experiences throughout the fostering transitions, their emotions, relationships and connections, and coping, adjustment, and adaptation to fostering. Particular emphasis was made on emerging categories identified within the data analyses process.\(^7\)

5.5.5 Main study: Stage 3 – Member-checking and prolonged engagement. All participants were offered the opportunity to participate in a member-checking session. This session included two things: (a) two to three weeks after the interview, participants were emailed a copy of their transcript and asked to review it for content and (b) three to four weeks post-interview they were contacted via telephone to allow the researcher to discuss the themes within their interview and from the data analyses process (see Appendix H). All participants consented to this member-checking

\(^7\) At the end of the interview, the researcher checked-in with the participant to see how she or he felt about the interview process and discussed if she or he requires any post-interview supports. No participant indicated that they needed additional support.
process; however, there were three of the fifteen sons/daughters who later declined. With the majority of the transcripts checked, it greatly assisted with maintaining the integrity within the data analysis process (Carlson, 2010; Charmaz, 2006).

5.6 Data Analysis: Grounding the data

Constructivist grounded theory is an interpretative and ongoing process. Data collection and data analysis are not separated (Charmaz, 2006). For this reason, both data collection and data analysis procedures are described in this chapter. An inductive approach was used throughout data analysis. Sampling, initial coding, memo-writing, and data collection with focused coding occurred simultaneously. Data collected from the participants’ demographic questionnaires, photographs of their meaningful fostering objects, photograph captions, and oral communications were included within this data analysis process. The results of these data collection and data analyses processes assisted in answering the research questions identified within this dissertation (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7).

5.6.1 Coding of data. There were different forms of data collected within this study. There were some differences in how the information were coded and this has been described below.

5.6.1.1 Demographic questionnaire. All quantitative data from the demographic survey were entered into an spreadsheet. Data were cleaned and checked for accuracy. The demographic survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency, percentages). It was also crossed referenced within the qualitative findings using Dedoose.

5.6.1.2 Interviews, photographs, photo-feedback, research notes. The interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants and research notes were taken. The purpose of

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8 A one-month time frame was appropriate for both the participant and researcher. This time frame gave the participant time to reflect on the interview and provide any additional comments to the researcher. This time frame also provided a logistical advantage for the researcher. It took 1-2 weeks to transcribe the data and thoroughly analyze the interview data of the participant and in conjunction with other participant data.
audio-recording the interview was to accurately capture all of the information that was discussed (Charmaz, 2006). The interview data were transcribed into a word processor and edited for any identifying information (e.g., names, locations). Data analysis was first conducted through a manual analysis without the assistance of any computerized software. After the codes and concepts started to emerge, the cleaned textual data, photographs, and photo-feedback were input and analyzed using Dedoose (www.dedoose.com).

The first analytic step within grounded theory is initial coding. According to Charmaz (2006), “coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data” (p.43). These codes are “provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data” (Charmaz, 2006, p.48). All of the data were explored for any theoretical categories such as emotions, noting that the specific categories were determined based upon the data collected. This process allowed potential weaknesses in the data collection process to emerge more fully than in the pilot testing (Charmaz, 2006). Changes were made earlier on in the data collection and data analyses stages in order to ensure rich data on the experiences of sons/daughters.

The initial coding consisted of word-by-word coding and line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006). The preliminary word-by-word coding was particularly helpful when working with the transcripts to identify emotion words (e.g., happy, sad), but also the flow of words that contextualized sons/daughters' emotions (e.g., I felt it in my body). Whereas, the preliminary line-by-line coding was helpful to “identify implicit concerns as well as explicit statements” (Charmaz, 2006, p.50). Each line, of each transcript, was reviewed for action codes and descriptive codes. This lengthy process highlighted vivid meanings and ideas that would have otherwise been missed if the data were reviewed in only sections (Charmaz, 2006). Refer to Table 5-4 for an example of line-by-line coding.
Table 5-4
Example of line-by-line coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line-by-line coding</th>
<th>Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting their first foster sibling</td>
<td>“Well, my parents didn’t get their first placement until I was in my second year of university, or I just finished my first year of university, now I am in my fourth year; but, I spent a lot of time being at home, I took a semester off, so I have been there for a good chunk of fostering; but, it is just being at school not many people here can understand that, yes I am worried about homework and what am I going to do after graduation, but in the back of my head I am worried about visits, and there is a court date coming up and the baby could be leaving any day, and all of these other things, there is just a whole other set of things that I am thinking about that other people here don’t understand and don’t really get.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning out of the home to university</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing their own life transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting foster home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living as a foster family member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking connection with non-fostering individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling not understood by non-fostering individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrying about everyday issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrying about foster sibling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering when their foster sibling would leave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about many different things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling not understood by non-fostering individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Daughter, aged 21 years

To identify and make comparisons between incidents, incident-to-incident coding occurred.

As a result of theoretical sampling, both similar and dissimilar events were explored. Analyses consisted of “comparing interview statements and incidents within the same interview and comparing statements and incidents in different interviews” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 54). The emotions that arose during the interview signified meaning of a situation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Refer to Table 5-5 for an example of an incident-to-incident coding of similar events.

Table 5-5
Example of incident-to-incident coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident-by-incident coding</th>
<th>Excerpts of similar events: Staying connected with foster sibling after they depart from sons/daughters’ homes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons/daughters and their families stay connected with some foster siblings post-placement. Much of the contact relies on developing a good relationship with the birth/adoptive parents.</td>
<td>“They still come and visit us on the weekends, we still get to visit, and it is like we take them on for the weekend, like our own kids to give their parents a break kind of thing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 24 years³⁰⁰³</td>
<td>“He stayed with us for about two years and then he was adopted out. We got to meet the adoptive parents. We got to say goodbye. We also got to stay connected after he left our home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 28 years³⁰⁰⁹</td>
<td>“The biggest things that has contributed to our family having relationships with kids after they left our home is that we have worked really hard to build relationships with the families.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 21 years³⁰¹⁴</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second analytic step is focused coding. According to Charmaz (2006), focused coding is “using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data” (p.57).

Several codes were synthesized to form key categories. Table 5-6 explores an example of how codes shifted about sons/daughters connecting with their foster siblings from line-by-line codes, to combining codes, and then to a more focused and revised set of codes. The revised codes were then used to review all transcripts again.

**Table 5-6**
Example of focused coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line-by-line codes</th>
<th>Combining similar codes</th>
<th>Established focused codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecting with the foster children; Understanding the traditions of the foster children; Including the foster children within the foster family; Lacking connection with the foster children; Engaging in activities with the foster children; Experiencing challenges with the foster children; Coping with the challenges of the foster children; Continuing to support the foster children post-placement; Accepting of the foster children; Transitioning plans for the foster children; Communicating as a family, including the foster children; Being compared to the foster children; Sharing positive and negative experiences with the foster children; Making choices on how to refer to the foster child; Recognizing feelings within the foster child; Planning to contact some of the foster children post-placement; Difficulties experienced in trying to reconnect with foster children post-placement; Clashing personalities between sons/daughters and foster children; Lacking knowledge or unawareness about the true behaviours of the foster child; Wanting more information about the foster children who entered the sons/daughters' homes; Deciding on when to have a foster child removed from the sons/daughters' homes; Learning how to handle crises or difficult situations while fostering; Diagnosing the behaviours of the foster children by sons/daughters; Managing/struggling with the negative behaviours of the foster children; Lacking connection with the foster child post-placement; Learning about the reasons why foster children enter CAS care; Coping strategies to deal with challenging behaviours of foster children; Ensuring safety of self and others within the home from challenges behaviours of the foster children; Understanding/empathizing with the life circumstances of the foster children; Re-connecting with foster children post-placement through Facebook; Wondering what happened to foster children post-placement; Seeking clarification about what is the 'best interest' of the foster child; Worrying about the quality of life of the foster child post-placement</td>
<td>Wanting more information about the foster children who entered the sons/daughters' homes</td>
<td>Connecting with the foster child who entered the sons/daughters' homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connecting with the foster children</td>
<td>Coping with challenges of the foster child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deciding on when to have a foster child removed from the sons/daughters' homes</td>
<td>Caring for the foster child after they leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coping with the challenges of the foster children</td>
<td>Ensuring safety of self and others within the home from challenges behaviours of the foster children;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6.2 Memo-writing, theoretical sorting, diagramming. Memo-writing, theoretical sorting, and diagramming provided an ongoing chronological documentation of the research activities and analytic processes. They also provided a critical function within data analysis. Memo-writing frequently helped to identify themes that were incomplete within the analysis process. Identification of gaps within these themes were then filled with continued sampling (Charmaz, 2006). A combination of these processes allowed for a method that analyses and re-analyzes issues within the whole study, for a specific interview, or for specific codes.

5.6.3 Trustworthiness. According to Oktay (2012), there are eight main strategies to trustworthiness and these have been included within this qualitative study.

5.6.3.1 Prolonged engagement with the participants. Prolonged engagement with participants increases the effect in reducing the threat of reactivity and respondent bias (Oktay, 2012). In this study, after participants completed the interview, they were followed up with via telephone, two to four weeks post-interview. The follow up interview allowed for the researcher and participant to discuss the interview, identify key emotions during the participant's experiences, and provided the researcher the opportunity to check-in with how the participant was feeling after the interview.

5.6.3.2. Triangulation of data. The triangulation of multiple sources of data provides a stronger argument about the quality of the data obtained within the study (Mason, 2002; Oktay, 2012). This study used a variety of sources of data, including object sharing, photographs, textual materials, and oral communication.

5.6.3.3 Peer debriefing/support. Peer debriefing/support is recommended within qualitative studies because it has a positive effect on reducing the researcher's bias (Oktay, 2012). In this study, the researcher selected Landy Anderson to be her peer debriefee because she has over 27 years of experience in child welfare as a foster parent, child protection worker, and supervisor. Her
experiences provided for an excellent peer debriefee who supported, but also challenged the researcher to self-reflect on how she may have affected the study participants during data collection, as well as during data analysis. The researcher consulted with Mrs. Anderson on a monthly basis about emerging themes and concepts from this study.

5.6.3.4 Reflexivity of the researcher. To assess whether a researcher has been reflexive, Saini (2011) asked: “has the researcher identified potential and actual biases (both as the researcher and in the research design? Did the researcher integrate the use of a reflexive journal in the data analysis and interpretation?” (Saini & Shlonsky, 2012, pp.171-172). For this study, there was the potential for researcher bias within the data analysis process due to her extensive review of the literature and personal experiences as a daughter of foster parents. She could have sought out codes and categories that had already been established within the literature or matched her experiences. To avoid this process, the researcher wrote a private journal about her views, thoughts, and biases that arose throughout the research process. Issues were also discussed with her peer debriefing/support person who provided guidance.

Additionally, this study had the potential for biases within the research design in how participants were included within the study. There were many gatekeepers that may have limited the access or awareness of this study to young adult sons/daughters, including: CAS agencies, CAS workers/supervisors, foster family associations, and foster parents. For instance, if a CAS worker did not feel comfortable that the sons/daughters on their caseload would say positive things about fostering, they may not have inform them of the study. Every effort was made to distribute the recruitment flyer from various platforms (e.g., CAS agencies, CAS workers, associations) with hopes that if one platform didn't reach the sons/daughters, then another would.

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9 For more information about Landy Anderson, please visit: [www.fosterparentsurvival.com](http://www.fosterparentsurvival.com/)
5.6.3.5 **Member-checking.** Member-checking has a positive effect in reducing reactivity, researcher bias, and respondent bias (Charmaz, 2006; Otkay, 2012). As previously mentioned within the prolonged engagement subsection of this Chapter, sons/daughters were contacted one month post-interview via telephone to assist in the verification of information and allowed participants to confirm or correct the researcher's interpretations of the emerging themes and concepts.

5.6.3.6 **Negative cases.** Negative cases address theoretical concerns and were achieved by ongoing sampling and purposeful throughout the data analysis process (Charmaz, 2006). In this study, a key theme was noted within the data collection and data analysis process. Inquiry into this area continued with all participants until one participant held a different experience. This different experience was further explored with future participants during their interview.

5.6.3.7 **Audio-taping the interviews.** The process of audio-taping the interviews increases the dependability of the data (Otkay, 2012). All interviews were audio-taped with the consent of the participants within this study. The transcripts were then provided back to participants to check for the accuracy of content.

5.6.3.8 **Audit trail.** An audit trail has a positive effect in reducing the threat of researcher bias (Mason, 2002; Otkay, 2012). The researcher maintained an audit trail of key activities within the study since the thesis proposal was approved by her Thesis Supervisory Committee in March 2013.

5.6.4 **Findings.** The next chapter discusses the findings of this doctoral research.
CHAPTER 6: Findings

6.0 Introduction

The central aim of this exploratory study is to develop a better understanding of the emotions experienced by sons/daughters throughout their fostering realities. The main research questions proposed in this study are:

- How do young adult sons/daughters (aged 18-35 years) make sense of their emotions, when looking back at different transitions within their experiences fostering for a children's aid society?

- How did sons/daughters cope with their (e)motions when they were living within the foster home?

This dissertation initially started with a concept map that combined the knowledge obtained through a scoping review (see Chapter 2), a systematic synthesis of qualitative studies (see Chapter 3), and a review of theory related to emotions, foster family life cycle, and foster family systems theory (see Chapter 4). To recap, the initial concept map suggested has been provided below:

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INITIAL CONCEPT MAP

As sons/daughters foster they will experience a continuum of emotions, relationships, and transitions. Intense emotions can signal a natural transition within the sons/daughters' own life cycle (e.g., attending post-secondary education) and/or family life cycle. During these transitions, sons/daughters may attempt to regulate their emotions or with the assistance of parents, extended family members, friends, and the like. Overlapping the sons/daughters' life cycle is their family life cycle. Family issues may arise that result in transitions to occur (e.g., retirement for a parent). The family members will attempt to regulate their emotions throughout this process (e.g., negotiating the changes in role/responsibilities during retirement). Lastly, the foster family life cycle is overlaid onto the family life cycle. Some of the foster family transitions consist of the decision to foster, the assessment/training process to become a foster family, the arrival of the foster child, the process of living as a foster family, the departure of the foster child, and the process to quit fostering. Overall, if sons/daughters are not able to adequately process their emotions to their own satisfaction throughout these different life cycles, there is a possibility that future transitions will be emotionally problematic and result in conflicts with family members and not just in transition. They could experience ongoing emotional issues that could lead to cognitive/behavioural/affective problems. Unresolved emotional conflicts and the possibility of resultant interpersonal conflicts may lead to negative emotions.

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This initial conceptual framework/concept map is modified throughout the data collection and data analysis process, as new interpretations began to emerge about the (e)motions of
sons/daughters and the impact fostering has on their well-being. This chapter shares the data collection and data analysis process from the Pilot Study and the Main Study.

6.1 Pilot study: Seeking constructive feedback on the data collection process

Throughout May and June 2013, the pilot study was conducted with two personal acquaintances of the researcher. These individuals provided constructive feedback on the data collection process. To avoid any conflicts of interest, the content of their interviews were not included within the data analysis process of the Main Study.

Two minor revisions were recommended. It was suggested that the researcher provide a list of emotion words for the participants to glance at during the interview (e.g., helps participants to think of emotions words). It was also recommended that the researcher verbally inform participants that the follow-up component of reviewing the interview transcript a few weeks later may be emotionally difficult (e.g., seeing their fostering experience written into words). These minor recommendations were made after consulting with the researcher’s Thesis Supervisory Committee. No major revisions were recommended or made to the data collection process.

6.2 Main study: Exploring the (e)motions of the young adult sons/daughters

The findings from the Main Study are provided in this subsection. There were three rounds of data analysis attempted by the researcher in order to make sense of the (e)motions of sons/daughters and how they cope with fostering. An illustration of the data analysis process (see Figure 6-1) provides transparency on how the researcher grappled with the data, and re-reviewed, re-coded, and re-defined the concepts until theoretical sufficiency was reached. The three rounds of data analysis include:

- **Data analysis – ROUND 1**: Identifying the (e)motions of sons/daughters
- **Data analysis – ROUND 2**: Identifying the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout each of the fostering transitions
- **Data analysis – ROUND 3**: Identifying how the (e)motions of sons/daughters helps to build relationships with their foster siblings and how sons/daughters cope with their fostering experiences
Fig. 6-1. Data analysis process. This figure illustrates how the researcher re-reviewed, re-coded, and re-defined the emerging data from this study.
Each round of data analysis built upon the previous one leading to the endpoint of using neuroscience concepts to support the (e)motions and experiences of sons/daughters in order to make recommendations for child welfare service delivery, research, and policy (see Chapter 7). Direct quotations from the sons/daughters are used to connect concepts from the raw data to the researcher's interpretations of the data analysis process. The quotations also provides a rich, thick descriptions directly from the participating sons/daughters.

6.2.1 Data Analysis – ROUND 1: Identification of the (e)motions of sons/daughters.

A word-by-word analysis of the transcripts and follow-up interview notes reveals many (e)motions identified by sons/daughters throughout their fostering experiences (as noted in the above box). Table 6-1 provides a brief list of some of the positive, negative, and neutral (e)motions that arise while growing up in families that foster from the perspective of sons/daughters. Initially noticed within this first review of the data was the diversity of (e)motions felt by sons/daughters, but also how similar and different fostering incidents could elicit a variety of emotional reactions. The diversity of the emotional landscape when fostering is too vast on its own. Emerging from the data is the fact that some (e)motions are associated with certain transitions within the fostering process (e.g., arrival of the foster child). At this point, it is determined by the researcher, that the data would be re-reviewed, re-coded, and re-defined by identifying the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout the fostering transitions.
**Table 6-1**
Some (e)motions identified by sons/daughters throughout their fostering experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(E)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P012&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“We finally got our first foster child... She was Caucasian and and she was a year or two older than me. I was really excited when she came. I was like, Oh! my gosh. I have someone to play with. I have someone to talk to.’ My emotions were an all time high... I was really happy when she came.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33&lt;sup&gt;P010&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“It gets frustrating when agencies don’t deem as you as an actual employee who worked. I know that at-home-mom’s suffer that same thing, like an at-home-mom who is busy cooking, cleaning, and raising her children and making sure that they are loved after school and all of that, the world is just like, ‘You are just an at-home-mom.’ Get it together! It is the same thing. I think that people think that fostering is nothing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gung ho</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P006&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I remember being really gung ho and being like let's do it!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Son, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P004&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“More often than not, you are more angry at the agency than you are at the child. Because you know that the kid is going through a rough time and this is all they know; whereas, the agency has existed longer than I have, they should know more about this than I do. So, why can't I do something so basic as we had an incident where someone threw a hammer at my mother, and she dodged it, but that was at a point in time that there was a lot of debate that you weren't allowed to restrain a child, and you know, I don't think there is anyone on the planet who would get offended if I had of taken down a kid who threw a hammer at my mother.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P008&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“We ended up going to school together. It was really fun.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P003&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“The hardest part of that was the day that [foster siblings] left.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonded</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21&lt;sup&gt;P001&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I get along very well with her. I find that she is really mature and I can have real discussions with her. We have talked about boys before. I have gone to the health unit with her when she went to get her first birth control. We have definitely bonded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P008&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“There was one girl. I am trying to remember how old I was. I was probably 10-12 years, or younger. It was her and her older sister and she was the same age as me and my sister, and we were really, really close.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P012&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Another girl came and all three of us were like this [participant crossed her fingers to indicate that they were close]. It really worked out. They were in the same age group as me.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.2 Data Analysis – ROUND 2: Identifying the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout each of the fostering transitions.

Fig. 6-2. Word cloud of code frequencies. This figure provides a graphic representation of (e)motion and fostering transition code frequencies identified within the data analysis process at this time. This word cloud, created in Dedoose, depicts codes that were repeated at least once.

The above word cloud analysis of the codes within the transcripts, memos, follow-up case notes, and researcher notes suggest that further inquiry is warranted into exploring the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout key fostering transitions: arrival of foster child, living as a fostering family, departure of foster sibling, and follow-up with foster siblings after they have left the foster home. Building upon the (e)motions initially identified, data analysis finds some patterns between emotional concepts and fostering transitions, in particular with the arrival and departure of foster siblings.
Almost immediately within the data analysis process, it became apparent that the more positive (e)motions (e.g., excitement, curiosity) tended to be associated with the arrival of the first foster child; whereas, more neutral and negative (e)motions (e.g., apprehension, shock) were associated with subsequent foster children (refer to Table 6-2).

Sons/daughters felt excitement with the arrival of the first foster child into their home. Excitement was felt because they anticipated that the arrival of the foster child meant the opportunity to participate in activities together. Daughter, aged 20 \(^{P006}\) shared, “Just like having an older sister who teaches me things, do makeup, and stuff like that. Those kind of ideas popped into my head and I was like this is going to be awesome!” Another Daughter, aged 33 \(^{P010}\) shared that “the foster child was a brother, sister, friend, another person to talk to and socialize with.” Without having any pre-service training by the child welfare agencies, or candid discussions with social workers about what fostering would truly entail, sons/daughters' initial (e)motions about fostering were predominately of excitement. However, not all sons/daughters initially felt excitement about the arrival of the first foster child. There is one Daughter, aged 24 \(^{P015}\) who shared that she was initially nervous. This emotion was attributed to her own personality of being shy. She stated:

“I was nervous. I can remember the first two. I remember being nervous. My parents fostered when I was younger up north and then we moved to Southern Ontario and we started fostering again. I remember sitting on the floor playing Lego and I was just petrified. I was really shy. The worker dropped off the children. I was really nervous until they came over and I started talking to them. After that I remember having a lot of fun. I had someone to play with.”

Additionally, a young adult son, aged 32 years \(^{P013}\) did not like the idea that his family started fostering while he was an adolescent and shared that he distrusted the foster children who entered his home. “Oh no! Now it begins. This is the point that I locked down my stuff. This is someone that I don’t know and
have no reason to trust. Trust needs to be earned.” Overall, the initial reactions of sons/daughters were a sense of excitement with the arrival of the first foster child into their homes.

For the participating sons/daughters within this study, it seems that the initial feelings of excitement when a foster child enters into their family home dissipates over time. The (e)motions associated with the arrival of a foster child slowly transition into more neutral and negative ones (e.g., apprehension, upsetting, shocking, worrying, not so welcoming, and stresses) and occasionally the emotions remained positive (e.g., curiosity, excitement).

Living as a family that fosters, like any kind of family, means that the emotional landscape has positive, negative, and neutral (e)motions. In this initial review, some of the (e)motions identified when growing up in families that foster consisted of responsibility, joy/laughter, embarrassment, not understanding/shock, and empathy; however, this is by no means a conclusive list of (e)motions and experiences expressed by the participants:

- **Responsibility:** Sometimes fostering helps to keep sons/daughters out of trouble because they have to be responsible role models. Son, aged 26\(^{P004}\) called it “going into a work mode”. One daughter, aged 33 years\(^{P007}\) shared: “You had to be responsible. You couldn’t do crazy teenager things because you were an example. You had to be there to help out with certain things... You have to be a better person. You have to be more responsible.” With additional responsibilities and work within the homes, some sons/daughters become resentful that their foster siblings did not help out around the home, even though they were making some of the messes. Daughter, aged 23\(^{P001}\) shared: “We don’t like cleaning up after them.”
### Table 6-2
Some (e)motions identified by sons/daughters when the first, second, third, fourth, and additional foster children arrive at their homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical positioning of foster child’s arrival</th>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First foster child</td>
<td>Excited-curious</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P002&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I was more excited-curious because I don’t think that my parents would expose us to anyone dangerous. So, there really was no fear.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super excited</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P003&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I was super excited. I wanted to tell all of my friends. ‘I got a new baby. I got a new baby.’ They were like, ‘Your mom wasn’t pregnant. What? You got a new baby?’ ‘Yeah! His name is this. He is this big. He is so cute.’ I just remember that every foster child that comes into our home, I consider them my brother or sister. I will right away, as soon as they walk into our doors. This is my new brother or sister. It changes all of the time. One day I may have six sisters and the next day, I might have four sisters and two brothers. I am good with that!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Son, aged 22&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Bit of excitement because generally you get to meet someone new. Are you going to get along? Is it going to be one of those, ‘Oh! This is who you are. This is just how we run things and this is just another person there? Or are you going to have a bunch of interests that are similar? Are they going to be off in their own world? ... There are all of these little things because every person is unique. Each person that you meet could present a new opportunity to learn and explore something that you never thought to do before. A lot of little things like that could add up to a lot of excitement. On the other hand there could be trepidation because if you don’t get along, you could be fighting all of the time. I guess nervous excitement is the word to go about it.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21&lt;sup&gt;P014&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“We were so excited... So, it was a Friday morning and we got a call that a mom was being induced. It would probably be an adoption case because she had previous kids removed and we were a little surprised that she wasn’t going to a foster-to-adopt home because we are not interested in adoption, but we were like, ‘Okay. We are not going to turn down a little baby. They said that Tuesday she would be ready to be picked up from the hospital and we had the whole weekend. We would have time to get stuff ready and go shopping. We kind of were hoping that we would have gotten one of those calls saying that we have a baby and we will be there in an hour, but we never gotten that surprisingly. And, so, it turned out that they needed her released from the hospital earlier, so we brought her home on Sunday. She was about 36 hours old coming to live with our family. We were so excited to just have a baby.”</td>
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### Numerical positioning of foster child's arrival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First foster child</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33 P010</td>
<td>“I remember being young. We had two kids straight away, like on our first day of fostering. For me, in my age, I was like this is exciting, and I have more kids to play and talk to and blah, blah, blah. It seemed like a good idea. I didn’t understand what all was going to happen in the long run and everything that I would experience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New and exciting</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 28 P009</td>
<td>“It is someone new and exciting and you never know how they are going to react and whatnot.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23 P011</td>
<td>“Curiosity. Being the type of person who wants to know and be in the know kind - Why is she here? Who is she? What is she all about? I am sure that we were [open to it] because we didn’t really know what was going on. I am sure we were confused too. You don’t know what will come next. It was kind of exciting too, I think. You soon learn that it wasn’t so exciting though.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second, third, fourth, and additional foster children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprehensive</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20 P006</td>
<td>“I think that I was apprehensive and very sort of aware of that time. I remember having a moment of ‘Okay, how long are you staying?’ It was kind of having that I don’t know how long she is staying, but we can do this, this, and this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upsetting</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21 P001</td>
<td>“The first couple of placements we had in our house were kind of rough because they didn’t fit as well as maybe they should have. They had behavioural issues, or they didn’t want to be in foster care, they didn’t want to be in our family, they were just really angry with the system.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shocking</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24 P002</td>
<td>“I think it was really shocking of getting the [foster children] straight from court because the pair that we had first came right from court and they had been in foster care before, so they kind of knew what was going on. They showed up and whatever. But getting the [foster child] straight from court and it was his first apprehension and he spent three days sitting in his room and being sad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not so welcoming</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23 P012</td>
<td>“There was one girl that came to the house and called my mom a b*thc, you know those foul words like hoe and housewife... But when I am around, she wouldn't say that kind of stuff. It was like she was kind of scared of me or what I would do. I went to up [foster child's] face and said you need to stop this or me and you are going to have problems... I remember after her, I started to be, not so welcoming and open to foster children. When they came to the house, I would be like, ‘Hi.’ I would introduce myself and then stay in my room. I am nice to them and not rude, but I don’t open up as much because of my past experiences of how they were disrespectful to my mom.”</td>
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Second, third, fourth, and additional foster children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stresses</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{P014}</td>
<td>“There are other stresses that come with it. Yes, you are holding a newborn baby, but there is a mother who is not. Just holding this baby, depending upon the baby, has a different story that they have already endured in the first years of their life. Even if my parents didn’t tell me anything about the case, I would still know that there was abuse and obviously there was something major that went wrong, so there are those emotions too.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrying</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24\textsuperscript{P003}</td>
<td>“I think it was more worriedness. We had a baby that came to us one time with a broken femur. She was in a half body cast... It is the anticipation of how things are going to be. What is she going to look like in this body cast? We only get this information over the phone. We wait for them to arrive and wait to see what the baby is going to be like. You never know. I think that was the biggest wow when she showed up and she had the braces on her legs. She was only six months old.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24\textsuperscript{P005}</td>
<td>“I was no longer nervous once they started coming in more regularly. I would go up to them and say, ‘Hello my name is [participant]. What is your name? Let’s go do this’ and then I would play with them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 28\textsuperscript{P009}</td>
<td>“The excitement disappears after awhile. It becomes more of a role and responsibility. You have to do it to the best of your ability and that is what you are supposed to do. It became more of what you were supposed to do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{P007}</td>
<td>“I guess that you get used to it and you don’t think much about it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23\textsuperscript{P011}</td>
<td>“Curiosity, definitely for all of them. You want to know what their story is. People read about those types of things, right? You don’t want to put them in a window and look at them and be like, ’Oh! Look what this person went through,’ but it is kind of what it is when people are coming into your home. You want to know why? What did they do in their past home? Why didn’t it work out there? Let’s see if we can make it work out here. I think that you are opened minded at the beginning.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24\textsuperscript{P003}</td>
<td>“We all get so excited and tell everyone. We will post it on Facebook. ’Can’t wait to get our new baby today!’ And people are like, ’What are you talking about?’ But for people who know us, the are like, ’That is so exciting!’ So it is always a super exciting experience for us, not necessarily the toddlers that we have had because they like to attack the babies, like the [foster brother] that we have right now, he is always after the [foster sister].”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• **Joy/ Laughter:** Sometimes sons/daughters talk about learning to laugh about some of the incidents that occur within their homes. For instance, Son, aged 22\(^{P005}\) was amused by the fact that his foster sibling ate his homework. He shared:

> “I found really amusing was, ‘Oh, I have to hand this [project at school], but it was so terribly done’ that he takes it rips it and starts eating it. I had to explain to my teacher, ‘No my dog didn't eat my homework, my foster brother did’ and I showed him the half eaten piece of paper. ‘Really? Who was that?’ I told him the name and he was like, ‘Oh, him. Okay. Yeah. I could see that happening.’ You get some really interesting stories out of it. Sometimes when you are experiencing it, you just 'face palm' or start thinking what are you going to do next?”

• **Embarrassment:** Sometimes it is not as easy to laugh about the foster siblings’ behaviours. Daughter, aged 24\(^{P015}\) shared that the children’s behaviours are sometimes so inappropriate, that her family can not go out for dinner. It would just be too embarrassing. She shared:

> “We never went out to dinner as a giant family because the kids didn't have manners. As they lived in our home, they were able to learn manners. They would come in and I don't want to say feral children, but no sense of respect. No sense of rules, nothing. Wild, essentially. Then you would have to work with them. We always wanted to go out and eat as kids and we couldn't because it was embarrassing for us sometimes.”

• **Not understanding/ Shock:** Sometimes it is difficult to fathom how and why children are maltreated. Despite being exposed to foster siblings who experience or are exposed to abuse and/or neglect, sons/daughters sometimes are shocked by what happens in their communities. Daughter, aged 24\(^{P002}\) shared: “[Foster siblings] would take their lunch boxes to school and hold them all day because they actually had food in them... That shouldn't be happening in a first world country.”

• **Empathy:** Putting themselves in the places of their foster siblings, sons/daughters talk about having empathy for them. Many sons/daughters share that they want their foster siblings to feel included and understood. Daughter, aged 24\(^{P003}\) shared: “We want the child to feel as much as part of the family, as we are. We want to welcome them the best that we can.” Another young adult daughter, aged 23\(^{P011}\) disclosed: “I feel bad because how uncomfortable is it for them to come into a family and try and be comfortable.” Many sons/daughters shared that they are able to recognize the emotional needs of their foster siblings. For instance, Daughter, aged 20\(^{P006}\) indicated that she can keep track of others’ emotions:

> “It is definitely difficult to keep track of other people's emotions and how things are playing out and who is talking to who. It gets really chaotic. It is like reality TV. You never know where you are at sometimes, it is just being very attentive to how people's days are going because that influences people as well. If they are having a bad day, they don't want to talk to anybody, even if you are best friends. You just have to kind of pay attention to how people are acting and feeling over a certain amount of time. I definitely think that I got that from fostering.”
Another participant, Son 26\textsuperscript{p004}, not only recognized the emotions of others, but also was able to exaggerate his feelings to assist the other person. “If I know someone who is going to face the same trauma, I know that I can handle it but I don’t if they can. I may even exaggerate my feelings to be more empathetic to bring us together.”

Overall, living as family that fosters provides for a wealth of (e)motions and experiences for sons/daughters who participated within this study. From this brief snapshot of the data, it became apparent to this researcher that most of the (e)motions of sons/daughters shared while fostering are directed towards their foster siblings. This will be explored more during the next round of data analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(e)motions with departure of foster siblings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brutal, burn, can’t wait, devastated, disappointed, fine, giving up, grieving, happy, hard, heartbroken, nice, normal, not having an opinion, not permanent, not sure, not understanding, pride, raw, relief, sad, upset, worry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Repeatedly, sons/daughters reported that their foster siblings would leave their homes, after a couple of days, months, or even years, without them having the opportunity to say goodbye. Table 6-3 provides examples of the (e)motions identified by sons/daughters, followed by their experiences.

This lack of closure for many sons/daughters becomes an area they struggled with while fostering. The struggle is predominately affiliated with the perceived normalcy of the frequent arrival and departures of foster siblings from their family units. For instance, Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{p007} described it as “having a friend over for the weekend, but the friend leaves at the end of the weekend... you know that it is not a permanent thing.” Another Daughter, aged 26\textsuperscript{p008} described a foster sibling leaving as “she was more like an older sister who just moved out... It was so normal.” In non-fostering families, the frequent and constant arrival and departures of individuals into the family unit is not normal. Further data analysis is required by the researcher to better understand the (e)motions associated with placement endings.
### Table 6-3
Some (e)motions felt by sons/daughters when their foster siblings leave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devastated</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20[^p006]</td>
<td>“She came for one night. She was about 14. She would have been the first girl and we played together all night. We were running around and acting crazy and then the next night we ended up going to the mall. That is one of the first things that my mom does, if the girls need anything we go to the mall. We went shopping together. Again, it was like that picture perfect moment. She was like an older sister picking out outfits. Then the next day, I came home from school and I was like, ‘Where is she?’ My mom is like, ‘She is not here. She has gone home to her grandmother’s house.’ ‘Why? Doesn’t she like me? What happened?’ That was the first experience that not everyone stays forever. I was just devastated.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heartbroken</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24[^p015]</td>
<td>“We had a little boy. It was a severe abuse case. He was abused really bad... We were really struggling with his behaviours. He needed more of a treatment home. It took a lot for my parents to put him in a treatment home; but, when he left, we expected to remain in contact with him because that was one of the children that my parents were thinking of adopting... He was really close to us. They decided to put him in a treatment home saying that he will come back when the treatment was done. That didn’t happen. We were heartbroken because me and him were pretty close. I remember being heartbroken and angry. Really, really angry because we were given this false promise and we rarely saw him afterwards and it was kind of awful what happened. I remember we pushed to have visits with him, just for a weekend that he would come to our house, and he changed completely. He became more violent. His vocabulary, I know that he was in a treatment home for older boys, so you can imagine some of the things that came out. Just his manners had changed completely and it was just heartbreaking and he was, ‘I miss you. I miss you. I miss you.’ And what do you say to a 10 year old who says that he misses you and you want him to live with you, but he can’t?... I just remember that I would cry a lot.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26[^p008]</td>
<td>“I was probably 10-12 years, or younger. There was her and her older sister and she was the same age as me, and we were really, really close and then suddenly she was gone. That really sucked... We had her for quite awhile. I don’t remember how long, probably a year or so. Then she went back home and we never ever heard from her again... That was frustrating. I sort of thought that in my head that I would see her again. We would see her around, but then you don’t. That was probably one of the first times that I remember being upset when someone left.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brutal</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26[^p008]</td>
<td>“That was brutal being torn away from your little sister. I think I was more attached than I thought. I mean, you move on, I guess. I still think about her once in awhile.”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weird</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P003&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“It is weird because after a couple of months when [foster children] are gone, not that I don't think about them, but it gets to a point that you don’t. It gets to a point that you are not thinking about him on a regular basis like he is at my mom’s house and I can go over and see him. I think that makes it easier, I don't want to say easier, but it definitely helps the transition when they have been gone for a little while and you don't think of them as much.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21&lt;sup&gt;P001&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“It was not fun. It was the same as equating it with a really good friend who moved away and you knew that they had to move away, but you still wanted to spend time with them kind of thing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20&lt;sup&gt;P006&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I came home from school. The room was empty. My mom was walking around. I felt like she was hiding, or something like that. 'Where is she?' Well, she is not here anymore. She went home. I kind of had this moment, 'What do you mean? Are you punking me?' No she is actually gone. I remember crying. It was like, 'Why did she leave?' My mom had to sit me down and explain again, even though we had that conversation before. There is always that expectation verses reality moment that they aren't staying forever.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P008&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I would have been 14-15 and she was just little, three years and we loved her so much... She got adopted and the adopted family was like you can come and visit and we were really excited and like, Ah sweet! Finally someone is getting adopted and get to stay in contact. As soon as they adopted her... they cut all contact. We were like, 'Nooo. It was very sad.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't feel</td>
<td>Son, aged 32&lt;sup&gt;P013&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I didn’t feel. It was the way that the process worked.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P002&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I really didn’t feel that I should of had an opinion because I was living at university.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Son, aged 22&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“You might wonder a bit, 'You didn’t like it here that much? You want to switch out a bit? That is disappointing because I didn't get to know you particularly well.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grieving</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21&lt;sup&gt;P014&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Most of our babies have left unexpectedly... The one that was with us when I was in Africa... before I came home, my mom called me and said that [foster sibling] was leaving. So then, I was dealing with emotions of leaving Africa and saying goodbye, but in the back of my head I was crying because our baby was leaving our home and I never got to meet her and people wouldn’t understand grieving a baby that you ever met kind of thing. I was still involved and I wanted to meet her and I never got that and it was difficult.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sons/daughters sometimes have contact with their foster siblings after they have left their homes. The contact is predominately through social media, such as Facebook. Communication through the social media site is minimal, but it allows contact, if desired by sons/daughters and foster siblings. For instance, Daughter, aged 23$^{P011}$ shared that social media allows her to stay in contact with one of her foster siblings. “She must have left our house in grade nine and Facebook started in Grade 11 and that is how we keep in touch... She is the only one foster child that I have ever kept in touch with.” Ongoing contact via social media can have some strengths and struggles associated with it. Daughter, aged 26$^{P008}$ shared examples of how social media makes her feel awkward, terrified, weird, and connected to her foster siblings whom once lived in her home:

“One family that we had that we didn’t get along with, they all added me to Facebook at one point, and I did have them on and then I was like this is really, really awkward and I think that I deleted them. Two of them were into drugs and I was like, ‘I’m terrified that you are going to rob my house, so I am deleting you because that is too sketchy.’ The other one was just weird, so I deleted her as well. But most of the time, they add me. I have another girl that we had when I was about 10-12 years. I still have her on my Facebook. We don’t necessarily talk, but she comments on my pictures and likes them or whatever. It doesn’t really bother me for the most part if they add me on Facebook.”

Social media also allows sons/daughters to informally check-in on how their foster siblings post-placement. Daughter, aged 24$^{P015}$ shared that a foster sibling who left her home was in an accident; however, because of Facebook, the daughter was able to make sure her foster sister was alright. “We had one girl who was in a really bad accident. She was a teenager. So we didn’t know what happened, but Facebook really helped because I have her on Facebook and I can talk to her and just see how she is doing.” Other forms of ongoing contact post-placement, include: telephone calling, emailing, and in-person activities (e.g., hanging out). For instance, Daughter, aged 23$^{P012}$ shared that she continues to have monthly contact with her foster sibling: “One of the foster kids that has been around the longest and
afterwards when she left, she would still come over once a month and sleepover with me and we would have a girls night.”

The post placement contact between sons/daughters and their foster siblings suggests a desire by sons/daughters to have the opportunity to stay connected with certain foster siblings. Further data analysis is needed to explore the (e)motions of sons/daughters who are able to stay connected with their foster siblings after they have left their home, compared to the (e)motions of sons/daughters when no post-placement contact is available.

6.2.3 Data Analysis - ROUND 3: Identifying how the (e)motions of sons/daughters helps to build relationships with their foster siblings and how sons/daughters cope with their fostering experiences. Data from the transcripts, memos, follow-up case notes, researcher notes, photographs, and captions reveals patterns between (e)motions of sons/daughters, development of relationships between sons/daughters and their foster siblings, as well as the impacts on sons/daughters as young adults.

As already discovered within the data analysis process (see Round 2), the participating sons/daughters who have experienced multiple foster siblings enter and exit their home tend to be more apprehensive about developing new relationships, with new foster children. The sons/daughters frequently suggested, as Daughter, aged 20 did, “You can get attached, but only up until a certain point.” With this state of mind, it may have been assumed that no relationship would be possible. However, sons/daughters are still able to establish positive connections with their foster siblings that can still lead to a rewarding relationship. There are four factors that contribute to overcoming this state of mind:
• **Sons/daughters spend quality time with their foster siblings → (e)motions of connection:** No patterns emerged about the specific types of activities that occur between sons/daughters and their foster siblings; however, the emphasis is on spending quality time together. Some of the activities mentioned included: going to school, listening to music, playing video-games, playing board games, watching television, cooking/baking, building forts, and talking. Sons/daughters who had infant foster siblings, quality time was spent providing care (e.g., feedings, changing diapers, playtime) or engaging in child-friendly activities with their foster siblings.

• **Foster siblings and sons/daughters have similar interests → (e)motions of connection:** Occasionally, sons/daughters shared that their foster siblings and them held similar interests in movies, music, hobbies, food, and the alike. The participating sons/daughters suggest that when they are closer in age to their foster siblings, it is easier to connect because they may have similar interests.

• **Both sons/daughters and foster siblings include each other in their family units → (e)motions of heart warmed, cute, like a sister, pride, and empathy:** Inclusion of each other in their family units frequently results in sons/daughters feeling connected to their foster siblings. Not all foster siblings reached the point of ‘family member’. This is reserved for a special connection between sons/daughters and their foster siblings.

• **Sons/daughters express empathy towards their foster siblings → (e)motions of empathy, openness, understanding, hope, and learning:** Many of the sons/daughters talk about learning to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences between them and their foster siblings. In order to achieve this, communication ways need to be open between the two individuals. Through talking, sons/daughters learn to compromise on some of the activities that they did with their foster siblings. For instance, instead of listening to music that neither could agree upon, sons/daughters and foster siblings find another activity that they could agree upon.

These factors did not necessarily occur in isolation from one another. In many situations, sons/daughters overcome their state of mind to ‘not get too close’ to their foster siblings, by engaging in many of the above factors. Refer to Table 6-4 for an overview of direct quotations of sons/daughters’ (e)motions and experiences that lead to a relationship with their foster siblings. Additionally, Figure 6-3, Figure 6-4, Figure 6-5, Figure 6-6, Figure 6-7, Figure 6-8, Figure 6-9, Figure 6-10, Figure 6-11, and Figure 6-12 provides a visual illustration of how sons/daughters develop relationships with their foster siblings.
## Table 6-4
Examples of when sons/daughters develop more engaged relationships with their foster siblings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>(E)motions</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster siblings and sons/daughters spend time</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Son, aged 22&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Some relationships are a bit close, but it really depends upon how much time you spend with them. If they are doing their own thing the entire time, you don’t really start to get to know them particularly well. You don’t start talking with them or develop any particular bonds with them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sons/daughters have similar interests</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33</td>
<td>See Figure 6-3: Deck of UNO cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sons/daughters have similar interests</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P003&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“We have a little boy right now and I am so attached to him. He is going up for adoption and I wish that I could adopt him myself. He is the cutest kid ever. He was just diagnosed with FAS. He should be going up for adoption soon. He is going to be the one that I have the hardest time with, I think, because he is the one I call my mom and ask, ‘Can he sleep over? I want to take him for the weekend.’ He is my baby. He is mine. He is going up for adoption, but I am begging my mom to find someone that is going to want to keep in contact with us.” She elaborated further by stating that: “I think that it is all about connection because some kids that you meet, you have this connection.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sons/daughters have similar interests</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P002&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I say that I connected with them the most because we ended up going to Florida.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sons/daughters have similar interests</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P012&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I think that we liked the same things. We are interested in the same topics and hobbies. We like the same kind of music, like R&amp;B, reggae. [Foster child] was Caucasian, but I felt like she hung out more African American people, so I guess that is why we clicked... And [foster child] was mixed. So her dad was African American and her mom was Caucasian, so we had the same interest in food and Black culture and background... I just remember that we had so much in common, video games, watching TV together, helping my mom make food.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
**Actions** | **(E)motions** | **Participant ID** | **Experiences**
--- | --- | --- | ---
Foster siblings include sons/daughters as part of their family unit | Heart warmed | Daughter, aged 21 | See Figure 6-4: Homemade Easter cards from foster sister
 | Cute | Daughter, aged 24 | See Figure 6-5: Homemade Christmas cards from foster siblings
Sons/daughters include foster siblings as part of their family unit | Like a sister | Daughter, aged 23<sup>0052</sup> | “Foster sister] is like my little sister... When she was at the house, she was the best foster kid we ever had cause she stayed with us all the way to Independence and after independence she lived with my grandparents.”
 | | Daughter, aged 20<sup>0006</sup> | “We had her since she was four days old until she was three. I was in high school and I use to come home and spend my whole night with her. We would make videos, take pictures, make movies, or dance in my room. That was a big chunk of my high school was having her and seeing her as my sister.”
 | Pride | Daughter, aged 28 | See Figure 6-6: Present
 | Empathy | Daughter, aged 24 | See Figure 6-7: Doll
 | | Son, aged 22 | See Figure 6-8: Costco membership

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>(E)motions</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons/daughters need to be understanding</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21</td>
<td>See Figure 6-9: Diaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>Son, aged 26</td>
<td>See Figure 6-10: Modern cell phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Son, aged 26*</td>
<td>“Two-perfectly wonderful people could live under the same roof and despite each other because there is a lack of compatibility and in that situation, you can walk away and never see that person again. But, if they live with you, there is no option. You have to learn to understand and appreciate each others differences. Teenage boys commonly love rap music. Still to this day, I can’t stand rap music. I actually prefer classical... So how do you get together when there is a barrier? In your teenage years, music is a major component of who you are and the type of life style. So, we have to learn, ‘Okay. What can we do? Well, we both seem to like similar movies or at least I can tolerate some of the movies or video-games or board games, or we go outside and build a tree fort.””</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33</td>
<td>See Figure 6-11: Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 28</td>
<td>See Figure 6-12: The word 'learn'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I brought a deck of UNO cards. We played UNO often, many games. This one in particular is a Toy Story deck of UNO and there is a special card... The alien card is when you have to pick up extra cards. It is not in the regular UNO game... Anyways, when you get this one, all of the kids will start laughing no matter what age they were. UNO was good for them. They learned to count, but they loved that card. So, it was fun. We liked to play a lot of games with the children... But I think that this would be the game that we played the most.”

~ Young adult daughter, 33 years old

**Object:** Deck of UNO cards  
**Emotions identified:** “An icebreaker, a way to connect with most kids; regardless of language or background, must enjoy playing games... this ‘Toy Story’ version of Uno is a great example”  
**When did this experience happen:** “Someone just played ‘The Aliens card’”  
**Written comments about object:** “N/A”  
**Years fostered:** 21  
**Age of foster siblings:** 0-15 years  
**Estimated # of foster siblings:** 50

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**Fig. 6-3.** Object sharing – Deck of UNO cards.
“They are cards from the girl who is staying with us right now... They are really important to me because [foster sibling] had taken the time to make cards for all members of her family who she no longer lives with... I was really touched when she sent me these because to me it meant that she was including me as part of her family. I tacked them up on my wall at home... I definitely got a little heart warmed when she sent them to me”

~ Young adult daughter, 21 years old

**Object:** Homemade Easter cards from foster sister
**Emotions identified:** “Inclusion, happiness, acceptance, love...”
**When did this experience happen:** “Within the past year”
**Written comments about object:** “It made me feel like she had decided to finally be part of our family.”
**Years fostered:** 13
**Age of foster siblings:** 6-16 years
**Estimated # of foster siblings:** 3

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**Fig. 6-4.** Object sharing – Homemade Easter cards from foster sister.
"[Foster siblings] made us all popcorn that they put gloves on, so it looked like hats. Like a bag of microwave popcorn and then they were wrapped in these [pointed to cards], and [foster child] wrote on it, “I like you because you are my sister. Love [foster child].” I just thought that this was really cute that they sent it to us. ”

~ Young adult daughter, 24 years old

**Object:** Homemade Christmas cards from foster siblings  
**Emotions identified:** “Hope that the children will end up having a good life”  
**When did this experience happen:** “Eight years in Christmas”  
**Written comments about object:** “ Says: I like you because your my sister”  
**Years fostered:** 9 years  
**Age of foster siblings:** 4-16 years  
**Estimated # of foster siblings:** 7

**Fig. 6-5.** Object sharing – Homemade Christmas cards from foster siblings.
“Every year my mom buys Christmas presents for past foster children who she keeps contact with. I guess it is a sense of pride for me because she thinks of others and she has those relationships and it is cool for her, and I am proud of her for thinking of others at that time... For Christmas we will open all of our presents and there will still be presents under the tree that she has to distribute throughout the holidays. So that is kind of cool.”

~ Young adult daughter, 28 years old

Object: Present
Emotions identified: "Pride"
When did this experience happen: "Every Christmas"
Written comments about object: "Proud of my mom for continuing to think of special foster children to her (not always me) and to include them during major family holidays even though they have left our home."
Years fostered: 10
Age of foster siblings: 12-18 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 9

Fig. 6-6. Object sharing – Present.
“The reason I think I picked [this object] is because we call our family the 'rainbow family' because a lot of the kids that we get are from different ethnicities... We never want to feel like a child is excluded, we want the child to feel as much as part of the family as we are, we want to welcome them the best that we can and especially with the Black kids that we get, we don't want them to feel, like here is a white doll because that is all that there is, kind of thing. We want them to feel like this world is for them too... We want to make sure that they feel like this is their home and their colour doesn't matter."

~ Young adult daughter, 24 years old

Object: Doll
Emotions identified: “Happiness that we can make them feel welcome. Hopeful that they could learn to trust our family.”
When did this experience happen: “After we took in two small black girls, and we wanted them to feel apart of our family and not singled out because of their colour.”
Written comments about object: “It was great to see them warm up to the family after such a traumatizing experience.”

Years fostered: 17
Age of foster siblings: 0-4 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 100

Fig. 6-7. Object sharing – Doll.
“Lots of people in the same house and groceries get expensive. You find out how to shop on the cheap end and Costco is one of those places where you go quite often. They tend to have most things in bulk and they tend to be cheap… You go through a lot of groceries with sometimes up to 12 people in the same house.”

~ Young adult son, 22 years old

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**Object:** Costco membership  
**Emotions identified:** “Compassion/ empathy”  
**When did this experience happen:** “Whole span of it.”  
**Written comments about object:** “Get to be part of something larger.”  
**Years fostered:** 21  
**Age of foster siblings:** 0-16 years  
**Estimated # of foster siblings:** 23

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**Fig. 6-8.** Object sharing – Costco membership.
“So my item is this diaper and this diaper has been in my purse from when I was [recently] home and I had taken our first foster child who came back for a weekend to visit, as she frequently does, to the Early Years Centre and so I just stuck a diaper in my purse and I forgot about it being in there. So when I moved back to school and I was unpacking, I was going through my purse and I was like, ‘oh I still have a Huggies diaper and no one here needs it.’ So the more I thought about it I realized that it applies to fostering because fostering is just like this diaper, it requires us to be stretchy and flexible a lot of the time... A lot of people don’t want to change diapers and a lot of people hear fostering and think no way. In the end, it is a lot better if you just change the diaper. And in the end, for us it has been rewarding and we are glad that we’ve decided to foster and there is a lot of change in fostering that has happened, just like there is a lot of diaper changes that we have done too. Sometimes it stinks, but then you change and things hopefully turn out better.”

~ Young adult daughter, 21 years old

Object: Diaper
Emotions identified: “Attachment, love, frustration, flexibility”
When did this experience happen: “All along”
Written comments about object: N/A
Years fostered: 3
Age of foster siblings: 0-2 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 6

Fig. 6-9. Object sharing – Diaper.
“When we started fostering this may have been several different devices, but there has a series of meanings that can be tied to this. One being that it is primary purpose is communication and the home will not survive if there is no communication. This is true of what I understand of a regular family, it is probably true ten fold over with a foster family because there is so much that needs to be discussed.”

~ Young adult son, 26 years old

Object: Modern cell phone

Emotions identified: “Calm, bring memory of when it was hectic. Reference to how far you have come.”

When did this experience happen: “Developing communication and using something to its fullest extent is a gradual theme that develops over the entire fostering experience and you learn to better appreciate it and understand over time.”

Written comments about object: “Surprised at how difficult it is to identify own emotions, despite being so trained in identifying others.”

Years fostered: 27
Age of foster siblings: 0-16 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 15

Fig. 6-10. Object sharing – Modern cell phone.
“My picture sums up everything with fostering for me. My whole existence is Christ-centered and the openness and the love and forgiven, joy, and the peace that He has given me is why my whole family began fostering. Growing up, all of the different experiences that I had and all the difference kids that came through positive, negative, the hurt, the happiness and all that kind of stuff was because of Christ and what He has done for us... what we do that for other people, you know, giving that kindness, especially because we did teens because no one wants the difficulty, the behaviours, the drugs, the truancy, the criminal side of it and there is still hope for them, there is hope for everybody, that is sort of the center of everything.”

— Young adult daughter, 33 years old

Object: Cross
Emotions identified: N/A
When did this experience happen: N/A
Written comments about object: N/A
Years fostered: 27
Age of foster siblings: 12-18 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 289

Fig. 6-11. Object sharing – Cross.
“So I brought in are some foam letters. They spell out 'learn' because I see that fostering is a learning process, but as you can see the A is really a V turned upside down because sometimes things happen when you are fostering that you can’t control or things get damaged or whatnot and so you learn to deal with it and you learn to be creative with how to fix situations. Sometimes an A is really an upside down V. So, that is how I perceive fostering to be”

~ Young adult daughter, 28 years old

Object: The word 'learn'
Emotions identified: “Pride in being able to learn something new with each child who comes into our home.”
When did this experience happen: “It is fostering.”
Written comments about object: N/A
Years fostered: 15
Age of foster siblings: 0-13 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 35

Fig. 6-12. Object sharing – The word 'learn'. 
(e)motions of sons/daughters
less engaged relationships with their foster siblings
amused, anger, annoying, apathy, bored, calm, different, embarrassed, fear, frustration, hurt, jaded, jealous, lack of closeness, lack of trust, nervousness, not happy, not well-informed, shocking, terrified, upset, work-mode

In addition to sons/daughters being somewhat apprehensive about developing new relationships with foster children because of the frequent breaks in past relationships, sons/daughters are also trying to develop relationships with children, as Daughter, aged 26 suggested, “those who are the hardest to love.”

Relationships are reciprocal and both sons/daughters and foster siblings can impact it. Data analysis indicates that there are six themes that may hinder the development of a relationship between sons/daughters and foster siblings:

- Sons/daughters are temporarily or permanently moved out of the foster home → (e)motions of difficult: Sons/daughters struggle with making connections with their foster siblings when they have temporarily or permanently moved out of the foster home. Much of the communication about the fostering incidents are between the foster mother and the sons/daughters, and rarely with their foster siblings themselves.

- Sons/daughters and foster siblings do not have similar interests → (e)motions of shock and lack of connection: Some sons/daughters struggle with developing a relationships with their foster siblings who do not have things in common and different values. If they are not able to compromise and/or find some common activities, it is unlike a relationship will develop.

- Foster siblings display violent and/or aggressive behaviours to members of the foster family → (e)motions of crying, upset, fear, dislike, and normal: Many sons/daughters struggle in developing relationships with foster siblings who display violent and/or aggressive behaviours towards their parents, their siblings, other foster siblings in the home, extended family members (e.g., grandparents), and themselves. Exposure to these aggressive actions frequently leads to the notion that sons/daughters need to protect their family unit by talking and even in some extremes, threatening the aggressive foster sibling.

- Foster siblings steal from the sons/daughters’ family → (e)motions of normal, frustrating, crying, and hurt: Many sons/daughters struggle in developing relationships with foster siblings who steal from them and/or their family. If stealing occurs within the foster home, it feels as a betrayal of trust and a violation against sons/daughters' person and their possessions. Typically, as a preventive method, many sons/daughters live in families that lock up valuables, medications, firearms, and bedrooms.
• **Foster siblings are disrespectful to sons/daughters' parents and home → (e)motions of angry, defensive, and normal:** Many sons/daughters struggle with developing relationships with foster siblings who are disrespectful to their parents and home. Disrespect is perceived as yelling, screaming, throwing objects, destruction of property, making threats or false allegations about foster family members, not abiding by the household rules, and so on. Regular exposure to the foster siblings disrespectful behaviours leads to the notion that it is a normal part of growing up in a foster family, except with infant foster siblings.

• **Sons/daughters' behaviours/ characteristics inhibit a connection from forming → (e)motions of weird, trouble-maker, hard, and setting boundaries:** A small number of participating sons/daughters admitted that their own behaviours could impact whether or not a relationship develops with their foster siblings. A few of them talk about how during their adolescent years, they were a bit of a handful themselves.

A combination of these themes may have contributed to the lack of relationship development between sons/daughters and some of their foster siblings. Refer to Table 6-5 for an overview of direct quotations of sons/daughters (e)motions and experiences that resulted in a less engaged relationship with their foster siblings. Additionally, Figure 6-13, Figure 6-14, Figure 6-15, Figure 6-16, and Figure 6-17 provide a visual illustration of this issue. If these themes occur, however, it did not necessarily mean that no relationship would ever be forged. Instead, it adds strain on any potential relationship with foster siblings and over time, the previously mentioned factors may mitigate these issues (i.e., sons/daughters spending quality time with their foster siblings, foster siblings and sons/daughter had similar interests, both sons/daughters and foster siblings included each other in their family units, and sons/daughters expressed empathy towards their foster siblings).
Table 6-5
Examples of when sons/daughters develop less engaged relationships with their foster siblings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>(E)motions</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons/daughters temporarily or permanently moved out of the foster home</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P003&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I think that I find that when I was in school and not living at home, I totally didn't feel as connected to the kid that was at our home at that time because I was never there. I never spent time there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons/daughters and foster siblings do not have similar interests</td>
<td>Shock</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P002&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“She had a bunch of partying... When she left, the CAS asked up to pack up all of her stuff for her. There was Vodka coolers and I was 16 and very against alcohol at that point, so it was very shocking to me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 28&lt;sup&gt;P009&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“We had this one kid who was always screaming. All of the time. It didn't work. They just screamed all of the time. They were quite destructive. They had odd behaviours. You couldn't connect with them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster siblings display violent and/or aggressive behaviours to members of the foster family</td>
<td>Crying, Upset</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P012&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I remember one night when I was home. This was when I was in high school... so every night the one child [foster child] would kept her radio on and my mom tells her that you put it on ‘sleep’ because my mom wakes up early for her job. So, every night, she would have the radio on and my mom would get so upset. One night my mom had to climb up and step on this chair to reach [the radio and unplug it] because it was up on the top bunk bed, so [foster child] seeing my mom coming up and she pushed my mom and my mom fell down and cracked her head and started bleeding. My mom started screaming for me to help her. I woke up and seen my mother bleeding on the floor, so I started crying like crazy, called the ambulance and took her to the [emergency hospital]. She ended up getting stitches and she was fine. But that made me upset. That has gone too far. 'You could have died if I hadn't waken up in time. I got the ambulance to come and stop the bleeding from your head.' After that I have begged for her to stop.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P011&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“The last girl she was actually sending threatening text messages to my mom. If she had done anything to my mom, I would have stepped in for sure... That was my fear because these girls don’t care.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dislike</td>
<td>Son, aged 32&lt;sup&gt;P013&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I didn't like how [foster child] was quick to raise his voice and maybe concerned for the safety for my mom when she had to give him instructions.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>(E)motions</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster siblings display violent and/or aggressive behaviours to members of the foster family</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Son, aged 26⁰⁰⁴</td>
<td>“I think that it just taught me to be calm during high stress situations because at this point I am 4, 5, 6 years old, so all of these teenage girls are much bigger than I am, stronger than I am and they know of all of these things that make no sense to me. So they might make weird threats or gestures that have no meaning to me and are suppose to be horrifically offensive or dangerous to me. It is having that ability to see it and not know what it means or simply not care. The middle finger that you have never seen before and then you see it. ’Well, okay, you are pointing to the sky or what is on the ceiling?’ That apathy helps carry over because now you know how to handle the situations. Maybe you learn what it means after the fact, but you have been through so many of them that you are already use to it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster siblings stealing from the sons/daughters’ family</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33⁰⁰⁷</td>
<td>“You start to think that it is normal. You talk to your friends and they wouldn’t have a lock box in their closet and you are like, ’Oh okay!’ And different things. We always had to lock up medication. There was a lock box for that and you couldn’t have access to that. You don’t have that in your home, ’Oh okay.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23⁰⁰¹</td>
<td>“[Sister and her] both have locks on our doors because of the stealing has gone on in the past... It is frustrating... We didn’t actually start putting locks on our doors until this last girl. In the past, the very first girl had stolen stuff, she didn’t take it anywhere and we found it, whatever. The rest of the girls, I don’t think that there were any issues, that we know of. I know that one girl brought friends in and my iPod was on the stairs and that got stolen, but it could have been the friends. That is about it for that, but when stuff started going missing, when this girl was around and we saw her with the clothing on that is when the locks went on the doors.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>(E)motions</td>
<td>Participant ID</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster siblings stealing from the sons/daughters’ family</td>
<td>Crying,</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23</td>
<td>“[Foster child] stole my play station and I was crying tears until I couldn't cry anymore. And, fortunately, the fostering agency that my mom is with replaced it because the girl kept saying that, 'I took your play station and you will get it back when your mom gives me the money’. Basically, the girl had issues with drugs and taking drugs. So, my mom was told [by the social workers] not to give her money because she would spend it on drugs. So, if she wanted something, my mom had to go with her to get it, but the girl didn't understand that and she stole stuff and tried to hold it for ransom. That really hurt me because I didn't do anything and my stuff was getting stolen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster siblings are disrespectful to sons/daughters’ parents and home</td>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23</td>
<td>“My mom has less boundaries so that they can learn that responsibility, but the kitchen ends up being messy because they don't do their dishes or they walk around in their shoes and we get angry about it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons/daughters' behaviours/characteristics inhibited a connection from forming</td>
<td>Weird</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23</td>
<td>“I find it weird that over eight or nine people who have been in our house, how come I haven't connected with one of them? How come I do not have a strong relationship with one?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24</td>
<td>“It was a personality clash. Her interests were very, very different. She had very different goals in life. I was also at the age where I was a smart ass and I corrected her on things and I am sure that she didn't appreciate that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 6-13. Object sharing – Lock.

“I brought a lock because it is represented a state of life that I had to exist in. I had to secure my things. A normal place to put a lock was on the outside of a house to keep the intruders out. But when you are voluntarily letting the outside in, then you need to secure your property individually.”

~ Young adult son, 32 years old

Object: Lock
Emotions identified: “Annoyed and frustrated”
When did this experience happen: “Right from the start.”
Written comments about object: N/A
Years fostered: 15
Age of foster siblings: 12-16 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 16
```
“Today I decided to draw the door of my house... The door represents about fostering with the amount of kids that have been in and out of the home... Before we started fostering, we lived in an apartment and I had to make the decision to share my room with someone first. So the money that my mom made off of fostering helped us to get our first house. So this door represents the positive that came of fostering for my mom to be able to afford her own house... There was a lot of conflict that come with the kids that come. They have done damage to the door. They have tired to break into the house. They brought people into the house, sneaking into the house. So, the door, you know, has a story for each foster kid.”

~ Young adult daughter, 23 years old
```

**Object:** Door

**Emotions identified:** "Joy, excitement because of moving into a new house, and the excitement that came when a new child arrived. Anger because some children decided to disrespect that door and do bad things in the house."

**When did this experience happen:** "This door came together on the first five years of fostering. The door represents the new home my mom purchased. Also various experiences with foster children coming in and out."

**Written comments about object:** N/A

**Years fostered:** 10

**Age of foster siblings:** 13-18 years

**Estimated # of foster siblings:** 20

---

**Fig. 6-14.** Object sharing – Door.
“So I decided to bring my university degree. I didn't know what I wanted to do after I was about to leave my house. I had no idea, so I took a year off and went to Africa and figured stuff out, volunteered at an orphanage, and then I came back and decided to go into social work. Partly because of my experiences in fostering and partly my experiences in overseas... [While fostering] I saw a lot of... mental health; a lot of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; behavioural difficulties because of neglect and a lot of sexual abuse. I saw many different types of children... I had seen a lot of arguments with my mom and you become defensive when other children are fighting with your parents.”

~ Young adult daughter, 24 years old

Object: University degree
Emotions identified: "Passionate. Confident"
When did this experience happen: "Later on I realized that I enjoyed my experience enough to continue working in the child welfare field."
Written comments about object: N/A
Years fostered: 20
Age of foster siblings: 0-16 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 30-60

Fig. 6-15. Object sharing – University degree.
"I just have a picture that I found online. It says: 'those who are the hardest to love need it the most' with a girl and some balloons and a boy with balloons and she is handing him one of hers. I thought that it is so true because we have had so many kids and they are not so easy to love, but definitely need it the most. I didn't realize it at that time. As you get older you start to realize. I wish I had of known it at that time."

~ Young adult daughter, 26 years old

---

Object: Picture
Emotions identified: “Guilty that I did not treat some kids this way. Hurt that some kids have had such a hard life.”
When did this experience happen: “Unfortunately, this did not happen for me until after I moved out of the home. But I wish someone had told me this in that time.”
Written comments about object: N/A
Years fostered: 30
Age of foster siblings: 0-18 years
Estimated # of foster siblings: 50

Fig. 6-16. Object sharing – Picture.
"I brought my key for my bedroom at my house. I think for me having that it was a way to set boundaries. Boundaries are important when you are living with six teenage girls. Sometimes you get really close to one girl and other times it is that you need your space. Having my own room and having my own space is really important to me. I think that may be why I have a bachelor apartment now. I just need space. I just need to be able to relax and unwind when things get hectic."

~ Young adult daughter, 20 years old

**Object:** Key

**Emotions identified:** “This object makes me feel like I have a sense of agency, a sense of self/individuality. It represents my own space”

**When did this experience happen:** “This was when we first started fostering. I realized every early on that I had a lock on my door. This became a large part of my differentiation to the girls..”

**Written comments about object:** “This object has come to represent a large part of my character and my tolerance. I feel like having my own space is very important for me, my mental health, and my ability to have a place to reevaluate my emotions, and how I’m feeling.”

**Years fostered:** 13

**Age of foster siblings:** 0-18 years

**Estimated # of foster siblings:** 60

*Fig. 6-17. Object sharing – Key.*
Data analysis reveals that the (e)motions experienced by sons/daughters slightly differed if they knew where their foster siblings were going to be placed post-placement, compared to when they did not know. In situations where sons/daughters have developed a strong relationship with their foster sibling and knew where they are going after they left their homes (e.g., returned to parents, staying with kin, adopted), they are more likely to feel more positive (e)motions about their foster siblings departures. When sons/daughters did not know where their foster siblings next placement was going to be or with whom, the mystery of the post-placement location leads some sons/daughters imaging the worst case scenarios for their foster siblings. Sons/daughters often express anxiousness, concern, fear, and worry that their foster sibling may not be in a safe place, experience additional abuse/ neglect by alleged perpetrator(s), lack access to resources to meet their basic needs (e.g., access to nutritious foods, clothing), and may experience multiple placement moves. When sons/daughters have not established a strong relationship with their foster sibling, regardless of whether or not they knew where that foster sibling is going to be placed, there is an overall sense of relief that their foster sibling left their home. Refer to Table 6-6 for examples of sons/daughters' (e)motions when their foster siblings leave their home and know or do not know where they are going to end up.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship established between sons/daughters and their foster siblings</th>
<th>Sons/daughter knew where their foster sibling was going after living in their home (e.g., returning back to kin, adopted)</th>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Son, aged 22</td>
<td>“It really depends upon the circumstances on how they leave – going off to get a job, their own place, you can’t but help feel proud that despite everything that is going on there, they gotten through all of their issues that they may or may not have had, they are making something of themselves. In other cases, alright you are going off, these are your plans, ok, you might want to reconsider a couple of those, but hey, if you can make them work, you can make them work. Other times, they get to go back to their family, great your parents have figured it all out, you get to be back with them again. It really depends upon the circumstances. If their reason for leaving is because they are going off to further their education, or a job, or going on, so on and so forth, it could be really happy for them, this is their next step in their life, this is what they should be doing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21</td>
<td>I think that it is better for my parents because they love having [foster sister] in the house, but they are definitely getting at the age where it would be nice to not have children in their house anymore. So, it is nice that they have set up this transition plan to kind of ease her out and she is still part of the family, but they will eventually get the house to themselves.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23</td>
<td>“[Foster sister] was with us for a substantial amount of time, probably a year and a half or so. She was very quirky and fun and younger than us. Even though we disagreed and I sometimes had to share my mom with her, we probably had a good relationship... Although when she left, it was kind of a happy thing because she was going home. It was kind of a success store. She is still at home and she still sees us and comes over for Christmas. My mom still gets her Christmas presents and that was six or seven years ago.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship established between sons/daughters and their foster siblings</td>
<td>Sons/daughter knew where their foster sibling was going after living in their home (e.g., returning back to kin, adopted)</td>
<td>(e)motion</td>
<td>Participant ID</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;0015&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“One instance, an Aboriginal baby was taken out of the home and flown back to the reserve and there was no real how was she doing and there was no follow up and that was really hard. It was hard to see how my mom was emotionally affected by it, but also for us kids because we didn't know where these kids ended up.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Burn</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33&lt;sup&gt;0010&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I clearly remember the first female we had. I can still picture her. I can still hear her laugh. I still know her favourite toy. I know that all. I probably felt the biggest burn when she left... In my mind I didn't understand that I was going to have this person for awhile and then they would be gone, but gone forever... That took a bit to get accustomed to.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Can't wait</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20&lt;sup&gt;0011&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Depending upon who it is. Sometimes you think, 'You know what? That is fine. I didn't have a super relationship with you... I don't see myself keeping in contact with you.' Or like, there have been times like you need to leave ASAP. I can't wait until you leave.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Relief</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;0011&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“A relief... I never established a tight relationship with any of them where I would actually call them a sister or anything like that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Oh</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;0002&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><em>I was just like, 'Oh'. She was a strange case.”</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher conducted further data analysis into the (e)motions of sons/daughters who are able to stay connected with their foster siblings after they have left their home, compared to the (e)motions of sons/daughters when no post-placement contact is available (refer to Table 6-7). Analysis reveals that post-placement contact with former foster siblings results in positive (e)motions for sons/daughters. As previously mentioned (refer back to ROUND 2), ongoing contact post-placement tends to be in the form of telephone calling, emailing, texting, social media, and even in-person activities (e.g., sleepovers). When sons/daughters do not have contact with their former foster siblings, they continue to think about some of them, wonder and worry about them, and even want to reconnect.

In many circumstances, post-placement contact is heavily guarded by gatekeepers. These gatekeepers could be the social workers, birth/kin, and/or adoptive parents. The message that sons/daughters want to reconnect with their former foster siblings may never be delivered. Sometimes social workers indicate that the foster child would not benefit from contact with former sons/daughters and therefore failed to pass along the information. Participating sons/daughters are not clear on why this would be a service delivery decision, especially if the relationships between sons/daughters and foster siblings were positive. Additionally, some participating sons/daughters indicate that social workers cited confidentiality rules and regulations that prohibit them from passing along such information. Gatekeepers, such as birth/kin members or adoptive parents, may not wish to have continued contact with the “foster family” as it would remind them that the foster sibling was involved in child welfare. This may have been a negative experience of these families that they wish to move on from, or ignore. Some sons/daughters suggested that adoptive parents may just want to establish their own family unit and therefore separate
themselves completely from the foster family. While the choices of the birth/kin and adoptive parents are respected, some of the participating sons/daughters struggled with that decision.

Table 6-7
Exploring the (e)motions of sons/daughters with or without ongoing contact with their foster siblings post-placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing contact</th>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24(^{002})</td>
<td>“I know that that boy is in a group home and he is now medicated. So, we suspect that there was something actually wrong with him, but he did the best when he was in our house. He just phoned CAS one day and told them to take him out of there. He said that I can't live there anymore... He ended up going through three or four foster homes in quick succession... My parents told us. I am pretty sure that CAS gives my parents updates about the children.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24(^{003})</td>
<td>“It is nice to see where she is now. We get photos and calls and all that kind of stuff from the kids that we keep in contact with. I think it is nice to see that we contributed to that. It makes me feel so good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends</td>
<td>Wanting connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24(^{003})</td>
<td>“It depends upon the family. Some families will say, 'Yes, we want to keep the contact.' Other families will say, 'No. We would rather live our happy little lives.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Wanting connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24(^{015})</td>
<td>“We tried connecting with him. My mom wrote letters and left them with the CAS at the time that we were fostering with to put on his file, so if one day he would know. I believe that he may have gotten adopted, I don't know. There was no follow up. We tried finding him on Facebook but we couldn't find him, mainly because we don't know his new last name, if he was adopted. We tried, but there was nothing. We were hoping that one day that he will remember because he remembers our last name and that maybe he will find us.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Wanting connection</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21(^{001})</td>
<td>“I just want to see how he is doing and to make sure that he is okay.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER: CHAPTER 6

Impact of fostering
on the (e)motions and relationships of young adult sons/daughters with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRIENDS</th>
<th>ROMANTIC PARTNERS</th>
<th>MOTHERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>caution, easily drop attachments, eventually experience separation, lack closeness, lack contact, lacking long-term relationships, loss, no permanency, no urgency to reconnect</td>
<td>fear, hindered attachment, lack of trust, never wanted closeness, worrying</td>
<td>amazing, awesome, best-friend, close, engaged, stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis finds that the intense positive and negative (e)motions experienced by sons/daughters while growing up in foster care often results in struggles with connecting to their adult friends and romantic partners (refer to Table 6-8), while developing stronger relationships with their mothers.

Sons/daughters use caution in developing relationships with friends. There is always a lingering feeling that their friend will eventually, and most likely, suddenly leave them, similar to what happened with their foster siblings. There is a feeling that friendships always have an expiry date attached to them – a day, a week, a year, a few years. As a result of these friend schemata, sons/daughters tend to struggle in developing friendships:

- Daughter, aged 33 shared: “I would never allow [friends] close enough. I would never ever share anything. I kept everything very internal, but growing up and like the best way to describe me as a teenager was that I was a drifter. I hung out with everybody and I was everybody's friend. I was the misfits friend. I was the cool kids' friend... I kind of drifted. I felt very isolated. I felt like I wouldn't trust at all”

- Daughter, aged 28 shared: “What I have noticed is that I have never been really good at saying goodbye to people... all of a sudden people move or go to college or whatever, then it is difficult for me to say goodbye. I don't really stay in contact with friends either. I don't have that best girlfriend.”

- Daughter, aged 24 shared: “I think the secret is that I moved eight times as a kid. You kind of view [foster children] as friends, and you know friends go away sometimes because you move or they move or whatever, so I have always found it easy to drop attachments and move on. That sounds really callous.”
• Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{p007} shared: “Other than getting married and having a child, I haven't felt anything permanently.”

• Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{p014} shared: “You don't know how long people are going to be in your life for, especially with all of our kids leaving suddenly. People sometimes say that I couldn't do that. I couldn't say goodbye, but I just want to say that you have your own kids and something could happen to your own kid and something could happen to anybody. You have no idea. You wouldn't say that you aren't going to get married because you could die. Loss is in every relationship in life and reality is that we don't know when we are going to lose anybody in life. I mean you don't say that you aren't going to take a chance. I look at how much we would have missed out on if we had of just said, 'No!'”

In regards to relationships with romantic partners, many of the sons/daughters struggles are self-imposed. For instance, participating sons/daughters talk about their own worry that the relationship will be temporary, fear that their partner will suddenly leave, and a lack of trust with their partner. In order to cope with these intense (e)motions, some sons/daughters find kind and loving partners who take their time to show sons/daughters that relationships can be permanent, stable, and filled with trust.

Strong relationship ties are forged between sons/daughters who have temporarily or permanently moved out of the fostering home and their mothers. Mothers are perceived as one of the few permanent and stable relationships sons/daughters have in their lives growing up in foster care and since moving out of the home:

• Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{p007} shared: “There are not a lot of people that you have known for a really long time, other than your family, which is probably why I am really close to them because they are the only people I have known my whole life.”

• Daughter, aged 20\textsuperscript{p006} shared: “She has always been my best friend. I think that it might have been just more because we were fostering. She checks in with me... She always has this extra awareness of me. I think that it is also because she is a foster parent and she is always in the house. There are some parents who are gone for most of the day and you don't have that kind of interaction... My mom is very engaged.”

• Daughter, aged 23\textsuperscript{p012} shared: “I feel that [fostering] has brought us closer.”

• Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{p010} shared: “That is it. That is what we have.”

The stability of these mother-child relationships plays a critical role in providing emotional support to sons/daughters. Many sons/daughters shared that they continue to have frequent contact with their mothers through telephoning, texting, and emailing:
• Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{P014} shared: “I am a few hours away, so I will talk to my mom several times a day. I am pretty in the loop about what is happening."

• Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{P081} shared: “I’m one of those cool kids that like to hangout with their parents. My relationship with my parents is amazing. My friends come over and they want my parents because my parents are so awesome.”

• Daughter, aged 20\textsuperscript{P006} shared: “I still call my mom everyday. She will call me. We will send pictures to each other. I feel like we are very close, like I could tell her anything.”

• Daughter, aged 23\textsuperscript{P012} shared: “We are a lot closer. I talk to her everyday. If I don’t talk to her, I call her and say, ‘Why she hasn't talked to me?’ She laughs.”

• Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{P010} shared: “With growing up and stuff, I struggled with wanting to be friends and have friends and things like that. Like I said, I never ever really did. I always stayed connected with my family. We are very, very connected. My mom and my sister are on the phone daily.”

The primary reason believed for these impacts on sons/daughters is attributed to nature of the foster care system. It is a temporary, transitional placement and a foster sibling’s departure from the home is frequently unpredictable and sudden. With few opportunities to say goodbye to foster siblings and minimal ongoing contact post-placement, it causes (e)motional turmoil for some sons/daughters. While these impacts arise for some sons/daughters, not all participating sons/daughters expressed difficulties as young adults in connecting with friends and romantic partners. Daughter, aged 26\textsuperscript{P008} shared, “I have always been good at getting close to people. That was never a problem.” Other participants alluded to the fact that there could be other confounding variables that impact their ability to connect with others as young adults (e.g., their own personality); but, it was suggested that fostering still plays a large role in it.
Table 6-8
Impacts of fostering on young adult sons/daughters’ relationships with friends and romantic partners, and how they cope with it

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>How they cope with it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Son, aged 22&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“As you grow up there are always people that will show up in your life and spend some time with and at some point or another you will go your separate ways. Sometimes it may be longer. Sometimes it may be shorter, but it is always going to happen, whether this is because you are moving apart or because they are going in different paths in your life, or because you are 60 years old and they are dying or you are dying first. It is going to happen eventually.”</td>
<td>“The sooner that you can start to understand where they are going and how you can keep in contact with them, the sooner you can start figuring out how to go forward because if you always dwell on the fact that people are coming and going, you will never figure out how to take the next step to keep in contact in with people... It is as simple as talking to someone or a friend or your parents about it.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33&lt;sup&gt;P007&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I don’t form a lot of close attachments with people... It is not really a conscious thing.”</td>
<td>“The attachment thing, you know that you are only going to be there for a certain amount of time and they are too.”</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P008&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I think that I am not as attached to people as other people... I have an aunt that she has a friend from when she was way little and they still keep in contact. They are like best friends, and I think a lot of people that I know have grown up with friends and stayed close with and I don’t have that. People leave and I am like, ‘Okay.’ It doesn’t bother me... I have never really thought of that being weird until someone brought it up to me... I have had people coming and going all of my life, so isn’t that normal? Apparently not.”</td>
<td>“I honestly think that we were so used to having people come and go. I can’t think of any other reason. I am pretty social-going person. I have always had friends. That definitely is not a problem. I guess what I have linked it to was fostering. Not that I think that it is a bad thing necessarily, but I guess I just don’t care to keep those connections, which sounds really bad. I am used to it.”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 33&lt;sup&gt;P010&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“When it came to going out to clubs with girlfriends and things like that, I was aware. I was cautious. People may have thought that I was crazy.”</td>
<td>“[Education] taught me about vicarious trauma. You have lived that. That is exactly what has affected you. You just gotten so much that you have no option, but to be this way.”</td>
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### Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>How they cope with it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends</strong></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20(^{006})</td>
<td>“We were going to the same school together and now, I see pictures on Facebook and I will comment on them or like them, but never that urgency that we must reconnect and get together. It is not realistic sometimes. It doesn’t mean that I don’t miss that person. Sometimes it is just too much to keep in contact with everyone... I don’t feel bad about it... I think it is a natural thing... I think it depends on who the person is. My past foster sisters that I call my sisters, those are the people that I say, ‘Let’s hangout.’”</td>
<td>“Never that urgency to meet up, but kind of that checking in. I think that is one differentiate that I can make. There is that level of urgency to meet up with someone and stay in touch and then it may fade. It doesn’t really matter the type of relationship it is, whether we are best friends or good friends.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romantic partners</strong></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21(^{001})</td>
<td>“[Fostering] might have slightly hindered my attachment to people. Just getting into relationships, especially romantic relationships, but feeling it won’t be permanently. Like we love you, but you are leaving in two years kind of thing. It is always that thought in the back of your mind.”</td>
<td>“When that thought comes up to counteract it and it isn’t like it when a child was placed in your house. This person is choosing to come into your life. This person is choosing to stay in your life. They are not going to leave because of bureaucratic issues. This is a different situation, keep reminding yourself that this is a different situation and that starts to help. But definitely a process.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 24(^{015})</td>
<td>“It took awhile, a year, to say, ‘Look this has really affected me and this will always affect me.’ He was like, ‘Well, I am not going to leave you.’ He is really corny. He was like, ‘You have got to find that one person and then you know.’ He was the only person that I was ever really serious with because of fostering, I never wanted to be with anyone. I never wanted that.”</td>
<td>“[Husband] showed me that there are benefits to being with someone.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 33(^{010})</td>
<td>“I have been married for 12 year. I would still say in my marriage that there is a lot... With my husband it has an ongoing [trust] process and journey. Probably, the first time that I ever told him how much I weighed I was 29. That was years after we have been married and I have had what three of his kids by then.”</td>
<td>“In actual fact, it is a me issue. I do trust him with all of my heart, but there is still something there... I haven’t been able to hang onto relationships. I haven’t been able to have any sense of belonging for myself outside of my immediate family unit, other than my husband.”</td>
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</table>
Data analysis identifies four main coping mechanisms that participating sons/daughters used to deal with their (e)motions related to growing up in families that foster. Using one or a combination of these coping mechanisms, sons/daughters are able to mitigate some of the negative (e)motions related to fostering.

*Sons/daughters engage in activities that help them cope with their (e)motions.* With many of the participating sons/daughters having ten or more years of fostering experience, they have been exposed to a number of fostering incidents and learned various coping techniques. Many of these techniques are preventive strategies. For instance, Son, aged 22\textsuperscript{P005} shares that he is able to remain calm throughout various violent outbursts of his foster siblings, predominately by keeping out of the “danger zone.” He describes an incident where he was able to remain calm:

“Sometimes I would be on the computer and let’s say six feet away around the corner plates are being thrown and smashed against the wall. I would just be continuing as if it wasn’t happening because I have just been so jaded to a lot of things like that happening, that I just keep calm and continue doing what I am doing because I know that I am out of the danger zone because there is a wall in-between us.”

Sons/daughters' crisis management skills are often parallel to their parents' skills. Many sons/daughters share that they frequently are exposed to how their parents handle the crisis and they utilize those techniques in other situations. A non-fostering incident, but without previous experiences while fostering, Daughter, aged 20\textsuperscript{P006} would not have been able to handle her roommate's suicide attempt as effectively:
“There was one [foster] girl, in particular who was suicidal and this knife that everyone in the houses uses. It is small like that [participant held up her fingers about six inches apart]. It is to cut fruit and stuff like that. It was the go-to knife. It disappeared from the cabinet and everyone was like, 'what is going on? Why isn't it there? Who steals a knife?' Low and behold we ended up finding it in this girl’s room upstairs. My mom was very calm. I remember that she was very calm. You know what, we are going to take some stuff out of your room. She put a call in and they got her an extra person, a one to one worker and they went through all of her stuff and anything sharp they ended up taking it out. Then she ended up doing a counseling thing. For me, that was a big moment. Oh my God, this girl is trying to kill herself. I just remember my first year of university, my roommate was also suicidal and she was trying to cut herself. She knocked on my door. She was bleeding down her leg, and I kind of went into mom mode. 'Do you want to come in and sit down? Do you want to tell me what happened?' And then even though I am literally shaking and stuff like that, I reflected back to when my mom was super, super calm. For me, I was shaking inside and absolutely terrified for her, for me. My mom was totally cool about it. You know what? It is because she was able to deescalate her. That is exactly what was going on with my roommate and she told me that she broke up with her girl friend and she wasn't feeling the best... Just reflecting on an experience like that I think was a moment that was very climatic for me.”

Another coping mechanism is to develop constant feelings of mistrust towards their foster siblings. An incident where Daughter, aged 33, was exposed to her foster siblings spitting in the family food. As a result, she does not eat any food from her foster siblings:

“I remember being like 12 or 13 and my mom would be like, 'Yeah, you can BBQ the burgers,' and the [foster] kids would... spit on it and stuff like that and they would actually sit and watch and let the other kids eat their spit... So now I don't share stuff.”

Overall, sons/daughters are creative and flexible in the developing personalized coping skills to maintain the equilibrium of their (e)motions while fostering.

**Supportive mothers who assist to regulate sons/daughters (e)motions.** In order to cope with (e)motions that arise while fostering, sons/daughters almost exclusively rely on their mothers for emotional support. Mothers are perceived as close, stable, informative, and understand individuals who listens to sons/daughters. Mothers do a few key activities that support sons/daughters to regulate their (e)motions. Some of the activities shared by the sons/daughters include:
• **Holding regular family meetings:** Mothers arrange formal and informal family meetings to 'check-in' and see how sons/daughters are coping with the fostering process.

• **Accepting sons/daughters (e)motions:** Mothers accept the (e)motions of sons/daughters; however, this did not mean that sons/daughters get what they want.

• **Setting time aside for sons/daughters:** Mothers who set a few minutes aside for sons/daughters contribute to them feeling important to their mothers.

• **Listening and talking to sons/daughters about their (e)motions:** Mothers who listen and talk with their sons/daughters make them feel like they are important, included, and heard.

• **Having a sense of closeness with their sons/daughters:** Mothers who take the time to engage with their sons/daughters often results in sons/daughters feeling a sense of closeness with them.

These activities demonstrate to sons/daughters that their mothers care and love them, even with all of the distractions that occur within a foster home (*refer* to Table 6-8).

**Supportive fathers, non-foster siblings, grandparents, neighbours, school teachers who listen.**

Data analysis reveals that sons/daughters also seek the support from their father, non-foster siblings, grandparents, neighbours, and school teachers. These individuals provide support by listening to sons/daughters about fostering and non-fostering related issues. What follows are excerpts from sons/daughters experiences with these individuals:

• **Fathers**
  ◦ Daughter, aged 21\(^{P001}\) shared, “My dad was great where if I ever needed a break, he would take me away.”

  ◦ Daughter, aged 24\(^{P002}\) shared, “I talk to my dad, but he just bought a farm and he is always talking about his farm and the animals. I was 16 when I got foster kids and they always treated me like an adult.”

  ◦ Daughter, aged 24\(^{P003}\) shared, “I am close with my dad. I wish that I could say that I was close with my dad as my mom. I sort of am, but in a different way. I will call my mom to share ridiculous stuff with or text her all of the time. That is not something that I do with my dad, but when we are around and I will talk about anything in front of my dad with. There is nothing that is uncomfortable talking about in front of him; however, she is my go-to person if I need advice, or if I need to do something, or if I need help or something.”

  ◦ Daughter, aged 33\(^{P007}\) shared, “My dad, we would see a movie or something, so we always had time we needed to talk about things that we could.”
• **Non-foster siblings**
  - Daughter, aged 23\(^{P011}\) shared, “I stick up for my sister all of the time, like when it comes to crappy friends.”
  - Daughter, aged 26\(^{P008}\) shared, “[My sister and I are] best friends forever. We talk about everything. My aunt would be baffled because we would go over there and we would be like yip, yip, yip, and she was like, ‘you guys are with each other 24/7. What could you possibly have to talk about?’ We talked about everything. That was awesome because you always had somebody there. That was perfect, so I guess that she was my go to person.”
  - Daughter, aged 20\(^{P006}\), shared, “I feel like I could talk to her about that with her about how I was feeling about the other girls.”

• **Grandparents**
  - Daughter, aged 23\(^{P012}\) shared, “I talked to my grandmother. My grandmother is one the same wave that we realize that it does help with the bills, like my mom has a really good connection with some of the foster parents and her doing fostering has really opened doors for her.”

• **Neighbours**
  - Daughter, aged 24\(^{P015}\) shared, “We had this weird thing when we were neighbours. Our neighbours gave us candy, maybe that was it, but we would go over and we would talked. They were older women giving us candy, so it might be bribery, they were always there too.”

• **School teachers**
  - Daughter, aged 24\(^{P015}\) shared, “I also became really close to a teacher. He was a world issues teacher. I still talk to him this day and tell him what is going on. He was also curious what it was like to living in the house.”

**Social workers have minimal impact on helping sons/daughters cope with their (e)motions.** Data analysis finds that social workers have not done well in engaging, connecting, and including the participating sons/daughters within the fostering process (refer to Table 6-9). The main reason for the poor connection is the minimal, irregular, and sporadic amount of time social workers spend with sons/daughters. Contact tends to be brief and infrequent (e.g., annually). When contact does occur, sons/daughters feel that it is superficial, but polite. Social workers rarely engage sons/daughters about their opinions, thoughts, and/or (e)motions regarding their foster siblings and/or their fostering experiences. Additionally, when social workers treat sons/daughters' parents as incompetent, not equals, and constantly perceive them as wrong, sons/daughters further distanced themselves from the social workers. The frequent turnover of social workers (e.g., maternity leave, retirement, terminating
employment) is also a major challenge for sons/daughters in developing a relationship with these professionals. These reasons signal to sons/daughters that they are excluded from the fostering situation, despite the fact that they are living in the foster home and exposed to the fostering incidents. Feelings of exclusion are closely connected to sons/daughters indicating that the social workers do not care about their well-being. Consequently, sons/daughters are less comfortable talking to the social workers about their (e)motions. Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{007} shared, “I felt that the she was a nice lady, but I don’t know if I felt close enough to her to tell her sometime a little more confidential... Situations happened I spoke with my parents first, I don’t remember a situation that I would have contacted the worker.”

When social workers spend quality time with sons/daughters, engage with them, seek their perspectives about fostering, and respect their parents, there is a greater likelihood of a relationship being established. Typically, the participating sons/daughters are only able to recall one social worker, if at all, that they developed a connection with while fostering. This social worker tends to be someone that sons/daughters have known for a lengthy period of time. The participating sons/daughters shared that they connected well with their first social worker because they appeared to be concerned about them in a sincere way that was also reliable, mature, and consistent, compared to other social workers.

6.3 Finding answers

The findings of this doctoral research resulted in having to modify the initial concept map initially proposed about sons/daughters’ (e)motions, relationships, and transitions that occur while growing up in families that foster. The fifteen participating sons/daughters feel a continuum of (e)motions throughout their fostering realities. From awkward to connected, happy to not happy, pride to protective, the (e)motions identified suggest many positive and negative ones. These (e)motions can sometimes be so intense that sons/daughters can feel them in their bodies. For instance, Daughter, aged 23\textsuperscript{011} shared, “I feel it in my chest. Whatever anger feels like. I am sure that emotions feel different for different people.” Overall, fostering is an emotional experience for sons/daughters.
Table 6-9
Examples of how sons/daughters' mothers help to regulate their (e)motions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold regular family meetings</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33 P007</td>
<td>“We always made sure that we had regular family meetings... just to sort of see how things were going and make sure everyone was comfortable and whatnot.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of sons/daughters (e)motions</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33 P007</td>
<td>“I didn't always agree with [my parents] answers, but I always felt able to discuss things with them.”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 28 P009</td>
<td>“I could always talk to my parents.”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 21 P001</td>
<td>“I mean it throws me off a little bit sometimes because I am concentrating on building my own life and school and work, and just get pulled back into the drama that is happening at home can throw me off sometimes. Just like I don't want to deal with this right now. I know that it is an issue, it is just not an immediate issue for me. But is nice to be included that my parents are still, “No, you are a part of this family and we want your opinion too and your help it situations.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Son, aged 26 P004</td>
<td>“You are your mother's children or your father’s children and you are always top in their mind. There is no escaping that. If you are doing your homework and won't mind having one more explanation on how this theorem works. If there is time, they might help you. However, more often than not, there is another foster child who might fail their history course if they don't pass this next test, so they are the ones that are going to get the help. You transitioning from a 78% to 82% is nice, but is not as critical as whether or not someone else passes or fails. There is a lot more children in the house that you are going to be having that dynamic with. Troubles in school is very, very common with foster children.”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 20 P006</td>
<td>“Sometimes I am stressed about school. I did very bad on a test and I'm in the moment and I am very, very focused on school. 'Oh my God! This teacher hates me. Mom you need to call the school.' She is like, 'You need to calm down.' There are times that I do get frustrated with her. 'You need to stop and listen to me. It is about me right now.' I think that I need to be snapped into reality. You know what, the grade is still going to be there tomorrow morning. It is fine that she doesn’t pay attention to me right away, but we can talk while she is with the child or doing the dishes. I can sit there and tell her about school. It doesn’t have to be us sitting in a therapy room telling her about everything.”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting time aside for sons/daughters</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“My mom had to specifically make time to spend with all of us individually. So even if it was grocery shopping, she would take us out for a milkshake afterwards. It was kind of like, ‘I am still here and I care about you, but we are able to care for other children and this is a way to give back to them.’ So I was like, ‘Okay.’”</td>
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<td>Son, aged 22&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I like to think that I have a pretty great relationship with [mother]. I think that a lot of it becomes standard that a lot of the things that I know how to do now is because of stuff that she would taught me going along.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20&lt;sup&gt;P006&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“She is always there. Even though it is not in that moment, ‘Mom I need you to wash this or sew this because I am going to freak out.’ ’No, I can do that.’ I can have that independence. I learned that she is not always going to be there. I might not be able to come to her and say can you do this right now. You can’t always because she has six other kids in the house and I am old enough. One of the first things was doing my laundry. All of the girls did their own laundry. My mom doesn’t do it. When I turned 10-11, my mom showed me how do work the laundry machine and dryer. She said that this is your thing to do. Just taking on small roles to help her out. I am capable. There is nothing wrong with my hands. I can wash my own clothes.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening and talking to sons/daughters</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20&lt;sup&gt;P006&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Me and my mom have a really good relationship which is very odd because I think that most teenage girls hate their moms, for a really long time, whether or not it evens out I don’t know, but I have always had a good relationship with my mom.”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 21&lt;sup&gt;P001&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Whenever I would get upset I would go and sit and talk with my mom and she would talk me through it. ‘I know that it is upsetting. Imagine if you were in this situation’ and she would kind of helped me through it.”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 33&lt;sup&gt;P010&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Honestly, as a child my mom walked me through everything... She took a lot of time processing with me and communicating and teaching, and that is probably what got me through.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a sense of closeness with their sons/daughters</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26&lt;sup&gt;P008&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“My mom and I have always been really close. Not sure that it changed [with fostering].”</td>
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<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P003&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Me and my mom are so close. She is like my best-friend. I think that a lot of it is because look up to her so much. I am sorry if I start tearing up. She has raised me to be the person that I am and I couldn’t imagine it being any different. I couldn’t imagine wanting it to be anything different.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P012&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I know that my mom loves me too much. My mom has my pictures all over the wall. If I am not there, the kids know who I am and what I look like. My mom talks about me with all the kids. I am actually happy that my mom has someone with her and that she is not alone.”</td>
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### Table 6-10
Examples of how social workers help and do not help sons/daughters cope with their (e)motions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Actions of social worker</th>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>First social worker</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21 P001</td>
<td>“We had one case worker for a few years when we first started out and she was always concerned with how I was fitting into the process, which not to many other case workers really were concerned about that or were around long enough to ask about that process.”</td>
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<td>Supported</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20 P006</td>
<td>“[Social worker] was one of the first people that I met from CAS... I know this person and if I need something I can call her. She is not our family worker anymore.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Son, aged 26 P004</td>
<td>“One that was helping our family from day one. So this social worker saw me as mature, saw what I became and knew enough to know that I knew what I was doing.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 26 P008</td>
<td>“We had the same family worker for years and then she retired. So we got close with her, not that I have her on Facebook. We don’t have contact with her anymore. We knew her. She was someone we could talk to if we needed to, but I think that she was the only one that we really, really loved.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Son, aged 22 P005</td>
<td>“Considering that I had been in the home and they had been fostering since I was two years old, it was a regular part of my life as I knew.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24 P003</td>
<td>The main social workers that we work with through [children’s aid society]... She has helped me with finding jobs and all sorts of stuff. We have built a relationship with her. We have had many social workers that we get excited that they are in charge of our kid and we are like, ‘Yeah! We get to see them.’ There have been many social workers that we get attached to and we love them... I think that one of the things is that we get so many kids that come through our house. There are a lot of different social workers that we work with on a regular basis because they work with the same kids that we are getting. I think that would be one of the reasons because we know that we are probably going to work with them again because they have more kids for us.”</td>
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### Helpful Actions of Social Worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Actions of Social Worker</th>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Annual visits</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 33&lt;sup&gt;P007&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“[Social worker] was more of a family friend who comes in. You would visit with them. You would have a nice conversation with them and it would be fine... It was a family friend that they would visit with every year. She was a nice lady who visited for a couple of hours.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Depends</td>
<td>Son, aged 22&lt;sup&gt;P005&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“It depends upon the worker. I mean, sometimes it is the yearly, 'Okay, how are things going? How do you feel about it? Have you ever felt uncomfortable?' The general questions to make sure that all of the kids feel comfortable and to make sure that nothing is up.”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Awkward</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P015&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“They would come in and you would have to do this giant survey. They would sit down with you and it would be awkward. I never really had a good relationship with them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Brief or no contact with sons/daughters</td>
<td>Not clicking</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 20&lt;sup&gt;P006&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>I think time, definitely. I think that it has helped on how long I know them. That [social workers] are there all of the time, but I think again it is whether or not that you click because they don't want to be there and I just want to do this meeting and get out of here. And there are others who are like, 'How was school?' They sit down and actually want to know about you, and still have the meeting. I think that makes a difference.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P002&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“We never really had much contact with the workers. I always expected that someone would come and view our house like you see on TV shows. I know that it was inconvenient that we had to lock our cabinet where we kept all of our medications on the top shelf. We had to install locks for all medications, so we did that. My dad has a couple of guns because we live on a farm and you have to shoot attacking animals, so those had to be in a gun cabinet. So, I always expected someone to come and say, 'Are the guns in the gun cabinet?' But it ever happened.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 23&lt;sup&gt;P011&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I don’t think that I have never sat down one-on-one with a worker.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Actions of social worker</th>
<th>(e)motion</th>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Social workers acted like they do not care about sons/daughters</td>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 21 P001</td>
<td>“[Social workers] were just not concerned with my opinions at all. It may have been the age that I was at... I found that most of them just wanted to talk to my parents to get the paperwork done and signed and all of the legal stuff. Or they wanted to talk to the kid because they were transitioning into our house, but it was never like, 'And, how are you doing? What are your concerns with this process?' I don't know if that is a hole in the system or that they thought that I was transitioning well into the system and I didn't need to talk to them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daughter, aged 28 P009</td>
<td>“I don't think they really cared about us. We were kind of like a ghost in the house... We kind of disappeared or vanished when they came and they didn't really have time for us... Their whole purpose is to focus on the foster child or the foster parents and not really us, there is no need to ask us.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Social workers who disrespected the parents of sons/daughters</td>
<td>Distrust, Frustration</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 28 P009</td>
<td>“There was always this distance. I think a lot of it had to do with how they were treating my parents. There was a lot of distrust. There was this 'I am God' quality about the workers that they knew so much about us. That kind of frustrated me because my parents were the ones who were up with the child 24/7, or were calling the police, or going to all of these appointments and yet they treated my parents like they were incompetent and like they didn't know anything.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dislike</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24 P015</td>
<td>“We didn't like her because of her attitude. She was an older worker. It was kind of like, 'You were always wrong.' Speaking to my mom, I still get some of that from workers, where she is always wrong. She was telling me that her workers were like, 'You don't know.' She had a child who was disruptive and she felt that she couldn't do it. We had a placement breakdown a few years ago and they were saying, 'No! Keep trying. No, keep trying' and my mom was like, 'No.' I was like, 'No. Your relationship is now harmful to yourself, but also your relationship with my dad.' It was very hard for her, but the workers were like, 'No, no, you have to try this.' From the workers perspective, now that I am in that role, I see it, but at the same time they are not listening to the foster parents.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike what was initially proposed, data analysis suggests that many of the (e)motions are associated with sons/daughters' relationships to their foster siblings instead of being solely focused on predetermined fostering transitions (e.g., arrival and departure of foster siblings). That said, (e)motions tend to be associated more with sons/daughters relationships to their foster siblings and/or (e)motions that are triggered during certain fostering transitions: departure of foster siblings and follow-up with foster siblings post-placement. The fluidity of the (e)motions can alter how sons/daughters perceive their relationships with their foster siblings over time. For instance, sons/daughters may express (e)motions of closeness, empathy, excitement, good, and nice towards their foster siblings, but then their foster sibling steals from them and now sons/daughters experience (e)motions of anger, annoying, frustration, and hurt. Additionally, sons/daughters may have positive (e)motions towards their foster sibling, but then their foster sibling unexpectedly leaves the foster home and no one informs the sons/daughters where they have been placed. This leads to sons/daughters, who still have a connection to their foster sibling, with (e)motions of devastated, heartbroken, upset, and worry about their foster sibling. The situation is further compounded when there is no post-placement follow-up with their foster siblings; thus, leading to the additional (e)motion of sadness directed towards this particular foster sibling. Overall, there are different emotional experiences that can occur between sons/daughters and their foster siblings while living in the foster home together and once the foster sibling leaves the home.

Sons/daughters feel a lot while fostering and as a result, they learn about relationship patterns. Data analysis finds that a foster relationship schema is developed: a foster sibling arrives, they live with you, and then they leave. Sons/daughters learn that relationships with foster siblings can be emotionally rewarding; however, they are frequently temporary, unpredictable, and unstable. Relationships with foster siblings can end abruptly and without any advance notice, and rarely is ongoing contact post-placement made available. This foster relationship schema is then transposed onto sons/daughters' relationships with friends and romantic partners. This results in sons/daughters feeling that friends and romantic partners will enter their lives, they will get to know each other, and then these individuals will leave. Similar to
their relationships with their foster siblings, sons/daughters feel that relationships with friends and/or romantic partners can be emotionally rewarding, but caution should be used when developing a new relationship. Relationships tend to have an expiry date attached to them and that individuals could suddenly end the relationship without any given reason. Reconnecting with former friends is not seen as a priority. Overall, sons/daughters experience a variety of (e)motions while fostering and they learn from these (e)motions about having relationships with others.

Fostering, and the (e)motions that arise, can be overwhelming at times. The participating sons/daughters shared that they predominately turn to their mothers for support. As one of the few permanent and stable relationships for sons/daughters, mothers are perceived as close, informative, and understanding individuals who listen to sons/daughters. In addition to listening, mothers tended to hold regular family meetings, accept sons/daughters' (e)motions, and set time aside to talk with them. Additionally, sons/daughters shared that they learn to cope with their (e)motions related to fostering on their own. Overall, sons/daughters are able to regulate their (e)motions through self-regulation and co-regulation with their mothers.

In the next Chapter, the researcher uses a neuroscience lens to illuminate some further insights about the (e)motions and relationships that emerge for sons/daughters while fostering. Implications for social work service delivery, research, and policy are then discussed.
CHAPTER 7 – Discussion & Implications for Social Work

7.0 Introduction

“I grew up in a foster home. Then everyone asks if I was a foster child and I was like, 'No.' They are like, 'Oh okay' and then their face kind of drops. Yes, I wasn't a foster child, but I did grow up in a foster home. I have experienced things from a different perspective, which have continued to influence me.”

~ Young adult daughter, aged 24

The findings from this doctoral research (see Chapter 6) suggest the participating sons/daughters had similar fostering experiences to each other, but also with the experiences reported in previous research studies (see Höjer, Sebba, & Luke, 2013).

- sons/daughters have twenty-four hour, seven day contact with their foster siblings;
- sons/daughters live in a quasi-family with no or minimal professional distance;
- sons/daughters have restricted information about fostering by several sources;
- sons/daughters are viewed as not mattering within the child welfare system;
- sons/daughters are expected to maintain an open family boundary; and
- sons/daughters experience (e)motional intensity while growing up in foster care.

Now as young adults, the participating sons/daughters continue to be influenced by the lingering effects of this fostering context. This effect is also compounded because their families continue to foster while they are no longer residing within the foster home, and they remain involved in the fostering activities. Fostering continues to shape the sons/daughters’ (e)motions and experiences.

This doctoral research asked the participating 15 sons/daughters to openly and honestly share their (e)motions related to growing up in a foster home. These sons/daughters have been exposed to a variety of scenarios, felt intense (e)motions, and coped with it all. Some of what the participants shared was positive and some of it was negative. The data collected in this research - their (e)motions, words, experiences, and photographs - are powerful illustrations of fostering from their perspective. They have provided insights into fostering through their thick and rich descriptions of it. That said,
part of the data analysis process (although widely disputed within grounded theory studies) suggests
the researcher to delve back into the extant literature in order to better understand the concepts that
emerged (e.g., Charmaz, 2006).

While in its infancy, the field of social work has slowly started to embrace elements of
neuroscience (see Farmer, 2009). In child welfare, researchers, such as Tronick and Beeghly (2011),
are linking impacts of child maltreatment to physical changes within the brain. In foster care,
researchers, such as Hughes and Baylin (2012), and Siegel and Bryson (2011), are combining
neuroscience concepts with parenting techniques. Thus, the researcher selected a neuroscience lens to
assist in illuminating only the theoretically sufficient findings within this study. In particular, the
neuroscience concepts of implicit memory, mental models/ schemata, and emotion regulation are
used. The objective of incorporating neuroscience into this discussion is not to pathologize the
(e)motions of sons/daughters; instead, it will hopefully add to the richness of this discussion.

7.1 Fostering memories: Neurons that fire together, wire together

“Maybe [fostering] is like teaching. You have students for awhile who will be in your class for a certain amount of time,
but in June they are going on to the next grade. You care for them while you have them, but you know that they are not going to stay in your class forever.
It is like when they come into your home. You will care for them while they are in your home, but you know that they are not there forever and they will be moving on to the next situation, whatever that might be.
It might be a week or year, but you know that they are eventually going.”

~ Young adult daughter, aged 33

According to Siegel (2012), “memory is the way past events affect future function. In this
view, the brain experiences the world and encodes this interaction in a manner that alters future ways
of responding” (p.46). At a neural-level, when an experience occurs, the memory of it is encoded,
stored, and then later retrieved. Hebb (1949) proposed that this occurred because “neurons that fire
together, wire together” (also see Hanson & Mendius, 2009; Siegel, 2012). More specifically, the full
experience, including (e)motions, perceptions, bodily sensations, behaviours, and images are collectively stored with that memory (Siegel, 2012; Siegel & Hartzell, 2009).

The objective of this study was to tap into those emotionally charged fostering incidents, in order to get an in-depth understanding of what it is like growing up in families that fosters. Advancements in neuroscience research suggest that the right-hemisphere of the brain tends to be a significant contributor to individuals' processing of sensory information, including (e)motions and experiences, through a holistic and context-rich manner (Schore, 2009; Siegel, 2012). This includes processing “nonverbal, images, metaphors, whole body sensations, raw emotion, stress reduction, and autobiographical memory” (Siegel, 2010, p.108). The left-hemisphere of the brain is considered to play a major role in processing information that is more detailed-oriented through a “linear, linguistic, logical, literal, labels, and lists” manner (Siegel, 2010, p.108). Data collection aimed to integrate this neuroscience knowledge into the methods. In so doing, the participating sons/daughters retrieved memories about their fostering experiences into their awareness. There were also emotional and behavioural responses from the participants during the interviews, such as crying, that would suggest that without sons/daughters knowing it, elements of their implicit memory were activated. The firing of these neurons during the interviews, resulted in statements from the participants that have been used within this discussion.

7.2 Developing the fostering schema: “You can get attached, but only up until a certain point”

Implicit memory includes mental model or schema, a generalizations due to repeated experiences (Siegel, & Hartzell, 2009). After repeatedly being exposed to multiple foster siblings entering and exiting their homes, many of the sons/daughters concluded, as Daughter, aged 20\textsuperscript{POS} did, “You can get attached, but only up until a certain point.” What the participating sons/daughters were sharing during the interviews was only one of their fostering schemata, but a theme that was repeated
by many of the participants. Using an neuroscience lens, this particular fostering schema has been appraised as being meaningful to the sons/daughters because it includes intense (e)motions and therefore is more likely to be retrieved during the interview, as well as throughout their lives (Siegel, 2012).

A simplified version of this fostering schema includes: the foster sibling arrives, the foster siblings lives with them, and then the foster sibling leaves. The (e)motions associated with the fostering experience may also be engrained into that implicit memory. Sons/daughters indicate several (e)motions felt while developing a relationship with foster siblings. Some of these (e)motions occur when sons/daughters spend quality time with their foster siblings (e.g., emotions of connection), foster siblings and sons/daughters have similar interests (e.g., emotions of connection), both sons/daughters and foster siblings include each other in their family units (e.g., emotions of heart warmed, cute, like a sister, pride, empathy), and sons/daughters express empathy towards their foster siblings (e.g., emotions of empathy, openness, understanding, hope, learning). As well, sons/daughters indicate some factors that could hinder the development of an emotionally close relationship. Some of these factors include: sons/daughters are temporarily or permanently moved out of the foster home (e.g., emotions of difficulty), sons/daughters and foster siblings do not have similar interests (e.g., emotions of shock, lack of connection), foster siblings display violent and/or aggressive behaviours to members of the foster family (e.g., emotions of crying, upset, fear, dislike, normal), foster siblings steal from the sons/daughters' family (e.g., emotions of normal, frustrating, crying, hurt), foster siblings are disrespectful to sons/daughters' parents and home (e.g., emotions of angry, defensive, normal), and sons/daughters’ behaviours inhibiting a connection from forming (e.g., emotions of weird, trouble-maker, hard, setting-boundaries). In the end, without a focused attention of this encoding, sons/daughters indicate, “you get use to it and you don't think much about it”
(Daughter, aged 33). In other words, when their implicit memory is brought into their awareness, they do not recall a past memory of fostering, per se; rather, they experience the (e)motions related to fostering without knowing they are related to a past foster sibling.

The fostering schema is repeated several times throughout the course of the family fostering. In the case of these participating sons/daughters, they experienced a range of 3-289 foster siblings entering and exiting their family units, with an estimated average of 30 foster siblings (excluding respite and relief placements). As a result of repeatedly activating their emotional state of mind while fostering, the participating sons/daughters retrieve and activate this fostering schema 'attached to a certain point' and this leads them to proceed into the relationship with the next foster sibling with apprehension and caution. Daughter 23 shared, “When [foster children] came to the house, I would be like, ‘Hi.’ I would introduce myself and then stay in my room. I am nice to them and not rude, but I don’t open up as much because of my past experiences.”

7.3 Prospective brain: Sons/daughters transpose the fostering schema onto non-fostering relationships

The brain has a natural tendency to generalize (Siegel, 2012). In particular, the left-hemisphere tries to predict familiar experiences and attempt to anticipate what will happen next from the environment (e.g., Schacter, Addis, & Buckner, 2007). An interesting finding within this study that has not been identified in the previous literature known to this researcher, is how this identified ‘fostering schema’ is encoded into the brains of sons/daughters and then appears to be transposed onto their relationships with their friends and romantic partners (see Table 7-1).

1 Previous research, without a neuroscience lens, found that the frequent arrivals and departures of foster siblings impacted sons/daughters who did not address their (e)motions by making it difficult for them to connect with future foster siblings (e.g., Sutton & Stack, 2013; Walsh & Campbell, 2010; Younes & Harp, 2007).
Table 7-1
Exploring how the fostering schema gets transposed onto sons/daughters' relationships with friends and romantic partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fostering schema for relationships with foster siblings</th>
<th>Relationships with...</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Romantic partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships can be emotionally rewarding</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships tend to be temporary, unpredictable, and unstable</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships tend to end abruptly</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships that end rarely result in reconnecting at a later date</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

√ represents the fostering schema theme is applied to non-fostering relationships
x represents the fostering schema theme is not applied to non-fostering relationships

Participating sons/daughters shared that they sometimes struggle in developing and maintaining relationships with friends and/or romantic partners. They anticipate that similar things may happen in those relationships because it happened in past relationships with their foster siblings.

Daughter, aged 33\(^{\text{P007}}\) proposed that, “It is not really a conscious thing.” However, sons/daughters provided statements throughout the interviews on how the fostering schema applied to their relationships with friends and romantic partners (refer to Table 7-2).

Solomon (2009) reported that affective response patterns can be triggered by an emotional experience and result in the current situation highlighting elements of the past:

“Because affective response patterns are encoded by the subcortical level, emotions, defenses, and enactments remain stored in implicit memory. An interpersonal event triggers emotional arousal that causes temporal loss – a kind of time travel in which past and present merge. The current situation and current person take on the characteristics of one or more people from the past” (p.236)

Participating sons/daughters suggested that this is what happened to them for both friends and romantic partners. These non-fostering individuals trigger an emotional response inside of them;
Table 7-2
Examples of how the fostering schema is applied to the experiences of sons/daughters with friends and romantic partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fostering schema</th>
<th>Examples of how the fostering schema is applied to relationships with...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Romantic Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>can be emotionally rewarding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 23</td>
<td>&quot;The friends I have, I have had since middle school circle.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I am close with my friends and peers, but like I said they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>can't understand what it is like [to foster] and they can't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understand the emotions.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Even now, I only have two other girls who I actually say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are true friends that I can trust. One of them I wouldn't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feel comfortable to share a lot with, the other one I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>probably would. But every time with something that comes up,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you want to share something, there is always that like voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in your head that it is only going to be a matter of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>repeating it, they are going to turn around and walk away.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 21</td>
<td>&quot;My connection with my peers were... I was kin of always,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that girl. That girl has a lot of kids in her home. That girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>has a million brothers and sisters. That girl has brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and sisters who you can't remember all of their names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because they are always changing. I was always that girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>which made me develop a defensive mechanism that I got</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>picked on in school because we were the odd family. So I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>took martial arts, so no one decided to pick on me again. I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guess, that was my relationship with others.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
Fostering schema Examples of how the fostering schema is applied to relationships with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships tend to end abruptly</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Romantic Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daughter, aged 28&lt;sup&gt;P009&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“I have never really gotten close to people. Everyone has a best friend and I never really had that…. I find that I am not really close to anybody. I am cautious. I know that people only stay in your life for a temporary time and that is it…. It hurts too much to get too close to someone, so it is easier to just not invest. It is not that you don’t invest, that is a bad way of saying it. You just don’t want to get close because you do, or you get too close and too involved and they leave and then you loose out on someone that you really wanted as a friend.”</td>
<td>Daughter, aged 24&lt;sup&gt;P065&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Relationships that end rarely result in reconnecting at a later date | Daughter, aged 20<sup>P006</sup> | N/A | No comments. Probing questions into past romantic relationships with sons/daughters did not occur during the interviews. |
however, they may not have a clear understanding of what that trigger was. Daughter, aged 33 shared, “I suppose [fostering] has impacted me, but in indirect ways that it became who I was and that impacted [my husband and my] relationships for sure.” Ultimately, it leads to the schema of 'getting close, but not too close' with these individuals.

7.4 Changing the brains of sons/daughters to alter the fostering schema: Hope from neuroscience

Neuroscience informs us that the “brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones” (Hanson & Mendius, 2009, p.41). The human brain is attracted to negative experiences. The identified fostering schema may suggest that fostering impacts sons/daughters. Indeed it does impact them; however, it is because it is another life experience for these individuals. The question becomes then, is fostering a negative experience, positive experience, or something in-between for sons/daughters? The emotional landscape articulated by the participating sons/daughters within this study suggests that there is a mixture of positive and negative elements. The identified fostering schema does suggest a risk of emotional harm could be substantiated due to the frequent exposure to the constant arrival and departures of foster siblings resulting in long-term impacts on non-fostering relationships for sons/daughters. However, many sons/daughters would still choose to foster, if they had to do it all over again.

Neuroscience has debunked the myth that much of the brain development occurs within the first three years of life (Stauch, 2003). The plasticity of the brain is ongoing. Thinking, feeling, events, objects, persons, tasks, and so on, cause changes to the brain (Farmer, 2009). There are a number of actions that can be taken by sons/daughters to mitigate the severity of the identified fostering schema:
• **Seeking secure attachments**: In general, studies on attachment suggest that relationships with a secure partner can alter insecure attachment patterns (Solomon, 2009). If sons/daughters have insecure attachment patterns with significant others, connecting with someone who has a secure attachment increases the possibility that the fostering schema of 'get attached, but not too attached' could be altered. For instance, Daughter, aged 24

> [Husband] showed me that there are benefits to being with someone.”

• **Participating in mental training exercises**: Neuroscience provides sons/daughters with hope that the identified fostering schema can be altered through mental training (e.g., Davidson & Begley, 2012; Siegel, 2012). Mindfulness meditation is an example of such training (e.g., Baer, 2003; Hölzel, Lazar, Gard, Schuman-Olivier, Vago, & Ott, 2011). For instance, Daughter, aged 21

> Keep reminding yourself that this is a different situation [than fostering] and that starts to help, but it is definitely a process.”

In short, “the foundation for the hope of healing lies in the brain's ability to modify wired-in painful or frightening experiences by activity both within the mind and between minds” (Badenoch, 2008, p.11). Findings from this study indicate that sons/daughters tend to seek emotional support from their mothers. This will be discussed in the next section.

### 7.5 Coping with identified (e)motions of sons/daughters

> “There are people who end up being your best friend forever and there are people that you just can’t wait to leave. That is not going to change, regardless of whether you are in the house or not in the house. I think emotions are very difficult. I think that attachments are very difficult. There is no one right way to foster or to be the daughter or son of a foster parent. There is no one way to deal with it because everyone deals with it differently. I think that everyone needs to figure out what the best way is”

> ~ Young adult daughter, aged 20

Findings reveal how sons/daughters experience growing up in foster care, how they are able to relate to their foster siblings and others within the foster home, and how they find meaningful ways to contribute to the foster family. All of these experiences are contingent upon how sons/daughters have learned to regulate their (e)motions. Emotion regulation “refers to how we try to influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 2008, p.497).
From the field of neuroscience, we know there are a number of factors that can influence an individual's emotion regulation. Some of these factors include: brain circuitry (e.g., Siegel, 2012), genetics and intrauterine contributors (e.g., LeDoux, 1996), temperament (e.g., Davidson & Begley, 2012), attachment styles (e.g., Schore, 2003), cognitive creativity (e.g., LeDoux, 1996), and subjective experiences (e.g., Siegel, 2012). These factors contribute to the individual differences noticed in people as they regulate their emotions. This research study only focuses on the sons/daughters' subjective experiences of growing up in families that foster. The other factors mentioned were not explored. That said, the subjective experiences of sons/daughters reveals some interesting facts.

Neuroscience and other related fields propose that emotion regulation differs between infants, children, adolescents, and young adults as they are developing their “tempermental, neurobiological (e.g., the development of the frontal lobes), conceptual (e.g., understanding of emotional processes), and social (e.g., family, teachers, and peers) forces” (Gross & Thompson, 2007, p.19). According to Porges (2011), “self-regulation is a difficult process to operationalize. Behaviors as diverse as sustained attention, facial expressions, and latency to soothe can be interpreted as regulatory” (p.146). That said, sons/daughters mentioned a variety of methods to regulate their (e)motions while fostering:

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2 This research used open-ended interviews, object sharing, photographing the object, and photo-feedback to elicit rich, thick, and emotional descriptions from participating sons/daughters. The lack of more neuroscience-based research techniques, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging, genetic testing, formalized temperament or attachment assessments makes it difficult to assess the other contributing factors influencing the sons/daughters' emotion regulation.
• **Going into 'work-mode':** Son, aged 26 shared: “Almost anyone has had some experience with it, where you get up and know everything that you have to do and it is almost like you get it all done without consciously being aware of everything that you are doing. This actually happens more during a crisis situation if the kid is having a blow out, you know exactly what to do, you may not think about it but you do the right thing, or do what you have been trained to do, or do what your experiences have taught you works best.”

• **No longer alarmed by incidents**: Son, aged 22 shared: “I’m not alarmed in a lot of situations that most people would freak over because of stuff like that. I have already experienced stuff like that before. To quote a movie, you just know where to stand.”

• **Becoming passive-aggressive**: Daughter, aged 26 shared: “I tend to be very passive aggressive.”

• **Thinking of the situation as something different**: Daughter, aged 24 shared: “You kind of view them as friends, and you know friends go away sometimes because you move or they move or whatever, so I have always found it easy to drop attachments and move on. That sounds really callous.”

• **Distracting onself**: Daughter, aged 24 shared: “I think that it is a distraction. If you are super attached to a little boy, like I am, and another cute little boy comes along then that little boy is not in the picture, then it is not that bad because at least you have another cute little boy. I know that that little boy went to a good home and hopefully I can keep in touch with him, but in the time being or until that happens, for the time being I can get over this one, I have another one to keep me happy. I know that sounds horrible, but it is the nice way of looking at it.”

While sons/daughters reported some self-regulation techniques, this approach did not reach theoretical sufficiency. The key to regulating sons/daughters (e)motions is from the use of mother-child emotion co-regulation/ dyadic regulation. In some cases, co-regulation occurred with other individuals, such as: non-foster siblings, fathers, grandparents, aunts/uncles, neighbours, school teachers, and the alike; however, this is not a dominant theme within the findings.
7.5.1 Mother using a 'neuroscience caregiving formula' to support sons/daughters

“So how do we help our children when they're suffering from the effects of past negative experiences? We shine the light of awareness on those implicit memories, making them explicit so that our child can become aware of them and deal with them in an intentional way. Sometimes parents hope that their children will 'just forget about' painful experiences they've undergone, but what kids really need is for parents to teach them healthy ways to integrate implicit and explicit memories, turning even painful experiences into sources of power and self-understanding” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011, p.77)

As Siegel and Bryson (2011) indicate in the above quotation, parents need to process with sons/daughters in order to highlight their implicit and explicit memories. Not in those words, but many sons/daughters talked about how their mothers processed with them about their fostering (e)motions and experiences:

- Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{P010} shared: “[Mother] took a lot of time processing with me and communicating and teaching, and that is probably what got me through, so I try and do that with my own kids. I make sure that I am listening, that the things that bother them that we figure out a way that works best.”

- Daughter, aged 21\textsuperscript{P001} shared: “Whenever I would get upset, I would go and sit and talk with my mom and she would talk me through it. ‘I know that it is upsetting. Imagine if you were in this situation’ and she would kind of help me through it.”

- Daughter, aged 24\textsuperscript{P003} shared: “I remember my mom taking me for a walk on my street and it is so weird because I haven't thought about this until now. I remember vividly we were talking up the street and she was asking me how I would feel about fostering. I think that the way that she explained it to me was that there are other kids who don't have families like ours and aren't fortunate like ours that are close and get along and can be taken care of as well as you are. ‘Would you be open to taking some of these kids until they can find a better home or they have find new parents?’ It wasn't the exact way that she explained it, but it was something along those lines. I remember being like, ‘Yeah, sure, why not?’ She even said that, ‘We can try it out and if it is something that you don't like, we don't have to do it anymore. I just wanted to make sure it was okay with you before we started doing it.’”

From the above examples, sons/daughters appear to use their relationships with their mothers to assist in regulating their (e)motions to achieve a state of well-being while growing up in foster care (Siegel, 2012). This is not necessarily a unique attribute to sons/daughters, because “the brain is constructed to rely on external social input to regulate its own functioning... Interactions with caregivers allow the
child's brain to develop the neural structures necessary to move from dyadic regulation to more autonomous forms of self-regulation” (Siegel & Hartzell, 2003, p.215). The mother-child relationship results in the development of neural structures for sons/daughters due to neuroplasticity (Badenoch, 2008). Neuroplasticity is defined as the “capacity for creating new neural connections and growing new neurons in response to experiences” (Siegel, 2010, p.5). Fostering is full of new experiences and sometimes it can be overwhelming for sons/daughters. Turning to their mothers, it appears that these relationships provide sons/daughters with a safe connection to process their (e)motions. Mothers, for these participating sons/daughters, are viewed as permanent, predictable, and stable relationships, and frequently referred to as sons/daughters' “best-friends.”

In addition to talking, mothers also engage sons/daughters to intentionally deal with their (e)motions through five key activities: holding regular family meetings, accepting sons/daughters (e)motions, setting time aside for sons/daughters, listening to sons/daughters about their (e)motions, and having a sense of closeness with their sons/daughters (refer back to Table 6-9 for direct quotations from participants). Without realizing it, these mothers are actually conducting brain-based parenting, or more specifically, what Hughes and Baylin (2012) refer to as the neuroscience caregiving formula - (P)layfulness, (A)cceptance, (C)uriosity, and (E)mpathy (PACE). PACE helps to decrease defensiveness and promotes growth and healthy development in parents and their children (Baylin & Hughes, 2013). What follows below are examples of how sons/daughters feel their mothers interact with them under a PACE framework.
7.5.1.1 (P)layfulness: Increases attuned communication, openness, and emotion regulation.

“My mom and I played Nintendo a lot and we would talk about things while we were playing. It was one thing that we both liked. We even played Tetris to see who would do the dishes that night. It was a competition, but it was a time that we would have just the two of us.”
~ Daughter, aged 33

Mothers sometimes engage with their own children through various playful acts on a one-to-one basis. Activities, such as playing video games together, are pleasurable to sons/daughters and have them wanting to spend more quality time with their parents. Play is an important action by mothers towards sons/daughters because it requires attuned communication and a sense of openness. It also has mothers assisting in the regulation of more pleasurable emotions for sons/daughters, rather than the frequent negative emotions associated with fostering.

From a neuroscience perspective, play “activates the higher regions of the brain, enhancing cognitive functioning... Because the dopamine that is stimulated by play enters the prefrontal regions, play enhances executive functions” (Hughes & Baylin, 2012, p.105). Consequently, mothers may use play as a less formal method to elicit a reflective attitude in sons/daughters about their (e)motions. For instance, when the parent and sons/daughters play video games together, they also talk and reflect on their fostering experiences.

7.5.1.2 (A)cceptance: Allows for repair within the relationships

“My mom took the time to listen to my frustration and anger. If she hadn’t taken that time, I am pretty sure that I would be in more of a pickle, especially since we [fostered] teens.”
~ Daughter, aged 33

The participating sons/daughters indicated that their mothers are accepting of their opinions and (e)motions related to fostering, for the most part. They feel that they can tell their parents most things related to fostering, (e.g., “I always felt able to discuss things with them,” Daughter, aged 33) and other aspects of their life (e.g., “We are a lot closer. I talk to her everyday,” Daughter, aged 23).
Sometimes they are not able to share with their parents in the moment; however, their mothers are able to repair the relationship by following up at a later time. As Daughter, aged 20\textsuperscript{006} shares:

“Sometimes I am stressed about school. I did very bad on a test and I’m in the moment and I am very, very focused on school. ‘Oh my God! This teacher hates me. Mom you need to call the school.’ She is like, ‘You need to calm down.’ There are times that I get frustrated with her. ‘You need to stop and listen to me. It is about me right now.’ I think that I need to be snapped into reality. You know what, the grade is still going to be there tomorrow morning. It is fine that she doesn’t pay attention to me right away, but we can talk while she is with the child or doing the dishes. I can sit there and tell her about school.”

It is important to emphasize the fact that mothers accepting the (e)motions of sons/daughters does not mean that sons/daughters will get what they want. Sometimes sons/daughters express opinions and (e)motions related to fostering that results in conflicts within the home (e.g., “It kept coming up, meeting after meeting, this was not going well,” Daughter, aged 26\textsuperscript{008}) and therefore, misattunement can occur. Realistically, mothers are misattuned a lot of the time to their sons/daughters, as is any other mother-child relationship (e.g., Schore, 2003). The key to a successful mother-child relationship is one that is repaired (see Siegel, 1999; Tronick, 1989). When these ruptures occur, sons/daughters may dysregulate from the fostering process (e.g., throwing a temper tantrum). Mothers sometimes use these incidents as valuable learning opportunities and provide the stability and acceptance that sons/daughters need to regulate their (e)motions (e.g., “I know that my mom loves me too much,” Daughter, aged 23\textsuperscript{012}).

From a neuroscience perspective, acceptance requires circuits between several areas in the brain to develop:

The heart; the anterior insula (the ‘visceral brain); the anterior cingulate cortex (that vital brain bridge, which reptiles don’t have, that is to important for caring); the orbitofrontal cortex (that region of the prefrontal cortex vital to attachment-based learning); the medial prefrontal cortex (that region in the very front of our brains that we use for ‘self-other awareness’, a region much expanded in comparison to our primate relatives (Hughes & Baylin, 2012, pp.112-113; also Porges, 2011).
Sons/daughters' mothers who are accepting of their opinions and emotions, also tended to be empathetic towards them.

7.5.1.3 (C)uriosity: Enhances the integration of emotions and cognitive process.

“[Parents] always wanted my opinion and never, 'that we are the parents and we said so, so that's why.' It was always a family decision”
~ Daughter, aged 21

Sons/daughters shared incidents whereby their mothers are curious about their (e)motions and opinions related to fostering, as in the above quotation. Mothers with their sons/daughters sometimes attempted to reflect on their past fostering experiences, to assist sons/daughters to process their (e)motions related to the current or even potential foster issues (e.g., “Imagine if you were in this situation,” Daughter, aged 21). Sons/daughters suggest their mothers' actions demonstrate a sense of curiosity about their (e)motions. From a neuroscience perspective, “curiosity benefits from the release of brain chemicals such as oxytocin and dopamine, which help to keep the connections between higher and lower regions of the parenting brain open, supporting the integration of feelings and cognitive processes” (Hughes & Baylin, 2012, p.122).

While mothers do remain curious about sons/daughters (e)motions, sometimes they are less curious and tend to evaluate sons/daughters than try to understand them. For instance, when sons/daughters request that a particular foster child be removed from their home, their parents are sometimes not able to understand it from the sons/daughters' perspective. Disregarding or dismissing these incidents as 'normal' sibling conflicts could impair the mother-child relationship.

• Daughter, aged 21 shared: “I think with [foster child] a lot of the time I wanted her to leave. I didn't want her in my house anymore and my mom would brush it off that siblings fight and you are going to fight, you are almost the same age, you are both girls, you are going to fight about things. I felt like she was not understanding the extent of the situation and I kept it to myself.”
As well, less curiosity may be attributed to “it is difficult when there is so many” children within the home (Son, aged 26\textsuperscript{PO04}). Although, this might not necessarily be perceived as a negative consequence because some sons/daughters may prefer their privacy (e.g., “I can keep my private interest and my private life, even while living with my parents. I saw other friends who had two siblings and two parents and their parents knew everything about them and that seemed to be way too much information,” Son, aged 26\textsuperscript{PO04}).

7.5.1.4 (E)mpathy: Awareness of distress, relationship stability, and emotion regulation.

“We always made sure that we had regular family meetings. Family meant our family and not the foster kids. Just to sort of see how things were going and make sure that everyone was comfortable and whatnot. It kept coming up, meeting after meeting, this was not going well. Eventually, my parents really didn’t want to send anyone away. I mean that is not fun. Eventually we did have to. It was my parents, or us who initiated it.”

Daughter, aged 26\textsuperscript{PO08}

While empathy is an important feature of PACE and useful in connecting with others, sons/daughters rarely shared explicit examples of how their mothers are aware of the distress they experience while fostering. Comments by participating sons/daughters are more about how their mothers process with them about their (e)motions. Previous research suggests that mothers experience similar emotional reactions to fostering, as their sons/daughters (e.g., Fox, 2001; Swan, 2002). The ‘we are in this together’ feeling may have resulted in some sons/daughters feeling that their mothers understood their experiences (also referred to as “feeling-felt” by Siegel, 2012). For instance, Daughter, aged 33\textsuperscript{PO10} shared, “Growing up there was no trust. I had all my eggs in one basket. I trust my unit – my sister, my mother, my father, and my grandparents, and anybody else on the planet will come and go.”

Sons/daughters suggest that mothers are one of the few stable relationships within their lives; therefore, they can emotionally connect with them.
From a neuroscience perspective, “empathy, broadly conceived, contains both features, activating the orbitofrontal-insula-anterior cingulate system that serves as a bridge to parents' higher awareness and meaning-making functions” (Hughes & Baylin, 2012, pp.130-131). As a result, sons/daughters feel that their parents are in tune to their needs and will collaboratively work with them to regulate their (e)motions to survive fostering.

### 7.6 Limitations of research

Every effort has been made to mitigate limitations to this study. Criteria used in evaluating the quality of a grounded theory study were initially used in the construction of the study design (e.g., Charmaz, 2006; Oktay, 2012; Padgett, 2008). The researcher methodically took into consideration the credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness of the study. The data are presented in a user-friendly format and the use of photographed objects are presented in an aesthetically appealing way to hopefully engage the broader community. That said, there are some limitations that should be considered when reviewing the findings.

The participating sons/daughters tended to represent more of a mainstream sample. The majority of the participants were single, Caucasian, biological daughters of foster parents in their early twenties, who self-identified as having a religious affiliation and permanently moved out of the fostering home, and these participants tended to come from two-parent families who fostered for 11+ years within a rural or suburban area. The researcher is not aware of any provincially published data on the demographic characteristics of sons/daughters. Thus, it is difficult to indicate whether the sample is an accurate reflection of young adult sons/daughters of current foster parents in Ontario. Some of the demographic factors have been noted below, along with speculations on why the sample tended to be more mainstream:
• **60% of the participating sons/daughters were between the ages of 20-25 years**
  The inclusion criteria sought out sons/daughters between the ages of 18-35 years. Most of the participating sons/daughters were in their early 20s, with all classifying themselves as students enrolled in a post-secondary institution. Being a young student may have attributed to the age of the participants - especially since data collection predominately occurred during the Fall 2013 and Winter 2014 semesters of the academic calendar.

• **67% of the participating sons/daughters were permanently moved out of the fostering home**
  There is sometimes an unspoken fear in the fostering community that if a foster family complains about their fostering experience, that the family will be “blacklisted” (Anderson, 2013, p.52). Anderson defines blacklisted as: “what foster parents believe happens when the agency doesn’t place children in their home. The withholding of placements is the foster parents’ greatest fear” (p.53). Foster parents were one of the gatekeepers to inviting sons/daughters to participate within this study. It is possible that foster parents were worried that if their young adult sons/daughters who lived in the currently fostering home said something negative about their fostering experiences, that the family could be blacklisted. Those young adult sons/daughters who were permanently moved out of the fostering home had some distance between them and the actual foster home; therefore, minimizing the risk of repercussions by the child welfare agency.

• **67% of the participating sons/daughters were single**
  In Canada, young persons tend to marry in their early thirties (Employment and Social Development, 2014). The majority of the participants were between the ages of 20-25 years (n=9 of 15; 60%) and therefore it would be anticipated that these participants would be single.

• **73% of participating sons/daughters had fostered for 11+ years**
  These sons/daughters were highly experienced in fostering. On average, these participants experienced 50 foster siblings enter and depart their families (excluding respite and relief placements). These sons/daughters may have felt that they had more to contribute to a study about growing up in families that foster because of the number of years they have done so.

• **73% of the participating sons/daughters self-identified as Caucasian**
  As a public-sector agency, child welfare has been challenged on its lack of ethnic diversity (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 1998). Over the years, much effort has been made to recruit and retrain a variety of diverse foster families (OACAS, 2010). Despite these efforts, it is possible that there is still an overwhelming number of Caucasian foster families with their own biological children. This may have been attributed to the majority of the sons/daughters self-identifying as Caucasian.
• **73% of the participating sons/daughters self-selected a specific religion**
  Some research suggests that individuals are motivated to become foster parents due to their religious affiliations (e.g., Gillis-Arnold, Crase, Stockdale, & Shelley, 1998). If that is the case, these parents may have shared their religious beliefs with their own biological, adopted, or step children. This may have attributed to the fact that many of the participating sons/daughters self-identified as having a religious affiliation.

• **80% of the participating sons/daughters were daughters**
  Research suggests that there are some gender differences in emotions. Rose and Rudolph (2006) found that peer relationships exhibited gender-specific styles. The feminine style tends to emphasize sharing emotional experiences; whereas, the masculine style emphasizes sharing one's skills. These gender differences may have attributed to the fact that more daughters than sons agreed to participate in this study - especially since the objective of the study was for sons/daughters to talk/share about their (e)motions and experiences related to fostering.

• **80% of the participating sons/daughters came from homes with two-parent families**
  In 2011, foster children were included for the first time in the Canadian Census (Statistics Canada, 2012). It found that foster children were more likely to be placed with two-parent families. This may explain why most of the participating sons/daughters came from two-parent families.

• **87% of the participating sons/daughters lived in rural or suburban foster homes**
  Recruitment of foster homes predominantly ends up with foster families who reside in rural and suburban areas. For example, two-third of youth, aged 13-17 years who are crown wards at the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, reside outside of the Toronto area (Goodman & Milstein, 2014). Thus, many of the foster homes are located within the rural and suburban area and it would have been anticipated that the sons/daughters came from homes from those geographical areas.

• **100% of the participating sons/daughters were birth children of foster parents**
  Some research suggests that biological, adopted, and step children may have experienced fostering differently (e.g., Serbinski & Shlonsky, 2014). That said, it is possible that only young adults who were biologically related to their parents felt comfortable participating in this study. The young adults who were adopted by foster parents may still be processing some of their (e)motions related to their adoption and growing up in families that foster, and therefore did not feel comfortable discussing it.

The findings may be applicable and transferable to other sons/daughters in Ontario and perhaps beyond these geographical boundaries. However, the predominately mainstream demographics characteristics of this sample may have limited its impact on future research in this area to more mainstream sons/daughters. Additional descriptive research on sons/daughters is recommended.
The findings are provided by sons/daughters who are part of public foster families, not private foster families. Previous research suggests that there may be differences between public and private foster homes, such as the availability of resources by the child welfare agency (e.g., Anderson, 2013). To mitigate this limitation, further research is needed with the inclusion of both public and private foster family members.

The Demographic Questionnaire was only pilot tested on two individuals prior to it being used within the main study. As data collection occurred, it became apparent that there is an issue with the tool related to the lack of clearly defined variables:

- **Involvement in foster home:** Participants were asked how involved they were in the foster home since they were permanently or temporarily living outside of it. They were asked to check one of four boxes: *often*, *sometimes*, *seldom*, and *never*. These terms were not defined by the researcher and left to the interpretations of the participants. It would have been more effective if the descriptors of how often sons/daughters were involved in the foster home were associated with predetermined number of days. For instance, *often* = 11+ times per month, *sometimes* = 6-10 times per month, *seldom* = 1-5 times per month, and *never* = no involvement.

- **Gender:** Sons/daughters were asked the gender of themselves (see Demographic Questionnaire, Section 1), non-foster siblings (see Section 2), parents (see Section 3), and foster siblings (see Section 5). Using an anti-oppressive lens, the researcher included three genders: *female*, *male*, and *other*. Inclusion of these options were aimed at being more open to individuals who may not have labeled themselves according to the dominant, societal gender discourse. This has become a popular trend within the academic environments in social work; however, many of the participants were not familiar with the third option. Some participating sons/daughters selected all three options, while other participants only selected the first two options. The results indicating *female* and *male* were used within the data analysis process. Data about *other* gender was not used because it is unclear whether or not participants were clear on this option.
• **Employment status of sons/daughters’ parents**: Sons/daughters were asked the 'employment status' of their parents by selecting the 'full-time', 'part-time', or 'not applicable' box (see Demographic Questionnaire, Section 3). Employment status was not clearly defined, but rather left to the interpretations of the participating sons/daughters. Interestingly, many sons/daughters, while completing the form, verbally made reference to the debate on the status of foster parents, especially when payment is considered. Sons/daughters were referring to the controversial epistemological debates about whether or not foster parents are employees, client, volunteers, or something else (e.g., Hanford, 1941; Kirton, Beecham, & Ogilvie, 2007; Pasztor & McFadden, 2006). Consequently, the employment status of the participating sons/daughters' parents could have been interpreted as 'employed as a foster parent'; and therefore, all parents were considered employed.

The findings are limited to self-report data by sons/daughters. While they are experts of their experiences in fostering, participants may have experienced personal biases when discussing how (e)motions related to fostering have impacted their lives. Study participants were only young adult sons/daughters of foster parents who temporarily or permanently lived outside of the current foster home. Fostering is an interpersonal and relational process; thus, other individuals could have been included in the sample. Relationships identified by sons/daughters within this study were: parents, non-fostering siblings, foster siblings, birth parents, social workers, support professionals (e.g., occupational therapists), volunteer drivers, court personnel (e.g., judges), neighbours, non-fostering friends, and kin (e.g., grandparents). To mitigate this limitation, additional research should consider the inclusion of a variety of individuals within the fostering process.

There are several gatekeepers that made it difficult to invite sons/daughters to participate within this study. Before sons/daughters can consent to participate, the invitation was sent to foster parents, social workers, child welfare agencies, and provincial and agency-based foster parent associations/ foster family associations. There is no direct method of connecting with sons/daughters in Ontario. There is no provincial working group. There is no centralized database with email contact information of sons/daughters. Thus, the recruitment flyer was distributed through various fostering networks and required the help of several individuals to get the recruitment flyer to
sons/daughters. It was anticipated that over 1,000 foster families in Ontario would have seen or received it. Despite the large distribution and possible cross-distribution of the recruitment flyer, there was little interest in the study. This resulted in more of a convenience sample, rather than a theoretical sample. To mitigate this limitation, the development of a centralised provincial online community should be considered in order to make it easier for researchers, social workers, and policy-makers to connect with sons/daughters.

The researcher was a former daughter of foster parents. Her social location may have unconsciously influenced the data analysis process. For instance, when the participating sons/daughters talked about the constant arrival and departures of foster siblings from their family unit being 'normal', this was also true of the researcher's experience in fostering. In discussions with her thesis supervisor, the researcher was reminded that the frequent arrival and departures of individuals, who are like siblings, is not normal for non-fostering families. Discussions with her thesis supervisor and her peer debriefer throughout the data analysis process helped the researcher to balance the findings from the study with her own experiences.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study provides useful interpretations that can be applied in the everyday fostering realities of this understudied area of research. Implications for child welfare service delivery, research, and policy are highlighted in the next sections.

7.7 Implications for child welfare service delivery: Engaging with sons/daughters

This study lends itself well to recommendations at the service delivery level. Child welfare agencies may consider more effective foster home placement matching variables. In addition to focusing on key variables already identified within placement matching (e.g., age of children), the social workers may want to also consider the foster family's level of tolerance to specific issues.³

³ For instance, Daughter, aged 20 shared: “There is no way to perfectly match someone and sometimes it is the differences that attract someone too. I think depending on what my level of tolerance is, I have never been able to tolerate a kid who always needs attention.”
Social workers may consider taking more time to engage with sons/daughters (e.g., Mullin & Johnson, 1999). The family's first social worker was the most remembered social worker because they were concerned about the well-being of sons/daughters in a sincere way, and they were reliable, mature, and consistent. Many of these qualities are adaptations to the PACE approach: Include sons/daughters within some of the fun activities that foster siblings and social workers get to do, such as going to a restaurant (playfulness). Listen to sons/daughters about their experiences and emotions related to fostering, so that they feel safe with social workers to share their experiences and not suppress their emotions (acceptance). Get to know sons/daughter, beyond the platonic niceties before and after they have meetings with their parents and foster siblings (curiosity). Try to understand what fostering is like for sons/daughters (empathy).

Social workers may also consider creative methods on how they can discuss with sons/daughters about the temporary and unpredictable nature of relationships they will have with their foster siblings. Discussions that are transparent and truthful with social workers, but also encouraging sons/daughters to talk to their parents or others (e.g., counselors) may mitigate some of the long-term impacts of fostering on this population. The main objective for social workers should be to ensure that open communication occurs for sons/daughters, whether it is with them or a supportive individual.

7.8 Implications for child welfare research: Including sons/daughters in research

In general, more high quality research is needed in child welfare (e.g., Anderson, 2013). Relative to the knowledge about foster children, sons/daughters have received minimal empirical attention. This means that the research agenda regarding sons/daughters is unexplored territory within child welfare and allows researchers to approach issues pertaining to this population through a variety of epistemological and ontological frameworks, theories, methods, and data collection and data analysis processes. That said, there are some questions that remain unanswered from this study that
social workers may consider exploring more in-depth. For instance:

- Have sons/daughters developed more effective mechanisms to enhance their emotional well-being while growing up in families that foster? Do they utilize “bodily regulation, attuned communication, emotional balance, response flexibility, fear modulation, empathy, insight, more awareness, and intuition” more than non-fostering sons/daughters? (Siegel, 2010, p.26).

- Why do sons/daughters seek emotional co-regulation more so from their mothers, instead of their fathers or another individual?

- Do sons/daughters utilize emotional co-regulation support from their mothers more than non-fostering sons/daughters while growing up?

- Many of the sons/daughters shared that they have a close relationship with their mothers as young adults. They talk, text, or email their mothers frequently, many indicating on a daily basis. Is this a result of fostering? Do non-fostering sons/daughters develop the same rapport and relationship with their mothers?

- Does fostering change the nature of the bond between mothers and their children? If so, how?

- Many of the sons/daughters indicated that they came from two parent-households, with a mother and a father. For sons/daughters who have two mothers or two fathers, what are the characteristics of the individual who provides (e)motion regulation to these sons/daughters? Does that individual use the neuroscience caregiving formula as well?

- Empirical evidence indicates that children exposed to maltreatment can have structural changes to the neurons in their brains (e.g., Tronik & Beeghley, 2011). How does fostering impact the brains of sons/daughters?

- Is it possible for sons/daughters and their foster siblings to experience emotional co-regulation with each other? If so, when in their relationship does this occur?

- Have sons/daughters developed more adaptive coping skills than non-sons/daughters because of their experiences of growing up in foster care?

Social workers may consider the development of a funded program of research in this area.

Basic epidemiological and survey data still needs to be collected about the entire foster family, not just the adults in the home. This data would assist the social work field to better understand how

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4 The Child Welfare League of Canada, in partnership with the Canadian Foster Family Association, conducted a national study entitled, “Every child matters: Strengthening foster families in Canada.” The results are not available at this time; however, one of their objectives is to provide baseline information about foster parents. For more details about this national study, please visit: www.cwlc.ca/ecm
foster families are structured, the various roles/ responsibilities within families, and how they shift over time. Longitudinal data would provide empirical evidence about the observed and perceived outcomes of sons/daughters throughout their fostering realities.⁵

Studies within the scoping review (see Chapter 2) were drawn from several countries. The objectives of those studies were quite similar – exploring the impact fostering has on sons/daughters. Therefore, social workers may also consider more international research project because such collaboration could pool resources and expertise together in order to create effective, efficient, and sustainable research about sons/daughters and others within the foster care team.

Social workers may also consider more interdisciplinary research projects. For instance, the advancements in neuroscience have started to demystified some aspects of the brain, mind, and relationships (e.g., Hughes & Baylin, 2012; Siegel, 2012). Insights from brain-based parenting that explores the integration between adults’ brains and children’s brains would be an important area of inquiry that can be used to develop helpful fostering practices and programs. Studies should include sons/daughters; however, they do not necessarily need to the primary focus. Studies could include expanding the research about sons/daughters and other aspects of fostering through theory building and model development, as well various empirically-based studies (e.g., outcome studies).

7.9 Implications for child welfare policy: Areas of improvement to consider

This study has not been conducted in a manner that lends itself to a well-considered set of policy recommendations beyond the typical emphasis that 'more research is needed'. The area of inquiry within this study is at the micro-level focusing on interpersonal relationship; rather than focusing on structural change mechanisms. That said, there are some obvious areas for improvement that could be considered, especially since sons/daughters rights have been formally acknowledged

⁵ Participants were asked what recommendations they would make. Son, aged 26 years (P004) shared that he would like further research about the impacts of sons/daughters: “I would be curious to know more about it affects on a child who never fostered or not fostered to fostering.”
under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).*

Social workers may consider methods to engage with sons/daughters into the foster care process. According to this study, there are on average 3.7 biological, adopted, or step-children living within or away of currently fostering homes of study participants. That is a lot of sons/daughters who are not being included within the foster care system. At the policy level, there should be creative ways to include sons/daughters in the decision-making process. This could include more complex questions about sons/daughters in homestudies, more formalized requirements for information about sons/daughters in placement documents and case plans, and perhaps sustainable funding for innovative, evidence-informed support groups (*such as* Mills, 2013).

Social workers may consider all interpersonal relationships that are formed within the fostering process. The frequently referenced fostering triangle – foster parent, birth parent, and foster child – is no longer relevant, as there are many more important relationships for foster children. At the policy level, there should be creative ways to consider the importance of the relationships and connections between sons/daughters and their foster siblings during and post-placement. This could include more formalized requirements for case closures, such as debriefing with sons/daughters and their foster siblings when the placement ends, and perhaps facilitate ongoing contact, if desired by both parties.

### 7.10 Concluding Remarks

Growing up in families that foster is a unique experience for sons/daughters. Research over the past 40 years has attempted to capture that experience, with most of it being student-lead through

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6 The *United Nations Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)* state in Article 12.1 and 12.2 the following rights for sons/daughters: Article 12.1 – States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age of maturity of the child. Article 12.2 – For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceeding affecting the child, either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.
master and doctoral dissertations. Studies tend to use qualitative research designs that use small sample sizes and this limits that transferability of the findings; however, of the research that is available on sons/daughters, the quality and rigor of the studies is good. Intentional focus within research and practices has started to occur on the topic of sons/daughters and how fostering can impact them.

This dissertation research aimed to provide further insight into the (e)motions of sons/daughters throughout their fostering realities. Using a neuroscience lens to illuminate the theoretically sufficient findings, it is apparent that for the fifteen participating young adult sons/daughters that fostering is a relational process. Sons/daughters develop emotional connections with their foster siblings while they are living in their homes and family, but also after their foster siblings have departed their homes. With the frequent arrival and departures of foster siblings, many sons/daughters developed a fostering schema that simply states: foster siblings come into your home, foster siblings live with you, and foster siblings leave. The impact of that fostering schema is then used by sons/daughters to anticipate what future relationships with foster siblings will be like. This leads sons/daughters to be apprehensive and cautious in developing new relationships with foster siblings. Sons/daughters also use that fostering schema to anticipate what their relationships will be like with friends and romantic partners. Good, bad, or indifferent, that appears to be the case for these participating sons/daughters. Emotional connections and relationships tend to be more with family members, in particular their mothers. Data indicates that mothers use a variety of techniques to support their sons/daughters. In particular, Hughes and Baylin (2012) PACE model of: (P)layfulness, (A)ceptance, (C)uriosity, and (E)mpathy.
This study finds that there is much to be learned about sons/daughters and their (e)motions and experiences growing up in families that foster. The research regarding sons/daughters is still unexplored territory within child welfare; however neuroscience may be able to debunk a few myths about this population in the future. Neuroscience has provided hope that the (e)motional impacts of fostering on sons/daughters can be altered and that mothers who continue to use brain-based parenting (through PACE) are building stronger and deeper connections with their sons/daughters. For now, at a practice-level, sons/daughters should continue to explore their (e)motions with the assistance of a supportive adult (e.g., mothers). Social workers should encourage sons/daughters to talk about their (e)motions with others. As Daughter, aged 20 concluded: “I think that feelings are the most natural thing ever. Obviously, you are feeling a certain way because something happened or something didn't happen, and you need to be able to focus in on why that is or might be.”


Clare, M., Clare, B. & Peaty, A. (2006). 'Children who foster’ - The impact on the children of foster carers when foster children reside in foster families. Perth: Foster Care Association of Western Australia Inc. and Centre for Vulnerable Children and Families, University of Western Australia.


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---. (2011). *Qualitative research quality checklist*. University of Toronto, Toronto, ON: Unpublished manuscript.


---. (2012b). *Integration interpersonal neurobiology into our understanding of the emotions and affect of sons and daughters of foster parents* (Comprehensive paper). University of Toronto.


192


---. (2012). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are (second edition)*. New York: Guilford Press.


Appendix A –
Summative/descriptive table about the studies
### Table

Summative/descriptive table about the studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
<th>other study participants</th>
<th>Years of fostering</th>
<th>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</th>
<th>Fostering Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armoer (2005)</td>
<td>Purposive, snowball</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M=35.34</td>
<td>18-52</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>12 male</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Exploring sons/daughters past experiences of the fostering process</td>
<td>Sons/daughters had greater long-term life satisfaction when their parents' used similar parental discipline techniques for both them and the foster child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatty (2007)</td>
<td>Convenience, purposive, snowball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td>20-60</td>
<td>Current/former</td>
<td>3 male</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exploring the emotions of rural sons/daughters relating to their own family, foster child(ren), and child welfare agency</td>
<td>Fostering evokes a range of emotions for sons/daughters throughout the fostering process (e.g., joy, empathy, guilt, neglect), indicating that sons/daughters developed closer relationships with their family members due to fostering, they struggled with feelings of loss when the foster child left their homes, and they felt that they did not have a voice within the child welfare agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blair (1989)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Foster mothers</td>
<td>&lt;1-14, M=2.1</td>
<td>6-15</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Comparing sons/daughters who have fostered and those who are interested in</td>
<td>Sons/daughters who have fostered may be more preoccupied with rejection than sons/daughters who are interested in fostering of the same gender and sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>Type of sample</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clare &amp; Peaty (2006)</td>
<td>Random, purposive</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>2-11</td>
<td>7-26+</td>
<td>Current/former</td>
<td>20 male</td>
<td>16 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Exploring how sons/daughters understand their fostering relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denuwelaere &amp; Bracke (2007)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Foster mother, foster father, foster child</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>M=17, SD=2.61</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>41 male</td>
<td>55 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>Exploring how foster children and sons/daughters identify support and conflict within the foster home</td>
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<td>Diepstra (2007)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>4-19, M=8.8</td>
<td>7-21 M=13.8</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>10 male</td>
<td>12 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Exploring how sons/daughters perceive and experience fostering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doorbar (1999), Doorbar &amp; Associates (2003)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>&lt;1-10+</td>
<td>5-16</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>65 male</td>
<td>80 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>Exploring how to acknowledge the contributions of sons/daughters, along with improving support, communication, and retention of foster families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fox (2001)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>8-23</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>2 male</td>
<td>6 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Exploring the experiences of sons/daughters</td>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Main Study Findings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross (2007)</td>
<td>Purposive, convenience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>10-17 and adults</td>
<td>exploring the rewards of sons/daughters who foster children with severe emotional disorders; Satisfying or dissatisfying fostering experience depend upon the foster child's issues/behaviours. Other factors that effect their fostering experiences were their lack of control over the fostering process, their inability to be themselves due to their different roles/responsibilities (e.g., acting as caregivers towards the foster child), the availability of open communication with their parents, and feeling that their home was not always a safe and nurturing environment. Regardless of their fostering experiences, sons/daughters were all able to identify how fostering had provided them with something (e.g., impressed by their parents' abilities to handle crises).</td>
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<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwynne (1984)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>Foster children</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6-12, M=9.3, SD=1.8</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>14 male</td>
<td>19 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>Examining the self-regard, foster parent perceptions, and family relations of foster children and sons/daughters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatmaker (1993)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Foster parents, foster children, case workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9-21</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>3 male</td>
<td>1 female</td>
<td>Birth, or adopted</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Exploring the relationships and levels of satisfaction within the foster family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heidbuurt (1995)</td>
<td>convenience, snowball</td>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>Children sample 3-7, M=4 Adult sample 4-15, M=8</td>
<td>7-16, and adult approx. 25</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>4 male</td>
<td>5 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Exploring the family boundaries within the foster family</td>
<td>Sons/daughters and foster parents sometimes feel pressured by the child welfare agency to adapt to a specific set of family boundaries that may differ from their preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>Höjer (2007), Höjer &amp; Nordenfor (2004)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9-23</td>
<td>Current/former</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>Exploring the experiences of sons/daughters</td>
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<td>Johnston (1989)</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>Snowball</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8-19</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Exploring the discussions of sons/daughters within a self-help group</td>
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</table>
### GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th>Type of sample</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
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<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaplan (1985),</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>mothers</td>
<td>&lt;1-7+</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>11 male</td>
<td>4 female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Exploring separation anxiety, superego conflicts, and maternal attunement of mothers and sons/daughters</td>
<td>Younger sons/daughters may experience fostering as more stressful than older sons/daughters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaplan (1988)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kraemer (1999)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;1-5</td>
<td>5-20, M=10.4</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>3 male</td>
<td>2 female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exploring what it is like to be a son/daughter of therapeutic foster parents</td>
<td>Sons/daughters shared that being members of a fostering family should mean being consulted before the family decides to foster. They also indicated that fostering involved a change in sons/daughters' roles/responsibilities (e.g., increased responsibilities if the foster child was younger and decreased responsibilities if the foster child was older), having a friend/sibling to interact with in the home, and a feeling a sense of loss when the foster child leaves their home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemieux (1984)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>mother, foster father</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>2-15, M=12</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>6 males</td>
<td>3 female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Exploring the initial adjustment of the foster family to the fostering process.</td>
<td>Sons/daughters felt they had to change their roles/responsibilities within the home in order to accommodate the foster child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Main Study Findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Type of sample</td>
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<td>other study participants</td>
<td>Years of fostering</td>
<td>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</td>
<td>Fostering Status</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</td>
<td></td>
<td>However, foster mothers reported being displeased with her own children's behaviours after starting to foster and also reported feeling less connected to their own son or daughter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MacPhee (1993)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Exploring sons/daughters experiences of fostering</td>
<td>No results are reported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin (1993)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exploring the feelings and conflicts of sons/daughters</td>
<td>Sons/daughters may quickly become peers and/or quasi-caregivers to the foster children in their homes. This meant that sons/daughters learned to put the needs of others first. For instance, sons/daughters had to share their possessions and, if the foster child damaged/destroyed a possession, they had to regulate their own emotions. They also learned to cope with some of the difficult behaviours frequently displayed by children in out of home care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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<td>Type of sample</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauro (1985)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>&lt;1-3</td>
<td>1-18</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Exploring how foster families integrate foster children into their homes, changes to roles/ responsibilities, and changes to relationships</td>
<td>Foster parents may disregard fostering stresses related to their own children in order to quickly incorporate foster children into their home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norrington (2002)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.5-14, M=5.1</td>
<td>7-12, M=9.1</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>9 male</td>
<td>8 female</td>
<td>Birth/adopted</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Exploring the perceptions of latency-aged sons/daughters in order to better understand/support them</td>
<td>Sons/daughters' perceptions about what fostering might be like did not match their actual experience. They struggled with the loss of private time with their parents, were troubled when the foster child left their home, found it challenging to deal with some of the difficult behaviours of the foster child (e.g., aggression, stealing). To cope with these struggles, they tended to isolate themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuske (2010)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>&gt;18-32</td>
<td>Current/former</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Exploring the fostering stories of sons/daughters</td>
<td>Fostering can result in contradictory experiences for sons/daughters. Sons/daughters wanted to share their family with foster children, but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<td>Often struggled with the loss of spending time with their own family. Roles/ responsibilities were frequently imposed onto sons/daughters and they sometimes wanted to escape this added burden. Feelings of caring for foster children was also simultaneously experienced by sons/daughters as resentment that their family fostered because they lost out on 'normal' childhood experiences. Lastly, sons/daughters struggled with deciding to shout in order to have their feelings/ needs addressed within the home or keeping their issues to themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part (1993)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring what sons/daughters felt about fostering Sons/daughters enjoyed being a part of a family that fostered, despite fostering related challenges (e.g., foster children were intrusive; changes to their family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland &amp; Groze (1993)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>Exploring the information foster parents and Sons/daughters were not provided adequate information about fostering or training to deal with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sample</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
<th>other study participants</th>
<th>Years of fostering</th>
<th>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</th>
<th>Fostering Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3-24</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td>0-30, M=7</td>
<td>7-32, M=15</td>
<td>Current/former</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Birth/adopted</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
<th>other study participants</th>
<th>Years of fostering</th>
<th>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</th>
<th>Fostering Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prosciak (1995)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Foster parents,</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9-15</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>To ascertain whether two, two-hour training sessions that discussed issues pertaining to fostering (e.g., separation, loss, abuse, communication) for sons/daughters resulted in a reduction in stress, anxiety, and other negative impacts of fostering on sons/daughters</td>
<td>sons/daughters feel is important prior to fostering some of its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pugh (1996)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social workers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Exploring the perceptions of foster parents and sons/daughters in terms of what they needed prior to fostering</td>
<td>Sons/daughters felt that their preparation to foster was often insufficient and most of the time it was left to their parents to explain; sons/daughters liked fostering because they could</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Author: Reed (1994), Reed (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9 male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the impact on sons/daughters that care for foster children with severe learning disabilities</td>
<td>Sons/daughters can have a positive fostering experience if sons/daughters have quality time with their parents; sons/daughters' fostering roles/ responsibilities are not too onerous; sons/daughters have their own space/ privacy; and sons/daughters could honestly share their feelings with their parents</td>
<td>Son/daughters disliking fostering when they had to share their personal possessions or parental attention, they had to deal with challenging behaviours, and they weren't recognized by child welfare workers; and sons/daughters tended to be exposed to real world difficulties more quickly than their peers because they were exposed to the sometimes disturbing behaviours/ issues of the foster children.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>Type of sample</td>
<td># of sons/daughters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schiefer (1995)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Foster parents, non-foster parents, foster children, non-foster children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>Type of sample</td>
<td># of sons/daughters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spears &amp; Cross</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumner-Mayer</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Foster parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sutton &amp; Stack</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Exploring how sons/daughters adapt to their fostering experiences</td>
<td>Sons/daughters experienced some positive and negative changes within their daily routines when fostering. Sons/daughters were not worried about losing their parents' attention; sons/daughters felt included within the fostering team; sons/daughters perceived themselves in a caregiving role and frequently put others' feelings ahead of their own (e.g., parents, foster child); and sons/daughters felt sadness and loss when foster children left their home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sample</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
<th>other study participants</th>
<th>Years of fostering</th>
<th>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</th>
<th>Fostering Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1 male</td>
<td>5 female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Exploring how sons/daughters adapt to their fostering experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Main Study Findings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan (2000), Swan (2002)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Exploring the most significant issues identified by sons/daughters, how they cope, and the impact of fostering on them</td>
<td>Sons/daughters self-identified as caregivers that were required to be responsible and compassionate; their most significant concerns paralleled those of their mothers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tadros (2003)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Exploring how sons/daughters think and feel about being a part of a fostering family at Wesley Mission, Dalmar Child and Family Care at Castle Hill</td>
<td>Sons/daughters develop deep feelings and attachment towards the foster children as evidenced by disclosures of sadness when a foster child left their home (e.g., to return back to their parents).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twigg (1993), (1994), (1995)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Exploring the influences of foster care on sons/daughters</td>
<td>Some sons/daughters coped with fostering by objectifying the foster child and perceiving them as needy. They also isolated themselves from the fostering experience.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th>Type of sample</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</th>
<th>Years of fostering</th>
<th>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</th>
<th>Fostering Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>van der Riet (2009)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>13 Social workers</td>
<td>&gt;6 months</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>&gt;6 months</td>
<td>11-18, M=15.61</td>
<td>4 male 9 female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Exploring the experiences of sons/daughters and social workers about fostering</td>
<td>Sons/daughters had a positive fostering experience if there was a strong parent-child relationship, open communication, involvement in the decision-making process, and if sons/daughters had volunteer experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walsh &amp; Campbell (2009)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>28 Foster parents</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11-19</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>42+</td>
<td>Identifying the extent to which sons/daughters are incorporated into the policy and practice of local fostering agencies</td>
<td>Sons/daughters were not generally included in policy/practice decisions and there was a lack of consistency on the part child welfare agencies in regards to addressing placement, placement endings, and post-placement contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watson &amp; Jones (2002)</td>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>116 No</td>
<td>4-12+</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Exploring the impact fostering has on sons/daughters</td>
<td>Sons/daughters experienced both positive and negative feelings related to fostering; negative experiences involved the loss of their parents' attention, personal space, and personal possessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younes &amp; Harp (2007)</td>
<td>Convenience, purposive</td>
<td>16 Foster parents</td>
<td>1-14</td>
<td>Current/former</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Exploring the educational, psychological, and (Nope – this was not included)well-being</td>
<td>The effects of fostering on the experience of sons/daughters was mixed. Some expressed that it reduced the amount of time that the family spent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Growing up in Families That Foster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study Design</th>
<th>Type of sample</th>
<th># of sons/daughters</th>
<th>other study participants</th>
<th>Years of fostering</th>
<th>Age of sons/daughters (Yrs)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Fostering Status</th>
<th>Sons/daughters birth or adopted</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Main Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young (2004)</td>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>&lt;1-14</td>
<td>9-15, M=12.2</td>
<td>4 males 1 female</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sons/daughters tried to understand the changes that were occurring in their families with the introduction of foster children and tended to adjust by redefining their family and their role within it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B –
Demographic Questionnaire
## Demographic Questionnaire

### Section 1: Getting to Know You!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What year were you born?</td>
<td>___________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a:</td>
<td>Adopted child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your gender?</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your ethnic or racial background?</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your religious or spiritual background?</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?</td>
<td>No schooling completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If currently enrolled, highest degree received.</td>
<td>Nursery school to 8th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some high school, no diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some college credit, no degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trade/technical/vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you currently:</td>
<td>Employed for wages part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed for wages full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: (please specify):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If employed, are you in the helping profession?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your current marital status?
- Single
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Common law
- Married
- Other: (please specify):

Are you temporarily or permanently moved out of your parents' home?
- Temporarily moved out (e.g., living in student residence)
- Permanently moved out (e.g., living in own residence)

How involved are you in the foster home activities when living outside of the home?
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never
## Section 2: Who are the other sons and daughters of foster parents in your family?

We want to learn more about your siblings, not including any current or long-term foster children. Please fill in each column for each of your siblings. If you require more space to add individuals, please tell the researcher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Currently residing</th>
<th>Highest level of school completed</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>In the home that fosters</td>
<td>Away from the home that fosters</td>
<td>Elementary or middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g.</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section 3: Who are your parents?

Tell the researcher more about your parents who are current foster parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Year of birth</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Currently residing</th>
<th>Highest level of school completed</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g.</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 4: Learning about your family home

In this section, the researcher wants to learn more about your family household.

**What year did your family start fostering in Southern Ontario?**

_______________________________________

**What type of foster care does your family provide to children and youth requiring out-of-home care?**

- Regular
- Treatment
- Specialized
- Not applicable
- I do not know
- Other (please specify): ____________________

**What is the household type of your parents?**

- Single parent household
- Two-parent household
- Three-parent + household

**What is the current household income of your parents’ home that provides foster care, in Canada dollars?**

- Under $20,000
- $20,001 - $39,999
- $40,000 - $59,999
- $60,000 - $79,999
- $80,000 - $99,999
- $100,000+
- I would prefer not to say

**Which of the following best describes the area your parents’ home is located in?**

- Urban area
- Suburban area
- Rural area
- I do not know
Section 5: Learning about the foster children/youth who have been in your home

This is the last section of this questionnaire. The researcher would like to know more about the foster children/youth who have come into your home throughout your fostering experience. Please do not include any identifying information about a specific foster child.

What is the age range of the foster children who have been placed within your home? ___________ years to ___________ years

What gender of foster children does your family take into your home? Check all that apply.
- Female
- Male
- Other

How many foster children have been placed with your family since you have started fostering? Please exclude respite/relief placements. _______

What is the average number of months a foster child stays within your parents’ foster home? _______ months

In your opinion, do majority of the foster children that come into your home have experienced previous in-care placements? Previous in-care placements can include another foster home, group home, and kinship in care.
- Yes. The majority of foster children have experienced in-care placements before coming to our home
- No. The majority of foster children who come into our home have not had prior placements.
- I do not know.

Please list 1-5 reasons why foster children come into your home.
1. _________________________________________
2. _________________________________________
3. _________________________________________
4. _________________________________________
5. _________________________________________

Thank you for completing this demographic questionnaire! Please return it to the researcher.
Appendix C – Interview Guide
Interview Guide

Introduction

I want to have a discussion with you about your fostering experiences today, which may also include some of the emotions you felt about those experiences. I want to hear about your experience in your own words before you became a fostering family, when your family decided to become a foster family, when you started fostering, and your experiences after you have fostered for some time.

This discussion is what is referred to as an open-ended interview. This may be a little different from other interviews that you may have participated in previously; meaning that I will be doing a lot of listening and let you do most of the talking, except for right now during this introduction. It is important to me that you feel comfortable throughout this process. There may be moments of silence and that is alright. This discussion will be exploring emotions and that may make you feel uncomfortable at times. If you need a break, please let me know and we can do so. Your emotional well-being is more important to me than conducting this interview.

There are no right or wrong answers to this interview. I really believe that you know more about your own experiences in being a part of a fostering family than anyone else. I want to understand your perspectives and the significance your experience has had on you. I am truly curious about your experience, so I may have further questions for you about what you have shared, such as asking you to define a word or explain more about the emotions you experienced. By me asking these questions, this will make sure that I accurately understand your experience. I hope that you feel that my questions are ones that are respectful and nonjudgmental.

For this interview, I asked you to bring with you an object that means something to you about your fostering experience (if the participant did not bring an objective: that you created today to illustrate something that means something to you about your fostering experience). If it is alright with you, I would like to start by asking you to tell me about this object and how it connects to your fostering experience. This may include you talking about your emotions, empathy, insight, moral awareness, intuition, bodily sensation, communications; really, it is open to anything you wish to share. After you have completed telling me about your object and fostering story, then if I have further questions or something is not clear I will ask you. But, I would love to hear about your experience right now.

Probe Questions

Note: Probe questions are included in this interview guide; however, depending upon the categories and themes that emerged from the data, the research probe questions may be modified or not all asked (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The probe questions aim to explore the research questions more in-depth, including the transitions with the fostering experience, emotions, and relationships.
Probes: Fostering transitions
• Tell me about your family before they started fostering
• Tell me about how your family decided to become a foster family
• Tell me about when your family started fostering
• Tell me about what it has been like fostering for some time now

Probes: Emotions
• When you had experienced a strong emotion (e.g., upset, frustrated, happy, joyful), what would you do? Please provide an example of a specific time this happened.
• How did you know that you were feeling __________ emotion?
• Tell me about how your body felt when you had that emotion?
• Tell me about a time when you paused before responding to a situation while fostering.
• Tell me about a time when you were dealing with a fostering situation and you thought back to a previous fostering experience to help you anticipate what to do next.
• Tell me about how you learned to handle your emotions when __________.

Probes: Relationships
• Who lived in your home? Describe your relationship with these individuals.
• Did you ever feel pushed away or ignored by _______?
• When, if at all, have you experienced a time when you felt _________ knew how you were feeling? If so, please explain.
• When, if at all, have you experienced a time when you could “see” what others (e.g., foster child, parents, siblings) were feeling? If so, please explain.
• Who has been the most helpful to you during this time? How has s/he been helpful? How has s/he not been helpful?

Probes: Coping, adjustment, adapting
• How has fostering and the emotions involved impacted your adult life?
• Did fostering impact your career choice? If so, please explain.
• When you were experiencing _______ emotion, how did you cope with it?
• How could have _____ (e.g., parents, social workers) helped you to better cope with the emotions that were raised during your fostering experience?
• What advice would you give other sons and daughters of foster parents to help them to manage their emotions?

Ending Questions
• How have you grown as a person since fostering? Tell me about your strengths that you discovered or developed through fostering.
• Is there anything that you might not have thought about or felt about before that occurred to you during this interview?
• Is there anything else you think I should know to understand your fostering experience better?

Check-In

We are at the end of the interview. Thank you so much for sharing your fostering experiences with me! I have learned a lot. Before we say 'good-bye', I wanted to ask how you are feeling about this interview process. [Researcher to listen to participant's response and provide necessary resources, if required].
Appendix D – Recruitment flyer
Do your parents foster?

If you answered **YES**, you may be eligible to participate in this study about growing up in families that foster!

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the emotions and experiences of the sons and daughters of foster parents, aged 18-35 years, who temporarily or permanently live outside of the foster home, and whose family fosters for a children's aid society in Ontario.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to:

(a) Complete a short demographic questionnaire

(b) Bring an object that has meaning for you about your fostering experience to the interview and talk about it; and

(c) Using the researcher’s digital camera, you will take a photograph of the object and write a sentence about it during the interview

In return for your time (approximately 1.5 hours) and sharing your experiences, you will be provided an honorarium of $15.00 for taking part in this study. No travel is required - I will come to your community.

**For more information about this study or to volunteer, please contact:**

**Sarah Serbinski**  
PhD Candidate, University of Toronto  
(647) 385 - 7115 or sarah.serbinski@utoronto.ca

This study has been approved by the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto
Appendix E – Information Sheet
Introduction

My name is Sarah Serbinski. I am a graduate student at the University of Toronto working under the supervision of my thesis supervisor, Professor Robert MacFadden from the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a son or daughter of foster parents and I would like to learn about your fostering experiences.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the emotions and experiences of sons and daughters of foster parents. Fostering has many emotional ebbs and flows. What are the emotions you felt throughout your fostering experience? How do you cope with your emotions related to fostering? I am inviting sons and daughters of foster parents across southern Ontario to participate in this study to learn more about their whole fostering experiences.

What is involved in participating in the study?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be invited to participate in a 1 to 1.5 hour, in-person interview to talk about your experiences as a member of a fostering family. Before you begin the main part of the study, you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire about you and your family. During the main part of the study, you will discuss your fostering experiences. To help with that discussion, prior to the interview, you will be asked to bring an object that has meaning for you about your fostering experience. This object may be whatever you wish (e.g., photograph, a t-shirt, necklace). After you have talked about your object and fostering experiences, you will be asked to take a digital photograph of the object with the researcher's camera and then write a sentence about it. Approximately 3-4 weeks after the interview, with your permission, the researcher would like to follow-up with you for 10-15 minutes by telephone about the information that you shared.
Are there benefits to participating in this study?

There is no direct benefit to you anticipated from participating in this study; although, many sons and daughters of foster parents have reported enjoying the opportunity to talk to others about their experiences in past studies. It is hoped that the information gained from the study will help sons and daughters of foster parents, foster parents, foster children, and social workers better understand the emotions and experiences of sons and daughters of foster parents throughout their fostering experiences.

Are there risks to participating in this study?

The probability that you will suffer harm as a result of the study can only be assessed on an individual-to-individual basis. There have been no reports within previous publications that sons and daughters of foster parents have experienced discomfort or harm as a result of talking about their fostering experiences. With that said, the process of reflecting on your emotions and answer questions about your fostering experiences may trigger uncomfortable feelings. You are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to, or to end the interview.

To minimize these risks, throughout the interview, the researcher may ask you how you are feeling about the interview process. At the end of the interview, the researcher will inquire if you would like to be connected to a support service, such as a counseling agency in your neighbourhood. You may also privately contact the Ontario Mental Health Helpline for free health services information in your area at 1-866-531-2600 or online at http://www.mentalhealthhelpline.ca; contact your Employee Assistant Plan to seek out resources (if applicable), or talk to a supportive individual (e.g., family, friend). With your permission, the researcher would like to re-connect with you 3-4 weeks post interview by telephone for 10-15 minutes to see how you are feeling about the interview and the information you shared.

Is the information I give confidential?

As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, the researcher is taking precautions to minimize this risk. Any information you give the researcher will be handled as confidentially as possible. All of the data will be aggregated (‘rolled up’). If results of the study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used. The researcher may use non-identifying quotations from the collected interviews in the dissertation and/or dissemination activities; however, your comments will not be directly attributed to you. Please know that if you tell the researcher information about suspected child abuse, elder abuse, or intent to hurt yourself or others, the researcher is required by law to make a report to the appropriate authorities. Although unlikely, it is possible that there is a court ordered release (e.g., subpoena) of the data.

To minimize the risk to confidentiality, the researcher will keep all electronic data (e.g., audio-recordings, transcribed data, photographs) on the researcher's private, secure network and saved in a password protected computer. Access to these files are restricted to only the researcher. All hard-copy data (e.g., signed consent forms) will be kept in the personal research office of the researcher in a locked filing cabinet. No data will ever be kept at any child welfare agency. All data will be kept confidential, under the supervision of the researcher. The data are kept for seven years after the study has been completed and then will be destroyed.
Will I be compensated for doing the study?

In return for your time and sharing your experiences, you will be provided an honorarium of $15.00 for taking part in this study. The money will be provided directly to you at the interview. Please note that if you discontinue study participation you will still receive the full honorarium.

Do I have to participate?

This is a voluntary study. This means that it is your choice to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you can refuse to answer any question and you can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. If you decide against participating, your decision will be respected. If you consent to participate in the study, but then withdraw from the study, you will be asked by the researcher if they can keep your non-identifying information that you provided from the screening process (e.g., that you are a son or daughter of foster parents). The information about arranging the interview (e.g., name, telephone number) will be destroyed within 24-hours of notification from you. All information that you shared during the interview before you withdrew from the study will be destroyed.

If you choose to participate within the study, please know that you may withdraw your consent at any time, up to the point when the researcher destroys the master list of participant names that are matched to their non-identifying ID codes (anticipated for March 2014). After the last participant has completed the interview and follow-up telephone call (if applicable), the master list will be destroyed. When this master list is destroyed, it will be difficult for the researcher to match you to your comments. The master list is destroyed because this personally identifying information is no longer needed by the researcher.

Further know, your parents and affiliated child welfare agency will not be informed of your decision to participation or not, nor will they be provided a copy of your individual responses.

Who will see my photographs?

A number of different people, associations, and/or agencies may see your photographs within this province, country, and perhaps internationally as well. With your permission (by signing the Photograph General Release Form), your photographs will be used with the other forms of data collected (e.g., interviews, photographs, captions) to assist in the data analysis process and when presenting the findings of the study. You maintain the copyright to your original digital photography images.

How do I find out the results of the study?

The results of this study will be made available to the public in a variety of methods, including (but not limited to) the final dissertation, articles, conferences, and/or presentations. Each participating child welfare agency and provincial association will receive a copy of the findings in the form of a research report and/or presentation. If you would like to receive a copy of the Executive Summary, you may either contact the researcher directly or indicate on the Consent Form that you would like the researcher to email you the Executive Summary when it is available.
I have a question about this study. Who do I contact?

If you are interested in participating within this study, or if you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the principal investigator, Sarah Serbinski at (647) 385 - 7115 or sarah.serbinski@utoronto.ca.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights and treatment as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Toronto, at (416) 946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca
Appendix F – Consent Form
Growing up in families that foster:
Exploring the (e)motions of young adult sons and daughters of foster parents

Sarah Serbinski, MSW
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
PhD Candidate
Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
University of Toronto
246 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1
Tel.: 647.385.7115
sarah.serbinski@utoronto.ca

Robert MacFadden, PhD
THESIS SUPERVISOR
Associate Professor
Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
University of Toronto
246 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1
Tel.: 416.978.5818
robert.macfadden@utoronto.ca

The purpose of this consent form is to indicate that:

- You have read the Study Information Sheet and Consent Form (or it has been read to you) and you fully understand what it says and the purpose of the study.

- All of your questions regarding the study have been answered. You know that you can contact Sarah Serbinski, principal investigator, at any time, to answer any question you may have about the study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the Office of Research Ethics for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Toronto, at (416) 946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

- You are aware of all your choices and understand that you have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time without consequence, up until the point that the master list (i.e., a list that contains a participant’s name that matches s non-identifying ID code) is destroyed.

- You understand any potential benefits and risks associated with this study.

- You understand that research notes will be taken during the interview by the researcher. All identifying data will be deleted from the notes, and the notes will become part of the data that will be analyzed.

- You understand the researcher has taken precautions to minimize the risk that confidentiality could be compromised. The researcher will not reveal your identity. Your affiliated child welfare agency or parents will not be advised if you participated in this study.

- You voluntarily consent to participate in this study and you acknowledge that you have received a copy of the Study Information Sheet and a signed copy of this Consent Form for your own records.
Audio-recording the interview

The interview will be audio-recorded, with your permission. The purpose of audio-recording the interview is to accurately capture all of the information you talked about during the interview. This information will then be transcribed and analyzed to form the data for this research. While researcher notes will also be written during the interview, the notes alone may miss important details to your story.

You understand that you can ask at anytime that the audio-recording device be turned off at particular times of the interview, for any length of your choosing. You can also verbally inform the researcher during the interview of certain statements that you would not like to be included within the analysis or dissemination activities.

Do you consent to having your voice recorded during the interview:   Yes [ ]  No [ ]
(Please check the appropriate box):

Participant’s Initials:  ______________________

Brief Follow-Up Telephone Interview

To ensure the accuracy of your interview, the researcher would like to follow up with you about 3-4 weeks after this interview. If you consent to this process, you will be asked: (a) review the transcript of the interview by email, and (b) check that the researcher has accurately understood your fostering experience through a telephone conversation that will take approximately 15 minutes.

Do you consent to participate in the follow-up process:   Yes [ ]  No [ ]
(Please check the appropriate box):

Participant’s Initials:  ______________________
Participant’s Email:  ______________________
Telephone Number:  ______________________

Finding Out the Results of this Dissertation

The study is anticipated to be completed by August 2014. There are many different ways that the study findings will be disseminated into the community (e.g., peer review articles, conferences, presentations to CASs). As a participant of this study, if you would like a copy of the Executive Summary emailed to you once it is available, this is an option.

Do you consent to being emailed the Executive Summary?   Yes [ ]  No [ ]
(Please check the appropriate box):

Participant’s Initials:  ______________________

If yes, please include your email address:
______________________________________________

Note: Email information will ONLY be used to provide you a copy of the Executive Summary.
Appendix G –
Photograph General Release Form
GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER

PHOTOGRAPH GENERAL RELEASE FORM

Growing up in families that foster:
Exploring the (e)motions of young adult sons and daughters of foster parents

Sarah Serbinski, MSW
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
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Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
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Tel.: 647.385.7115
sarah.serbinski@utoronto.ca

Robert MacFadden, PhD
THESIS SUPERVISOR
Associate Professor
Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
University of Toronto
246 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M58 1A1
Tel.: 416.978.5818
robert.macfadden@utoronto.ca

I, ________________________________________, give permission for Sarah Serbinski, a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto to use and publish the digital photographs that I took of my object that represents something meaningful to me about my fostering experience during the interview. However, if the photograph is of someone (e.g., a photograph of you and your family), or something (e.g., picture of your home) that is identifiable, your photograph can not be used within any dissemination activities.

You may choose to withdraw your consent at that time. In doing so, your photograph(s) will be removed from research and not made public. To withdraw your consent, please immediately contact Sarah Serbinski, principal investigator. However, if you withdraw your consent after the photograph(s) have been published into materials, journal articles, conference materials, presentation materials, and educational awareness materials, unfortunately, the researcher will no longer have the ability to remove the photograph(s) as it will be in the public domain.

Please know that by giving permission for the researcher to use and publish your photographs, it does not guarantee that such action will take place. The decision to disseminate the findings will also have to take into consideration the other participants within the study and what opportunities are available.

I consent to having the photograph(s) I took of my objects about fostering during the interview to be used in this study and the study dissemination activities (such as dissertation, article submissions, conferences, presentations).
Participant’s Name: ____________________________________________________________

Please print clearly

Participant’s Signature: ______________________________________________________

Identification of Photographer (optional)

You understand that your original digital photographs are your property as the individual photographer. If you want your name to be included with your photographs, there is no safeguard to protect your privacy. This may result in unwanted exposure to your pictorial expression of your fostering object.

If you want your name to be included with your digital photographs, that is your choice. Please indicate below if you want to be identified as the photographer and how you wish to be identified (e.g., first name only).

You consent to having your name included with your photographs: Yes ☐ No ☐
(Please check the appropriate box):

If yes, please indicate how you wish to be identified: ____________________________

Participant's Signature: ______________________________________________________
Appendix H –
Member-Checking Tool
Growing up in families that foster:
Exploring the (e)motions of young adult sons and daughters of foster parents

INTERVIEW MEMBER-CHECKING TOOL

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<td>ID code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Sarah Serbinski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of follow-up:</td>
<td><strong>/</strong>/****</td>
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This follow-up is to make sure that I have accurately understood your emotions throughout the fostering transitions. The information has been taken from the transcript of our interview. Please review and indicate whether or not the information is accurate. Many thanks!

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Emotion words</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Accurate</th>
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<td>Before you became a fostering family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When your family decided to become a foster family</td>
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<tr>
<td>When you started fostering/ arrival of foster child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living as a family that fosters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departure of a foster child/ sibling from your home</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No longer residing within the fostering home</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Questions:
1. How are you feeling since our interview about your fostering experiences?
2. Any additional emotions missed within this review?
Copyright Acknowledgments
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Bonnie Badenoch <bonniebadenoch@mac.com>

Jan 29

Hi, Sarah - This looks great to me! Best of everything, Bonnie

On Jan 29, 2014, at 11:47 AM, Sarah Serbinski wrote:

> January 29, 2014
> Dear Bonnie Badenoch:
> I am a University of Toronto graduate student completing my Doctoral thesis entitled “Growing up in families that foster: Exploring the (e)motions of young adult sons and daughters of foster parents.”
> My thesis will be available in full text on the internet for reference, study and / or copy. Except in situations where a thesis is under embargo or restriction, the electronic version will be accessible through the U of T Libraries web pages, the Library’s web catalogue, and also through web search engines. I will also be granting Library and Archives Canada and ProQuest/UMI a non-exclusive license to reproduce, loan, distribute, or sell single copies of my thesis by any means and in any form or format. These rights will in no way restrict re-publication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you.
> I would like permission to allow inclusion of the following material in my thesis:
> The material will be attributed through a citation.
> Please confirm by email that these arrangements meet with your approval.
> Sincerely,
> Sarah
> Sarah Serbinski, MSW, PhD Candidate
> Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work
> University of Toronto
> 246 Bloor Street West
> Toronto, ON, Canada
> M5S 1V4
> sarah.serbinski@utoronto.ca
GROWING UP IN FAMILIES THAT FOSTER

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- **Account Number:** 300074796  
- **Organization:** sarah.serbinski  
- **Email:** sarah.serbinski@utoronto.ca  
- **Phone:** +1 (647) 385-7115  
- **Payment Method:** Invoice

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