

## ABSTRACT

### PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL WORKERS' PERSONAL FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES REGARDING SIBLING PLACEMENTS IN FOSTER CARE

A descriptive study was conducted that examined the social workers' personal feelings of their sibling relationship(s) and what impact they have on their professional practice within a public child welfare agency. Questionnaires were developed and conducted with 47 social workers who had been employed with the agency from 2 months to over 20 years. The majority of the respondents had favorable relationships with their sibling(s) and therefore wanted to take every possible step in their professional practice to keep siblings placed together in foster care. The social workers expressed that despite their best practice intentions, barriers within the agency beyond their control prevented them at times from placing siblings together. Suggestions for the public child welfare agency would be to implement a protocol when placing siblings in foster care, establishing a functional plan to maintain sibling contact if siblings become separated in the foster care system.

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