



“Well, my kids always come first”: A preliminary examination of the role of children in the lives of women who misuse opioids

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OVERVIEW

- ~40% of adults with an opioid use disorder (OUD) live with children
- Women with OUD are more likely to be living with children, and to be their caretaker, relative to men with OUD
- Yet, there is a paucity of research exploring the role of children in the lives of adults who misuse opioids, particularly women

PURPOSE

- To highlight the role of children in the experiences of women who misuse opioids

METHODS

- Research team members completed in-person, semi-structured interviews
- *Inclusion criteria:* participants had to be 18 years or older, identify as a woman, and had to have misused any opioid within the previous six months
- The interview guide included questions related to a participant’s social network: it asked about the people who were most important and to describe their relationships with them
- All interviews were transcribed verbatim
- Open and axial coding were used to identify preliminary themes.
- Constant comparative methods were used to explore the role of children in the women’s experiences

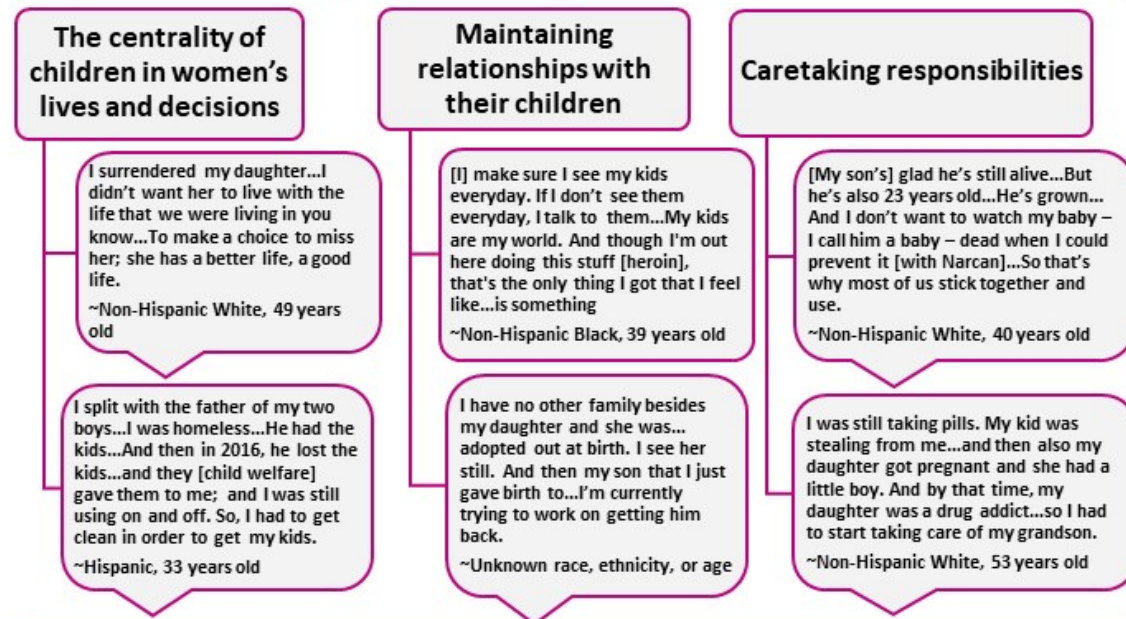
Table 1. Sample characteristics (n=26)

Age, mean (range)	41 years (22 – 58)
Race/Ethnicity	15 (58%) Non-Hispanic White
Geographic area	16 (62%) Urban
Education level	16 (62%) High school diploma or GED

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RESULTS

Figure 1. Preliminary themes and representative quotes



DISCUSSION

- Many women who misuse opioids have children and describe them as important to their lives
- Our findings indicate that children – and related caretaking responsibilities – are central to women’s opioid misuse and recovery experiences
- Interventions that seek to maintain or regain child custody should be prioritized
- Family-based treatment options may also be especially relevant for women who misuse opioids, particularly approaches that can engage adult children with substance use disorders