

*Pathways to Service:
Visual Mapping of Barriers and
Access to LA Nonprofits*

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In collaboration with...

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Locating myself

- ❖ Over 6 years of social work practice experience in various non-profit organizations in Southern California & Portland, Oregon
- ❖ A-R-T (Artist-Researcher-Teacher) and Activist
- ❖ Pedagogical Approach in the Classroom
 - appreciate embodied, creative and experiential ways of knowing
 - value the co-construction of knowledge
 - support creative representations of knowledge as a form of challenging hegemonic ways of knowing, learning and sharing

Research Literature on Access to Services & Barriers to Services

- ❖ Kissane (2003) evaluated nonprofit organization success after welfare reform. Findings suggested that clients lacked knowledge of nonprofit services, often could not reach the physical nonprofit organization, faced stigma for service access, and frequently experienced bureaucratic struggles in receiving services.
- ❖ Awareness of services was more likely when there was a high density of nonprofit organizations in an area, leading to increased confidence and utilization of the services available (McDougle & Lam 2014). When individuals were capable of accessing services they were likely to experience an organization that lacked cultural and racial diversity.
- ❖ Weisinger, Borges-Mendez, and Milofsky (2016) argue that current nonprofit staff members lack the diversity of their client-base. A lack of representative diversity in nonprofit organizations may lead to a reduction in successful client interactions.

Research Literature on Access to Services & Barriers to Services (cont.)

- ❖ Burg, Zebrack, Walsh, Maramaldi, Lim, Smolinski and Lawson (2009) examined barriers to accessing quality health care for cancer patients.
 - These researchers found that barriers could be understood as falling under three categories: health system (such as inadequate health insurance), social/environmental (inability to pay for treatment services) and individual-level barriers (client's fears and distress).

- ❖ Allard (2004) found that the biggest barrier to accessing services was related to the changing urban geography of poverty and service provision. For example, the location of social service providers did not always match well to the changing demographic composition of cities.
 - On average, poor populations in urban centers had greater spatial access to social services than poor populations living in suburban areas.
 - However, the shifting geography of concentrated poverty (as marginalized populations become less concentrated in a few central city locations) and the transformation of government assistance from cash to services, increased the importance of the location of non-profits, requiring greater attention from policymakers and service providers.

The Project

❖ Who:

☞ 27 Graduating undergraduates Sociology students fulfilling their internship requirement (240-hours at a non-profit organization)

❖ What:

☞ Exploration of client's pathways and barriers to service at Los Angeles non-profit organizations through an interview and visual mapping methodology

❖ Where:

☞ Sociology Social Welfare & Social Justice Option

☞ Supervised Field Instruction (internship class)

❖ When:

☞ Fall 2015 through Spring 2016

Data Collection Instructions

- ❖ The project was requirement assignment (with an option to include the visual map in our data collection)
 - IRB approval was obtained

- ❖ Students were:
 - * Told to interview a client at their non-profit organization
 - * Instructed to pay attention to the client's pathway to accessing service at the agency and identify any barriers the client encountered along the way
 - * Given full creative control over the medium and method of how to represent their client's pathway

- ❖ Provided examples of visual maps to students

- ❖ Engaged in-class small group discussions to help the students flesh out their visual mapping ideas

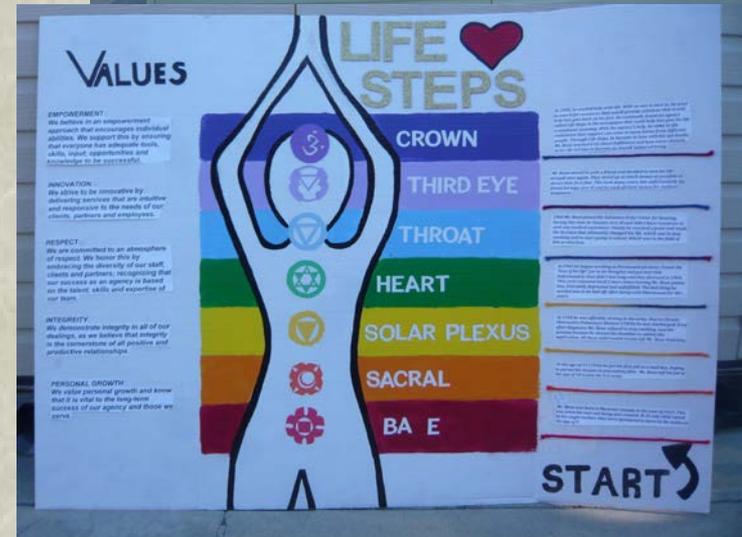
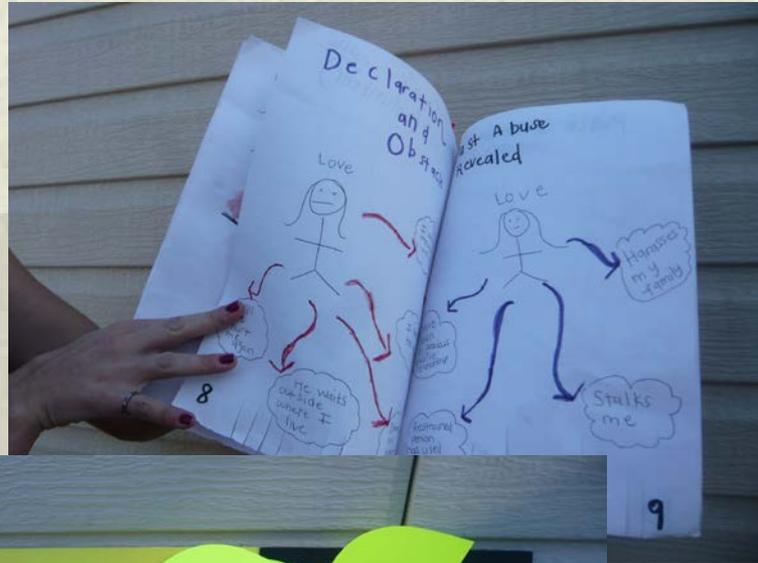
Visual Mapping Methodology

- ❖ Also known as “concept mapping” and “mind mapping”
- ❖ A means to document emerging phenomenon visually in ways that words or other creative forms are incapable of doing (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010)
- ❖ A creative methodological practice that links and locates data to one another with the aid of images and illustrations (Budd 2004)
- ❖ Addresses complex and often subtle interactions and...provides an image of those interactions in ways that make them noticeable (Barone, 2011)
- ❖ Useful for documenting the relational aspects of data (Wheldon, 2010)
- ❖ Its multimodal forms allow us to convey diverse experiences to a larger public (Puwar & Sharma 2012)

The Visual Maps as Data



The Visual Maps as Data



Presenting the Data



Data Limitations

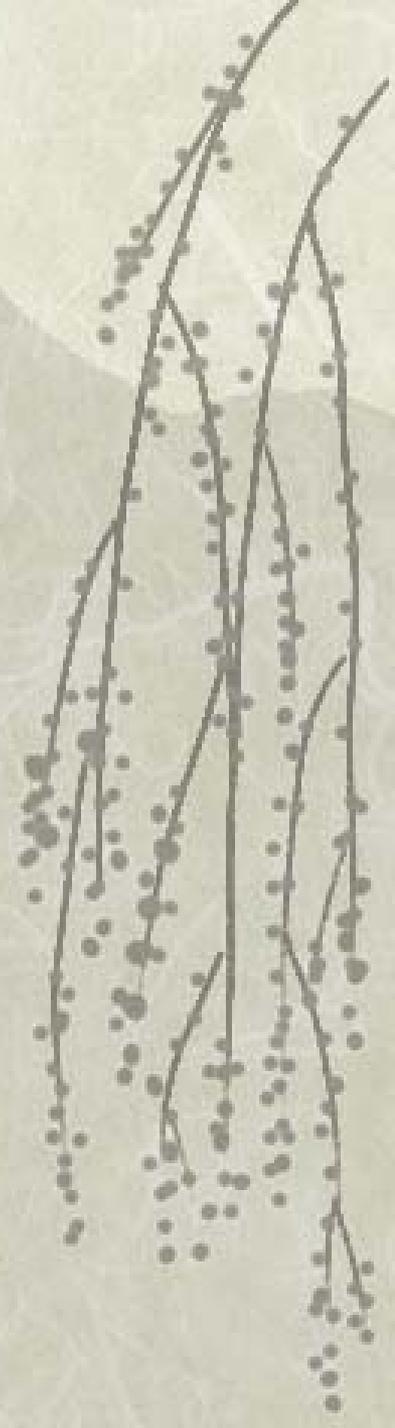
- ❖ Some of the visual maps lacked pertinent details and needed explanation
- ❖ A few students lacked confidence with constructing creative modes to represent client's journeys
- ❖ The quality of the visual maps and how to grade them
- ❖ Time limitations
- ❖ Power of representation—what does it mean to tell another's story

Gathering the Data

- digital images of each student's visual map
- descriptive essay of the their visual maps
- agency power analysis paper that provided a context of:
 - the power structure within each agency
 - the agency's process for decision-making and service allocation
 - other factors that would provide a deeper understanding for what structural factors played a role access to client services

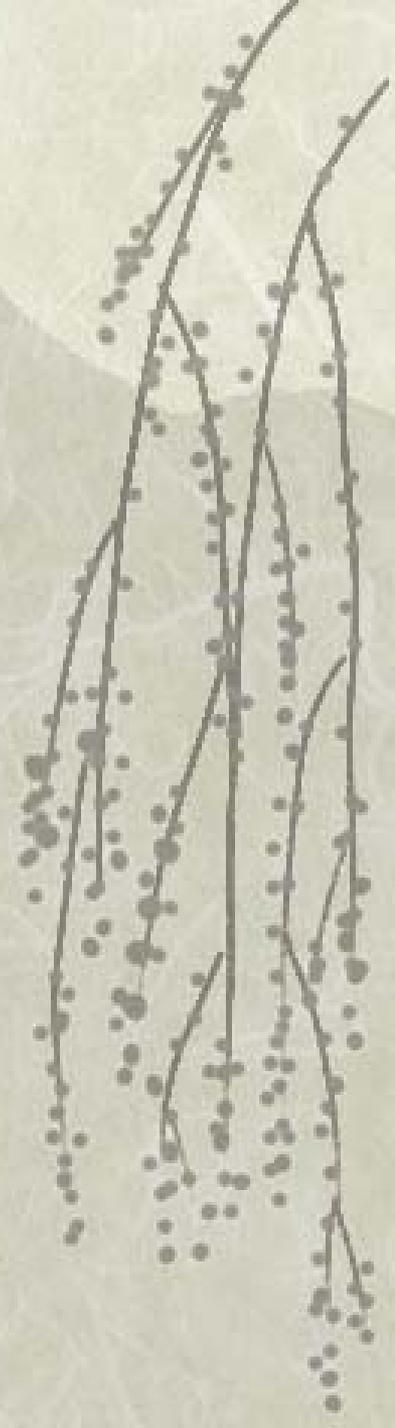
Analyzing the Visual Maps

- ❖ Data was first organized into folders according to collective categories that emerged:
 - Child/Family Services
 - Homelessness
 - Domestic violence,
 - LGBTQIA
 - Education
 - Gerontology
 - Low-income families
- ❖ With each case folder we searched for barriers and pathways to nonprofit services
 - Each researcher created extensive notations within these folders that highlighted the trajectory of a client in their attempt to access resources
 - These notations were then triangulated by our fourth researcher who identified key themes that appeared in each collective category

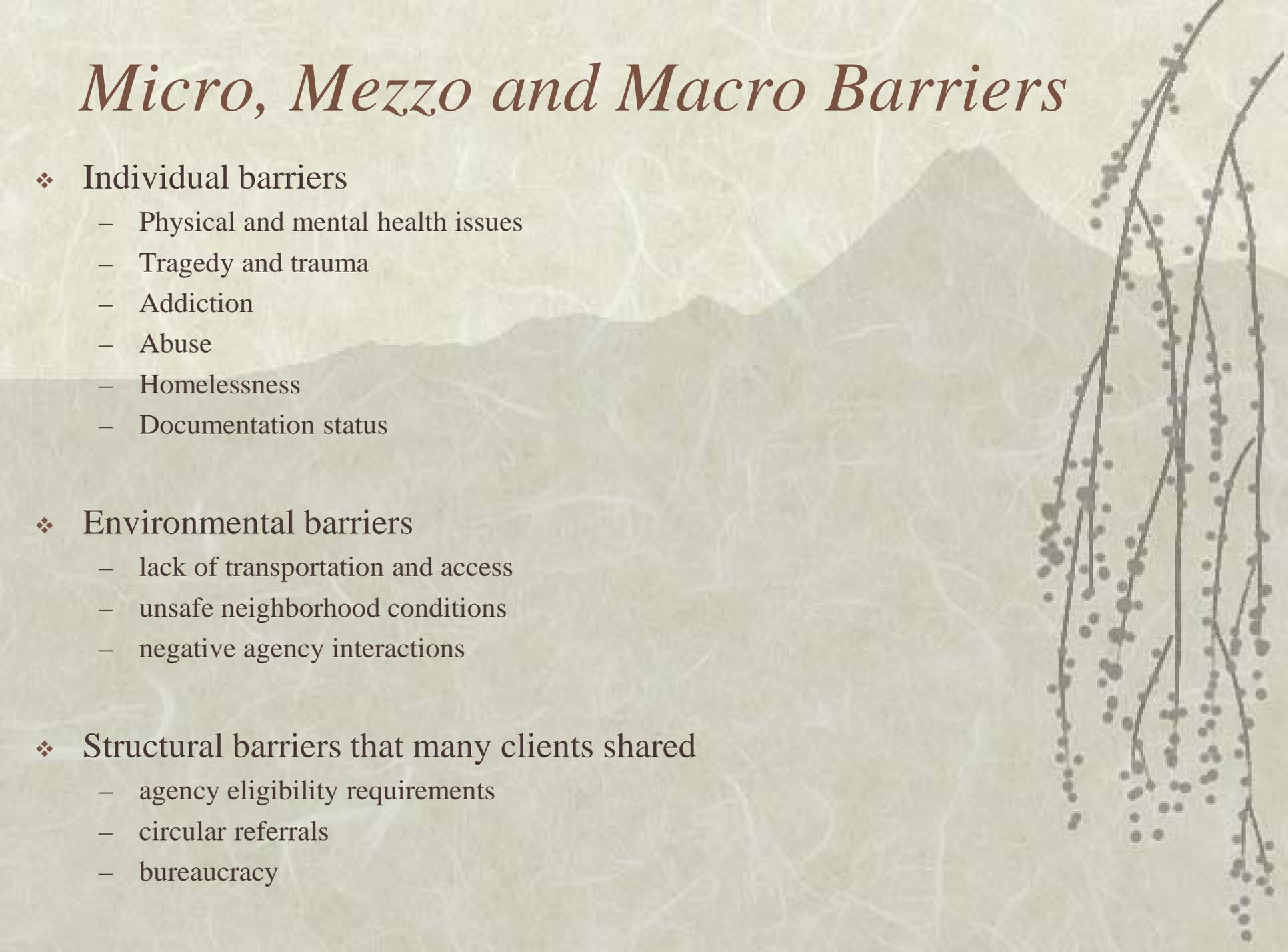


Analyzing the Visual Maps

- ❖ Within each annotated folder, we pulled out the moments that demonstrated a barrier or pathway to service
- ❖ Every instance of a barrier or pathway was placed into a master coding sheet with the corresponding quote
- ❖ This sheet was then further fragmented into the various agency types we analyzed
 - At that point we had a coding sheet for each agency type that presented quotes that presented barriers and pathways to agency services
- ❖ This master coding sheet was then utilized to conduct a detailed content analysis to assess the themes present in each collective category of non-profit organization



Micro, Mezzo and Macro Barriers

The background of the slide features a soft, sepia-toned image of a mountain range with a prominent peak in the center. On the right side, a branch of a willow tree hangs down, adorned with small, dark, round buds or leaves. The overall aesthetic is calm and natural.

❖ Individual barriers

- Physical and mental health issues
- Tragedy and trauma
- Addiction
- Abuse
- Homelessness
- Documentation status

❖ Environmental barriers

- lack of transportation and access
- unsafe neighborhood conditions
- negative agency interactions

❖ Structural barriers that many clients shared

- agency eligibility requirements
- circular referrals
- bureaucracy

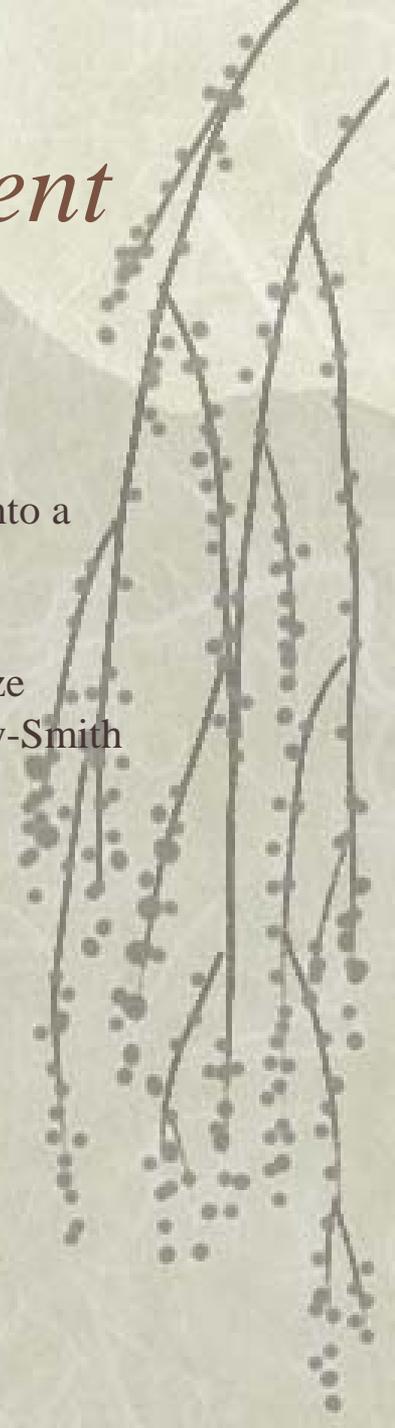
Barriers to Access across Agencies

Table 1. Recurring Themes of Barriers Service Across Agency Types

Theme	Description
Eligibility	Participants were often turned away from agencies because they did not meet the requirements for entry (children, gender, age, citizenship status).
Transportation	Participants often noted that the agencies were too far away from their homes and were inaccessible by public transit.
Negative Agency Interactions	Participants suggested that they often felt as if they were disrespected or discriminated against by agency staff.
Knowledge of Agency	Participants found it difficult to find agencies that would serve their needs.

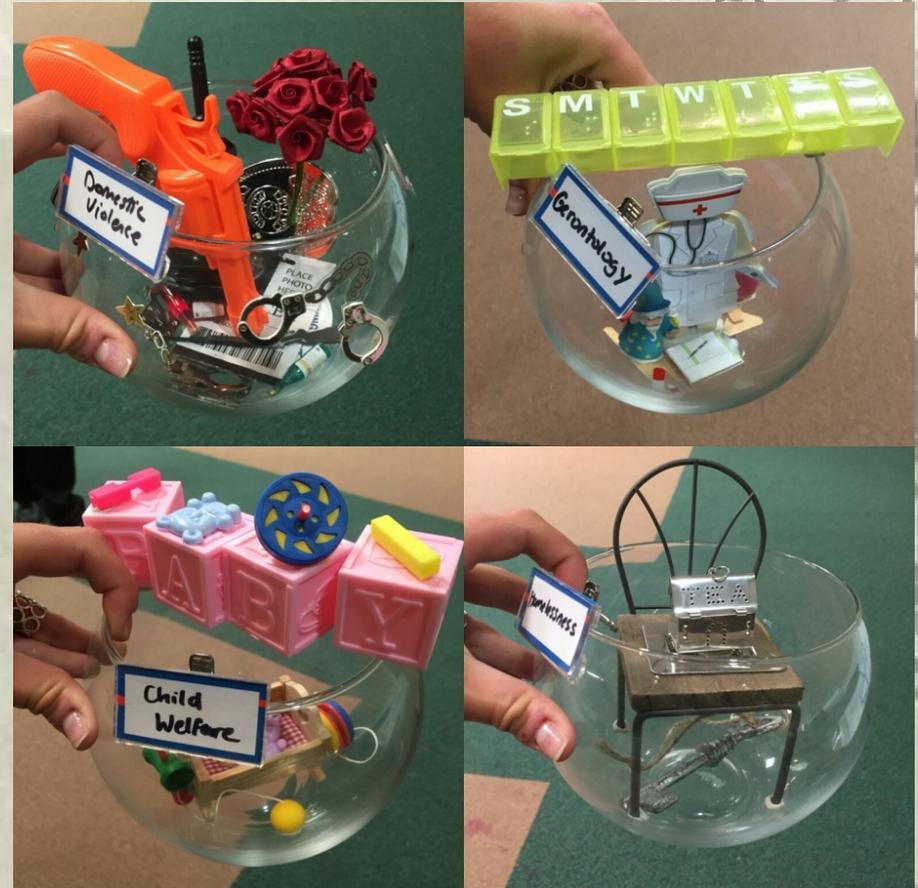
Using Installation Art to Represent the Visual Mapping Data

- ❖ A mode of production that encompasses a conglomerate of objects configured into a specific space (Peterson, 2015; Sullivan, 2006)
- ❖ A multimedia art form provides researchers with the opportunity to conceptualize human phenomena into a three-dimensional representation (Green, 1996; Percey-Smith & Carney, 2011)
- ❖ Cultivates a modality of experience characterized by a multi-sensory feeling of presence (Petersen, 2015)
- ❖ By being able to interact with the installation piece, viewers become part of the creation process



Creating Art to Represent the Data

- ❖ We created fishbowls for each agency type (i.e. LGBTQIA youth-oriented agencies)
- ❖ These fishbowls represented the various types of agencies that interviewed clients utilized
- ❖ The interiors contained various found objects that represented the respective organization type
 - While each fishbowl had a tag identifying what agency category it represented, we wanted the bowls to be unique enough to overtly represent these categories
- ❖ With this in mind, we decorated the insides of the bowls with objects that, when interpreted together, could tell a hypothetical story of a client who encountered said agency category.
 - These fishbowls were meant to demonstrate simultaneous pathways (visually seeing into it) and barriers (it is still stuck behind glass walls)



Creating Art to Represent the Data

These agencies were then physically linked to their location in geographic space on a map of Los Angeles using colored string.

Each string was given tags that were indicative of the pathways and barriers we had noted in our analysis of data.

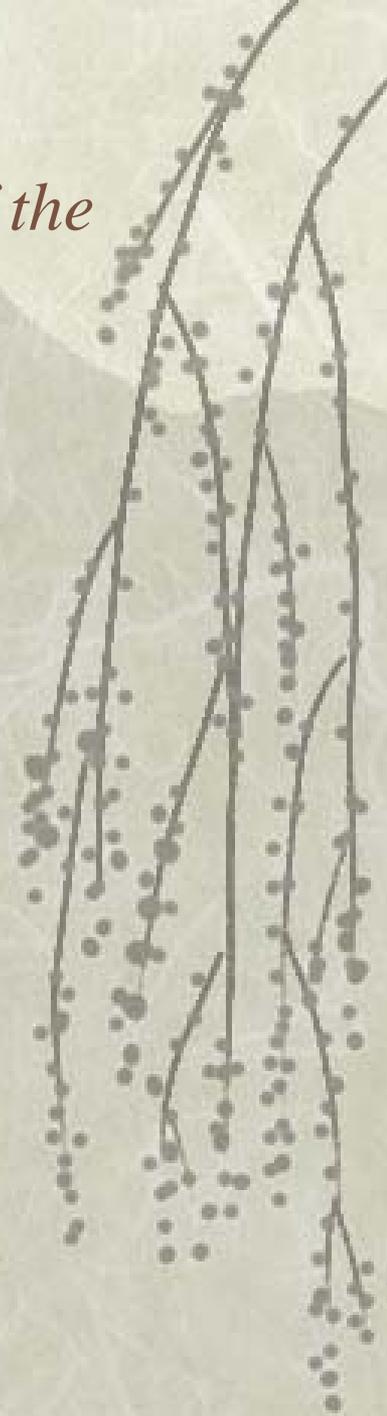
Every angle that this piece was viewed at showed a different understanding of how these agencies existed.

The only way one could understand any agency was to actively view that string and the theme tags associated with them.

This method of construction would encourage the viewer of the art to consider the complex and multi-layered issues within each type of agency.



Installation art: One cohesive visual map of the pathways & barriers to service



Interpreting the installation art

❖ tags represent barriers to service

<u>THEMES</u>	STRING (Pathways) COLOR
Child/Family Services	Yellow
Homelessness	Purple
Domestic Violence	Blue
LGBT	Brown
Education	Pink
Gerontology	Green
Low Income Families	Black

Creating Art to Represent the Data



Limitations of this Research

- ❖ while mapping can illuminate data, it can simultaneously hide a lot of activity or life experiences
- ❖ the visual maps did not incorporate each client's intersecting identities and those structural factors that play a role in their lack of access to barriers and pathways to service
- ❖ there was limited viewing of the installation art by individuals with the ability to change any of the structural issues we noted through our findings
- ❖ although our research team did reach a wider audience beyond academia, there was little direct impact on the institutions that we studied
- ❖ logistical issues
 - Expensive to implement (art supplies)
 - Time-consuming
 - Difficult to analyze and represent the data

Strengths of this Research

- ❖ Emphasizes freedom to create knowledge through art-making
- ❖ Visual maps center the client's voice and lived experience
- ❖ Visual maps engage undergraduate & graduate student's learning and critical thinking through the opportunity to engage in research (data collection and representation)
- ❖ Visual maps and installation art allows embodied research experience attending to various levels of meaning, representation, and creativity
- ❖ Visual maps and installation art allow the dissemination of research findings to an audience beyond academia
- ❖ Installation art provides an embodied understanding of the dimensions of organizations

Implications for Non-Profit Organizations

- ❖ Sanvely and Tracy (2000) found that non-profits built on existing networks of collaboration that were constructed on personal relations among organization leaders and staff and on the inclination of organizations to collaborate because of resource constraints.
 - Collaboration between non-profits can be most easily accomplished:
 - at the level of information sharing, client referral, interagency problem solving (with respect to individual clients they shared), and devising procedures for serving each others' clients
 - Non-profit collaborations can be more intentional by providing incentives, leadership, guidance and mandates

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the students to contributed their data

and to the participants who shared their stories

Thanks for Listening! 😊

