



Domestic Violence Shelters and Outreach in Non-urban Locations

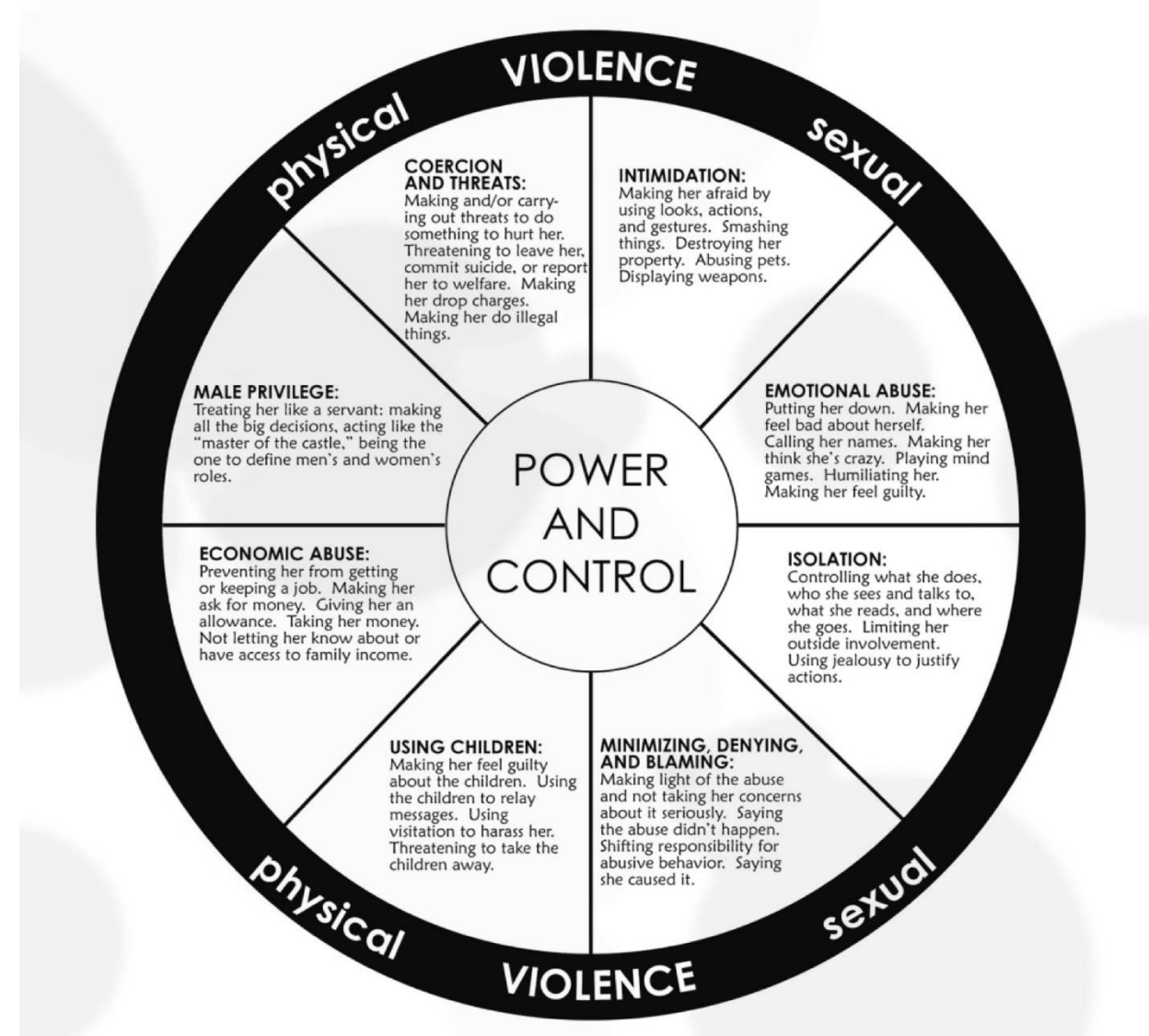
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Introduction

- About 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced domestic violence in the United States (Smith et al., 2018).
- Domestic violence is defined as behaviors (emotional, physical, spiritual, sexual, and others) used by one person in a relationship to control the other.
- Previous research has identified an association between clients accessing services and geographic location (Eastman & Bunch, 2007).
- Research exploring the relationship between geography and domestic violence primarily examines client perspectives, experiences, and opinions, forming a gap regarding perceptions of program administrators, staff, and volunteers.



Aim of Research

- To explore the ways in which domestic abuse service providers understand and respond to challenges from working in non-urban locations

Methods

- Participants: 5 domestic violence service providers
- Requirements for participation: currently employed at an anti-abuse organization located in Western Wisconsin
- Field notes taken throughout a 14-week period
- Semi-structured interviews via phone, Zoom, or face-to-face
- 18-20 interview questions in the following categories (adapted from Eastman & Bunch, 2007):
 - Perceptions of the Self
 - Perceptions of the Service Consumer
 - Perceptions of the General Public
 - Perceptions of Inter- and Intra-agency Issues
- Analysis involved thematic coding using NVivo software to identify key themes and challenges relating to accessing and providing services given a rural locality

Results

Treemap of Thematic Coding Results

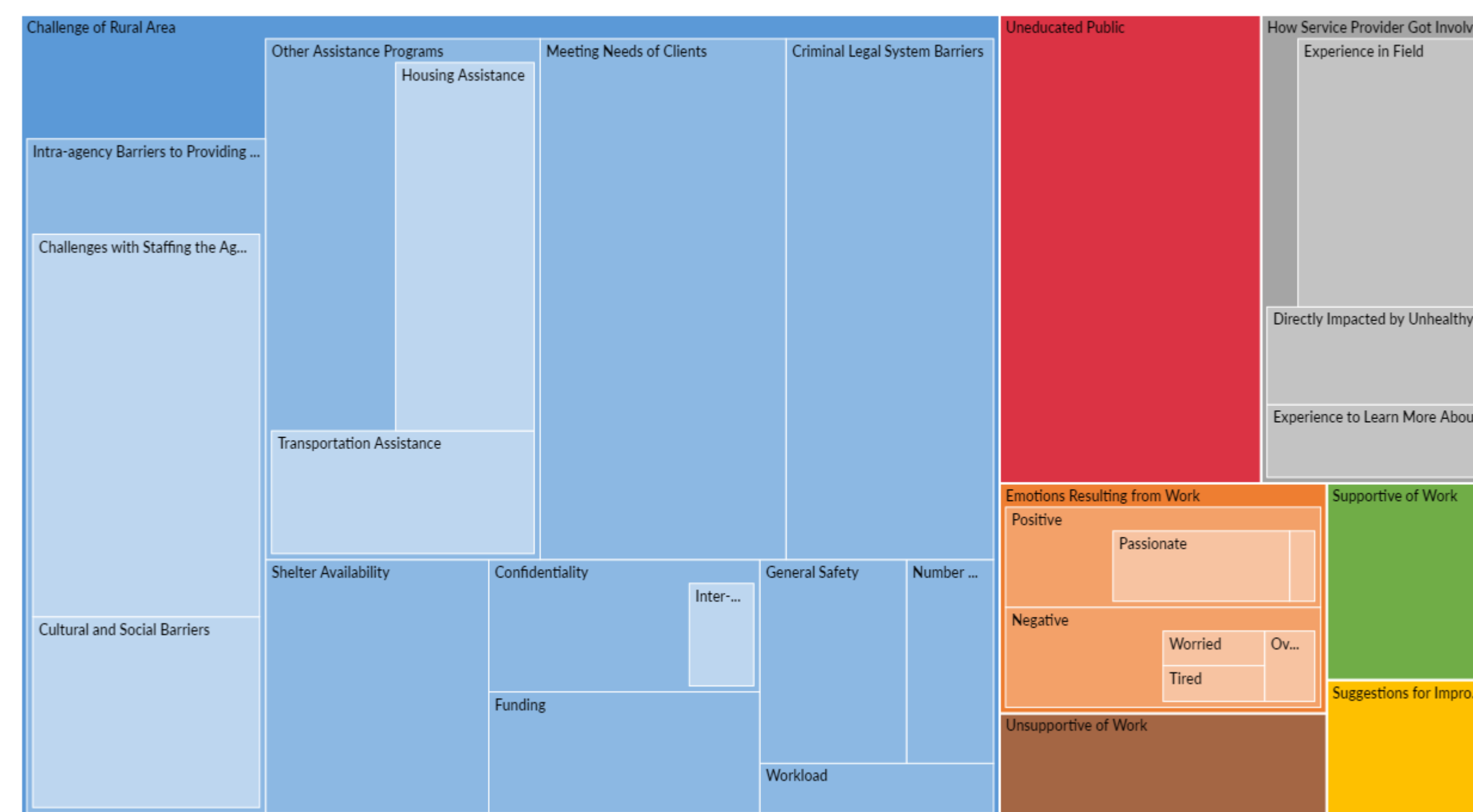


Figure 1: Hierarchy Chart of Codes. Size of the rectangle corresponds to code prevalence. Distinct colors represent parent codes, and lighter hues represent child codes. For example, Cultural and Social Barriers is a sub-category of Intra-agency Barriers, which are both within the parent code Challenges of Rural Areas.

All interviewees stated that service providers for rural areas have a more difficult time meeting the needs of clients than service providers for urban areas.

Percent Coverage for Child Codes within Challenges of Rural Areas

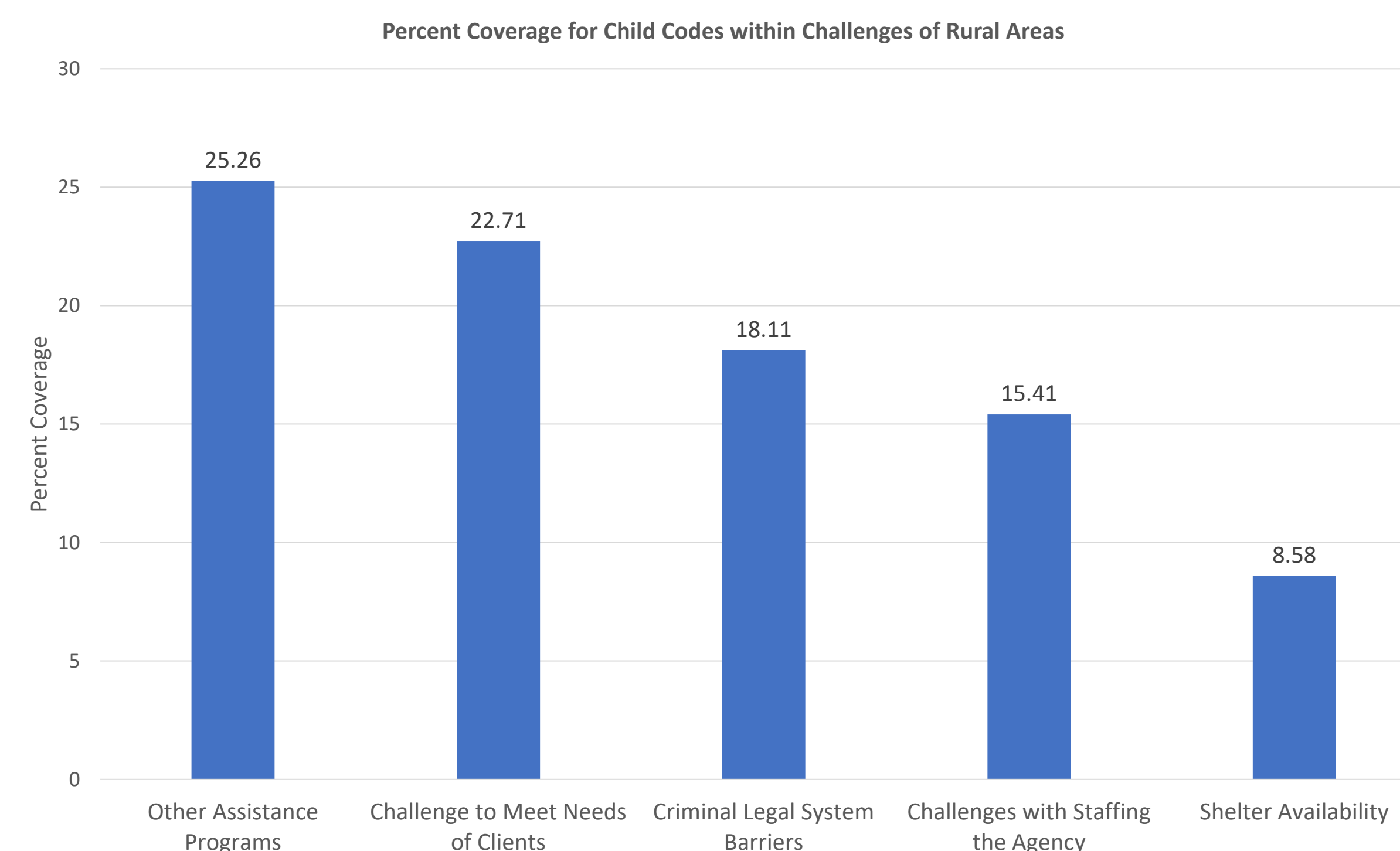


Figure 2: Percent of Total Transcripts Coded to Child Codes within Challenges of Rural Areas. Other Assistance Programs includes housing and transportation. Meeting the Needs of Clients includes unbalanced service demand and available resources. Criminal Legal System Barriers includes legal documents, court activities, and police encounters. Challenges with Staffing the Agency includes turnover, burnout, and livable wages.

Conclusions

- Overall, the most prominent themes include challenges of rural areas (68.99%) and the uneducated public (14.32%).
- Within the challenges of serving rural areas, other assistance programs (25.26%), meeting needs of clients (22.71%), and criminal legal system barriers (18.11%) were the most frequent themes, highlighting the structural impediments to clients achieving a flourishing life.

“And then those main players [court officials] aren’t as educated in domestic violence or don’t see that power dynamic that’s being played within the legal system. So it’s almost like going through that abuse all over again.”

- All interviewees discussed victim-blaming (8.54%) as an issue in the community.

“Whether they be in law enforcement...the officers at this point, know them by name, because they get DV [domestic violence] calls consistently for this pair...they just see it as this choice the victim is making.”

- In response to these challenges, service providers suggested increasing service provider wages (3.00%) and improving housing availability for clients (2.06%).
- Limitations include a small, single-center, non-random sample.
- Future research could examine the comparison of rural service provider perspectives to urban service provider perspectives.

Acknowledgements

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References

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