Understanding Clinical Staff Turnover & Strategies for Increasing Staff Retention

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Welcome
Outline of Presentation

- Welcome
- Turnover – Advantages and Disadvantages
- Factors That Decrease and Promote Staff Retention
- Description of Study and Study Results
- Strategies to Decrease Turnover
“Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.”
— Mary Anne Radmacher
Turnover occurs when employees leave their position of employment (Bliss et al., 2010).
Social service and mental health organizations 30% to 60% (Bliss et al., 2010)

Public and private child welfare agencies 20% to 40% (Auerbach, Schudrich, Lawrence, Claiborne, & McGowan, 2014)

Private not-for-profit agencies in child welfare (including RTC’s) 30% to 50% (Claiborne, Auerbach, Zeitlin, & Lawrence, 2015)

Connor et al. (2003) found 46% turnover in RTCs
Comparison to Other Human Services Fields

- Teaching 13.2% (Young, 2015)
- Nursing 12.0% (Young, 2015)
Advantages and Disadvantages to Staff Turnover

**Advantages**
- Eliminate employees who are not a good fit for the organization
- New employees bring new perspective and opportunity for organization growth
- Increase employee productivity and quality of care

**Disadvantages**
- Decrease organizational knowledge and synergy in the work environment
- High financial cost to the organization
- Increased workload and burnout for staff
- Poor client outcomes
Tremblay, Haines, and Joley (2016) studied staff turnover in RTCs and found high staff turnover resulted in:

- Negative impact on the therapeutic alliance and quality of clinical care
- Shorter lengths of stay suggesting unsuccessful discharges
- Increased number of subsequent stays in RTCs
- Youth requiring services in state custody for longer lengths of time
Factors I decided to study...

- Burnout
- Vicarious Trauma
- Perception of Work Environment
- Self-Care
Burnout is a form of job stress that was originally associated with human services and caregiving occupations and has been expanded to include many other occupations including the financial industry, law, and other technology and customer service professions. (Maslach, 2017)
Three dimensions of burnout

(Maslach & Jackson, 1981)

- Emotional and Physical Exhaustion
- Cynicism/Depersonalization
- Diminished Experience of Efficacy

Burnout
Primary Causes of Burnout

- Job Overload
  - Too many hours
  - Too many tasks
  - Too many clients

- Too few social supports
  - Time
  - Money
  - Staff
  - Technology

- Poorly Defined or Conflicting Work Roles
Work Conditions in RTCs That Contribute to Burnout (Evces, 2015)

- Multiple tasks
- Long hours
- Role ambiguity
- Client needs outweigh resources
Repeated empathic engagement with another’s trauma–related thoughts, memories, and emotions results in changes in a person’s beliefs about themselves, others, and the world (McCann & Pearlman, 1990).
**Disrupted Psychological Schemas – Constructivist Self Development Theory (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Concerns about safety for self and others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do I feel reasonably safe?  Do I believe my loved ones are safe?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Trust in self and others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do I believe I can trust my own judgement?  Do I believe I can trust or depend on others?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Feelings of control</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do I feel I have control over my own life?  Do I believe I can influence others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Esteem for self and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Am I proud of who I am? Do I believe others deserve my respect?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intimacy</th>
<th>Feeling connected to self and others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do I believe I am good company for myself? Do I believe I can be close to others?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Affects of Vicarious/Secondary Trauma  (These are examples, not an exclusive list)

- Judgement – professional boundaries, questionable ethical judgement
- Decreased ability to tolerate strong affect (irritability, anger outbursts, overwhelmed)
- Decreased self-awareness
- Increased sensitivity to violence
- Decreased self-care activities
- Feelings of despair, hopelessness
- Intrusive imagery
- Social withdrawal
Secondary Traumatic Stress and Compassion Fatigue also describe the impact of working with traumatized clients.

People engaging in empathic engagement can experience PTSD symptoms that mirror the symptoms of the traumatized individual (Figley, 1995).
Symptoms of Secondary Traumatic Stress/Compassion Fatigue

(Inwell, Nelson, Dardell, & MacNeil, 2016)

- Intrusive thoughts
- Traumatic memories
- Nightmares associated with client traumas
- Insomnia
- Chronic irritability or angry outburst
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Avoidance of clients and client situations
- Hypervigilant or startled reactions towards stimuli or reminders of client trauma
92% of youth in RTCs have experienced multiple traumatic events (Zelochoski et al., 2013).

66% of youth in secured juvenile facilities reported some form of abuse and nearly one third reported multiple forms of abuse (Veysey, 2008).

Youth entering residential care have experienced an average of 2.3 traumas and almost half have experienced three or more traumatic events (Harr et al. 2013).

Common childhood traumas include physical, sexual, and verbal abuse; separation from family or loss of a parent; witnessing domestic violence; community violence; chronic and severe neglect; caregiver substance abuse and other impairment; and multiple moves or placement disruptions (Briggs et al., 2012; Harr et al., 2013; Kagan & Spinazzola, 2013).
Work Environment Factors in this Study Included:

- Compensation
- Workload
- Work Hours
- Relationships with peers and supervisors
- Availability of resources
- Training
- Nature of job tasks
- Organizational Climate
Self–Care

Actions or experiences that help to promote and maintain counselor well-being (Bradley, Whisenhunt, Adamson, & Kress, 2013).
# Three Categories of Self Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Care</th>
<th>Nurturing Ourselves</th>
<th>Escape Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Healthy habits</td>
<td>• Being gentle with ourselves, positive self talk</td>
<td>• Activities that allow you to escape from work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work/Life Balance</td>
<td>• Focus on pleasure and comfort</td>
<td>• Engage in fantasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal Boundaries and Limits</td>
<td>• Relaxation</td>
<td>• Get away from painful feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connection with Others</td>
<td>• Play</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Professional Self Care Scale Subscales

- Professional Support
- Professional Development
- Daily Balance
- Life Balance
- Cognitive Awareness
Description of the Study

Outreach
- Contacted directors from 245 RTCs in the U.S.
- Participant responses from 24 states
- Total sample size 131

Data
- Survey Monkey to gather data through an online survey
- Survey measured independent variables and the dependent variable
- Data Collected 8/27/18 – 11/21/18

Participants
- Provisionally and fully licensed professional counselors
- Counselors, MFTs, and clinical social workers
- Providing counseling to youth RTCs
- United States
Demographic Information

- **Gender**: 85.5% Female; 13.7% Male
- **Race/Ethnicity**: 90% Caucasian/Non-Hispanic White; 3.8% Black/African American; 3.1% Hispanic; 1.5% Asian; <1% Arab–American; <.1% Pacific Islander
- **Type of Degree**: 44.3% Social Worker; 33.6% Mental Health Counselor; 13% Other Counseling Degree; 9.2% Marriage and Family Therapy
Demographic Information Cont.

- **Type of RTC**: 78.9% Private Nonprofit; 17.7% Private for Profit; 3.9% State Run Facility

- **Time Spent**: 86% five day per week; 6.1% four days per week; 4.5% seven days per week; 1.5% 6 days per week

- **Age**: Mean age ($M$) = 37 with a range of 23 to 67

- **Years of Experience**: Mean years ($M$) = 6 with a range from < a year to 38 years
Results

Descriptive Statistics

- Perceived Working Conditions Scale (PWCS, Thompson, Amatea, & Thompson, 2014) study participants were moderately happy to happy with their work environment.

- ProQOL – 5 (Stamm, 2010) participants experience average level of burnout and average to low average levels of vicarious trauma.

- Professional Self Care Scale (PSCS, Dorociak, Rupert, Bryant, & Zahniser, 2017) participants engage in several self-care activities.

- Intent to Leave Child Welfare Scale (ILCW, Auerbach, Schudrich, Lawrence, Claiborne, & McGowan, 2014) intent to leave/turnover high in the study participants.
## Results

### Correlations Between Study Variables

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perception of Work Environment</th>
<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Vicarious Trauma</th>
<th>Self-Care</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Work Environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.561**</td>
<td>-.279**</td>
<td>.364**</td>
<td>-.378**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>-.561**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.619**</td>
<td>-.618**</td>
<td>.321**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious Trauma</td>
<td>-.279**</td>
<td>.619**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.355**</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Care</td>
<td>.364**</td>
<td>-.618**</td>
<td>-.355**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.244**</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Burnout

- There was a significant relationship between burnout and turnover

- There was a significant relationship between burnout and all five subscales on the self-care scale (professional support, professional development, life balance, cognitive awareness, daily balance)
Perception of Work Environment: There was a significant relationship between perception of work environment and turnover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nine items on the PWCS had an almost perfect correlation with turnover</th>
<th>The atmosphere at my work setting is collegial.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I receive the administrative support that I need to care for clients.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My boss is reasonable in her/his demands.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>My coworkers seem discouraged and overwhelmed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I believe that the organization I work for doesn’t care about my well-being.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The size of my caseload is reasonable given the other commitments that I have at my work setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have the training I need to work effectively with each of the clients on my caseload.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Effective client treatment is a top priority in this work organization.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Staff in my work setting are open to trying new innovative counseling approaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Care: There was a significant correlations between self-care and turnover

Three subscales on the PSCS had a significant relationship with turnover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Support</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Balance</td>
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</table>
Professional Support Included:

- maintaining a professional support system
- cultivating professional relationships with colleagues
- avoiding workplace isolation
- sharing positive work experiences with colleagues
- share work-related stressors with colleagues
Professional Development Included:

- Taking part in activities that promote professional development
- Taking part in work related social and community events
- Connecting with professional organizations in the community that are important to me
- Finding ways to stay current in professional knowledge
- Maximize time in professional activities I enjoy
Daily Balance Included:

- taking breaks throughout the day
- taking some time to relax each day
- avoiding over-commitment to work responsibilities
Vicarious Trauma

- There was not a significant relationship between vicarious trauma and turnover.

- Turnover scale made up of 3 subscales – thinking, looking, and acting.

- There was a significant relationship between vicarious trauma and thinking about leaving but not looking or acting on leaving.

- There was a significant relationship between vicarious trauma and all five scales on self-care scale.
## Results of Regression Analysis

- **Burnout** significantly predicted turnover
- **Perception of work environment** significantly predicted turnover
- **Self-Care** significantly predicted turnover
- **Vicarious trauma** did not significantly predict turnover; Vicarious trauma significantly predicted think about leaving
Strategies to Address Staff Turnover

supported by the findings of this study and other research
Provide quality and consistent supervision
Provide Quality and Consistent Supervision

Supporting Evidence and Other Research

- Subscale supervisory/administrative support on the PWCS had a significant relationship with turnover (Edmonds, 2019)

- Employees who feel supported by supervisors are more likely to stay (Benton, 2016; Boyas et al., 2013; McFadden et al., 2015)

- Employees with less experience required more direct support while employees with more years of experienced required more autonomy to remain in their positions (Boyas et al., 2012; Claiborne et al., 2015)

- Trauma informed supervision recognizes the impact of working with high needs and traumatized clients (Knight, 2018)

- Supervision increased feelings of hopefulness in clinicians working with traumatized youth (Lipschitz–Elhawi, 2009)

- Supervisor support had a significant relationship with decreased symptoms of burnout (Steinlin et al., 2017)
Promote team building and staff development
Promote Team Building and Staff Development

Supporting Evidence and Other Research

- Subscale co-worker support on the PWCS had a significant relationship with staff turnover (Edmonds, 2019)

- Professional relationships (share positive and challenging work experiences with colleagues, avoiding workplace isolation, take part in work related social events, maintain a professional support system, cultivate work relationships) on the PSCS had a significant negative relationship with staff turnover (Edmonds, 2019)

- Communication and support within a team had a significant relationship with fewer vicarious trauma symptoms (Steinlin et al., 2017)
Provide training and opportunities for professional development
Provide Training and Opportunities for Professional Development

Supporting Evidence and Other Research

- Professional development subscale on the PSCS had a significant relationship with turnover (Edmonds, 2019)

- On the PWCS the item “having the training to effectively work with clients” was almost perfectly correlated with turnover (Edmonds, 2019).

- Employees who felt more prepared and trained for their positions were more likely to stay (Boyas et al., 2013).

- Staff members who felt inadequately trained experienced more burnout (Lakin et al., 2008).
Examine workload and role ambiguity issues within the organization
Examine Work Load and Role Ambiguity Issues Within the Organization

Supporting Evidence and Other Research

- The subscale workload on the PWCS had a significant relationship with turnover (Edmonds, 2019).

- Claiborne et al. (2015) found a significant relationship between job overload and role ambiguity and intent to leave for clinicians, supervisors, and administrators.

- Some researchers found that increased work hours increased turnover (McFadden et al., 2015) and others (Benton, 2016) found they decreased job turnover.

- Lower caseloads had a significant relationship with retention in child welfare workers (Shim, 2014).
Provide work incentives
Provide Work Incentives

Supporting Research

- Positive reinforcement and positive performance evaluations decreased turnover (Connor et al., 2003).

- Employees who took advantage of tuition reimbursement and other incentives had less turnover (Connor et al., 2003).

- Adequate financial compensation and raises decreased turnover (Connor et al., 2003).

- Opportunities for advancement decreased turnover (Connor et al., 2003).

- Emphasis on rewards had a significant relationship with retention in child welfare agencies (Shim, 2014).

- Satisfaction with contingent rewards was predictive of retention (Schudrich et al., 2013)

Does anyone want to share incentives you have found effective in your organization?
Give employees a voice in the organization
Give Employees a Voice in the Organization

Supporting Research

- Lack of influence within the organization increased intention to leave (Boyas et al., 2013).

- Participation within the organization and transparency within the organization had a significant relationship with decreased burnout (Steinlin et al., 2017).

- Staff members who perceived fairness related to allocation of resources, work performance incentives and consequences; and having a voice in the agency had decreased intention to leave (Kim et al., 2012).
Encourage self-care to decrease burnout and vicarious trauma
Encourage Self–Care to Decrease Burnout and Vicarious Trauma

Supporting Evidence and Other Research

- Burnout and vicarious trauma negatively impact how professionals felt about their jobs and enjoyment of their work (Steinlin et al., 2017).

- Eastwood and Eklund (2008) found that support at work and escape self–care activities decreased vicarious trauma and spending time with family decreased burnout.

- Personal self–care strategies such as taking a break, taking time to eat, drink or use the bathroom, being able to delegate and say “no”, regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and spending time in nature decreased burnout and vicarious trauma symptoms (Steinlin et al., 2017).

- Boyas et al. (2013) found a significant relationship between burnout and turnover and that newer employees reported more emotional and physical exhaustion and older employees reported more cynicism/depersonalization with their clients.

- Self–care that promotes professional relationships, professional development, and daily balance may be the most significant for decreasing turnover (Edmonds, 2019).

- Self–care decreases burnout and vicarious trauma. All five subscales (professional development, professional relationships, daily balance, life balance, cognitive awareness) had a significant inverse relationship with burnout and vicarious trauma (Edmonds, 2019).
Questions?
Thoughts?
Ideas?
References


References


References


References


