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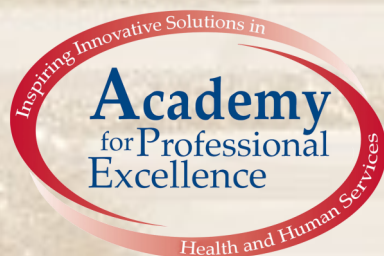
Literature Review: Recruitment and Retention in Health and Human Services

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Introduction

In the health and human services field, recruitment and retention is an issue that has interested researchers for many years. This field is full of professionals who work on the frontline of service, who many times are plagued with secondary trauma, burnout, and general job stress. On the other hand, these individuals also provide support, a path to resiliency, and positive outcomes to those clients that they serve. Research has found that high turnover in this field is a concern, for the financial cost that the organization must endure and, arguably more concerning, negative outcomes on the families being served.

A substantial portion of the research in this area of recruitment and retention in the human services field focuses on child welfare services, where turnover is high and where the impact on families from this turnover is worrisome. The financial cost to employee turnover and the negative implications of social worker attrition can have serious effects on families being served. Research found that children with one caseworker had a 74.5% chance of permanency compared to 17.5% for children with two workers, and 5.3% for children with three workers (Flower et al., 2005).

Personal and organizational factors that impact worker attrition will be addressed in this review of the literature, as well as strategies to effectively recruit and retain employees in the public sector, many of whom are child welfare workers. Examples of personal factors impacting retention include commitment to child welfare, education, family/work balance, job satisfaction, and professional recognition. Some common organizational factors include dissatisfaction with salary, workload, supervisory support, administrative support, coworker support, working conditions, and promotion potential.

This report is designed to review the current recruitment and retention problems in public health and human services, with a focus on child welfare services, where a majority of the research in this field is. The research will discuss realistic job previews, and creative recruitment, hiring, and orientation strategies in human services. It will also focus largely on child welfare studies that address the current problems and strategies associated with recruiting and retaining case workers in the field. There is a substantial portion of research in child welfare that specifically discusses the role of supervision in retaining staff and studies that address this issue are discussed. Furthermore, specific topics that add to the research will be presented such as strategies for increasing retention of eligibility workers, using design teams in child welfare, addressing workload management, burnout and wellbeing, recognition strategies, and lastly Return to Work programs for employees, their coworkers, and the agency.

A. National Report on Recruitment and Retention Problems and Strategies

American Public Human Services Association [APHSA]. (2005). *Report from the 2004 Child Welfare Workforce Survey*. Washington, D.C.

The following information lists the reported recruitment, turnover, and retention problems and strategies as reported from the Child Workforce Survey. Note that this information is specific to child welfare and not the broader health and human services field.

APHSA Reported Recruitment Problems (in descending order of importance)

1. Perceived imbalance of demands of job and financial compensation
2. Starting salaries are not competitive with comparable positions
3. Other attractive labor market alternatives for job seekers
4. Budget constraints other than hiring freezes or restrictions
5. Hiring freezes or restrictions
6. Negative media reports

APHSA Reported Recruitment Strategies (in descending order of effectiveness)

1. University-agency training partnerships and/or stipends for students
2. Job announcements posted on web sites
3. Early and aggressive recruiting at social work schools
4. Emphasized continuing education/training and supervision opportunities within agency
5. Increased personal contact with potential candidates to encourage their application

APHSA Reported Preventable Turnover Problems (in descending order of importance)

1. Workloads too high and/or demanding, e.g., stress, being overwhelmed, etc.
2. Caseloads are too high
3. After hours and unpredictable work interfere with personal and family life
4. Too much time spent on travel, transport, paperwork, etc.
5. Insufficient service resources for families and children
6. Workers do not feel valued by agency
7. Problems with quality of supervision
8. Insufficient opportunities for promotion and career advancement
9. Low salaries

APHSA Reported Preventable Turnover Strategies (in descending order of importance)

1. Increased/improved in-service training
2. Increased educational opportunities, e.g., MSW
3. Increased/improved orientation/pre-service training
4. Provided technology, e.g., cell phones, laptops
5. Improved professional culture throughout agency
6. Enhanced supervisor skills
7. Implemented new child/family intervention strategies
8. Increased workers feeling valued/respected by agency
9. Increased worker safety

10. Implemented flex time/changes to office hour
11. Regularly sought and used employees' views
12. Improved physical office/building space
13. Special efforts to raise workers' salaries
14. Increased workers' access to service resources

APHSA Reported Reasons for not Implementing Strategies (in descending order of importance)

1. We couldn't implement any strategies that required new resources
2. Agency staff did not have authority to implement strategies
3. Strategies need to be customized to unique needs of local offices
4. Crises in child welfare prevented agency staff from focusing on improvements
5. We had no consensus on which specific strategies would improve outcomes
6. CFSR and PIP process prevented agency staff from focusing on improvements
7. We had no confidence that these strategies would improve our recruitment/retention outcomes

APHSA Reported Important Factors for Retention (in descending order of importance)

1. Good supervision, with a supervisor who cares about the worker as a person
2. An agency mission/purpose that makes workers feel their jobs are important
3. Dependable management support of and commitment to workers
4. Worker's self-efficacy [self-belief in success]
5. Worker's human caring
6. Fair compensation and benefits
7. Reasonable number of cases
8. Manageable workloads
9. Opportunities for workers to learn and grow professionally

APHSA Reported Important Agency Actions and Initiatives for Retention (in descending order of importance)

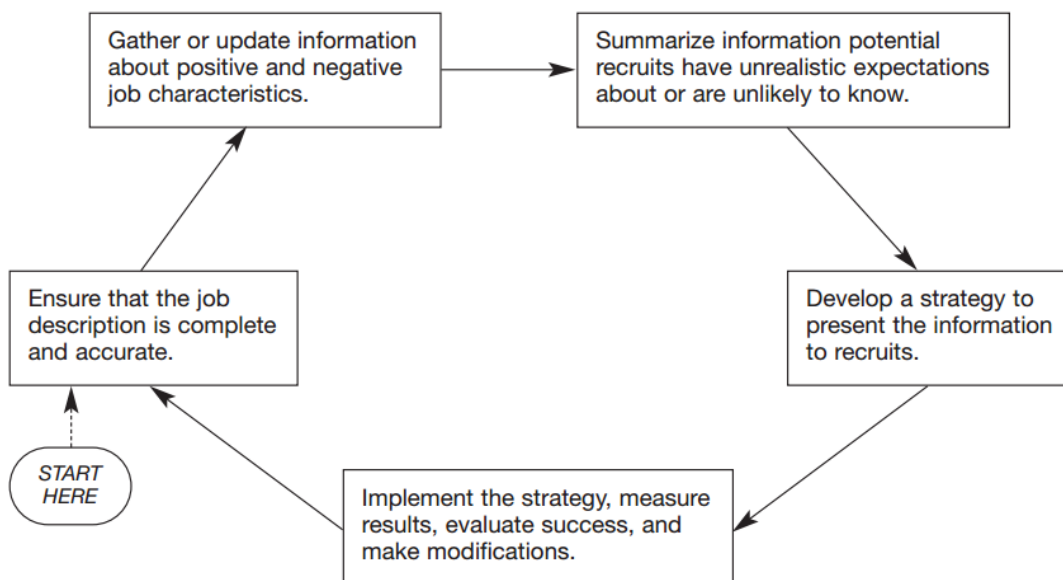
1. Reduced caseloads, workloads, and supervisory ratios
2. Increased salaries that are competitive and commensurate with the work
3. Improved supervision, support, technical assistance, and supervisory accountability
4. Career ladders and promotional opportunities, and personal and professional growth
5. Staff training- pre-service and in-service, and supervisory training

B. Realistic Job Previews (RJPs)

Larson, S., Hewitt, A. (2012). Staff Recruitment, retention, and training strategies for community human services organizations. *Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota*.

http://rtc3.umn.edu/docs/Larson_and_Hewitt_Staff_rrt_book_U_of_MN_reprint_2012.pdf

- The principle is that if employers provide better and more complete information to potential recruits and if they encourage those candidates to use the information to make an informed decision about whether the organization and job are a good match, those individuals who do accept positions will have fewer unmet expectations and will therefore be less likely to leave the job.
- Applicants who are close to making a decision about the job will pay closer attention to the RJP than would applicants who are just learning about an opening. This suggests that pairing the RJP with the final interview may be most powerful in reducing turnover.



Strategies for Developing an RJP

Asking questions to existing staff via survey or focus group:

- What is the best part of your job?
- What makes you want to stay at this organization or in this job?
- What could your employer do to make your job better?
- What was the hardest part of starting this job? Give specific examples.
- What specific incidents make you want to leave this organization or job?
- What would you tell a friend who was applying for your job?

A well-rounded RJP will require input from a variety of people affiliated with the organization. People who currently work in the position, however, should provide the majority of the information about the job and its impact on new employees.

Regardless of the method or strategy the organization uses for its RJP, to be effective the RJP must have the following characteristics:

- The purpose of the RJP must be clear to the applicant (e.g., to help him or her decide whether to take the job if offered).
- The RJP must use credible information (e.g., real people and events, not actors and scripts; testimony from job incumbents rather than a discussion with supervisors).
- The RJP should include information about how current employees feel about their jobs.
- Positive and negative information should be balanced to reflect actual experience (a topical outline can be used to keep this balance when live people are part of the RJP).
- The RJP should be presented before or at the time that a job offer is made.

Faller, K. C., Masternak, M., Grinnell-Davis, C., Grabarek, M., Sieffert, J., & Bernatovicz, F. (2009). Realistic job previews in child welfare: State of innovation and practice. *Child Welfare*, 88(5), 23-47.

- The goal of an RJP is to give a job applicant an accurate picture of the position he or she is seeking. A realistic view is intended to improve prospective employee decision-making about the job and thereby to reduce turnover and improve job satisfaction (CPS Human Resources [HR], Champnoise, & Masternak, 2004). One of the challenges is to balance the positive and negative aspects of the job so that the RJP is a mechanism for recruitment, selection, and retention.
- First known RJP to be used in child welfare as a recruitment and retention tool was with the Nebraska Health and Human Services System in 1998.
- This study looked at 10 RJP videos and analyzed to look at their components and outcomes of their implementation.

Characteristics of RJP in Child Welfare

- Some RJP address the full spectrum of the jobs - for example, the Maine, North Carolina, and Delaware RJP.
- Others (Arizona) focus on the most difficult position to recruit and retain workers. The Nebraska and Pennsylvania RJP stand out. Nebraska focuses on child protection and juvenile services work because these jobs were in the same division when the RJP was created. Pennsylvania's recruits "county caseworkers," who address mental health and mental retardation issues as well as child welfare, although most of the substantive content is on child abuse and neglect.
- Most also refer to working with other professionals, especially law enforcement. In fact, the Delaware RJP includes a dramatic scene involving the caseworker and police officer doing a home visit, in which the police officer handcuffs the distraught mother, who has beaten her

son because he "messed his pants," and arrests her. Nebraska's RJP shows a delinquency worker handcuffing an adolescent.

- Child physical abuse is documented by showing medical photographs of severely abused children (e.g., Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, and Pennsylvania), and neglect by showing photographs and video footage of a "filthy house" (e.g., Georgia, Maine, Michigan, and Pennsylvania).
- Few RJPs actually demonstrate child welfare worker skills, with the Maine RJP being an exception. It shows a worker engaged in a forensic interview of a child and workers involved in a team decision-making meeting. The Delaware video demonstrates the unsuccessful attempt of a child welfare worker to calm a distraught client (the client who was handcuffed and arrested).
- Both the process and the substantive components of the job can be personally stressful. Therefore, we noted reference to job stress in RJPs.
- Six RJPs refer to working after hours and on weekends, but this requirement varies by jurisdiction. Three Georgia workers describe the extraordinary impact of working after hours, often combined with the need to drive long distances in their own cars.
- Most RJPs involve interviews with workers and supervisors, a few with agency administrators, and some contain footage of actual clients. Although the clients were far past their initial encounters with the child welfare system, client role-plays and post intervention commentaries in these RJPs provide the viewer with the important perspectives of clients.
- All RJPs indirectly address the issue of diversity, but usually by having a diverse group of staff in the RJP.

Outcome Data on RJPs

- The Maine RJP is embedded in other recruitment initiatives, to reduce turnover in the first six months and first year on the job. In 2003, the year before the project was operational, the averages were 2.34% and 1.50% respectively for a cumulative average of 3.84% in the first year. In the last four years, these rates have been reduced to 0.88% and 1% for a cumulative turnover of 1.88% in the first year. What is notable, as well, is how low turnover rates in Maine are generally.
- Michigan has evaluated the effect of their RJP, both after initial use, by tracking turnover of workers who did and did not see the RJP, and by use of data from a longitudinal study of incoming child welfare workers.
 - Masternak and Champnoise (2007) tracked 88 new Michigan workers over the course of their first year of employment. Of these, 49 workers (56%) had viewed the RJP and 39 (44%) had not. At the end of the year, only 6.2% of the workers who had viewed the RJP had left the job, compared to 21.6% of those who had not viewed the RJP. The latter percentage is equivalent of the national turnover rate among child welfare frontline workers and more than three times the rate of the workers who had viewed the RJP.

C. Creative Recruitment Strategies

Larson, S., Hewitt, A. (2012). Staff Recruitment, retention, and training strategies for community human services organizations. *Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota*.

http://rtc3.umn.edu/docs/Larson_and_Hewitt_Staff_rrt_book_U_of_MN_reprint_2012.pdf

The following strategies have shown to be effective strategies for recruiting employees in a service-oriented job:

1. Internal recruitment (posting job opportunities internally)
2. Networking with other managers and supervisors to find internal applicants
3. Recruitment bonus for current employees
4. Recruitment bonus for supported individuals and their families, board members, and other referring stakeholders
5. Hiring bonus for new recruits
6. Developing relationships with school-to-work, welfare-to-work, and job service staff
7. Internship programs for high school students
8. Comprehensive marketing plan development
9. Development of creating marketing materials
10. Recruitment videotapes
11. Television and radio advertisements
12. Trade show giveaways (e.g., pens, pencils, letter openers with organization name)
13. Web site recruitment
14. Marketing to nontraditional sources
 - a. Community clubs, civic groups, scouts, and churches
 - b. Advertising in ethnic newspapers
 - c. Military bases and veterans groups
15. Presentations about careers in human services
 - a. High school and college classes
 - b. Workforce centers
 - c. Job fairs
16. Open houses
17. Volunteer programs

D. Hiring Strategies¹

Many strategies and tools are available to aid in the hiring process of new employees. They vary both in terms of how effective they are and how difficult, complex, or time consuming they are to use. One challenge for supervisors is to balance the speed and simplicity of the hiring process (so that strong applicants do not choose another job while waiting for a job offer) with the

¹ Larson, S., Hewitt, A. (2012). *Staff Recruitment, retention, and training strategies for community human services organizations*. Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from http://rtc3.umn.edu/docs/Larson_and_Hewitt_Staff_rrt_book_U_of_MN_reprint_2012.pdf

integration of strategies that are effective indicators of person-job fit and fit and person-organization fit.

Strategy	Basic description	Effectiveness (predictive validity)
Structured interviews	Structured interviews use the same questions for every applicant and score responses using a standardized scoring guide. Two major types are structured behavioral interviews and situational interviews. Both are based on a job analysis and assess skills critical to successful job performance.	High (.48 to .67)
Cognitive ability tests	Standardized tests assess the intelligence or cognitive ability of the candidates. Candidates whose scores most closely match those of successful employees are given preference in hiring.	High overall (.44 to .47) High for very complex jobs (.60) Low for the least complex jobs (.24)
Biographical data (weighted application blanks)	Past work history, education, honors and awards, extracurricular and community service activities, and other social or life experiences are scored, with points awarded for experiences or activities that predict future employment success.	Medium (.36)
Personality and integrity tests	Personality tests assess the personality attributes of candidates. Integrity tests assess attitudes toward counterproductive behaviors or aspects of personality believed to be related to counterproductive behaviors (Hermelin & Robertson, 2001).	Medium (.31 to .37)
Work sample tests or assessment centers	Work sample tests examine an applicant's skill on a work-related task through direct assessment (e.g., a typing test for a clerical applicant). Assessment centers are a behaviorally based managerial selection procedure that incorporates multiple assessments and multiple ratings by trained managers of behaviors related to the job (e.g., in-basket, leaderless group discussion, business games; Cascio, 1987)	Low to medium (.24 to .43)
Unstructured interviews	Unstructured interviews have no constraints on the questions asked and result in only a global assessment of the candidate (Buckley & Russell, 1999)	Low to medium (.23 to .37)
The "big five" personality traits	Tests examining the "big five" personality traits: conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experiences. (Of these traits, conscientiousness had the highest predictive validity, .10 to .15)	Low (.00 to .15)

Sources: Nine meta-analyses that included 20 estimates of validity (Hermelin & Robertson, 2001).

Recruitment and Selection Process

In looking at an organization's recruitment and selection process, there are areas to look at within your organization to determine if there are parts of the recruitment and selection process that can be improved upon.

Questions to consider asking your organization:

1. Are there components of the selection process that your organization is skipping? How could they be better addressed?

2. Has your organization succumbed to the “warm body syndrome,” hiring all applicants just to fill vacancies? If yes, what steps could your organization take to change this?
3. What specific changes can your organization make to improve the questions it asks in the interview process? Does your organization use structured behavioral interview questions? Why or why not?
4. What changes are needed in your interviewing practices to make them conform more closely to the structured interview techniques described in this chapter? What will you do first?
5. Has your organization developed set selection criteria for all applicants? Are these criteria used consistently across applicants and across different parts of the organization?
6. Is job carving a strategy your organization could use? Why or why not?
7. What proportion of staff members who leave your organization are involuntarily terminated? What selection strategies can reduce that proportion?

E. Evidence-Based HR Management Strategies for Reducing Turnover

Allen, D., Bryant, P., Vardaman, J. (2010) Retaining talent: Replacing misconceptions with evidence-based strategies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 48-64. Retrieved from <http://misweb.cbi.msstate.edu/~COBI/faculty/users/jvardaman/files/files/AllenAMP.pdf>

Recruitment

- Providing a realistic job preview (RJP) during recruitment improves retention.
- Employees hired through employee referrals tend to have better retention than those hired through other recruitment sources.

Selection

- Biodata (biographical data) and weighted application blanks (WAB) can be used during the selection process to predict who is most likely to quit.
- Assessing fit with the organization and job during selection improves subsequent retention.

Socialization

- Involve experienced organization insiders as role models, mentors, or trainers.
- Provide new hires with positive feedback as they adapt.
- Structure orientation activities so that groups of new hires experience them together.
- Provide clear information about the stages of the socialization process.

Training and Development

- Offering training and development opportunities generally decreases the desire to leave; this may be particularly critical in certain jobs that require constant skills updating.
- Organizations concerned about losing employees by making them more marketable should consider job-specific training and linking developmental opportunities to tenure

- Lead the market for some types of rewards and some positions in ways that fit with business and HR strategy.
- Tailor rewards to individual needs and preferences.
- Promote justice and fairness in pay and reward decisions.
- Explicitly link rewards to retention.

Supervision

- Train supervisors and managers how to lead, how to develop effective relationships with subordinates, and other retention management skills.
- Evaluate supervisors and managers on retention.
- Identify and remove abusive supervisors.

Engagement

- Design jobs to increase meaningfulness, autonomy, variety, and coworker support.
- Hire internally where strategically and practically feasible.
- Provide orientation that communicates how jobs contribute to the organizational mission and helps new hires establish relationships.
- Offer ongoing skills development.
- Consider competency-based and pay-for-performance systems.
- Provide challenging goals.
- Provide positive feedback and recognition of all types of contributions.

F. Employee Orientation Practices²

Realistic Orientation Programs for new Employee Stress (ROPES)

Effective socialization using ROPES should do the following:

- Provide realistic information about job stresses.
- Provide general support and assurance (one-to-one or in small groups).
- Help new employees demonstrate, discuss, and rehearse various coping skills.
- Teach self-control of thoughts and feelings.

Research suggests that reducing stress and providing realistic information about job stresses to new employees after hire can reduce turnover.

Six aspects of co-worker support were identified:

- Co-workers go out of their way to help new staff members adjust.
- New direct service professionals can understand their role by observing co-workers.
- Co-workers are personally supportive of new staff members.
- Experienced staff see advising or training newcomers as a main job responsibility.
- Experienced staff guide newcomers about how to perform the job.
- Training expands and builds on knowledge gained in previous training.

² Larson, S., Hewitt, A. (2012). Staff Recruitment, retention, and training strategies for community human services organizations. Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from http://rtc3.umn.edu/docs/Larson_and_Hewitt_Staff_rrt_book_U_of_MN_reprint_2012.pdf

Supervisor support

Research on socialization outcomes suggests that the information provided by supervisors about the tasks and roles of new employees is the most important factor in positive socialization outcomes such as newcomers' commitment, feelings of adjustment, and satisfaction with the job and the organization.

G. Child Welfare Studies

Gomez, R., Travis, D., Ayers-Lopez, S., Schwab, J. (2010) In search of innovation: A national qualitative analysis of child welfare recruitment and retention efforts. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(5), 664-671.

Research question posed in the study: What strategies have been employed throughout the United States to help alleviate child welfare recruitment and retention challenges? How can we better understand the effectiveness of the strategies within the context of organizational innovation?

Method: This study uses: 1) a qualitative review of recruitment and retention strategies and interventions publicized on agency websites in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and 2) a thorough examination of the perceived effectiveness and innovation of these strategies based on qualitative interviews with a national sample of child welfare experts in 13 states.

Six types of strategies used for the recruitment and retention of child welfare workers include:

Education

- Providing funding for existing employees to pursue the Master of Social Work degree has resulted in a 90% retention rate for those employees.
- Ten respondents stated that their respective state offers paid time off to pursue education.

Training

- Most of the child welfare experts interviewed discussed that their respective states offered orientation and on-the-job training, reporting that these programs are effective recruitment and retention tools.
- The review of national websites found a high reporting of training as a recruitment and retention strategy. Paid ongoing training was listed by 29 of the state websites, university-based training by 18, orientation by 12 states, and on-the-job training by 10 websites.

Job Preparation

- In contrast to how it was advertised, interview respondents described orientation as a key component of both training and job preparation.
- One state agency administrator reported that the best recruitment programs use a variety of techniques during orientation and new worker training; panels of field staff and supervisors, videos, etc. that do not "sugar coat" their information. She said, "*The key is doing a better job at the front door of assessing prospective staff and giving them a realistic picture of what the job is actually going to be like.*" She went on to say that, "*we have some people who walk out of the orientation, saying, 'this isn't what I expected'.*"

She sees this as a positive thing, “*we need to invest in staff who have the capacity to stay.*”

Recognition and Rewards

- The website review did not reveal many strategies advertised in the area of recognition and reward; three websites discussed a pay differential; benefits were discussed, but generally just linked to the state website outlining benefits.
- The child welfare experts interviewed for this study stressed the importance of high salary and good benefits, as well as career ladder opportunities to aid in the retention of child protective services caseworkers.
- Four of the respondents reported that a lack of emotional support to enhance recognition at work contributes to increased turnover, and five cited an emotionally supportive work atmosphere as a factor that contributes to retention of child welfare caseworkers.

Workload Management

- State websites did not report on the issues of workload management. Websites did not offer information on caseloads, paperwork demands, or any issues related to workload. This may be because this information changes quickly and is not easily reported via a webpage.
- Interview respondents overwhelmingly cited workload issues as contributing to poor retention.
- Seven felt that manageable caseloads promote retention, stating that caseworkers are able to feel successful at their jobs. Four of the respondents reported that keeping caseloads at a manageable level is a major challenge to retaining staff.
- Lack of client contact due to paperwork demands was the most frequently cited factor contributing to increased turnover ($n = 15$).

Supervision

- The review of state child welfare websites did not provide any findings related to supervision. State websites did not discuss the use of supervision or mentoring programs.
- Eight respondents from the interviews reported that inadequate or poor supervision was contributing to increased turnover. In addition, eight reported that good supervision and mentoring contribute to retention. Five respondents cited ensuring good supervision as a major challenge to retaining and engaging staff.

Underutilized strategies included:

- Paid time off to pursue education
- Loan forgiveness programs
- Tuition reimbursement
- Strategies aimed at transforming organizational culture

Clark, S., Smith, R., Uota, K. (2013). Professional development opportunities as retention incentives in child welfare. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 35(10), 1687-1697.

Highlights

- Career paths for child welfare MSWs were examined over time.
- Promotion to supervisor and access to training encouraged retention.
- Promotion to manager or administrator was not associated with retention.

- Being a field instructor did not encourage retention.
- The results from this study refute the fear that social workers are leaving public social services for private practice, as argued in Specht and Courtney (1994). Conversely, and importantly, the notion that delivering social services to a disadvantaged population of families does not call for advanced social work skills or clinical expertise is not the case. The Title IV-E MSWs surveyed in this study seek to improve their clinical skills and they stay working in public social services. These are not mutually exclusive.
- *Limitations:* Important to note is that California's definitions of retention may differ from other states. **In this study, leaving one county agency for another was deemed to be retention in the field of public child welfare.** Thus the definitions of stayers and leavers used in this study may be unique to California's state-supervised, county-administered child welfare services.

Perceived Organization Support: Retention Incentives

Promotions

- Currently the promotional structure is not consistently tied to advanced training and education in this state. Related to advanced training, a lateral move (job mobility) could be an incentive to stay on the job. Job mobility within the agency that involves working with special populations of interest (for example grandmothers providing foster care to grandchildren) or applying a new practice method (such as group work) could also be seen as a retention incentive and, most importantly, as recognition for a worker's special area expertise and professionalism.

Access to Training

- Non-salary benefits can motivate workers to stay, especially when salary increases are not feasible. From the results of this research, different retention strategies can be employed for new and experienced workers in order to address workers' professional developmental needs. The desire and need for advanced training could be followed more closely and studied relative to job tenure.
- The timing, frequency and availability of advanced training, including support for seeking educational degrees, tap into views of positive organizational support and the discretionary reward system.
- Various aspects of the training system are important to take into account.
 - The amount and availability of agency-based training; how workers are chosen to attend training; whether or not the agency will pay for training or for school for further education; whether there is a clear connection between training and promotion. This begs the question of whether training for supervisors would serve as retention incentives for themselves. Regardless of the workers' lengths of time in their careers, they sought positive case-focused supervision.

Case-focused Supervision

- Since many studies have found that competent supervisor communication and support is important to long-term job tenure, supervisor training and advanced case-focused

supervisor training are good investments as well, not viewing supervision as only for communicating policy or managing a workload.

- The results of this study indicate that Title IV-E graduates have a high interest in licensure, yet a small minority actually have private practices. Obtaining case-focused supervision and training for licensure may work as non-salary incentives for retention, especially among Title IV-E graduates. Case-focused supervision may also be seen as a type of advanced training.

Being a Field Instructor

- Field instruction which affords social workers the opportunity to connect with their universities and mentor the next generation of professionals, did not show a positive influence on retention. When looking at the open-ended responses about field instruction, many respondents reported that their agencies did not support them to be field instructors (i.e., they were chosen involuntarily, their caseloads were not reduced when they had a student, and/or they felt there was not enough support from the university, among other reasons).
- Adequately supported field instruction may offer opportunities for workers to test their supervisory skills (case-focused or otherwise) and for the mentoring experience necessary for promotion to a supervisory position.
- More attention needs to be drawn to field instruction as a retention strategy.

Recommendations

- There is no consensus in the field defining how long a worker must stay on the job in order to be classified as retained. In a county-administered state-supervised system such as California, does one worker leaving a county agency to work in another public child welfare agency count as turnover or retention? If one is evaluating the effects of a Title IV-E program then this event may be counted as retention. If one is evaluating the need for on-the-job training, this may be counted as turnover.
- Another issue is, in the literature as well as in this study, retention and turnover are viewed as measures of a dichotomous variable: Either workers stayed or left. More research is needed to determine under what conditions workers stay and for how long and retention could be measured as a continuous variable, allowing for more complex analyses.
- On the other hand, if staying with the vulnerable child and family population is the retention goal, leaving the public child welfare agency for a non-profit job is not counted as leaving. Furthermore, the universities and agencies may hold different concepts of what retention is and this may cause some tension.

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute. (2015). Children's Corps: A dynamic approach to child welfare worker recruitment, screening & selection. [Webinar]. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/126502101>

The Children's Corps contracts with child welfare agencies to strengthen the workforce through strategic recruitment and selection, pre-service training, and ongoing training and support.

1. Strategic Recruitment & Selection

- Recruit from higher education institutions/major online job sites.
- Application and interview processes screen for specific characteristics.
- Selected members make two-year commitment to the field.

2. Pre-Service Training

- Members immersed in four-week Summer Training Academy.
- Training includes both shadowing at agencies and dynamic, interactive classroom learning.

3. Ongoing Training and Support

- Members have structured support systems from Fostering Care for Children (FCFC) staff, mentors, and current Corps members/alumni.

Recruitment Strategies

- Career Fairs
- Information Sessions
- Online Job Postings
- Social Media
- Word of Mouth
- Partnerships
- Strong Relationships

Lessons Learned

- Recruiting local is helpful and important
- Be transparent about the work
- Utilize behavioral interviewing
- Use feedback loops builds trust and helps the system as a whole
- Understanding agency cultures helps makes placements successful
- Ability to adjust to the needs of the system is necessary
- Be adaptable and open to learning contributes to the program's success and growth

Shim, M. (2010). Factors influencing child welfare employee's turnover: Focusing on organizational culture and climate. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 32(6), 847-856.

- Organizational culture and climate in child welfare agencies play important roles in delivering services and enhancing organizational capability, as organizational values have been popularly used to accomplish identified goals and desired organizational changes in businesses and for-profit organizations. Understanding the relationships between organizational culture and climate and employee turnover may help administrators and managers see through their agencies and create a positive organizational culture and climate.

In this way, child welfare agencies may be able to decrease employee turnover and enhance organizational capability in achieving their organizational mission and goals through creating a positive organizational culture and climate.

- This study found that organizational culture and climate are significant predictors of an employee's intention to leave.
 - Public child welfare employees with higher values of their organization's culture and climate have less intention to leave than those with lower values.
- Emphasis on rewards is statistically significant, implying that public child welfare employees with clearer and more effective incentives and rewards for job performance have less intention to leave than those with less clear and effective incentives and rewards.
- Emotional exhaustion is statistically significant, implying employees with higher levels of emotional energy for their job report less intention to leave than those with less energy.
- Administrators and managers in child welfare agencies influence the development of a positive organizational culture and climate through effectively managing crucial organizational factors such as strengthening reward systems and providing supervisory and practice supports which diminish employees' emotional exhaustion.

Dickinson, N. S., & Painter, J. S. (2009). Predictors of undesired turnover for child welfare workers. <i>Child Welfare</i> , 88(5), 187-208
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Recruitment and retention strategies for child welfare workers:

- Role clarity: When workers feel confident in the match between their skills and the job expectations they are less likely to have intentions to leave.
 - Agencies can employ to match the skills of applicants with the demands of particular child welfare positions.
 - Agencies should employ realistic recruitment strategies that accurately portray the skills and attributes needed to work successfully in child welfare so that applicants can choose whether child welfare work is appropriate for them.
 - See Section B for more information about realistic job previews.
- This study strongly supports other research on the important role that supervisors play in retaining child welfare workers (Dickinson & Perry, 2002), especially in providing practice support.
 - Retention-focused supervisors know best practices with families, set clear and measurable performance expectations, and provide workers expert help through such tactics as coaching, case consultation and mentoring. Supervisors also help workers develop professional development plans and career paths that build on workers' skills. These activities define a learning organization that promotes personal feelings of accomplishment through communication and team work, opportunities for professional growth and education, and cooperative learning.
 - Retention activities are important at every stage of the child welfare worker's development, but different strategies apply at different stages. For example, during a

worker's first months on the job, a retention skilled supervisor will focus on the concrete tasks of the work and give feedback about the worker's ability to accomplish those tasks. Later, as the worker develops confidence in accomplishing these concrete tasks, the supervisor will increase performance expectations and coach the worker for greater skill development and application.

Haynes-Jenkins, K. (2012). *Child Welfare Turnover, Retention Strategies, and Performance Outcomes*. n.p.: ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing.

The following discusses individual and organizational factors for recruitment and retention.

Individual factors

Realistic Job Previews

- Agencies need to describe clearly the expectations and responsibilities of the job to prospective workers.

Employee Motivation

- Workers appreciate the challenge in helping families and are inspired when families are successful and remain out of the system.

Work/life balance

- Workers need supervisor, upper management, and peer support systems to assist them in being able to take time off and balance their personal and professional lives.

Organizational factors

Work Environment

- Positive relationships appear to enhance the agency's work environment. Workers were reluctant to leave their jobs because they desired to maintain relationships with co-workers.

Supervisory Support

- Landsman (2007) suggested that workers supported by their supervisors experience increased job satisfaction, greater commitment to their jobs and are more motivated to remain in the child welfare field. In his research, workers appeared to appreciate supportive supervisors who provided constructive feedback. Workers did not work well with micromanagement, but wanted supervisors who trusted them in doing their jobs.

Training

- According to the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (2010), training provided by child welfare agencies does not adequately prepare workers for the challenges they encounter on the job. Child welfare training inadequacies were indicated in the data. Training provided for new hires was found to be unrealistic and inadequate in preparing workers for the job. Workers reported that the agencies provided too many unnecessary trainings. Field training and short in-service trainings appeared to be the best learning experiences for child welfare workers.

Incentives

- Salary, promotions, bonuses, and incentives appeared to be factors associated with employee retention. The agency did not provide workers with consistent bonuses and incentives for high caseload. Workers admitted that employee retention could be improved if the agency provided opportunities for promotion, larger raises, and other incentive like employee oil changes, gift cards, or lunch provided from the agency. Retirement plans and tuition reimbursements also appeared to influence employee retention.

Suggestions

- Results of this study coincide with previous research, which signify the lack of effort devoted to improving child welfare caseload and workloads. Riggs (2007) found that child welfare agencies obtain positive outcomes when workers maintain frequent contact with the families served; however, limited progress has occurred to ensure adequate caseloads and manageable workloads. Child welfare agencies may determine a more effective process of assigning cases to workers, as reasonable workloads can assist in reducing stress, burnout, and turnover rates within the child welfare system.
- Supervisor support was confirmed in this study as positively relating to employee retention.

Johnco, C. Salloum, A., Olson, K., & Edwards, L. (2014). Child welfare workers' perspectives on contributing factors to retention and turnover: Recommendations for improvement. *Child and Youth Services Review*. 47(3), 397-407.

Highlights

- A supportive environment and opportunities in the organization impact retention.
- Low compensation, work demands, system issues and stress increases worker turnover.
- There are few differences between early and later-career workers' perspectives.
- Workers have a number of suggestions on ways to manage workplace problems.

Study Method

- Focus group consisting of resigned case managers; case managers who had been in their current position for less than one year and who have completed orientation training; case managers who have been at their current child welfare agency and current position for three or more years; and supervisors who have been in their current child welfare position for at least one year.

Research Focus

Questions asked about how job stress and burnout, salary and benefits, workload, and organizational policies and procedures contribute to workers leaving child welfare, and how coworkers, professional growth and development, job security, commitment to the organization and supervision contributed to retention. Workers were also asked about their perspectives on strategies for addressing workplace problems. Resigned workers were asked the same questions about staying and leaving child welfare and suggestions on changes, but the wording was changed to past tense.

Strategies for addressing workplace problems (see article for more detail breakdown of suggested strategies):

- Reduce caseload
- Provide assistance
- Increase salary
- Improve benefits
- Contingent rewards
- Transportation assistance
- Court
- Training
- Priorities
- Use of data
- Efficiency
- Communication
- Hiring practices
- Address safety

Given the high rates of turnover in workers during the early stage of their career (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003), this study provided both a within-group analysis, and across group analysis to highlight differences and similarities in factors contributing to turnover and retention in workers at stages of employment. Interestingly, there were very few differences between the groups, suggesting that factors impact on individuals is similar ways regardless of their employment status. It may be that differences in an individual's circumstances and coping resources differentiate whether or not these influences are significant enough to influence worker turnover.

Chen, Y., Park, J., & Park, A. (2012). Existence, relatedness, or growth? Examining turnover intention of public child welfare caseworkers from a human needs approach. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(10), 2088-2093.

- This study aims to specify turnover factors from the perspective of the caseworkers' needs at work. Knowing the current level of pay and benefits is ineffective to sustain caseworkers in public child welfare, the study raises two research questions:
 - Does the dissatisfaction of financial rewards affect caseworkers' motivation to pursue other needs at work and eventually lead to turnover intention?
 - How important is pay and benefits in relation to other at-work needs for the caseworkers' turnover intention?
- The study asks what work motivation determines caseworkers' turnover intention (T).
- The categories of human needs are existence (E), relatedness (R), and growth (G).
- The authors found growth regarding career development and fulfillment most critical.
- Dissatisfaction of existence, pay and benefits, leads to turnover intention only if Growth is poorly supported.

- Growth is identified as the only need category having significant direct effect on Turnover Intention.

Study has two findings:

- First, dissatisfaction of existence needs leads to turnover intention only if growth needs is poorly satisfied as well. Literature suggests imbalance between job demand and financial rewards is a trigger of intention to leave, but the authors found this argument neglects that growth needs works in between as a complete mediator. The finding indicates caseworkers could be encouraged to continue their employment through positive motivators such as responding to their growth needs even when the pay and benefits are not satisfying for them.
- Second, growth needs have the strongest effect on turnover intention among the three need categories. Growth needs refer to a sense of accomplishment, making a difference, and fulfilling personal career goals which have direct and indirect effects on intention to leave. When considering leaving or staying on the front line of public child welfare, the caseworkers value the opportunity and success of serving the children and families in need as well as the alignment of their career goals with the job. This finding echoes the literature regarding the importance of self-efficacy, contingent rewards, and the altruistic and caring nature of child welfare for retention.

Unexpectedly, this study fails to find evidence supporting the effects of relatedness needs on turnover intention. This could be a consequence of averaging the influences from at-work relationships and life-work balance in the measurement, or relatedness needs would have such a strong correlation with growth needs that its effect is taken over by growth needs in the modeling. Corresponding research may improve the measures by specifying sub-constructs of the need categories and adopting other ways of scoring. Another worthwhile step to revise the conceptual framework is to include more organizational factors so the correlation between relatedness needs and growth needs would be less distracting.

Based on the empirical findings, the study suggests public child welfare agencies provide programs and resources nurturing caseworkers' growth needs. Below are some strategies to address these growth needs:

Practice Level

- Supervisors should increase caseworkers' satisfaction of growth needs by strengthening the link between their day-to-day work and meaningfulness for children and families.

Administration Level

- The reward system should reflect caseworkers' performance and efficacy. Although the structure of pay, benefits, and promotion is difficult to change in public sector, contingent rewards and symbolic recognitions (such as awards for exceptional performance), offer public respect and reinforce a worker's sense of success.

Policy Level

- Administrators and policy makers may initiate system changes to unravel the workforce turnover problem in child welfare and allow caseworkers to fulfill their own careers. In addition to professional development which many states have adopted by supporting social

work education, providing on-the-job training, and applying rotation among service units (Gomez et al., 2010), caseworkers need diverse opportunities to develop their own career goals within their units, the agency, and child welfare field.

- Agencies may adopt empowerment management practices such as team-based decision making or problem-solving (e.g. Nunno, 2006; Strolin-Goltzman, 2010) to engage caseworkers in organizational changes so they may feel valued by the agency and strengthen their commitment to the job. Such initiatives create challenging roles and opportunities for caseworkers to learn and use their knowledge and skills at levels beyond individual cases thus allowing them to envision long-term career paths in the field.

Redmond, B., Guerin, S., Nolan, B., Devitt, C. & Egan, A. (2010). *The Retention of Social Workers in the Health Services: An Evidence-Based Assessment. Project Report.* UCD.

Retrieved from

<http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCD%20Retention%20of%20Social%20Workers.pdf>

Three factors that influence preventable turnover:

- Individual factors: emotional background, professional affiliation and career commitment, work-life fit and demographic influences.
- Supervisory factors: competence and social support.
- Organizational factors: agency's climate, culture, structures and operational processes.

Researchers in Ireland have explored the following factors that might also have a positive influence on retention:

- Education and training interventions
- Supervisory support
- Promotion opportunities
- A belief in the value of child welfare world
- Skill variety
- Role clarity
- Compensation
- Promotion opportunities
- Support
- Low role conflict

Perceptions of the profession with both cohorts:

- Perceived by students as requiring the highest level of expertise
- Perceived by students as having the highest level of job stress
- Comparable level of job satisfaction
- Students even in early stages of training and prior to completing a field placement, have already formed strong opinions on levels of stress between different areas of social work
- The professional group rated child protection and welfare as having the least job satisfaction

- Child protection and child welfare are seen as the areas requiring most expertise to professionals

Burnout:

- Professionals display overall high levels of burnout: high scores in both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, low levels of personal accomplishments
- A key finding here is the high level of dedication shown by the group, with lower levels of vigor and absorption in their work. High levels of dedication indicate that individuals maintain enthusiasm, pride and inspiration on the job. However, this finding has to be seen in the light of the low levels of vigor and absorption recorded in the cohort, which suggests poor levels of energy and mental resilience and lack of concentration, enjoyment and a sense of control over their work.

Recommendations:

- This research recommends that social work training needs to provide a blended approach to child protection education, with an emphasis not just on the basic legislative and operational knowledge needed to function within the child welfare field, but also on the fundamental attitudes and perceptions that underpin the way that these beginning social workers practice in the field. This combination of a sound knowledge of the instrumental aspects of social work practice with the development of critical thought, good decision-making skills and capacity for teamwork and professional leadership is needed to produce efficient and effective beginning professionals who can successfully respond to the context in which they will work.
- Professional social work training has to contribute to building the mental resilience in beginning practitioners that will support them in their careers, particularly in stressful environments.
- In terms of specific child protection teaching and training, the universities should focus on a proactive quality enhancement approach, rather than the more defensive quality assurance approach to curriculum development, using feedback from present and past students, from employers and the professional accreditation processes to inform their work.
- International research shows that the decision to leave one's profession during the early years of a professional career is primarily related to lack of support and problems with workplace conditions. In terms of responding to stress in a job, Lang et al. (2005) argue that social workers can alleviate stress by fulfilling the tasks that their role involves, while receiving adequate support and acknowledgement from fellow colleagues, as well as having the opportunity to pursue professional development.
- Induction:
 - New social workers provide a useful framework upon which to develop these training and support structures, as they include the critical knowledge elements necessary for safe and informed practice.
 - Specifying the size of caseload within which beginning social workers operate to maximum effectiveness needs to become a more nuanced judgement, which should also be informed by the decision of that social worker's supervisor as to the supervisee's current capabilities and the dynamic process of supervision.

- Supervision:
 - Structures need to offer new social workers both the necessary knowledge and skills to practice safely and competently in the area, but also to address their overall long-term professional development needs. These structures need to recognize that supervision offers an opportunity to both reflect on practice (thereby allowing opportunities for development) and identify areas for further support and input. Such structures, when properly implemented, can create a cohort of social workers who are committed to developing their careers in the long-term and who are confident that they will be supported in doing so.
 - This study's findings of having a high level of dedication and a strong identify with the core ethics and values of social work need to be incorporated in a positive way in the professional development of beginning social workers.
 - These are factors which, when developed and supported within a training and supervision structure, will act as strong retention drivers for the professionals and also underpin the development of competent practice.
- The current research has identified a strong interest among the cohort for professional development for those at mid-career and beyond, including the need for continuous professional development.
- The more experienced social workers in both the focus groups and the individual interviews expressed interest in being involved in more work-based training, research and evaluation that would actively link theory and research into practice.
- There is a need for training that would help develop this stronger professional identity and that would also help social workers become more aware of their proven professional strengths and capabilities.

H. The Role of Supervision in Child Welfare Services

Jacquet, S., Clark, S., Moraze, J., & Withers, R. (Aug. 2007). Characteristics of workload management in public child welfare agencies role of supervision in the retention of public child welfare workers. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 31(3), 95-109.

- This study examines the relationships among supervisor support, availability of resources, worker ability and their impact on workload management. Child welfare caseworkers struggle to maintain their workloads amid tremendously high caseloads and ever-increasing paperwork. Results suggest that supervisor support and availability of resources have a direct impact on workload management. Additionally, supervisor support is significantly associated with worker ability and availability of resources. While worker ability does not directly affect workload management, it is significantly related to the availability of resources. Results of this study can be useful to public child welfare agencies by identifying variables associated with increased manageability of employee workloads.
- Caseworkers, especially those with little experience or who are new to the job, rely on supervisor's support. Numerous research indicates the role of the supervisor is critical:

- Supervisors set the climate for workers and are able to provide the environment that encourages a good person/job fit.
- For some caseworkers a supportive relationship with their supervisor was their reason for staying, for others the autonomy provided by a detached relationship was a major motivator.
- Supervisors can act as gatekeepers, providing space for workers to accomplish their work; or they can overload workers by failing to set priorities or assign work fairly.
- Supervisors can help develop workers and mentor them through the crisis period when they are considering leaving the agency.
- Support from the child welfare worker's supervisor and co-workers are important for sustaining a sense of well-being.
- The importance of supervision in developing professional socialization, improving staff morale, increasing job satisfaction, and decreasing job turnover is well documented in administration, management, and social work literature.
- In studies that include staff interviews, supportive supervision is the most commonly cited variable related to turnover and retention. The supervisor is the person who best understands the responsibilities of and the demands made on the caseworker, backs up decisions and casework activities, and advocates for both caseworkers and clients.
- Two critical functions of child welfare supervisors are to recognize and respond to the needs and concerns of caseworkers and to provide them with direction and guidance.
- Agency and supervisory support can mitigate the stress of the job and the workload.
- Help supervisors support new caseworkers through the two to three year transition period.
 - Develop a plan to provide training or clinical consultation to supervisors in preparing new caseworkers for their crisis of commitment as well as how to maximize their staff's ability to move through it smoothly.
 - In 2003, a study that was part of the evaluation of the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC), Chapin Hall Center for Children, analyzed the results of survey responses from 572 frontline workers, supervisors, and some senior managers from public child protective service agencies in four diverse locations around the country.
 - Individuals who were surveyed were asked to "rate" how satisfied they were with seven aspects of their jobs including: 1) workload, 2) quality of supervision, 3) salary raises, 4) opportunities for advancement, 5) being valued, 6) agency cultural sensitivity, and 7) physical working conditions.
 - When all aspects were combined into one measure, a generally mixed view of job satisfaction emerged. Within this context, however, "quality of supervision" received the highest average rating among the seven aspects that can contribute to job satisfaction. This does indicate that a supervisor can make a difference in how his/her staff feel about their work experience even when an extraordinarily difficult work environment beset with huge cutbacks contributes to fairly low job satisfaction overall. Also organizational culture, specifically a culture that empowers workers by valuing openness, creativity,

personal development, quality orientation, and personal integrity also had a very large effect on the job satisfaction among the respondents.

Kinjerski, V. (2014). *Supervision: The cornerstone for caseworkers to flourish. A report to the Alberta College of Social Workers*. Retrieved from http://www.acsw.ab.ca/pdfs/supervisory_support_final_report_2014.pdf

Quality supervision in child welfare is associated with the following caseworker outcomes:

- Reduced burnout and stress
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased retention
- Improved perceptions of the organizational culture and climate

Study focused on:

1. The kind of supervisory support necessary for caseworkers to flourish at work.
2. The type of support that enables supervisors and team leads to more fully support caseworkers.

Here is how caseworkers described the experience of flourishing:

1. Happy, hopeful and positive
2. Accomplished, competent and confident
3. Energized, engaged and excited about work
4. Passion, pride in work and job satisfaction
5. Motivated, empowered, encouraged and supported
6. Respected, trusted, and heard
7. Sense of belonging, connection and safety
8. Valued and cared about
9. Acknowledged, appreciated, validated and recognized

Caseworkers identified five key components of supervisory support which contribute to them flourishing in child welfare; that is, supervisors:

1. Are available, approachable and make supervision a priority
2. Are knowledgeable, skilled and resourceful
3. Create a culture of belonging and safety
4. Foster personal and professional relationships
5. Build capacity and competence of caseworkers

The following five supports emerged as priorities for supervisors:

1. The organization values the supervisory role and treats supervision as a priority.
2. Ongoing, timely training and mentorship is readily available, supported and specific to the supervisor's experience and requirements.
3. Elements of a supervisory practice model are clear, implemented and supported.

4. The organization, and especially the manager, trusts and believes in their supervisors.
5. Managerial support is readily available.

The responsibility for whether a caseworker flourishes or not does not lie solely with the supervisor. Indeed, it is a shared responsibility between the individual and the larger organization. For example, the supervisor's ability to provide adequate, supportive supervision is impacted by the nature of the work and organization, constant organizational change and what some describe as "colliding initiatives," employee turnover and vacancies, and the experience and knowledge of caseworkers.

These recommendations incorporate proven strategies and tools known to support supervisors as they carry out the diverse activities of their role and to help caseworkers flourish:

1. Create an organizational culture, inclusive of direct managers, especially; that recognizes, respects, appreciates and supports the central role of supervisors and team leads in supporting caseworkers to flourish.
2. Develop (or update) and implement a comprehensive model of supervisory practice that addresses the complexity of the role, is consistent with current knowledge about effective supervision in child welfare, is congruent with the Child Welfare Practice Model and reflects what is known to assist caseworkers to flourish.
3. Ensure that all supervisors are equipped to effectively carry out the administrative, educational, supportive, and mediation functions of supervisory practice.
4. Create a culture of safety, self-care, and mindful awareness for supervisors and caseworkers.

Mor Barak, M., Travis, D., Pyun, H., & Xie, B. (2009). The impact of supervision on worker outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Social Service Review*, 83(1), 3-32.

- Researchers consistently find that effective supervision at the worker's level can contribute to such positive worker outcomes as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and worker retention (Abu-Bader 2000; Landsman 2001; Annie E. Casey Foundation 2003; Mor Barak et al. 2006).
- The quality and type of supervision is notably cited as one of the most instrumental factors contributing to turnover and intention to leave (Landsman 2001; APHSA 2005).
- The findings from this study quantify and underscore the importance of supervision in creating positive worker outcomes; they also show its role in mitigating detrimental ones (Kadushin and Harkness 2002; Austin and Hopkins 2004). Given the accumulated evidence for the benefits of supervision, the most important implication from this study is that organizations may benefit from generating policies and investing resources in nurturing the supervisor-supervisee relationship.
- In addition, it may be helpful for organizations to provide supervisors with training that covers the three supervisory dimensions: task assistance, social and emotional support, and supervisory interpersonal interaction.

- Of the three dimensions, task assistance had the greatest impact on positive worker outcomes, while supportive supervision and quality supervisory relationships were associated with reduced worker anxiety, stress, depression, somatic complaints, burnout, intention to leave, and turnover.
- The implication here is that organizations need to survey their employees to gauge job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, burnout, and other outcomes, both beneficial and detrimental. This assessment could be done as an organization-wide survey or as part of the evaluation of the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Results from these surveys could create a feedback mechanism that could inform the organization about training needs for its supervisors and could also inform individual supervisors about areas in which they might improve in their supervisory relationships.

I. Eligibility Workers

California Healthcare Foundation. (2012). Under pressure: Front line experiences of Medi-Cal eligibility workers. *Perspectives*. Retrieved from <http://www.chcf.org/~media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/U/PDF%20UnderPressureEligibilityWorkerExperiences.pdf>

There is not an abundance of research on eligibility workers and the recruitment and retention strategies available to this specific area of human service work. However, the following information addresses Medi-Cal eligibility workers in California and some strategies aimed at improving their job satisfaction.

Eligibility workers for Medi-Cal enrollment identified the following workplace issues:

- High caseloads
- Budget cuts
- Client demographics have changed making some cases more complex due to the amount of assets new clients have
- Staying informed about changing policies could be a barrier

Recommendations for improving the client's experience:

- Hire more staff to lessen caseloads.
- Hire more supervisors.
- Improve communication between clients and workers by improving call center functions, providing alternate ways for clients to check the progress of their applications, and allowing them to speak with a knowledgeable worker about their application.
- Allocate time to catch up on administrative functions.
- Better marketing of the modalities for enrollment.
- A mechanism for sharing best practices among offices.
- Streamlining paperwork submission processes.
- Providing appropriate and effective software for processing information.

J. Design Team Interventions in Child Welfare

Claiborne, N., Auerbach, C., Lawrence, C., & Caringi, J. (2014). Design teams as an organizational intervention to improve job satisfaction and worker turnover in public child welfare. *Journal of family strengths, 14* (1), Article 12. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/jfs/vol14/iss1/12>

- The design team intervention shows promise for improving turnover; it directly focuses on improving supervision skills and attends to interpersonal and inter-agency communications.
- While promotion was not an intentional element of the intervention, personal development was an unanticipated benefit of the design team process.
- Participants who were promoted attributed skills attained in the design team as contributing to their advancement.
- Team members from all sites spontaneously reflected that they learned the dynamics of working towards solutions, learned to use data to identify priorities for action, and changed their perception of management when team solutions were brought forward and implemented, with support from the leadership.

Key Take Away Points

- A design team is an externally facilitated intervention consisting of team members from across the agency.
- A design team uses a logic model, solution focused approach to address specific issues and enhance the quality of the workforce.
- Worker's job satisfaction in this rural and urban sample significantly improved.
- The design team approach has strong potential to reduce worker turnover.

Design Team Model

- The conceptual framework underlying design teams theorizes that both client and workforce outcomes respond to new organizational configurations that include innovative leadership and participatory management alongside new teaming arrangements for front-line professionals and their supervisors.
- Under optimal conditions, researchers suggest that teams provide important benefits, including higher productivity, better workplace quality, a more committed and engaged workforce, more efficient, high quality decision-making, and improvements in desired performance outcomes and companion outcomes such as enhanced workforce retention.
- Teams can also address concerns at the organizational level. Successful teams engage in complex problem-solving and generate new knowledge, enable mentoring, coaching, and embedded professional development, and serve as vehicles for organizational learning and continuous quality improvement.
- At the time of this study, only one team model, the “design team” model, had documented the impact of action research teams. The primary aim was to design inter-organizational and inter-professional program and service interventions. To achieve this aim, teams representing middle managers, supervisors, and front-line professionals from multiple agencies serving the child welfare population were convened as design teams. These teams were structured to design new intervention services that would address child welfare families’ co-occurring

needs such as substance abuse, depression, domestic violence, and persistent employment challenges. One design team was created in each agency.

- The aim of the design team intervention is to enhance the quality of the workforce, specifically through improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover. *Prior to the intervention, participating child welfare agencies did not use a systematic means for identifying and solving ongoing agency-wide issues. In addition, line staff were rarely consulted during decision-making processes and implementation procedures. The issues addressed by each agency varied and included the following examples: safety, job stress and burn-out, unclear job descriptions, on-call schedule, lack of recognition, and inconsistent supervision.*

Findings

- Job satisfaction being related to turnover (measured by the latent construct of intention to leave) was confirmed by the standardized parameter estimated between these concepts. This indicated that satisfaction with the nature of the work was related to intention to leave. In fact, satisfaction decreases as worker intention to leave increases.
- The design team intervention shows promise for improving turnover; it directly focuses on improving supervision skills and attends to interpersonal and inter-agency communications.
- The relationship between a supervisor and caseworkers is crucial in retention. A major function of the facilitator was to gain members' commitments to the work, especially the development of a team. Trust-building and skill development were important priorities as the group learned to function as a collective, gained help in managing differences and conflict, and began to experience a sense of being empowered. It was found that worker autonomy, in which employees have the freedom to complete tasks without 'over supervision,' was found to be significantly associated with agency commitment.

Strolin-Goltzman, J. (2010). Improving turnover in public child welfare: Outcomes from an organizational intervention. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 32(10), 1388-1395.

- This study examines the effects of an organizational intervention on intention to leave child welfare. Using a non-equivalent comparison group design, 12 child welfare agencies participated in either the Design Team intervention condition or a comparison condition. Organizational factors and intention to leave were assessed pre and post intervention. Findings from GLM Repeated Measures indicate significant group by wave interactions for three of the six organizational variables (professional resources, commitment, and burnout) and intention to leave. All of these interactions showed a greater positive improvement for the design team group than the comparison group. Intervening at the organizational level can help child welfare agencies improve organizational shortcomings, while also decreasing intention to leave. Evidence suggests that by improving organizational factors affecting the workforce, service quality will improve.
- Design Teams begin by identifying the problems that employees perceive to be the causes of turnover within their agency. The teams identify the causes and correlates of turnover through informal focus groups and an agency-wide survey called the *Workforce Retention Survey*. The design team then compile the results and prioritize the issues by feasibility and

importance. Each of the teams follow a specific solution-focused logic model that guides them toward developing solutions to the identified causes of turnover in their organization.

Findings

- The implementation of design teams in public child welfare agencies is correlated with a reduction in intention to leave and actual turnover rates at the organizational level.
 - The findings demonstrated that agencies with design teams had a 12% decrease in turnover rate from pre to post test, while the comparison agencies turnover rate increase by 2%. However, because the data were analyzed at the aggregate agency level, it is unclear through exactly what mechanisms these improvements occurred or whether the intervention actually created change in individual perceptions of organizational factors over time.

K. Workload Management

Northwoods Consulting Partners, Inc. (2014). Staff turnover cut in half for Dane county social workers using mobile application. *Dane County Department of Human Services*. Retrieved from <http://www.teamnorthwoods.com/Portals/0/case-study-pdfs/2014-Dane-WI-CPS.pdf>

This study reviewed Dane County's implementation of a mobile technology for writing and accessing case notes.

Problem

- Faced with a 25% increase in child abuse and neglect reports and a 30% turnover rate, Dane County Department of Human Services in Wisconsin needed to help mobile social workers deal with mountains of paperwork and access critical information while in the field.

Intervention

- Implementing Northwoods' software for social services to allow social workers the ability to change the way they take case notes, saving them hours of paperwork and allowing for more time with families.
- The mobile technology is called Compass Pilot and Compass CoPilot. They are tools designed for mobile social workers that can eliminate duplicative, manual steps in the field, improve efficiency, and help social workers save time to focus their attention on families, not paperwork.
- Social workers in Dane County use Compass CoPilot to electronically capture documents and case notes in the field, take date- and time-stamped photos of children and living situations, complete forms with clients and have them electronically sign, and access all necessary case information and documents in the field.
- Because Compass CoPilot is built for mobile use and performance, social workers say it's not a barrier to engaging families; the tool is actually improving trust and interaction with children and families.
- A major benefit for Dane County CPS social workers is having access to current and historic case information and documents versus a description of a document found in eWiSACWIS,

notes scratched on a piece of paper, or even nothing at all because the case file is back at the office.

- Because all case information is immediately accessible, social workers can also share documents, such as medical reports or law enforcement reports, when talking with families or creating safety plans. In the past, those documents were buried in a paper file at the main office.

Outcomes³

- In Dane County, turnover has been cut in half, and social workers can access necessary case information to make critical decisions and strengthen families.
- Initial assessment social workers are able to complete investigations and make recommendations within the 60-day required timeframe. The time savings have reduced the backlog by 84%, from 450 cases in July 2012 to 70 in 2014.

L. Social Worker Wellbeing

Lizano, E. L. (2015). Job Burnout and Affective Well-Being: A Longitudinal Study of Burnout and Job Satisfaction Among Public Child Welfare Workers. *In Society for Social Work and Research 19th Annual Conference: The Social and Behavioral Importance of Increased Longevity.*

- Among public child welfare workers this study tests the consequences of burnout on affective well-being, an area of research that has received limited attention in child welfare workforce studies. The purpose of this study is to investigate the interrelationships between demands, burnout and job satisfaction across time while taking into account the influence of resources (e.g. social support and specialized child welfare training) on those interrelationships.
- Findings from the study suggest that the type and level of job resources moderates the relationship between job demands, burnout and job satisfaction. Job demands had diverging effects on several relationships in the model with the exception of two relationships. The relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction were consistent across all groups and models. This finding suggests that regardless of social support and specialized training, emotional exhaustion is positively related to depersonalization and negatively related to job satisfaction.
- Several implications for social work administration and management practice can be drawn based on results from this study.
 - When working towards the prevention of burnout development, a job demand that can be targeted is work-family conflict. Findings from this study suggest that conflict between work and family responsibilities can cause emotional exhaustion to begin to form.

³ This information was not formally evaluated to test that the Compass software was the direct cause of the decrease in turnover or the positive outcomes with families. The software was implemented and the results are anecdotally reported by the staff who are using the software, and families who have received services from them.

- The implementation of non-traditional work structures that allow for greater flexibility can be used to help reduce the risk of workers experiencing conflict between the demands of their personal and professional lives.
- Furthermore, managers and administrators crafting workplace interventions that target a reduction of burnout should be focusing their efforts on protecting workers from emotional depletion. This may include workforce management interventions that protect workers' emotional resources and interventions that will provide workers with added resources that may facilitate the process of fulfilling their work responsibilities.

Rose, J. (2015). *Organizational factors that influence social workers' capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care: A case study*. (Doctoral dissertation).

- Burnout is an issue for social workers, which negatively impacts their mental and physical health. However, child welfare social workers may be at an increased risk for burnout compared to other professionals. Further, burnout plays a role in social worker employee turnover rates, which is costly to organizations, and negatively impacts the quality of care for the children served.
- Research findings have shown mindfulness self-care to be effective in decreasing symptoms of burnout for social workers. However, it appears there is a gap in research, which examines the influence organizational factors have on employees' capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care.
- The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study was to examine the organizational factors that influence child welfare social workers' capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care. A case study was conducted at a Midwestern non-profit agency that provided services to abused children. This agency had established a steering committee, in August of 2013, aimed at implementing a trauma-informed care culture for both clients and employees. Employees engaging in mindfulness self-care were viewed as an important part of creating a trauma-informed care environment.
 - Data were collected from various sources in order to conduct a comprehensive examination of the case study. Findings showed that culture, leadership, policy and procedures, operational processes as well as strategic thinking, all influenced the social workers' capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care.
- Burnout is also associated with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and difficulties with personal relationships. In addition to the impact these issues had on the social worker personally, collectively these problems were related to increased employee absenteeism and turnover rates (Green et al., 2013).
- Mindfulness as a self-care strategy to combat burnout.
 - There are varying definitions of mindfulness but two main themes are being present in the moment, and observing the internal and external experience without judgement. As ruminative thoughts and feelings come up, a mindfulness return to the present allows for a greater harnessing of emotional energy needed for the task at hand.
 - Burnout is conceptualized as a process that includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. These

components impact how the professional interacts with self, client and/or the organization. Adding to these dynamics are risk factors that include vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue.

- Self-care is a response to burnout and may include meeting basic needs, to higher levels of functioning such as self-esteem. As burnout occurs along a continuum, mindfulness self-care can be utilized at any point in that process. Mindfulness research findings have found it to be effective, in particular, for mental health and reducing risk factors for burnout.
 - Social work, business, healthcare and education industries have begun to implement mindfulness into the workplace as a response to work related stress.

Other research studying the impact of mindfulness on social worker well-being:

- Shier et al (2012) surveyed 700 social workers and interviewed 13 participants who reported high levels of well-being as a result of mindfulness practice.
 - Mindful practice allowed for the social workers to reflect on the roles professionally and personally. Other themes included an increase in self-regulation when with clients as well as maintaining a determined balance between work and personal life.
- McGarrigle and Walsh (2011) examined the effectiveness of an eight-week mindfulness-based group model utilizing a mixed method design. The participants were social workers in a nonprofit agency that served children and families.
 - The quantitative findings indicated that participants had an increase in mindfulness and organizational factors that influence decrease in stress levels.
 - The participants indicated that permission to participate in mindfulness during work hours strongly influenced their capacity to participate.
 - The participants indicated that the agency was structured to promote mindfulness with a location to practice as well as time allotted during the workday.
 - The overall feeling was that leadership supported incorporating mindfulness as part of daily professional practice within the agency (McGarrigle & Walsh, 2011). Participants reported lowered stress levels and increased sense of well-being as it related to their role within the agency.

What organizational factors influence employees' capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care?

This study looked at an organization that used a trauma-informed care steering committee to implement trauma-informed practices across every level of the organization. The committee was made up of diverse members of the organization, not just leaders.

- Organizational culture: employee relationships, acceptance of mindfulness, language and the trauma-informed care steering committee's mission, all played a positive role in their capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care.
- Leadership: social workers reported participating in mindfulness self-care due to the agency's support.
- Agency policy and operating procedures: Social workers and healthcare workers participated in mindfulness, when trainings were provided in the workplace; the interviewees reported that the operational process of mindfulness check-in at meetings, and a feeling that they are allowed to take breaks, all had a positive influence on participation in mindfulness; demanding staff schedules had a negative influence on social worker capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care.

- Strategic thinking: This type of thinking at all levels of the organization may be an effective first step in creating change. Strategic thinking should no longer be associated with senior leadership. By creating a learning, and reflective, environment via strategic thinking, sustainability of a program may be increased. In addition, utilization of effective change agents may also play a critical role influencing employee capacity to engage in mindfulness self-care.

The following is a summary of recommendations for organizational leaders:

- Promoting strategic thinking that is seen in cognition and behavior.
- Working to have strategic thinking that is visible at various employee levels.
- Transformational leadership may be effective in promoting strategic thinking to employees as well as creating organizational change in culture.
- Establishing change agents that are peers to the recipients of the message.
- Establishing change agents that are representatives of the diversity in an organization.
- Change agents continue to seek out a variety of communication methods to meet a wider range of people.
- Change agents should set a goal in which they are no longer needed by empowering the recipients to be their own change agents.

M. Employee Recognition Strategies

Larson, S., Hewitt, A. (2012). Staff Recruitment, retention, and training strategies for community human services organizations. *Research and Training Center on Community Living, University of Minnesota*. Retrieved from http://rtc3.umn.edu/docs/Larson_and_Hewitt_Staff_rrt_book_U_of_MN_reprint_2012.pdf

- Motivation can come in the form of concrete and measurable interventions, or it can be intangible. Motivation can be either formal or informal. Effectively motivating staff requires taking the time to get to know what motivates each individual staff member.
- Having employees who are excited to come to work every day and who can anticipate their duties breeds a positive work environment. An employee who meets the workday with enthusiasm and vigor can also meet the needs of a supported individual who has challenging behaviors or can face the occasional disappointment of unmet goals. A highly motivated employee performs his or her job duties in a manner that promotes the mission of the organization. People who receive support services will get the best support from motivated staff. A highly motivated staff can influence numerous stakeholders to effect change and to create an overall positive environment.
- Employees who lack motivation and dread coming to work are less likely to come to work every day. The organization may begin to experience problems such as poor work attendance and poor quality of work performance, and eventually the organization will see an increase in its turnover rates. Motivated employees, on the other hand, come to work routinely and on time, meet and exceed performance goals, and remain with the organization despite challenges.

Strategies for responding to motivation issues:

- Use training and staff development: For the purposes of employee motivation, employee orientation and initial skill development must be supplemented by ongoing training for long-term professional development
- Set performance goals: If an employee knows that he or she is doing a good job and that the employer appreciates the work that the employee does, he or she will generally be more motivated to continue performing at a high level. And, if an employee has a clear understanding of what he or she needs to do to meet expectations and feels supported in making this effort, he or she likely will be more motivated to improve job performance.
 - Supervisors should work collaboratively with each employee to generate performance goals.
 - Long-range goals can seem overwhelming or intimidating to some employees. For these employees, performance checklists could be useful.
- Recognizing Employees: Supervisors and managers can also have an impact on employee motivation through the recognition of positive employee efforts and accomplishments. Recognition is an important aspect of keeping employees. Unfortunately, although it is a simple and cost-effective strategy, it is often overlooked as a viable solution to retention problems.

N. Return to Work Strategies

Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, University of California at Berkeley. (2010). *Helping injured employees return to work: Practical guidance under workers' compensation and disability rights laws in California*. California Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation. Retrieved from http://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Reports/2010/HandbookRTW_2010.pdf

The following information is best practices in returning an employee to work who has been out due to medical or other reasons.

Steps

1. Contact the injured employee and start the interactive process.
 2. Describe essential functions and usual duties of jobs.
 3. Obtain work capacities and restrictions.
 4. Research and evaluate possible accommodations.
 5. Select a reasonable accommodation and make an offer at work.
- You must consider accommodating the employee in the following order, unless you and the employee agree otherwise:
 - Provide accommodations that would enable the employee to stay in his or her original job.
 - Reassign the employee to an equivalent vacant position in a job the employee is qualified to perform, and provide reasonable accommodations as needed.
 - Reassign the employee to a lower-graded vacant position in a job the employee is qualified to perform, and provide reasonable accommodations as needed.

- Temporarily assign tasks that the employee is able to perform while recovering.
6. Implement and monitor the accommodation.

Establishing an Effective Return to Work Program

1. Develop and formalize your policies and procedures.

2. Apply the six-step return to work process.

- Identify who in the organization will be responsible for carrying out each of the steps.
- Include instructions on how to obtain information from the employee's primary treating physician, other health care professionals, your workers' compensation insurer, and the persons in the organization responsible for accommodations.

3. Eliminate inappropriate policies.

Examples of inappropriate policies:

- Always terminating an employee if he or she is unable to return to full duty after a specific, fixed period.
- Never considering modified or alternative work outside an employee's area, unit, or program.
- Requiring that injured employees be released to full duty without restrictions or be healed 100 percent before returning.
- Not considering time off except under fixed, pre-determined circumstances.
- Delaying discussion of job accommodations until the employee's condition is permanent and stationary.
- Refusing to purchase new equipment to accommodate the employee unless approved by the workers' compensation insurer.

4. Evaluate existing jobs and working conditions.

- Identify essential and non-essential functions of jobs to know which functions may need to be removed.
- Identify short-term tasks outside regular jobs to allow injured employees to return to work while recovering.
- Evaluate working conditions and encourage employee input to reduce injuries.

5. Ensure everyone assumes their roles and responsibilities.

- Select suitable physicians and the best workers' compensation insurer
- Train supervisors and managers on the return-to-work process
- Inform employees of their rights and obligations in the process

Dunstan, D.A. & MacEachen, E. (2012). Bearing the brunt: Co-workers' experiences of work reintegration processes. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. Retrieved from <http://www.springerlink.com/openurl.asp?genre=article&id=doi:10.1007/s10926-012-9380-2>

The role of co-workers in Work Reintegration (WR) interventions.

- Workplace privacy and confidentiality requirements are a key challenge for full co-worker participation in WR. Coworkers' capacity to support returning workers was related to the quality of the WR arrangements, the relationship with the returning worker, work culture, and the duration of the required support. Co-workers saw themselves as a potential resource in WR planning, as they had the best 'on the ground' knowledge of the job. Instead of leaving co-workers to 'pick up the slack,' WR planners should consult with them about how best to integrate the returning worker.

Negative impact of work related injuries:

- Extra work or heavier duties for co-workers
- Disruption of personal work effectiveness
- Disruption of organizational effectiveness
- Disruption of workplace social relationships
- Confrontation with injured worker's externalized distress

Identified solutions to above issues:

- Replacement staff
- Effective communication
 - Understand the injury
 - Be consulted about Return to Work plans
 - Receive guidance on how to assist
- Ensure injured worker is recovered sufficiently to perform modified duties
- Acknowledgement, consideration, and recognition
 - Monetary or in-kind payments

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