Resilience and Burnout in Child protection social work: Individual and organisational themes from a systematic literature review


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Resilience and Burnout in Child Protection Social Work: Individual and Organizational Themes from a Systematic Literature Review

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Resilience and Burnout in Child Protection Social Work:

Individual and Organizational Themes from a Systematic Literature Review

Abstract

Child protection social work is acknowledged as a very stressful occupation with high turnover and poor retention of staff being a major concern. This paper highlights themes that emerged from findings of 65 articles that were included as part of a systematic literature review. The review focused on the evaluation of research findings, which considered individual and organizational factors associated with resilience or burnout in child protection social work staff. The results identified a range of individual and organizational themes for staff in child protection social work. Nine themes were identified in total. These are categorised under ‘Individual’ and ‘Organizational’ themes. Themes categorised as individual included, personal history of maltreatment, training and preparation for child welfare, coping, secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. Those classified as organisational included workload, social support and supervision, organizational culture and climate, organizational and professional commitment and job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The range of factors are discussed with recommendations and areas for future research are highlighted.

Key Words  Burnout, child protection social work, resilience, retention and turnover, systematic literature review
Introduction

Child protection social work is an occupation that can result in high levels of stress and burnout (Anderson, 2000). There are concerns about the level of inexperience in the child protection workforce due to high levels of staff turnover (Healy et al., 2009), and it is acknowledged that a competent and committed workforce is essential for the effective service delivery of statutory services to vulnerable children and families. Despite the evidence of the difficulties associated with this job, there is also evidence to suggest that workers can find their role rewarding and experience job satisfaction, feeling they make a valuable contribution to peoples’ lives (Ellett, 2009, Nordick, 2002). Resilience is therefore apparent in some workers but not all. Factors associated with these individual differences are multifaceted and are recorded and discussed in this article.

The current paper gathers together research findings from 65 studies which together have formed a framework to provide insight into the range of individual and organizational factors associated with resilience and burnout in child protection social work. The framework is based on a career timeline perspective which begins at the point of motivation to become a social worker and then the range of factors that impact along the career journey of the social worker form motivation, to selection to the degree to training and post qualifying training, to the organizational contest such as the impact of workload and manager and team experience. The collation of the study results have been presented in a table Systematic Review Table.doc and has been the basis of a literature review which was the foundation of empirical research sited elsewhere.
Theory and Definitions

Job burnout was developed as an important concept during the 1970s, and it captured something extremely critical about people’s experiences in the workplace. Burnout is defined as the experience of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that can arise from long-term involvement in occupational situations that are emotionally demanding. A widely accepted definition of burnout is proposed by Maslach et al (1996:4) which encompasses the concepts of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment. A plethora of research has been devoted to the understanding of factors contributing to burnout and the consequences for individuals and their health and well-being. Research indicates that stress and burnout are significant factors in the development of both physical and psychological illness (McGrath et al., 1989).

There are many definitions of resilience that broadly reflect the conditions of adversity and adaptation. Resilience approaches focus on those who manage or overcome adversity and tend to avoid negative impacts or identify learning and benefits as a result of these experiences. According to resilience theorists, resilience, rather than distress and an inability to cope is the norm (Bonanno, 2004) and adversarial growth is also common (Arnold et al., 2005). Resilience literature has evolved from concepts related to personality factors such as adaptability and hardiness (Bonanno, 2004) and developed to include process based insights into resilience (Hart et al., 2007). This development places the individual in context and creates the ability to examine options for building resilience into organizational contexts. It is noted that this is an emerging area of research and concepts of
resilience and adversarial growth are challenged in relation to rigour of the research and validity (Luthar et al, 2000) the link, however, offers an alternative framework worthy of consideration. While deficit models tend to focus narrowly on contributors to burnout, Bell (2003) argues that a strengths perspective can inform broader personal and organisational strategies and resources that support resilience.

This link also highlights the need and potential for systems and processes for developing strategies to build organizational resilience.

Burnout and Resilience in Child Protection work

There is evidence that child protection workers are at risk for experiencing burnout (Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Regehr et al., 2004). Although burnout can occur in any occupational group, child protection workers are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to their poor working conditions excessive paperwork, long working hours, little opportunity for advancement, and ineffective bureaucratic structures (Anderson, 2000).

Russ et al., (2009) states that there are at least four conditions of adversity that research has identified as common experiences in child protection work. These are work stress (Dollard et al., 2001; Lonne, 2003), burnout (Maslach and Leiter, 1997), trauma (Horwitz, 2006), and vicarious traumatisation (Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006). Research has highlighted the potential for these experiences to have significant adverse impacts for child protection workers and suggested that these adversities contribute to declining staff well-being (Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006).
ultimately impacts on organisations by lowering the willingness and ability of individuals to function optimally.

Despite the predominantly negative focus on burnout, researchers have increasingly identified a proportion of child protection workers who continue to function effectively and report high job satisfaction (Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Ellett, 2009, Nordick, 2002). Furthermore, a closer examination of the research suggests that even where negative indicators are evident, 50-70% of study participants remain without symptoms or dysfunction (Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006).

Methodology

A total of 10 bibliographic databases were selected (Psych Info, Medline, ASSIA, Social Services Abstracts, SSCI, CINAHL, Cochrane Library, Index to Thesis, Social Care Online, ZETOC) as well as the search engine Google Scholar. The selection was influenced by the Social Care Institute Guidance (Coren and Fisher, 2006) and previous random searches across available electronic databases. Other issues that were considered included accessibility, relevance to the subject and inclusion of grey literature as well as peer reviewed research. All of these databases included abstracts for the articles found which enabled the first stage of the process of selection and de-selection for relevance to begin. In order to manage the quality of the current study, independent inter-rater selection and de-selection processes took place before 1st and 2nd raters met to discuss and agree studies to be included.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria
To be included papers had to focus on social workers in child protection or child welfare work. Papers on resilience amongst other professions and in other areas of social work practice were excluded. Papers had to report empirical research or be reviews of relevant research. Government papers, policy documents, theoretical material and descriptive case study articles were excluded. It became clear during scoping that a number of relevant empirical studies were available through dissertation publications by research students at Master’s and Doctoral levels so grey literature was included. Extending the search to this type of grey literature reduces the potential for publication bias (Burdett et al, 2003) although it is recognised that this is less of an issue for social work than for some other areas of study (Egger et al, 2003, Taylor, Dempster and Donnelly, 2007). The studies selected were limited to English language (due to the high cost of translation) and a ten year time frame: 01st January 2000 to 31st December 2009.

**Development of Research Formulae**

The first step in developing the search formulae was to break the research question into the concept groups. These were “Resilience” or “Burnout” and “Retention” and “Turnover” in “Child Protection Social Work” or “Child Welfare”. A standard structure for developing search criteria is suggested by Taylor et al (2003, 2006) which includes five broad thematic areas. Type of service or intervention (Social Work), aspect of service (child protection), client groups (children and families), professional role or task (child protection – related to “burnout” or “resilience” and “retention and turnover”), publication limits (English language, research based
studies, including grey literature, ten year time frame). It is important that concept
groups reflected the meaning of the terms so that retrieval of relevant articles could be
achieved (high sensitivity) and then refined sufficiently (high precision) to minimise
the number of irrelevant articles (Taylor et al, 2007). The concept groups were the
beginning of the development of the search formulae that were used across all data
bases and each database had variations on search terms to operationalize how the
concept groups became search formulae.

The second step was to refine the search terms for maximum precision from each
database. Electronic databases are electronic libraries that can be used to search for
titles, authors, key words using “text terms”. Bibliographic databases of journal
articles have the additional ability of searching titles, abstracts, and full articles as
well as work with a combination of terms developed from standard Boolean algebra
(Taylor, 2003). Many of the databases used had the additional feature of thesaurus
with index terms to assist in overcoming the range and variation of reflecting context
specific search terms. For example, USA and Canada studies refer to “child welfare”,
whereas UK and Australian studies refer to “child protection”. Psych Info, Medline,
ASSIA, Cochrane Library, CINAHL, and Social Care Online have systems for
indexing terms. Social Services Abstracts, SSCI, Index to Thesis, ZETOC and
Google Scholar did not have this facility. Proximity searching was a feature of
CINAHL, Medline, SSA, Psych Info and SSCI. This feature adds to precision as it
allows for a search of two or more terms within a certain number of words of each
other. For example, “child protection adj4 burnout” searches for child protection and
burnout within four words of each other.
Individual Themes

Personal History of Maltreatment

Researchers have investigated the extent of trauma histories in professionals such as social workers, due to concerns that the personal abuse histories of these professionals may lead to the experience of trauma symptoms, counter-transference, vicarious traumatisation and burnout as a result of continued exposure to traumatic material (Follette et al., 1994, cited in Stevens and Higgins, 2002). Five studies in the current literature review highlight a relationship between personal history of maltreatment and burnout or vicarious traumatisation (Cunningham, 2003; Nelson-Gardel and Harris, 2003; Bride, 2007; Shepel, 2009; Stevens, 2002. Bride (2007) found that a personal history of childhood trauma increases a child welfare worker’s risk of secondary traumatic stress (STS). Results are consistent with other studies that indicate a personal trauma history, especially in childhood as a significant risk factor in the development of STS (Caringi, 2008, Nelson-Gardell and Harris, 2003).

Whether a history of trauma will enhance one’s resilience or reduce it is a matter for further research. Stevens and Higgins (2002:323) point out that the considerable disparity of reported prevalence rates of abuse histories among those in the ‘helping professions’ (7.1% to 83%) reflects differences in sampling, content, definitions, format techniques and random variation. Furthermore, the authors acknowledge the significance of personal abuse history as a possible motivator to enter the caring professions and suggest that organizational strategies should be developed to foster resilience in these employees.
Training and Preparation for Child Welfare

Studies that have focused on training and preparation issues include Rosenthal, 2006; Ellett, 2006; Ellett et al., 2009; Curry, 2005; Turcotte, 2009. Rosenthal, (2006) in a large-scale study of 839 workers found that participation in funded social work education programmes predicted increased retention. Title IV is a USA Government based strategy between employers and educators in order to attract and retain recruits in child welfare. The scheme involves a stipend payment to students in return for a commitment to remain in the job for a pre-allocated time period beyond qualifying as a social worker (Rosenthal, 2006). Ellett (2006) conducted a study with 369 participants and also reported that a clear retention factor was IV-E internship, internship experiences or work experience in child welfare before taking the job.

Ellett et al, (2009) describes the development and initial implementation of an Employee Selection Programme (ESP) for child welfare. The results of this study highlighted the benefit of ESP in improving the employee selection process and how this assisted retention of the considerable financial and human investments in making employee decisions. There is a professional responsibility on staff to engage in ongoing CPD (Continuous Professional Development), not just for ethical and governance reasons, but for the growth of professional knowledge and skills and also to maintain professional registration status (Munro, 2011). Research by Curry (2005) has identified transfer of learning factors and the impact of overall knowledge-transfer and suggests that these findings support the need for training and development opportunities as part of a holistic staff retention programme. Furthermore, Turcotte (2006) found that following the implementation of a training programme, a large
sample of 945 practitioners felt more competent, had acquired additional knowledge and had changed some of their behaviours with families.

**Coping**

Coping with the demands of the job were discussed in a number of studies. Eight studies were identified as belonging to this category (Anderson, 2000; Aclaro-Lapidario, 2008; Nissley, 2004; Nordick, 2002; Robichaud, 2004; Vu Paul Hoang, 2007; McGowan, 2009; Weuste, 2006. Nordick (2002) found that social workers achieved balance, surviving, thriving, job satisfaction, job retention, self-actualization as well as meaning and purpose with work by using a number of coping strategies. These methods include (1) applying investigative and interpersonal skills, (2) embracing the risks and challenge, (3) finding meaning and purpose, (4) expect the unexpected, (5) keep expectations realistic, (6) achieve competence and confidence, (7) find support from others and supervision, (8) maintaining an important life outside work, (9) debriefing from trauma, (10) learning about self and self-awareness.

Anderson (2000) examined how 151 Social Workers with at least 2 years’ experience coped with job stress. The findings of the study showed that participants view themselves as using active coping strategies such as cognitive restructuring and problem solving, more than expressing emotions and social support. These strategies were used more than problem avoidance, self-criticism or social withdrawal. The findings confirm that coping strategies that are used vary according to the level of burnout experienced. According to these findings, workers should use active coping
strategies such as emotion focused coping methods and support from colleagues to
prevent and treat their experiences of emotional exhaustion.

Aclaro-Lapidario (2008) conducted a study with 75 child welfare staff to measure
compassion satisfaction (CS), burnout (BO) and secondary traumatic stress (STS).
Findings revealed that pleasure from helping others was one of the main sources of
maintaining workers in their role. Interestingly, the top three reported coping
mechanisms were “talking to a co-worker or spouse”, “exercising” “lunch/dining out”
(Aclaro-Lapidario, 2008:44). This study confirms the findings of Anderson (2000),
that burnout is less likely when active coping is engaged.

**Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction**

Despite the knowledge of the levels of burnout and turnover in child protection social
work, there is evidence that some individuals “love” this profession (Nordick,
2002:3), thrive in the job and wish to remain employed in this sector (Stalker et a;,
2007). Four articles were categorised as relevant to the discussion of job satisfaction
and dissatisfaction and report on the factors found to be prevalent for both ends of this
continuum (Stalker et al., 2007; Nordick, 2002; Szu Chen, 2009; Cahalane, 2008).
These studies reflect a common thread, sometimes with conflicting findings, relating
to the experience of working in child welfare which include the individual’s
tendencies towards emotional arousal, cognitive problem solving, emotional
exhaustion, self-efficacy and coping.
Stalker, et al., (2007) conducted a systematic literature review of 6 studies that assessed the co-existence of job satisfaction (JS) and emotional exhaustion (EE) in samples of child welfare employees. Results reveal that 47% of participants were highly satisfied with their job yet the mean of the EE scores were recorded in the high range (Maslach Burnout Inventory, MBI, Maslach and Jackson, 1996). The research questions used to guide these studies were varied which could explain why a correlation between emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction had not always been reported. Methodological design limitations such as the use of non-validated measures were found and in many studies job satisfaction had been measured by a single question. Other findings are in contrast to Stalker, et al., (2007) regarding the co-existence of high EE and JS. For example, the Szu Chen (2009) study reported on longitudinal quantitative research with 455 participants. The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of job satisfaction on worker’s desire to remain in this sector. Findings show that improving job satisfaction is not the only factor of importance in retaining staff. Similarly, Coleman’s (2003) study with 550 Title IV MSW child welfare students, found that those at higher levels of cognitive affective levels should be less prone to burnout and able to make tough social work decisions which are necessary of this profession. These workers are also more able to use insights from own emotions and the emotions of others to inform practice.

Organizational Themes

Organizational and Professional Commitment

Commitment to child welfare has been shown to have strong significance on whether an employee stays or leaves the child welfare profession. Fourteen studies touch upon
this variation of the theme (DePanfilis, 2008; Mor Barak, et al., 2001; Mor Barak, 2006; Barth, 2001; Strolin-Goltzman, 2008; Landsman, 2008; O’Donnell, 2009; Stalker, 2007; McGowan, 2009; Chernesky, 2009; Yankeelov 2009; Szu Chen 2009; Ellett, et al., 2003; Song Ki Bum, 2006). DePanfillis (2008) found the importance of worker commitment to the profession, showing low levels of worker exhaustion and high levels of self-efficacy for staying and co-worker support, salary and benefits as important organizational factors that impact on retention.

Using longitudinal methods O’Donnell (2009) found that the most consistent factor relating to whether the sample of 201 MSWs (Master in Social Work) stayed past their Title IV stipend commitment was organizational commitment. Similarly, a cross sectional survey conducted by Chernesky (2009) examined reasons for taking a public child welfare job as well as job expectations to understand why workers leave. Findings revealed that workers who form a certain attachment to their supervisors and take jobs because they are committed to the mission of the agency were more satisfied and less inclined to leave.

Weaver (2007) examined predictors of turnover amongst newly qualified child welfare workers. This study was based on 141 “leavers” and 382 “still in post”. Results distinguish “intention to leave”, versus “actually leaving”. It was found that attitudes of staff to job conditions are more likely to be associated with intention to leave than job exit. Collectively, these studies indicate that workers first of all need to feel committed to the agency, have formed an attachment to their supervisors and have a positive perception about job conditions in order to promote their retention.
Organizational Culture and Climate

Studies have looked at organizational climate as key to the issue of turnover and retention in child welfare organizations (Bednar, 2003; Mor Barak, 2006; Cahalane, 2008; Chenot, 2008; Glisson, 2006; Healy et al., 2009; Kyonne, 2009; Landsman, 2007; Barth, 2006; Strolin-Goltzman et al. 2008). Supervisory support, level of trust between colleagues and adequate resources all correlated with job satisfaction. Furthermore, organizational climate can also impact on service quality and service user outcomes and climate was found to be the primary predictor of positive outcomes for children (Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998), cited in Bednar (2003). Kyonne’s (2009) study used secondary quantitative data relating to 310 child welfare staff. Findings indicated that the workers’ positive perception of teamwork decreased their stated intentions to leave whereas the workers’ burnout increases their stated intentions to leave.

Chenot (2008) found that a passive defensive organizational culture has a negative impact on early career workers, but not on those in mid or late career stages. This suggests that there is a reduction in sensitivity to passive defensive organizational culture evident over time. Support and organizational culture has only a limited impact on retention across varying stages of child welfare workers careers. Healy et al. (2009) carried out a comparative study across three countries, England, Sweden and Australia focusing on the analysis of barriers to retaining novice practitioners. This study confirmed that the absence of line management support together with the level of inexperience in teams and a lack of peer support exacerbates the situation for novices.
In a study by Strolin-Goltzman et al. (2008), intention to leave and actual turnover were measured following the evaluation of an intervention designed to address organizational causes of turnover in public child welfare. Findings support the use of Design Teams (DTs) as a method of achieving organizational change that positively facilitates workforce retention in child welfare. The study found changes to be at agency and individual level with a significant decrease on intention to leave and an improvement in organizational commitment and actual turnover levels. Qualitative findings suggest that self-sustaining agencies were managed by strong leaders who possessed professional characteristics and organizational conditions that contributed to sustaining DTs. However, it is possible that those organizational conditions were the factors that led it to participate, in the first instance.

Workload

Workload is acknowledged as a significant stressor in child protection work by a number of research studies (Dillenberger, 2004; Ellett, 2006; Juby and Scannapieco, 2007; Stalker, 2007; Tham and Meagher, 2009; Strand, 2009; Van Hook, 2009). High workload and low wages have been confirmed as impacting negatively on workers’ self-esteem. In a large scale quantitative study Strand (2009:395) found that such conditions indicates to staff that they are not valued by their employer. Furthermore, workers perceive such working conditions to indicate that their welfare is not important to their employer, which in turn results in a lack of organizational commitment and high rates of attrition. Excessive working hours were found in a study by Ellett (2006) which records that both the front line workers and their supervisors have to work 50-60 hours per week and in some cases 70 hours per week.
Comparing the specific experiences of child welfare workers (n = 309), with social workers more generally and human service workers on a larger scale (22,532), Tham and Meagher (2009) found that whilst child welfare workers made positive assessments of some dimensions of their working lives, their job was unusually demanding compared to other human services workers.

**Peer and Management Support**

Social support and supervision has been found to contribute to worker retention in a number of studies (Nissly, 2002; 2005; Stevens and Higgins, 2002; Yankeelov, 2009; Westbrook, 2006; Szu Chen, 2009; Nordick, 2002; Curry, et al. 2005; Mor Barak, 2001; Barth, 2008; Anderson, 2000). Research on turnover has repeatedly shown that supervisor and co-worker support can buffer the effect of burnout and turnover (Curry et al., 2005; Smith, 2005; Weaver et al., 2007; Mor Barak, 2001).

Using longitudinal methods, Scannapieco (2007) confirmed that co-workers and supervisors play a crucial role in the retention of staff. Anderson (2000) similarly found that active coping mechanisms and social supports protect against burnout. Yankeelov (2009) reported that stayers were more attached to their supervisors and received more guidance and suggests that a supportive relationship with supervisors can provide a secure and buffering effect to protect staff from the stresses of the job. Research on turnover has repeatedly shown that supervisor and co-worker support can buffer the effect of burnout and turnover (Curry et al., 2005; Smith, 2005; Weaver, et al., 2007; Mor Barak, 2001). DePanfilis (2006) carried out a literature review of 25
studies and concluded that child welfare managers need to be aware of their important and significant role in helping workers to deal effectively with secondary trauma.

Dickenson’s (2009) experimental retention study based on 151 child welfare staff highlights the concept of “undesirable exits”. Results strongly indicate that supervisor practice support can significantly and incrementally decrease a workers risk of leaving. Strand (2009) similarly found that the more satisfaction with supervision, working conditions, availability of both internal and external resources, and/or being a manager, created more job satisfaction.

**STS, Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue**

Five studies focused on secondary traumatic stress (STS) or compassion fatigue/satisfaction (CF/S) and the impact on workers of dealing with traumatic aspects of child protection work on a daily basis (Bride, 2007; Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Aclaro-Lapidario, 2007; Caringi, 2008; Van Hook, 2009). The effects of traumatic events are not solely confined to those who directly experience them. The term STS is applied to those who have regular contact with traumatised individuals. Such individuals can experience prolonged emotional disruption and become indirectly affected by the trauma (Figley, 1995, cited in Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006).

Many studies have noted that child protection workers are especially at risk for the development of STS given their level of contact with abused children (Bell, Kulkarni, and Dalton, 2003; Horwitz, 1998; Cornille and Myers, 1999; Meyers and Cornille,
2002, all cited in Conrad and Kellar-Guenther, 2006), found that child protection workers suffered from more psychological distress than the general population, and many had distress levels greater than those reported by typical outpatient mental health clients.

Caringi (2008) conducted a study into STS to understand the impact of this on a sample of 102 child protection workers. He was also interested in understanding the mitigating and contributing factors that are associated with STS. Mitigating factors were, (1) prior personal history of worker trauma, (2) coping style, (3) organizational factors, (4) workers own perception of stress. This research tends to confirm the findings that CF is evident in the child protection workforce with mitigating factors that need to be considered.

Discussion

This paper attempts to bring together a range of current research findings on resilience and burnout in child protection social work. A career time line perspective was useful to examine relevant factors and allow cognisance of individual and organizational factors that need to be considered in relation to the individual worker experience in this important role. Resilience and burnout outcomes are related to a range of factors to be considered which are associated with individual issues and/or training or employee context and organizational dimensions or experiences.

It is first of all important to consider the individual worker motivation to be a social worker, taking into account the “personal history of maltreatment” discussion and
how such a history impacts on workers who are dealing with vicarious trauma of others on a daily basis. The results from this review suggest that personal awareness and personal development are important at the point of entry onto this career, for individuals and educators as well as employers and this commitment should be a career long activity. Although it cannot be assumed that all motivation to a social work career has an origin in a personal history of trauma, consideration could be universally applied to promote a mind set to support workers who have had such a history. There should be consideration on many aspects relating to training at undergraduate and post graduate levels. Specifically, it is recommended that practice placements and preparation for practice should reflect the demands, challenges and realities of the job.

Coping styles are also important to consider in relation to any recommendations to improve worker resilience around the challenges of the job. According to Anderson, (2000), those who use active and engaged coping methods such as cognitive restructuring and problem solving coped better with the demands of the job than those who use avoidant or disengaged methods such as withdrawal and absenteeism. Therefore, coping methods and professional development strategies could become integrated into undergraduate and post qualifying training to enhance worker resilience. One might argue that those with a previous history of maltreatment have either enhanced coping mechanism or, on the other hand, their ability to cope may have been compromised (Shepel, 2009). The outcome for such workers is highly individual and will depend on the meaning they have applied to their experiences and any therapeutic interventions to process the event/s. This suggests the need for individuals to develop internal resilience by engaging in personal and professional
development strategies from the outset of their career so that they can build on these
to develop active coping methods and practices.

Organizational and professional commitment has been discussed in the context of
studies examining workers intention to stay or leave. The overwhelming finding from
these studies is that supervisory and peer supports are significant factors which
influence commitment, organizational culture and intention to stay or leave (Stalker,
2007; Strolin-Goltzman, 2008; Yankeelov, 2009; Schwartz, 2008; Bednar, 2005;
Barak, 2006; Cahalane, 2008; Glisson, 2008; Kyonne, 2009; Landsman, 2007; Barth,
2006; Juby and Scannapieco, 2007). Organizational culture is experienced by
workers as either positive or negative during their career. Recommendations are
targeted at employer level and call for an examination of culture and climate
contributors, specifically the quality of manager support and supervision, and the
factors that impact on the contextual work experiences for staff. For example, studies
confirm that a major contributor to burnout is workload and staff being stretched
beyond capacity (Dillenburger, 2004; Ellett, 2006; Juby Scannapieco, 2007; Stalker,
2007; Tham and Meagher, 2009; Strand, 2009; Van Hook, 2009). In addition,
commitment is closely related to turnover or retention of staff and according to
DePanfilis (2008) and Mor Barak et al., (2001) factors that create commitment is
within the grasp of managers and policy makers to manipulate. These authors state
that the major predictors of turnover are not individual but are work and
organizational based, therefore there is more that could be done to increase job
satisfaction and reduce attrition in this sector. It is recommended that employers and
policy makers consider the significant factors that are evidenced to contribute to
turnover and develop a strategic approach to build resilience into the workforce.
Conclusion

The themes that contribute to resilience are discussed drawing from the range of studies in this literature review include positive coping styles and personal development, good quality primary and ongoing training, constructive organizational cultures, supportive social and supervisory support, together with manageable workloads. Whereas, defensive organizational culture with poor social supports and unmanageable case loads are related to intention to leave and job exit. Strolin-Goltzman (2008) argues that low turnover is not always indicative of a healthy organization and a lack of job alternatives could be a more realistic reason why workers remain. This is a very important issue in the current economic and employment downturn.

The information retrieved from the included 65 studies provides an overview of the issues relevant to the maintenance of staff and to help them to achieve longevity in a very difficult and stressful occupation which requires them to protect children and young people in society. The results have produced a framework which has formed the basis of an empirical research programme on the individual and organizational factors that lead to certain outcomes regarding retention or turnover of staff in this sector. This could go a long way towards providing an evidence base for policy and practice regarding the retention of staff and practice experience in this critical area of social work.
REFERENCES


The Munro Review of Child Protection: A child centred system. (May 2011)


Table on themes found in systematic literature review: Resilience and Burnout in Child Protection Social Work

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<th>No</th>
<th>Author and Year and Country</th>
<th>Data-Base</th>
<th>Factors Identified – Verbatim extracts from studies.</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
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| 1  | Aclaro-Lapidario 2008 USA   | ASSIA SSA | • Compassion Satisfaction (CS), Burnout (BO), and Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) were not associated with total years of service or size of caseload.  
• Marital status had a significant relationship with STS.  
• CSWs reported using active coping to deal with stress.  
• Findings suggest that these workers would benefit from awareness and prevention of the pernicious effects of STS. | Studies are of those workers in post unless otherwise stated. master final data ext table 65 july 2013.doc |
| 2  | Anderson 2000 USA           | ASSIA SSA | • Engaged coping = reduced DP and increased PA.  
• Disengaged coping = EE and DP and reduced PA.  
• Neither active nor avoidant coping strategies saved these workers from EE.  
• The problem-focused strategies they are taught to use do not help them deal with the emotional content & context of their work, suggesting the use of emotion-focused coping to prevent & remediate burnout. | Survey. Quantitative study – Cross sectional survey design using non-probability convenience sampling to measure CS, BO and STS. The Professional Quality of Life scales and self-report questionnaires were administered to (n= 75) workers. |
| 3  | Barak 2006 USA              | SSCI      | • Diversity, together with a stressful, unjust, exclusionary and non-supportive organizational climate, negatively influences individual wellbeing, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, resulting in intention to leave the job.  
• Study findings hold implications for supervisory recruitment and training, structural and procedural systems reform. | Mixed Methods. The study employed a cross-sectional design with mixed method – both qualitative and quantitative – analyses, utilizing an availability sample of 418 child welfare workers drawn from a large, urban public agency. Mixed methods using SEM and constant content comparative analysis testing theoretical model of intention to leave. |
| 4  | Barak 2001 USA              | SSCI      | • Burnout, job dissatisfaction, availability of employment alternatives, low organizational and professional commitment, stress, and lack of social support are the strongest predictors of turnover or intention to leave.  
• The major predictors of leaving are not personal or related to the balance between work and family but are organizational or job based. | Literature Review. Meta-analysis of 25 articles relating to child protection social workers and other human services employees. |
<p>| 5  | Barth 2008 USA              | SSCI      | • Worker satisfaction is associated with quality of supervision and urban setting but does not have a clearly in-dependent relationship with having a degree in social work. | Survey. Quantitative survey on child and adolescent wellbeing also collected information on child welfare workers satisfaction (n = 1729). |
| 6  | Bednar 2003 USA             | SSCI      | • This review examines research on Job satisfaction in child welfare systems and on factors that influence a worker's decision to leave a job or stay, as well as organizational climate factors which have been linked to job satisfaction, consumer satisfaction, and client outcomes. | Literature review. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>Bride 2007 USA</th>
<th>GS CIN</th>
<th>• Relationship between levels of secondary traumatic stress in CPS professionals and the group of potential correlates: personal history of trauma in the past year and lifetime, peer support, administrative support, intent to remain employed in child welfare, professional experience, and size of caseload</th>
<th>Survey: Quantitative methodology. Data was collected by means of a web-based survey questionnaire. Participants were 187 child protection social workers. The study measured demographic variables, intention to remain employed (IRE-CW); secondary traumatic stress and organizational culture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cahalane 2008 USA</td>
<td>ASSIA Med CIN</td>
<td>• Evidence suggests that efforts to retain highly skilled and educated public child welfare workers should focus on creating positive organizational climates within agencies.</td>
<td>Survey: Quantitative survey of four different graduate cohorts (n = 305) over four year period. Mapping of those who remained in child welfare and those who left.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9 | Carangi Stroin-Goltzman, Lawson, McCarthy, Briar-Lawson and Claiborne 2008 USA | SSCI ASSIA P Info CIN GS | • DT (Design Team) intervention potential contributions to social work education, research, and practice.  
• Preliminary results from four systems in the DT intervention study indicate that from wave 1 (2002) to wave 2 (2005), the non-intervention systems showed a non-significant improvement of 3% on intention to leave ($\chi^2 = 1.530, df = 1, p = .27$). At wave 1, 81% of the employees identified an intention to leave, while 78% (1) indicated intention to leave at wave 2.  
• The systems that received the DT intervention improved significantly by 22%, from 76% down to 54% ($\chi^2 = 4.342, df = 1, p < .05$). The delta chi-square change suggests the between-group difference to be significantly different with 90% confidence that the change was not due to chance ($\chi^2 = 2.902, p < .10$). These results offer promise regarding the efficacy of the DT intervention. | Action Research Pre (2002) post (2005) test of DT intervention. Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale was used to measure STS levels. The Social Work Education Consortium Demographics Survey used to gather demographic information. Three Likert scale questions were added to assess respondent’s history of personal trauma. Semi-structured interview questions were utilized to gather data regarding perceived incidence, mitigating, and protective factors related to STS. Evaluation of an intervention to address the issue of workforce turnover and poor retention in child welfare. DT problem solving combines action research and learning. DTs and their facilitators rely on specially designed tools, protocols, research as they address retention related priorities. |
| 10 | Chenot 2008 USA | Med | • Support and organizational culture has a varying degree of impact on retention (as the antidote for turnover) across different stages of CWS careers.  
• Findings include the crucial role supervisor support plays in retaining workers not only in their agencies, but in the field of CWS.  
• Passive defensive organizational culture has a negative effect on early career workers, but not on mid or late career workers. Suggesting that a unique sensitivity to passive defensive organizational cultures exists early in CWS workers’ careers that dissipate over time. | Survey: Quantitative cross sectional survey (n = 767) design, multi-level factor analysis. |
| 11 | Chernesky 2009 USA | SSCI ASSIA | • Workers who take jobs because they are committed to the mission of the agency were more satisfied and less inclined to leave.  
• Regardless of why workers accepted the position, they were more likely to think about leaving if they thought the organization did not provide what they expected.  
• These findings suggest that the reasons why workers choose to take a job in public child welfare may be as important as the reasons why workers choose to leave, and managers may need to consider workers' job expectations when addressing worker retention. | Survey: Cross sectional survey design examined reasons for taking a public child welfare position and job expectations to better understand why workers leave. |
| 12 | Coleman 2003 USA | ASSIA | • The intense emotional challenge of child welfare work emerged in the focus groups. Cognitive-Affective Model.  
• Several hypotheses for further research: that student at more advanced | Qualitative research. Thirty-seven focus groups conducted over four years with approximately 550 Title IV-E MSW students in CA were submitted to qualitative thematic analysis. |
cognitive-affective levels should be less prone to burnout, better able to make the difficult value-based decisions demanded by child welfare work, & more likely to integrate & use the emotions of themselves & others.

13 Conrad 2006 USA ASSIA SSA SSCI GS

- Compassion satisfaction may help mitigate the effects of burnout.

Survey. A self-report instrument developed by Stamm and Figley was used to measure the risk of compassion fatigue and burnout and the potential for compassion satisfaction among 363 child protection staff participating in a secondary trauma training seminar.

14 Cunningham 2003 USA SSA ASSIA

- The effect on clinician's cognitive schemas & the confounding variables of personal history of abuse & years' experience are described.
- Clinicians who worked primarily with clients who were sexually abused reported more disruptions in cognitive schemas than clinicians who worked with clients who had cancer.
- These sub-groups are viewed as those who work with naturally occurring trauma versus those who work with humanly induced trauma, sexual abuse.

Survey. This article describes a quantitative study of social work clinicians working with two types of trauma: (1) the human-induced trauma, sexual abuse; & (2) the naturally caused trauma, cancer. The effect on clinician's cognitive schemas & the confounding variables of personal history of abuse & years' experience are described. (n=182, 69% of sample were those who work with cancer patients and 54% sexual abuse workers). Measure was a questionnaire, the Traumatic Stress Institute Belief Scale which measures the clinician’s world view and disruption to cognitive schemas.

15 Curry 2005 USA SSCI

- The research identified transfer of learning factors and an indicator of overall transfer support and explored their relationship to child welfare social worker retention.
- Transfer support, demographic variables (experience, age, education, gender) and several transfer support factors (supervisory support, co-worker support, application planning, caseload size) were identified as predictors of retention.
- The results provide support for the use of training and development activities as part of comprehensive staff retention programs.
- The results also raise additional questions about the ambiguous relationship between training and turnover and suggest the need for ongoing research in child welfare regarding training, transfer of learning and staff retention.

Longitudinal research study attempted to promote a better understanding of the training, transfer, and turnover relationship. Transfer of learning factors were used to predict staff retention among 416 child protective services workers who participated in 3 phases of the study over a 7 year period.

16 DePanfilis 2008 USA ASSIA SSA SSCI

- Findings of this review reinforce the importance of workers' commitment to child welfare, self-efficacy, and low levels of emotional exhaustion as important personal factors for staying.
- Supervisory and co-worker support and salary and benefits as important organizational factors affecting retention.

Literature Review. Analysis of research that used retention or turnover as the dependent variable. Of the 154 documents identified, 25 were research studies that focused on these variables. This paper focuses on reviewing the methods and findings of nine studies that used multivariate analyses to explore the relationships between organizational and/or personal factors as independent variables and retention or turnover as dependent variables.

17 Dickenson 2009 USA Medline

- Results of the first Cox regression analyses show that IL (Intention to Leave) is a significant predictor of actual exit.
- Supervisor practice support can decrease a worker’s risk of exiting by 42% and that, for each year above the sample’s average age of 36, risk of undesired turnover is decreased by an additional 4%.
- Important differences were also found according to degree type. A worker with a BSW is 75% less likely to resign or be dismissed than a worker with an MSW, and a worker with a BA is 60% less likely to

Longitudinal Quantitative methods using survey questionnaire. Experimental retention study using baseline demographic and attitudinal data collected from a child welfare worker survey, combined with employment data from a human resource database. Survival analyses and multilevel regression models identify the strongest predictors of intent to leave and actual turnover (n = 157).
• The findings showed that social workers experience more stress than would be expected in the general population. Consistent with a Demand-Control-Support model, this was mainly caused by high workloads, high staff turnover, and insufficient leadership and support. Survey questionnaire distributed to field social workers in family and child care (n = 16).

19 Ellett, Ellett, Ellis and Lerner 2009 USA SSCI Action Research. Using the ESP, applicants and employers make informed decisions about the goodness of fit between the applicant and the demands of a career in child welfare. (Employee Selection Protocol). Of particular interest is the role that the ESP can play in improving the employee selection process; conserving the considerable human and financial investments in making employment decisions; and enhancing employee retention rates by hiring better qualified child welfare employees.

20 Ellett 2009 USA ASSIA SSA SSAI SSCI Survey. Positive relationship between Self-efficacy beliefs and intentions to remain employed in child welfare. These findings replicated across the two states.

21 Ellett 2007 USA GS Survey. Qualitative research. Survey design (n=941). Measures include SEA-SW (Self-Efficacy Assessment-Social Work); IRE-CW (Intent to Remain Employed–Child Welfare); Social Desirability Index (SDI).

22 Ellett 2006 GS Qualitative methodology. Fifty-eight focus group interviews completed in this study with a total of 369 professional staff representing all levels of the agency.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USA supervisors working 50–60 hours per week (in some cases more than 70 hours per week)</th>
<th>and all job assignments in child welfare.</th>
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<tr>
<td>• an atmosphere and organizational culture of tension and fear (e.g., most employees are hired into unclassified positions without Merit System protections; criticism from the Media, courts, public, other professionals, and clients; second guessing case decisions of child safety; fear for personal safety; fear of dismissal and of criminal and civil liability for doing their jobs)</td>
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<td>• salaries are not competitive with other social and human service agencies, and comparable professions (e.g., teaching, nursing), few promotional opportunities (i.e. no clear career path within DFCS child welfare)</td>
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<td>• employees are not valued by DFCS, policy makers, or the general public</td>
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<td>• inadequate client resources (particularly inadequate numbers of foster and adoptive families for children in DFCS custody)</td>
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<td>• inadequate selection and hiring processes (too many staff are hired for child welfare positions without the requisite knowledge, skills, abilities, and dispositions to be successful with this population)</td>
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<td>• the court system creates many impediments to child welfare (e.g., great variety in the quality of working relationships with judges and attorneys)</td>
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<td>• communication structure in DFCS is problematic, especially around policy development and interpretation</td>
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<td>• too much paperwork (50–75% of work time)</td>
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<td>• training provided to new hires was of mixed quality, and mentoring and professional development opportunities were insufficient</td>
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<td>• unstable central leadership in DFCS with leadership changes driven by adverse publicity and politics.</td>
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</table>

**Organizational factors contributing to employee retention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ellett 2001</th>
<th>ASSIA SSA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• job benefits including retirement if an employee works long enough to become vested in the retirement system</td>
<td>Survey. Quantitative methodology. The study used large sample survey and quantitative data analysis methods to examine relationships among elements of self-efficacy linked to human caring and organizational culture. This study addressed personal and organizational factors related to self-efficacy.</td>
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<td>• flexibility in work hours to attend to personal emergencies, unexpected events, etc. (colleagues are allowed to work cooperatively with one another in these situations)</td>
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<td>• exciting, challenging, unpredictable, constantly changing work environment</td>
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<td>• important and meaningful work</td>
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<td>• supportive, quality supervision, consultation, mentoring, and leadership that values employees.</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>P Info</td>
<td>employee retention in child welfare.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Gibbs</td>
<td>GS</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>ASSIA SSA CINAHL</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Gibbs</td>
<td>Med</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>CIN SSCI</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Glisson</td>
<td>GS</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>GS</td>
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<td>workplace trauma effects (R² = 0.344) in the final regression model tested.</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Juby 2007 USA</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Kyonne 2009 USA</td>
<td>ASSIA SSA P Info</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Landsman 2008 USA</td>
<td>SSCI SSA</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Landsman 2001 USA</td>
<td>SSCI</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>McGowan 2009 USA</td>
<td>ASSIA SSA SSCI</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Nelson-Gardell 2003 USA</td>
<td>ASSIA SSA</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Nissley 2005 USA</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Nordick</td>
<td>2002</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>O Donnell</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Perrone</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Regehr</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Renner</td>
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<td>Reference</td>
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<td>Journal/Academic Database</td>
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<td>Robichaud 2004 USA</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Psych Info</td>
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<td>Rosenthal 2006 USA</td>
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<td>SSCI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scannapieco 2007 USA</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Med CIN</td>
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<td>Schwartz 2008 USA</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>SSA ASSIA</td>
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</table>

This study uses employee responses from six time points (2003 to 2008) to capture trends across the state and focus on responses from public workers and supervisors. (n = 1467 average)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Shepel 2009 Canada</td>
<td>ASSIA SSA</td>
<td>Quantitative descriptive study</td>
<td>Survey.</td>
<td>Important role in worker intent to leave. Research hypotheses sought to test whether inclusion in any of these categories would increase the incidence of vicarious traumatisation and secondary traumatic stress amongst Aboriginal child welfare social workers who were then subsequently exposed to their clients' trauma stories. Insufficient sample size prevented testing of the research hypotheses but the study sample clinical data were notable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Smith 2005 USA</td>
<td>SSCI</td>
<td>Longitudinal. Data collected from an in-person survey of child welfare staff (Time 1) and staff retention information collected 15-17 month later (Time 2) were used to test hypotheses regarding the effects of extrinsic rewards, perceived organizational support, supervisor support, and intrinsic job value on job retention. Logistic regression and multilevel logistic regression models were conducted to assess the relative effects of individual- and organization-level influences on maintaining a child welfare job.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Song KI Bum 2006 USA</td>
<td>ASSIA SSA</td>
<td>Survey.</td>
<td>Literature Review.</td>
<td>Six quantitative studies that assessed both JS and EE in samples of child welfare employees were located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Stevens and Higgins 2002 Australia</td>
<td>P Info ASSIA SSA</td>
<td>Survey.</td>
<td>Considerable evidence supports the positive influence of variables organizational managers can control, including job autonomy, supportive supervisors, workload, promotional opportunities and perception of personal safety.</td>
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<td>ID</td>
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<td>Source</td>
<td>Study Design</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>SSCI</td>
<td>Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Strolin-Goltzman, Auerbach, McGowan, McCarthy</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>SSA, SSCI, Med</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Strolin, Goltzman, Auerbach, Caringi, Claiborne, Lawson, McCarthy, Sherman, Shim</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>CIN</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Strolin, Goltzman</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>CIN</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Szu-Yu Chen*</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>GS</td>
<td>Longitudinal</td>
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</table>
### Table 56: Tham 2007 Sweden

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Tham 2007 Sweden</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>ASSIA</strong></td>
<td><strong>SSA</strong></td>
<td><strong>SSCI</strong></td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>One of the most striking results was that although 54% of the social workers had been at their current workplace for two years or less, 48% per cent intended to leave their jobs.</td>
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<td>A logistic regression analysis showed that the variable of greatest importance for the intention to leave the workplace was lack of human resource orientation within the organization, i.e. the extent to which personnel are rewarded for a job well done, feel well taken care of and where management is interested in their health and well-being.</td>
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<td>A final conclusion of this study is that when measuring the impact of different aspects of work tasks compared with some aspects of organizational culture, it becomes clear that the latter seem to be most important in this respect.</td>
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### Table 57: Tham 2009 Sweden

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<th>Program</th>
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<td><strong>SSCI</strong></td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>We found that although social workers in general, and child welfare social workers in particular, made positive assessments of some dimensions of their working lives, social work was unusually demanding among human service professions on several measures of workload, complexity of tasks and quality of management.</td>
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<td>The strains of the job that social workers expressed call upon employers to promote working conditions that offer more support, and to recognize and value social workers for their work.</td>
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### Table 58: Turcotte 2009 USA

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Turcotte 2009 USA</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<td><strong>ASSIA</strong></td>
<td><strong>SSA</strong></td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>The results show that prior to the training program, there are few differences between workers according to their educational backgrounds. Following the training program, practitioners felt more competent, had acquired additional knowledge, and had changed some of their behaviors with families.</td>
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<td>If level of stress at work had slightly decreased, job satisfaction remained unchanged. Conclusion: Findings suggest that an in-service training program may contribute to increased knowledge and feeling of competence and to modified professional behaviors, but it is essential to develop more valid indicators of knowledge and skills necessary to perform child welfare practice.</td>
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### Table 59: Turcotte 2006 Canada

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<th>Program</th>
<th>Turcotte 2006 Canada</th>
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<td><strong>ASSIA</strong></td>
<td><strong>SSA</strong></td>
<td><strong>SSCI</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>The results highlight the impact of task-related and organizational factors on job satisfaction. A few courses of action for improving work satisfaction among child protection workers are explored on the basis of the results. Adapted from the source document.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Experimental Design. A design study based on pre-test and post-test measurements was used. Two periods of measurement were scheduled: (a) immediately before the training began (PRE), and (b) immediately after the training ended (POST). This article examines the determinants of work satisfaction among practitioners in this field. Participants completed a 41-item multiple-choice knowledge test developed jointly by the research team.</td>
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</table>
### 60 Van Hook (2009, USA)
**Survey**. Quantitative methodology. Survey using The Professional Quality of Life Survey and questions regarding ways respondents dealt with stress and their recommendations for organizations. 

**Results**. Results are based on a study conducted with 450 practitioners.

- Compassion satisfaction was positively associated with lower levels of burnout and fatigue. Levels of burnout and compassion fatigue were similar to other helping professions but higher for younger workers and both direct line staff and supervisors working with the most vulnerable and troubled situations. Respondents indicated the need for realistic caseloads and administrative support.

### 61 Vu, Paul Hoang (2007, USA)
**Survey**. Quantitative methodology. Fifty-six Children's Social Workers at the Lakewood Office participated in the study by completing a survey that assesses their level of vicarious trauma using a standardized instrument, ProQOL R-IV, as well as their self-reported coping strategies.

**Results**. Results found that child welfare workers in Los Angeles have high levels of job effectiveness (74.1%), high levels of potential professional burnout (75.9%), and moderate levels of vicarious trauma (35.2%) and those workers who self-report using more positive coping strategies were experiencing lower levels of the trauma.

### 62 Weaver (2007, USA)
**Survey**. Quantitative methodology. Survey using The Professional Quality of Life Survey and questions regarding ways respondents dealt with stress and their recommendations for organizations. 

**Results**. Results are based on a study conducted with 450 practitioners.

- Attitudes of workers in response-to-job conditions are more likely to predict intention to leave than actually leaving.
- Time to receiving a full caseload, which is under the control of administrators, is an important predictor of leaving the job. Other lessons for administration are discussed.

### 63 Westbrook (2006, USA)
**Qualitative methodology**. A series of focus group interviews was completed with 21 child welfare employees in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The results of the study are described in six sections: (a) Engagement and Involvement of Participants; (b) Reminiscence Organizational; (c) Reminiscence: Societal; (d) Personal Characteristics; (e) Core Themes; and (f) Group Differences.

### 64 Weuste (2006, USA)
**Mixed methods design**. Thirty child welfare workers in Northern Illinois participated in a debriefing and a follow-up session. This study used a triadic research design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Participants took inventories to measure trauma symptoms and to identify the type of coping responses before and one month after the debriefing. The debriefing and follow-up session were also audio taped for the qualitative narrative analysis of their critical incident experience.

**Results**. Results are based on a study conducted with 450 practitioners.

- The provision of a critical incident debriefing, in a supportive and neutral interpersonal context, contributed to their reduced sense of isolation and gave them an opportunity to process the incident which they reported contributed to their sense of reduced stress.

### 65 Yankeelov (2009, SSCI)
**Longitudinal. Quantitative research design**. This study utilized a non-experimental, prospective research design. In Phase 1, trainees were requested to

- The results of this study show that the stayers (N = 448) and leavers (N = 275) in this child welfare agency did not differ in their gender, race.
or cumulative G.P.A. MSWs were more likely to leave the agency and employees with majors other than psychology or social work were more likely to stay. Stayers reported being more attached to their supervisors and receiving more guidance. Rural workers also perceived greater support from their supervisors than did urban workers.

complete a pre-training questionnaire prior to the start of the core training and a post-training questionnaire immediately following the last unit of this core training. In Phase Two of this study, employee retention records were obtained and matched to each individual's Phase one data. Groups were identified on the basis of worker retention—those who remained with the organization and those who were no longer with the organization. Group differences on demographics, personality, social support from co-workers and supervisors, and training effectiveness measures were examined.