

Assessing staff attitudes and needs in a trauma-informed organization: a mixed-methods study



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Background

- ➤ Prior research has found that high burnout rates are prevalent in organizations that work with individuals who have experienced trauma.
- Furthermore, high burnout is associated with secondary traumatic stress, which can affect staff's ability to provide care to clients.
- The purpose of the current study was to identify staff satisfaction and departmental needs at an organization specializing in family services for those who have experienced trauma.

Methods

- A mixed-methods approached was used, with an assessment that included both quantitative and qualitative questions.
- The assessment was delivered via an online survey developed in Qualtrics and emailed to employees at one non-profit organization.
- The final sample size included data from from 20 employees.

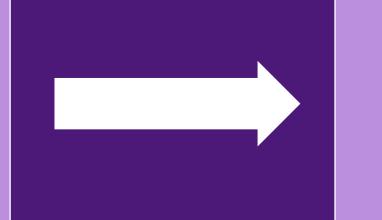
Results

- > Overall, the participants rated their organization favorably.
- The average burnout and secondary traumatic stress levels were low, which indicates no issues present in these categories.
- Eurnout significantly predicted secondary traumatic stress $(\beta = .57, p = .001)$.
- Results were corroborated by qualitative data from staff, where staff demonstrated a general positive experience within their work environment. However, when prompted staff identified aspects of the organization that could be improved.

Quantitative Results			
Construct	Number of Responses	Minimum; Maximum	Mean
Cohesion	19	25; 48.33	35.44
Autonomy	19	24; 44	34.63
Communication	20	14; 44	30.90
Change	20	20; 46	32.20
Influence	20	21.67; 43.33	37.08
Adaptability	20	25; 50	38.88
Compassion Satisfaction	17	32; 45	39.29
Burnout	18	12; 27	19.17
Secondary Traumatic Stress	17	14;31	20.82

Note: The possible score range of Cohesion-Adaptability can range from 10-50; a score below 23 for Compassion Satisfaction indicates an issue; a score below 23 for Burnout indicates low risk for Burnout; a Secondary Traumatic Stress score above 41 is an indication that staff may need to examine how they feel about their work.

Burnout



Secondary Traumatic Stress

Qualitative Themes

- The following themes emerged from the qualitative data:
 - 1. Staff coordination and training
 - 2. Number of staff employed
 - 3. Open communication between coworkers and supervisors
 - 4. Reinstating staff events
 - 5. Increased access to mental health services

Qualitative Results

Staff Coordination and Training

"Working with kids from hard places is difficult enough, but to feel as if there is not a clear direction on how TBRI should be used makes [it] that much harder."

Number of Staff Employed

"Recruiting and onboarding high quality candidates for each position...not enough staff currently."

Communication

- "Become more attuned with staff and clients needs."
- "Create a digital platform for suggestions that can be made without fear of retaliation from leadership."

Staff Events

"[Reinstate]employee activities [with emphasis on] fun, health emphasis. This was lost during worst of COVID."

Access to Mental Health Services

"If you need to see a professional, you can't afford it with our insurance plan. Copays for therapy are \$70 for each visit. EAP is available but it only covers 6 visits."

Conclusion

- > Burnout is a predictor of secondary traumatic stress
- ➤ Overall, staff rated their organization as a positive work environment, but identified several areas for improvement
- Addressing staff concerns could reduce staff burnout and increase satisfaction
- Ensuring staff needs are met could benefit clients, as staff and organizational factors are related to the quality of services
- The current study may not be generalizable to other organizations, due to the assessment of only one organization and the small sample size of 20 employees.