Psychosocial Needs of Frontline Workers

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Overview

❖ Mental health in the workplace

❖ The Workers: who are they

❖ The Client Population: a complex and multi-challenged group

❖ Challenges in the work place

❖ The study: methodology and results

❖ Implications for program management and worker well-being

Mental health in the workplace

Increasing recognition of mental health as a significant contributor to workplace functioning

Cumulative reports over the last 20 years on the impact of stress and burnout in mental health and social services settings

Homeless sector is a central location of may people with multiple mental health, addictions and trauma-related issues.

The Workers: who are they

Professionals

Social Workers
Nurses
Doctors
Psychologists

Paraprofessionals

Case workers
Outreach workers
Case managers
Child and Youth workers

The Workers: who are they

Professionals

Training and registration/licensure

Paraprofessionals

Variable training to only on-the job experience

The Client Population:
A complex and multi-challenged group

Present with a range of personal factors such as addictions, mental health, history of trauma, disability, and a lack of social support.

Challenges in the work place

➢ Dealing with complex and challenging clients
➢ Continually dealing with trauma
➢ Dealing with unsolvable problems created by poverty and multiple personal difficulties
➢ Lack of training
➢ Lack of supportive supervision
➢ Lack of administrative recognition of worker self-care needs

The study: methodology

Self-administered survey
One-time data collection
Target population: Workers in major organizations providing housing and support services to homeless people in Calgary

The study: methodology

The Survey

Three sections: demographics, work conditions, perceived needs and supports

The PROQOL ;
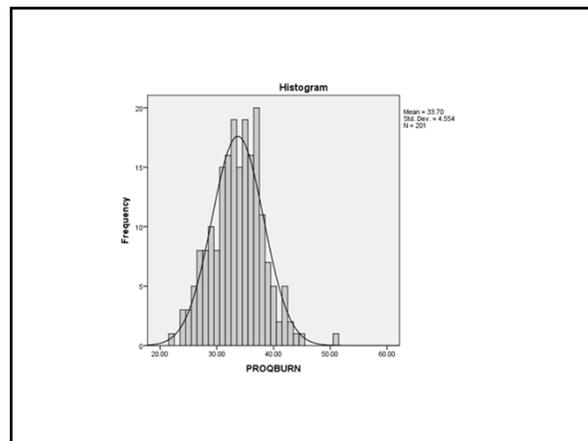   compassion satisfaction
        compassion fatigue
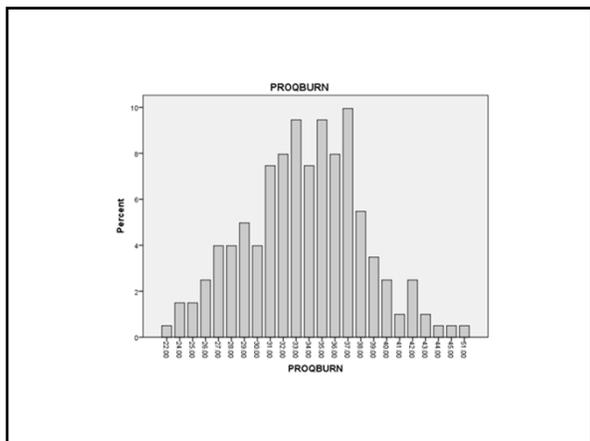   burnout

Abbreviated PCL-C a brief PTSD screen

The study: PROQOL results

	Study	Norms lo, mid and high quartiles
Compassion Satisfaction PROQCS	39.4	33 37 42
Compassion Fatigue PROQSTS	21.3	8 13 17
Burnout PROQBU	33.7	18 22 27
PTSD	12.5	14 (clinical cut off)
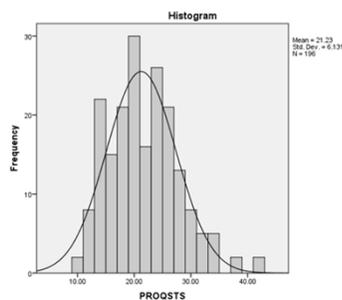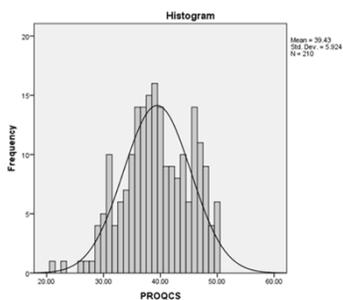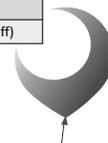
The study: PTSD results

PTSD Screen: Abbreviated , the PCL-C

Participants: Mean score 12.5

Clinical cut off: 14
Number over clinical threshold :   75 out of 210   (36%)

Prevalence of PTSD in Canadian population   9.2%

Conclusion: frontline workers reported 4 times the rate of PTSD as found in the general population

Implications for worker well-being

Frontline workers have alarmingly high rates of compassion fatigue and burnout

36% report PTSD symptoms at clinical levels

Despite this they report average rates of compassion satisfaction.
                is there a dissonance that needs to be examined?

Mental health in the workforce

Frontline workers report clinical levels of PTSD symptoms at FOUR times the prevalence in the general population

Burnout was reported at extremely high rates by staff across all but one program (10 out of 11)

Most working conditions: job assignment, supervision, working in teams or alone, are not correlated to compassion fatigue or burnout

Implications for program management

Build in mechanisms for greater support

        - More mental health days (and encouragement to take these)
        - Ongoing training for staff
        - Individual counselling/debriefing (in addition to large group debriefing)

Consideration of dissonance between compassion satisfaction and burnout/PTSD.

WHY ARE WORKERS FINDING THEIR WORK SATISFYING, BUT EXPERIENCING SUCH TRAUMA?
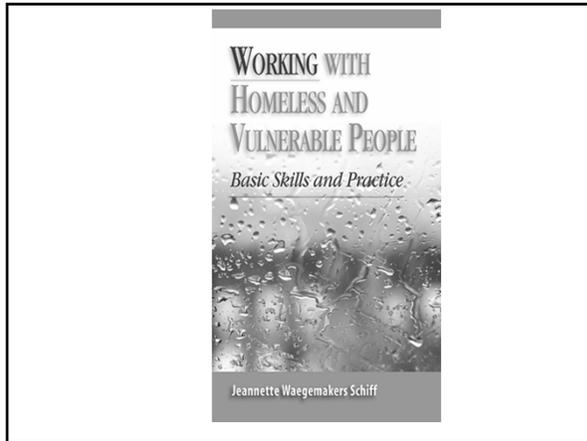
WORKING WITH HOMELESS AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Basic Skills and Practice

Jeannette Waegemakers Schiff

Table of Contents:

Introduction and Overview