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Child Welfare Supervisor Retention: An Exploration Of Personal And Organizational Resilience

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CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISOR RETENTION:
AN EXPLORATION OF PERSONAL
AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Thomas and Velma Ausbrooks,

for their constant and unwavering love and support.

I could not have made it without you. Thanks for always being there.

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Child welfare agencies are considered some of the most stressful places of employment. This stress is related to several factors: (a) the myriad forms of child maltreatment that employees must deal with on a consistent basis, (b) high caseloads, and (c) the organizational climate of most child welfare agencies. Working in child welfare involves seeing battered, beaten, bruised, burned, and neglected children on a daily basis and sometimes experiencing the death of a child as a result of abuse or abuse-related conditions. Because of the stressors inherent in child welfare agencies, retention of employees has become an increasing issue throughout the United States. A review of the literature determined that most studies involving child welfare retention focused on the reasons that employees leave the agency. These studies found that child welfare employees' reasons for terminating their employment included excessive caseloads, lack of supervisor support, job dissatisfaction, and a negative organizational climate. This dissertation explored the reasons that child welfare employees, specifically supervisors,

remain employed in child welfare agencies from a strengths perspective. A qualitative study was conducted with 50 child welfare supervisors to determine whether their ability to remain with the agency was related to resilient characteristics. Results of the study indicate that the possession of a personal mission or calling, support systems, and coping skills are among the primary factors that allow supervisors to achieve employment longevity. These and additional findings are discussed in detail as well as implications for child welfare, social work practice, and social work education.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Effective child protection has been of concern since the first case of child abuse was documented and received national acclaim in the late 1800's. In 1874, U.S. citizens became more aware of the existence of child abuse when a concerned neighbor reported her suspicions that eight-year-old Mary Ellen Wilson was being physically abused by her parents (Crosson-Tower, 2002). Because there were no child protection agencies in existence, the report was handled by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). This incident resulted in the creation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC) – a precursor to the modern-day child welfare agencies (Crosson-Tower, 2002). However, child protection was not addressed by the government until 1909 during the White House Conference on Dependent Children. As a result of this conference, the Children's Bureau was formed in 1912 "to oversee the welfare of children" (Crosson-Tower, 2002, p. 11; Child Welfare League of America [CWLA], 2002)

With the passage of the 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), protection of children became federally mandated. The American Psychological Association's (APA) Public Policy Office considers CAPTA "the key federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect." Passage of CAPTA provided Title I funds to states for the purposes of supporting the "…development of reporting systems, investigation of maltreatment reports, family preservation and reunification

1

services, foster care, adoption assistance, and independent living programs for emancipated youth" (Burnam & Melamid, n.d.). An additional component of CAPTA involved awarding grants to fund research that could inform child protection policy and practice. Additional legislative action resulted in the passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 which expanded foster care and adoption assistance for all children, transitional living programs for adolescents, and supportive services for families (CWLA, 2005).

Since its inception, the child welfare system has required each state to formulate its own system to insure child protection. In Texas, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is mandated by the legislature to "protect the unprotected" (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services [DFPS] Data Book, 2004). The unprotected include children, older adults, and persons with physical and mental disabilities. DFPS consists of a myriad of departments, each with several managerial and direct delivery layers. These departments are Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, Child Protective Services, Foster Care and Adoption, and Prevention and Early Intervention (DFPS Data Book, 2004).

Protection of children is the primary responsibility of the state's Child Protective Services (CPS) division. The mandate of child protection requires CPS to investigate allegations of maltreatment and provide services as needed. Services include removing children from the care and custody of parents in extreme abuse situations and/or providing counseling, parenting classes, and substance abuse treatment to the parents where warranted. To accomplish these goals, three primary program areas have been established in Texas: (1) Investigations, (2) Family-Based-Safety-Services (FBSS), and

(3) Conservatorship or Legal.   These departments are briefly described below to provide insight into the specific responsibilities of each.

Investigators are assigned to determine the validity and extent of maltreatment allegations and represent the first point of contact with a family. They are responsible for interviewing everyone in the family and making the initial assessment regarding the family's functioning and a determination of whether abuse or neglect has occurred (Texas Family Code [TFC], Chap. 261). The investigators are usually the ones who see children immediately or within 72 hours after the maltreatment has occurred or is reported. Investigators visit children at home, school, hospitals, day care, or relative's homes and may have to do so anytime during the day or night. (TFC, Chap. 261; DFPS Annual Report, 2003)

Family-Based-Safety-Services (FBSS) caseworkers provide services to children and their parents in the family's home. Cases are referred to FBSS after an Investigator has determined that there are factors within the family that place the children at risk, but find that that risk is not serious enough to warrant removing the children from their home. Children considered at risk are those who appear to be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect because of their age, disabilities, or inadequate functioning of their parents due to substance abuse, mental illness, or a childhood history of abuse. FBSS caseworkers assist parents in improving their functioning, and reducing or alleviating the risk factors identified, so their children can remain in the home instead of being placed with relatives or in foster care.

When children are removed from their parents' custody and placed in substitute care (shelters, foster homes, and residential facilities), a Conservatorship or Legal worker

is assigned to provide services which will address the independent needs of each child and parent. The primary goal of this stage of service is reunification of the parents and children. Services usually include counseling for children and parents, parenting classes, and substance abuse treatment.

Additional program areas of the agency include Foster Home and Adoption (FAD) and Preparation for Adult Living (PAL). Caseworkers in FAD units are responsible for: (a) recruitment, training, and licensure of prospective foster and adoptive parents; (b) providing continuing education training and support services to licensed foster and adoptive parents; (c) assisting agency caseworkers with emergency foster home placements; and (d) serving as a liaison between foster parents and caseworkers. Caseworkers in PAL units are responsible for preparing youth, who will age out of foster care to live independent, productive, and self-sufficient lives. When adolescents turn eighteen, they are mandated to leave foster care and live independently. PAL caseworkers assist these youth with acquiring life skills, exploring higher education, and planning for their futures to accomplish their goals of independence.

Legal intervention and involvement may also be an additional casework responsibility in any program area. Investigators must file paperwork and testify in court when they have removed children from their parents' care. FBSS caseworkers must file paperwork and testify to request that children be removed from their parents or request a judicial mandate requiring resistant parents to participate in services. Conservatorship or Legal caseworkers must prepare reports for court describing the child's adjustment, behavior and progress, and progress made by the parents, or lack thereof.

Some children engage in criminal activity while in foster care which requires the CPS caseworker to become involved in the juvenile justice system. In these instances, caseworkers may have to testify in juvenile court proceedings and work closely with juvenile probation officers to insure that all recommendations and mandates from the juvenile system are followed.

Child welfare supervisors are responsible for facilitating and overseeing all case decisions. All supervisors have been caseworkers themselves and know the job first-hand. Because of this, they have developed expertise which they must utilize to train new caseworkers, monitor all cases assigned, and insure that the best interest of each child is being served. Supervisors accompany their caseworkers to court to provide support, additional information, and expertise as needed. They must be able to assess cases and assist their caseworkers in making accurate assessments and utilize effective problem-solving to determine the best possible solution for each child and family.

Statement of the Problem

Child abuse has become a widely recognized international issue of concern. The World Health Organization recognized child abuse as "a major health problem" (Djeddah, Facchin, Ranzato, & Romer, 2000, p. 905). The World Health Organization's definition of child abuse is as follows:

"child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical

and/or emotional, ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent

treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or

potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity

5

in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power"

(Djeddah, Facchin, Ranzato, & Romer, 2000, p. 906)

In 2003, national statistics indicate that there were approximately 2.9 million referrals alleging abuse and neglect of children and 906,000 children were confirmed as victims of abuse and neglect (U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, 2005).

In Texas, the definition of maltreatment is more specific and consists of abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual) and neglect (physical, medical, and neglectful supervision) of children by their parents, relatives, and/or caretakers (TFC, 2005) Specific examples of this abuse and neglect include severe physical discipline, leaving small children home alone at night, or abuse that is outside the boundaries of normal imagination.

Caseloads

Recently, much attention has been given to the caseloads that CPS caseworkers must manage. This attention to caseloads has been the result of reports initiated by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and studies indicating that high caseloads contribute to employee turnover (Bernotavicz, 1982; CWLA, 2002; Ellet, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003; Reilly & Wilkerson, 2004). In fiscal year 2005-2006, state data indicates that there were 163,795 reports of suspected abuse and neglect involving Texas children (Texas Department of Family & Protective Services [DFPS], 2006 Data Book). Of these reports, only 41,406 were confirmed indicating that abuse and/or neglect had occurred. There were 1,418 investigative caseworkers employed during 2005/2006 to conduct these 41,406 investigations, which is an average of 115 cases per caseworker. This data

appears to indicate that there were an adequate number of caseworkers employed to conduct assigned investigations. However, data from CWLA, DFPS, and the Texas Comptroller indicate that is not the reality. The recommended caseload for a child welfare investigative caseworker is 12 active cases per month or between a 1:12 and 1:15 caseworker to case ratio (CWLA, 2005, p. 2; TX Comptroller, 2005, p. 2). For investigators, active cases are those that require action such as interviewing, contacting collaterals, or making follow-up visits. For family-based and conservatorship caseworkers, active cases are those that remain open to provide services to children and their families. Those cases that have been completed and have not been documented or closed are not considered active. Agency statistics indicate that investigators in Texas had an average monthly caseload of 59.7 in the 2004/2005 fiscal year (DFPS FY 2004-2005 Budget Request). Caseworkers in FBSS, Conservatorship/Legal, and FAD units had average caseloads of 23.6, 41.9, and 25, respectively. The monthly caseload recommendation by CWLA for ongoing cases (FBSS & Conservatorship/Legal) is "17 active families per 1 social worker and no more than 1 new case assigned for every six open cases" and "12-15 children per 1 social worker" for foster family care (FAD) cases. All of the caseworker caseloads at the agency exceed the CWLA recommendations.

Supervisors at CPS usually supervise 6-8 caseworkers and are responsible for all case-related decisions on all of their cases. There are two classifications of Supervisor – I & II. To be promoted to Supervisor I, a caseworker must have at least two years of casework experience and being promoted to Supervisor II requires at least two years experience as a supervisor. Supervisors in all program areas are required to perform the following job-related tasks:

7

1. Plan and manage unit operations to achieve project goals and objectives for service delivery.

2. Monitor budgets and caseloads.

3. Consult with staff on case issues, approve leave, and hold unit meetings.

4. Select, manage, and develop staff through review of performance data, conferences training, and performance appraisal.

5. Interpret program policy and procedures to unit staff, other agency staff, and the general public.

6. Evaluate unit performance through case readings, computer reports, and observation of unit operations to ensure unit compliance with policy, procedure, and service control requirements.

7. Develop and maintain effective working relationships between Child Protective Services staff, Child Welfare boards, the general public, legal, medical, educational, and other community resources.

8. Consult on casework decisions regarding the removal and placement of children.

9. Works with county and district attorneys on legal measures to initiate on CPS cases.

10. Promotes monitors, and ensures that respect is demonstrated for cultural diversity (TX Health & Human Services, 2006).

In addition to these responsibilities, supervisors must conduct monthly conferences with each caseworker to discuss caseloads and formulate case decisions. They are also required to read and approve all case documentation submitted by each caseworker. If caseworkers are not in compliance with documentation timeframes, a written plan must be formulated that describes the methods that will be utilized to bring the caseworker's documentation into compliance and current. If caseworkers are overwhelmed, it would be logical to assume that supervisors are as overwhelmed, and in some cases, may experience more stress than caseworkers because of the volume of cases for which they

are responsible. For example, if each investigative caseworker in a unit has a caseload of 59.7, which is the average monthly caseload according to DFPS data, the supervisor is responsible for at least 358 cases if they supervise six caseworkers.

Additional Factors Which Contribute To Stress

Child welfare agencies are considered some of the most stressful places of employment (Koeske & Kirk, 1993; Morrison, 1992; Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003; Steib and Blome, 2003). This stress is related to several factors: (a) the myriad forms of child maltreatment that caseworkers must deal with on a consistent basis, (b) high caseloads, and (c) the organizational climate of most child welfare agencies. Being a caseworker at CPS involves seeing battered, beaten, bruised, burned, and neglected children on a daily basis and sometimes experiencing the death of a child as a result of abuse or abuse-related conditions.

An added stressor involves working with the parents who are responsible for this abuse and neglect. Parents may present such problems as hostility, an inability or unwillingness to make the necessary changes, not being truthful, not accepting the seriousness of the situation, or not being cognizant that their behavior caused the abuse or neglect. In addition, caseworkers also have to treat abusive and neglectful parents with respect even though they may be angry and appalled by their abusive and neglectful behavior.

Some caseworkers are also responsible for night duty or after-hour calls after completing an eight to ten hour work day.   Case management also requires caseworkers to work with other professionals in the community to coordinate efforts when families are

involved with more than one agency. Caseworkers are also responsible for insuring that adequate services are being provided and parents and children are participating in those services. In this author's opinion, encountering atrocities and having to work with the people responsible for them, creates stress that the caseworkers must combat consistently. Because the above-mentioned stressors are experienced daily, caseworkers' coping abilities are greatly impacted and for some caseworkers their ability to cope is diminished and exhausted. It is logical to assume that stressors are particularly taxing on those with diminished coping skills. The same assumption could be made for supervisors.

Although supervisors do not interact directly with abused/neglected children and their parents on a daily basis, they continue to have personal contact with clients, usually when a client has a complaint that the caseworker cannot resolve. Supervisors are also responsible for making the ultimate decisions on cases that were similar, and sometimes worse, than the cases they encountered as caseworkers. Inadequate coping skills would make it difficult to experience trauma, crises, and the associated stress, on a consistent basis without experiencing negative effects on one's emotional and psychological well-being.

Manifestations of Stress/Secondary Trauma

Caseworkers who are responsible for addressing and alleviating this maltreatment are sometimes unable to handle the physical manifestations of the abuse and neglect children experience. Most caseworkers experience a great deal of internal stress as a result of working with abused and neglected children and their families (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003). This stress results in burnout, secondary trauma, vicarious

10

traumatization, and compassion fatigue (Bell, 2003; Cunningham, 2003; Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003; Pines 2002, 2004; Soderfeldt & Soderfeldt, 1995). Although supervisors experience the same stressors, most of the literature explores the impact of stressors on caseworkers while ignoring the impact on supervisors.

Several studies have identified burnout as one of the main consequences of work stress (Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Pines 2002, 2004; Soderfeldt & Soderfeldt, 1995). Pines describes burnout as "a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion" seen in employees who are disillusioned by their employers (p. 12), while Koeske and Koeske consider burnout to be a "negative affective response" to work-related stressors (p. 243). Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter define burnout as "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job" consisting of three components – exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. (p. 397).

Three additional related concepts to burnout are secondary trauma, vicarious traumatization, and compassion fatigue (Bell, 2003; Cunningham, 2003; Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003). Bell defines secondary trauma as "a form of work induced posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" (p. 514). Nelson-Gardell and Harris define secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization, and compassion fatigue as the vicarious exposure of social workers to trauma via their work with traumatized clients. These terms are now being used synonymously with burnout; however, several authors believe that secondary traumatic stress and vicarious traumatization are different from burnout because they are specific consequences of exposure to the atrocities of child abuse (Cunningham, 2003; Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003;). Bell (2003) believes that

11

compassion fatigue is similar to burnout, but different because of one main concept. Bell asserts that compassion fatigue can be experienced immediately whereas burnout is the result of a process involving emotional and physical exhaustion for a prolonged period of time.

Regardless of the label, all of the above-mentioned emotional and physical manifestations of work-related stress are considered primary contributing factors in employee turnover (Bell, 2003; Cunningham, 2003; Koeske & Koeske, 1989; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003; Pines 2002, 2004; Soderfeldt & Soderfeldt, 1995). Nissly, Barak, and Levin (2005) identify "age, education, completion of an internship, work, experience, tenure, workload, length of workday, job satisfaction…, salary, and opportunities for promotion" as additional factors related to employee turnover (p. 80).

The results of a survey conducted by the Child Welfare League of America indicate "public and private nonprofit agencies report that the greatest concerns for the child welfare field are the increasing number of children needing services and the lack of qualified staff who remain employed with child welfare agencies (CWLA, 2002). CWLA found that child welfare agencies have had turnover rates as high as 50 percent. Reilly & Wilkerson (2004) report that turnover was especially high for entry-level CPS caseworkers in Texas in 2002 and 2003. They report that the average length of employment for new workers was 10-1/2 months and the turnover rate was 46.8 percent. The turnover rate decreased to 40% in fiscal year 2003.

Organizational Climate

The climate of the organization can also be a contributing factor in the turnover of its employees. A report by the CWLA (2002) states that although reform efforts have been implemented in the past, "…the child welfare work environment evolved into one characterized by lowered autonomy, heightened regimentation, and increased documentation…" (p. 2). It is this author's opinion that this type of work environment has been instrumental in increasing the turnover rate of front-line and administrative staff. Ylipaavalniemi et al. (2005) state that organizational climate is primarily based on "employees' shared perceptions and interpretations of the organizational environment" (p. 112). If employees perceive their work environment as satisfying, rewarding, and full of possibilities they are more likely to remain employed. However, if they perceive the opposite, the work climate is considered stressful and turnover is usually the logical consequence (Ylipaavalniemi, 2005). Marchand, Demers, and Durand (2005) believe that psychological distress experienced in an organization is related to how tasks are assigned and completed, how demanding managers and daily tasks are perceived, quality of social relationships, and rewards. The climate of the organization is also related to several other factors including, but not limited to, managerial styles (Marchand, Demers, & Durand, 2005), peer relationships (Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998), organizational justice (Ylipaavalniemi, 2005), safety of employees (Ylipaavalniemi, 2005), and job security (Cheng, Chen, Chen, & Chiang, 2005).

Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998) describe organizational climate as being comprised of two components: intraorganizational and interorganizational factors which affect overall effectiveness and service provision. The authors state "that attitudes shared

by employees about their work environment (collectively labeled organization climate) are important determinants of the organization's effectiveness" (p. 404).

Intraorganizational factors are related to what occurs within an organization, and interorganizational factors are those that involve working with community leaders and professionals and other organizations. From this perspective, organizational climate is determined by employees, clients, and the community. For this study, the primary focus is on intraorganizational factors, those within the organization, because previous studies (Cheng, Chen, Chen, & Chiang, 2005; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; Marchand, Demers, & Durand, 2005; Ylipaavalniemi et al., 2005) have found that the internal stressors within an organization are more closely associated with employee retention or turnover. Therefore, this author assumes that if an organization's internal climate is adequate, employees will be better equipped to ward off the effects of, or even ignore, interorganizational factors that produce stress.

Several researchers have found that the climate of the organization affects job satisfaction, job commitment, job embeddedness, and overall stress which can be utilized as predictors of turnover and retention (Cheng, Chen, Chen, & Chiang, 2005; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; Koeske & Kirk, 1993; Marchand, Demers, & Durand, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2001; Stibe & Blome, 2003: Ylipaavalniemi et al., 2005). Apparently, organizational climate not only affects employees personally, but also influences their effectiveness and productivity which is directly related to the organization's effectiveness. If employees are stressed and consider their work environment to be adding to rather than ameliorating that stress, it appears that everyone is impacted – the

14

employee, clients, and the organization – and personal and organizational goals, and objectives are not realized.

As previously discussed, a person's perception of their organization greatly influences their positive or negative perception of that organization's work environment. Enhancing the workplace, specifically the child welfare work environment, should improve the perceptions of its employees, enhancing their ability to withstand the stressors inherent in child welfare.

Employees Who Remain Employed

In spite of the stressors inherent in the child protection system, some employees are able to remain employed with the agency. These employees experience the daily stressors associated with helping professions and even though they may sometimes succumb to the effects of work-related stressors, eventually they are able to overcome or ameliorate the impact of these stressors. Resilience is defined by several authors as an ability to cope with, adapt to, and recover from adversity (Ayers-Lopez & McCrory, 2004; Corcoran & Nichols-Casebolt, 2004; Jacelon, 1997). Strümpfer (2003) considers the ability to resist burnout, a manifestation of secondary trauma, to be a process he labels resiling. He further states "resilience derives from the verb resile, which means that when a thing is compressed, stretched or bent, it tends to spring back elastically, to recoil and to resume its former size and shape" (p. 70).

Some supervisors may present as possessing resilient characteristics, but may, in fact, have remained employed because of other factors. These factors may include, but are not limited to, health insurance and/or other benefits, the salary level they have

15

achieved, the declining job market, a lack of motivation, or feelings of fear related to leaving. Some of these supervisors may also have reached a point of diminished productivity, but remain because of the aforementioned or other reasons.

Purpose of the Study

Child Protective Services is a stressful, trauma-filled, and crisis-oriented environment; however, some supervisors have been able to endure this stress and remain with the agency. In this authors' opinion, these supervisors may possess resilient characteristics that contribute to their ability to remain employed in spite of the stress experienced, secondary trauma, and a less than optimal organizational climate. But, what compels them to stay? Is it an innate characteristic, individual personality characteristics, the quality of supervision they receive, the presence of a support system inside and/or outside the agency, or organizational benefits? The goal of the research is to identify the personal and organizational characteristics that contribute to employment longevity for supervisors. The specific goal of this dissertation is to determine whether supervisors are remaining employed because they possess resilient characteristics or whether their employment longevity is related to other factors.

The research questions are:

1. What personal characteristics of resilience impact retention of child welfare supervisors?

2. What process is involved in the development of resilient characteristics and traits?

3. How does organizational climate influence the development of resilience in child welfare supervisors?

4. How does organizational climate influence retention of child welfare supervisors?

5. What motivates child welfare supervisors to remain employed?

Burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue have been identified and discussed above as negative influences on resilience which is the ability to overcome and recover from adverse situations. Although CPS employees leave the agency for several reasons, some leave because they do not possess an adequate level of resilience, contributing to the major problem of turnover within child welfare agencies. Agency conditions that could contribute to turnover and impact retention include, but are not limited to, stress, high caseloads, lack of support, poor supervisor support, and overall decreased job satisfaction (Gibbs, 2001; Morris, 2005; Rycraft, 1994; Samantrai, 1992). Employee turnover has become a major problem not only in Texas, but throughout the United States (CWLA, 2002). Much attention has been focused on the reasons that CPS caseworkers leave the agency and what can be done to alleviate the trend.

There were several studies found which have empirically analyzed the issue of caseworker turnover in the United States and other countries focusing on caseworkers who stayed and those who left the agency (Samantrai, 1992; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2004), the impact of education on retention (Jones & Okamura (2000), those who expressed an intent to leave (Nissly, Barak, & Levin, 2005), and a comparison of caseworkers from CPS and Adult Protective Services (APS) (Baumann, Kern, McFadden, & Law, 1997). However, very little attention has been given to those caseworkers and supervisors who remain with the agency (Cicero-Reese and Clark, 1998; Ellett, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003; Gibbs, 2001; Morris, 2005; Rycraft, 1994). As indicated

by the research questions, the purpose of this dissertation is to provide further empirical

evidence of what has contributed to the longevity of those employees who remain with

the agency.

Additional goals of the research are to influence agency hiring policies and

procedures, create a profile of a resilient supervisor, and formulate a definition of

resilience. The resilient employee characteristics identified as a supervisor profile could

be utilized to formulate suggestions for hiring to decrease staff turnover and improve

hiring practices. The desired result is that individuals with the identified resilient

characteristics and appropriate job-related talents will be hired to fill caseworker and

supervisor positions rather than hiring just to fill vacant positions. Hiring individuals

with desired characteristics could improve employee tenure, thereby reducing the

turnover rate. Defining resilience would add to the resilience literature and inform future

empirical explorations of the concept.

Significance for Social Work and Child Welfare

This research is significant to social work educators who administer Title IV-E

programs in partnership with child protection agencies. Several universities utilize

Federal Title IV-E funds to provide education specifically related to child welfare and

prepare social work students for careers in child welfare. Title IV-E funds are also

utilized to educate child welfare employees who are interested in obtaining Master's

degrees in Social Work. The results of this study could be utilized by social work

educators to prepare students and CPS employees selected for Title IV-E programs for

employment in child welfare. Educators could actively foster resilience enhancement in

some students and assist others in their development and attainment of the identified resilient characteristics. This will insure that more people who can be considered a good fit for the agency are selected for future and continued employment. In addition, supervisors who receive Title IV-E funds to further their education are taught social work skills which include assessment, diagnoses, crisis intervention methods, etc. Development and enhancement of social work skills could serve to enhance supervisors' competency when delivering child welfare services, and improve their employment longevity.

The dissertation author believes that the results of this study will be significant for child welfare staff in two ways. Because the Texas legislature implemented reform efforts for CPS in 2005, the agency was required to hire a total of 2,400 new caseworkers by 2007 (Senate Bill 6, 2005). Therefore, CPS staff can utilize the results of this study to achieve the mandated hiring and retention goals. Agency staff could consider the identified resilient characteristics when making hiring decisions, insuring good fit when selecting social work students and other individuals as prospective employees. Retention of these individuals who might eventually become supervisors could possibly minimize the current staff retention issues. Improving the retention rates of supervisors could provide opportunities for them to develop caseworkers and enhance their resilience, resulting in a positive impact on the retention of caseworkers. With the identification of resilient characteristics of existing supervisors, hiring procedures can be modified to insure that persons with these characteristics are considered for employment.

In addition, results of this study regarding organizational climate could be utilized to improve organizational environment and overall effectiveness. Identifying resilient characteristics and improving the climate within the organization could impact turnover rates and improve employee and organizational effectiveness. If more supervisors are hired who can withstand the stressors of working in child protection and perceive their working environment as positive, they could develop caseworkers with the same characteristics. This could enhance the resilience levels of caseworkers, minimizing the impact of stressors associated with the increased, and sometimes unmanageable, caseloads in the agency. Although retention of competent supervisors is an agency desire, it is also imperative that child welfare agencies are evaluated periodically to insure they also remain productive and provide effective service delivery. Supervisors who are no longer productive contribute to the stress levels of not only their peers, but caseworkers as well, who have to assume additional casework responsibilities due to their ineffectiveness and/or turnover. With an increased, tenured, and productive workforce, the organization can provide more effective services to clients and achieve desired goals and objectives.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation includes several concepts; therefore, the literature reviewed is varied as well. Literature on burnout and related concepts, organizational climate, and resilience will be discussed. In addition, education has been identified as possibly influential on resilience and will be included in the review of literature.

Burnout

The concept of burnout was utilized in the 1970's by Freudenberger (1974, 1975) when he utilized the term to refer to the consequences of working in stressful environments (Söderfeldt & Söderfeldt, 1995). In the last decade, burnout has been researched in over 1000 studies (Pines, 2004). In a previous study, Pines (2002) defines burnout as a physical, emotional, and mental state of exhaustion occurring when those employees who possess a high level of motivation consistently experience emotionally demanding and draining situations that they cannot resolve. Burnout is also defined as synonymous with feelings of alienating depression, anxiety, loss of realism, and loss of spirit (Söderfeldt, Söderfelt, & Warg, 1995).   Pines (2004) asserts that most of the literature on burnout has examined work conditions as a contributing factor to burnout rather than a consequence of individual vulnerability.

Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) consider burnout to be associated with work environment and comprised of three dimension which are exhaustion, a sense of

cynicism and perception of personal ineffectiveness. Lecroy and Rank (1986) found that several work-related factors including satisfaction, autonomy, self-esteem, and discrepancy can be considered potential determinants of burnout. When employees perceive that these factors are lacking or unfulfilled, the result is job dissatisfaction, and ultimately, burnout.

Maslach (1982) states, "if all the apples in a barrel are rotten, it is the barrel that should be blamed and not the individual apple" (p. 67). Pines also hypothesizes that occupations are chosen as a method to resolve childhood issues or gratify unmet employment goals and selecting employment brings about job satisfaction. She states "success helps to heal childhood wounds. However, when people feel that they have failed, when the work repeats the childhood trauma rather than heal it, the result is burnout" (Pines, 2004, p. 67). Manifestations of burnout include decreased morale, productivity, and commitment, and increased absences, turnover, and vandalism (Pines, 2002). Koeske and Kelly (1995) found a significant relationship between over-involvement and burnout. The authors define over-involvement as emotional involvement with clients that negatively affects the helping process. Professionals who are over-involved find it difficult to maintain a professional distance with clients, become over-involved in their problems, and burnout is the result.

Several authors (Arches, 1991; Baumann, Kern, McFadden, & Law, 1997; Daley, 1979; Drake and Yadama, 1996; Harrison, 1980; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Jayaratne, Chess, & Kunkel, 1986) examined burnout with child protection caseworkers. Baumann et al. found that the tendency of professionals in helping professions to perceive that bad case outcomes are solely their fault could be related to burnout. However, they note that

organizational factors "may [also] play a primary role in producing burnout" (p. 16).

Drake and Yadama, along with Daley found that emotional exhaustion is the best

predictor of burnout. Daley identified several additional job-related factors which

contribute to burnout: (a) excessive paperwork, (b) inability to see a case through to an

outcome, (c) case recidivism, (d) lack of evidence of client success, and (e) poor working

conditions including, but not limited to, rodents in the office, poorly maintained

buildings, and offices in crime-infested neighborhoods. Jayaratne and Chess, Harrison,

and Arches explored the relationship of burnout and job satisfaction among social

workers employed in child welfare. Jayaratne and Chess included community mental

health and family service social workers as well as those employed at child welfare. The

authors found that of the three agencies, child welfare workers reported higher levels of

stress, more job-related conflict, and higher caseloads although they had fewer cases than

their counterparts. The authors contribute the perception of high caseloads to the

characteristics of child welfare cases and further state that "…number of cases per se may

not be a good indicator of workload" (p. 451). Harrison sought to determine the

relationship of role conflict and ambiguity with burnout. Their findings suggest that

those caseworkers who are unsure of their role and the associated casework behaviors

that constitute effectiveness and/or success, experience more job dissatisfaction which

could lead to burnout. Harrison also states that providing workers with clear expectations

will assist them in achieving job satisfaction.

Jayaratne, Chess, and Kunkel (1986) examined the effects of burnout on family

relationships. The authors found a significant relationship between work stress, marital

relationships, and burnout. They cite this as evidence of a cyclical relationship whereby

stress experienced at work exacerbates any marital stress or conflict, which in turn negatively impacts job performance resulting in increased levels of job-related stress. Arches focused on social workers in various social service agencies, the majority of whom were employed in child welfare. The author reported that perception of autonomy was the only variable (out of 6) found to have a significant relationship with burnout.

Several concepts are considered synonymous with burnout. All are based on the concept of burnout, but have been labeled secondary trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and vicarious traumatization. Collins and Long (2003) explored the effects of trauma, specifically the issue of secondary traumatic stress reactions of those who work with traumatized people. This phenomenon has been labeled "vicarious traumatization". They utilize McCann and Perlman's (1990) definition of vicarious traumatization which is: "…the transformation in the inner experience of the therapist that comes about as a result of empathetic engagement with clients' trauma material" (p. 145). According to the authors, this concept has also been labeled "traumatic countertransference" (Herman, 1992), "burnout" (Pines, 1993), "compassion fatigue" (Figley, 1995), and "secondary traumatic stress disorder" (Munroe et al., 1995). These terms are often used interchangeably .

Secondary traumatic stress is considered to be the result of helping people who have been traumatized. Working with victims of trauma can produce burnout which is associated with "low morale, absenteeism, high job turnover, and other indices of job stress (Pines & Maslach, 1978)." In a subsequent study, Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) defined burnout as: "A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with

24

people (Pines & Maslach, 1978, p. 4)." They consider emotional exhaustion to be only one component of burnout. Depersonalization produces cynicism and feelings of incompetence and reduced productivity which are consequences of reduced personal accomplishment.

Nelson-Gardell and Harris (2003) explored the concept of secondary traumatic stress specifically with child welfare workers. They found that those child welfare workers who had a personal history of abuse and neglect had an increased risk of developing secondary traumatic stress. The authors note that symptoms of secondary traumatic stress are similar to those of burnout, but believe that secondary traumatic stress can have additional consequences such as "increased fatigue or illness, emotional numbing, social withdrawal, reduced productivity, and feelings of hopelessness and despair" (p. 9).

Bell (2003) assessed secondary trauma from a strengths perspective. The author emphasizes the need to reframe our paradigms from an emphasis on the pathology contributing to or causing the problem to an identification of the strengths that enhance an individual's ability to be successful and achieve overall well-being. Vicarious traumatization has been examined by Cunningham (2003) with social workers. Both, Cunningham and Bell considered vicarious traumatization and secondary trauma to be the result of working with people who have experienced and survived trauma. Cunningham believes that this phenomenon is similar, but different from burnout because vicarious traumatization is a direct result of working with "survivors of human-induced traumas…" (p. 452), whereas burnout is a concept experienced in all professions and work conditions.

25

West (1997) discusses the concept of secondary trauma as a natural consequence of providing mental health services to abused and neglected children. Because of the sometimes debilitating effects of this work, West suggests that mental health professionals should begin discussions regarding professional protection, similar to the concept of child protection   She believes there is a dire need to assist professionals in learning how to care for themselves and ameliorate the effects of working with traumatized children. West also believes the first step to improving self-care is awareness and recognition that working with traumatized individuals does indeed have an effect on the service provider. Additional suggestions are to obtain and maintain a support system, set boundaries, and consciously engage in personal and professional prevention efforts.

Organizational Climate

Employees who believe they have the ability and opportunity to successfully navigate through and utilize the resources within their environments are less susceptible to the stressors inherent in their work environment (Hobfoll, Jackson, Hobfoll, Pierce, & Young, 2002). According to Steib and Blome (2003) child welfare environments consist of "a high level of regulations, vast amounts of documentation, lack of respect from the public and professional groups, and persistent threats of legal liability" (p. 748). Most CPS employees do not appear to perceive that they have the ability to withstand or overcome these organizational characteristics which constitute the organization's climate. Fox, Miller, & Barbee (2003) described child welfare as one of the most stressful and thankless jobs in the public sector. Ylipaavalniemi et al. (2005) state that

"organizational climate…refer[s] to the employees' shared perceptions and interpretations of the organizational environment, especially factors related to co-operation (James, James, & Ashed, 1990; Schneider, 1990)" (p. 112). Baumann, Kern, McFadden, and Law (1997.) summarized the literature on organizational climate (Anderson, 1991; Capel, Sisley & Desertrain, 1987; Gaines & Jermier, 1983; Maslach, 1976; Leiter, 1988; Roberts, 1991) and indicated that the lack of supervisor support, poor peer relationships, uncertainty about job roles, minimal pay, and few opportunities for advancement are organizational factors which have a relationship with burnout. Employees who also work in an environment fraught with high levels of stress and perceive that they have little to no control over their environment are more at risk of health problems than those in less stressful and inclusive work environments (Ylipaavalniemi et al., 2005). Arches (1991) found that the bureaucratic structure of social service agencies contributes to job dissatisfaction of its employees. Arches describes bureaucracies as stifling environments that do not allow workers to work autonomously with clients or use the skills they possess.

Ylipaavelniemi et al. also discussed the concept of organizational justice that involves the treatment of employees and their perceptions of equity. Ylipaavalniemi et al. cite studies (Elovainio et al., 2002; Lind & Tyler, 1988) which found an association between organizational justice and employees' commitment to and engagement in the organization, employee behavior, minor psychiatric issues, and absences related to health and illness. An employees' perception of their work environment also dictates how they will relate to that environment, whether that interaction will be positive or negative, and

27

whether the environment will be viewed as a source of positive or negative feelings (Marchand, Demers, & Duran, 2005).

The stressors inherent in child protection work could also cause feelings of job insecurity, specifically, when a caseworker is unable to keep up with caseload demands, or while working with a family, a child is injured or dies. Any of these situations, could create anxiety and fear of being terminated. Cheng, Chen, Chen, and Chiang (2005) assessed whether job insecurity had any relationship with psychological distress or an employee's health. The authors found evidence that a perceived threat of job loss could actually be more emotionally and physically harmful than the actual loss resulting in anxiety and decreased health status and/or illness.

Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998) state that employees' attitudes about the climate of their organization are indications of organizational effectiveness. They also state that organizational climate influences not only individual employees, but service delivery as well. The authors recommend that organizations intentionally employ efforts to improve the internal climate of its organization as a means of increasing effective service delivery rather than continuing to focus solely on the external factors that influence organizational climate.

The History of Resilience Research

For the last several decades, resilience has been the focus of researchers in the fields of education, psychology, social work, and business.

According to Waller (2001), resilience research originated in the disciplines of psychiatry and developmental psychology, focusing on within-person factors rather than

the ecosystemic context of adaptation. Social work literature has utilized an ecosystemic

perspective, but it is relatively new to resilience research.   Waller believes that resilience

research emerged from the study of risk, specifically with "at-risk" children because

pioneers of resilience research (Anthony, 1987; Garmezy, 1994; Matsen, Best, &

Garmezy, 1990; Murphy & Moriarty, 1976; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982)

recognized that some children thrive in the midst of adversity becoming healthy adults.

Resilience was initially conceptualized in the 1950's as the result of personality

traits or coping styles that seemed to make some children's developmental transitions

positive even when experiencing childhood adversity (Ayers-Lopez & McCrory, 2004;

Richardson, 2002; Waller, 2001).   Waller notes that Anthony (1987) and Bolig &

Weddie (1998) identified these children as hardy, possessing characteristics that made

them invulnerable, and resistant to stress. Felsman & Vaillant (1987) disagree with this

idea of individual invulnerability because they believe no one is either resilient or

vulnerable all the time. An additional problem with the idea of intrinsic hardiness is the

tendency to consider any shortcomings or failures the fault of the individual even when

they are the result of social problems.

Waller considers the identification of risk factors an important contribution of

prevention research during the 1980's. She believes that risk factors threaten an

individual's ability to adapt and recover and protective factors facilitate positive

outcomes by operating as buffers between individuals and the risk factors impinging on

their well-being. Waller notes that risk and protective factors are not dichotomous. A

risk factor can become a protective factor when a person can develop coping skills as a

response to the adversity or risk factor experienced.   Substance abuse, criminal

involvement, crises, poverty, and life traumas such as divorce and death are examples of risk factors.

Protective factors include any resource within an individual's environment that they can access to cope with and/or overcome the effects of risk experienced. Specific examples of protective factors include nurturing environments such as family, schools, organizations, supportive peers, community resources, high levels of self-esteem, and prevention programs.   Waller also states that exposure to multiple risks can negatively impact one's ability to adapt and recover and an individual can respond resiliently in one situation and not another.

Resilience Definitions

Although studied since the 1950's, there is a lack of agreement among authors regarding the definition of resilience; therefore, several definitions of resilience have been developed.   Some authors consider resilience to be a personality trait or characteristic that people can rely upon to produce a positive response to adversity, crisis, and change (Corcoran & Nichols-Casebolt, 2004; Jacelon, 1997). Jacelon considers resilience to be "an ability of people to spring back in the face of adversity (p. 123), and Ayers-Lopez and McCrory (2004) define resilience as "the capacity to bounce back from adversity" (p. 1). Corcoran and Nichols-Casebolt state resilience is "the 'absence of significant developmental delays or serious learning and behavior problems and the mastery of developmental tasks that are appropriate for a given age and culture' in spite of the exposure to adversity" (pp. 213-214). In addition, resilience has been defined by

Neill and Dias (2001) as "a psychological quality that allows a person to cope with, and respond effectively to, life stressors" (p. 5).

Several authors defined resilience in the context of adaptation. Lifton (1994) believes that resilience is the human capacity of all individuals to transform and change-no matter their risks, and Waller (2001) defines resilience as "positive adaptation in response to adversity" (p. 292). Werner and Smith (1992) define resilience as an innate "self-righting mechanism"(p. 202). Several articles referenced the definition of resilience authored by Garmezy (1991) which states "resilience is a process, capacity or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenges or threatening circumstances" (Ayers-Lopez & McCrory, 2004; Richardson, 2002; Waller, 2001).

Other authors define resilience as a process utilized by persons to not only withstand and recover from adversity through adaptation, but to produce permanent positive changes in their coping abilities as a result. Palmer (1997) defines resilience as "a process in which the development of substantive characteristics made up of greater or lesser periods of disruption and the development and use of greater or lesser competencies in life management" (p. 203). Richardson (2002) considers resilience to involve a process of growing and adapting when faced with life's disruptions. He defines resilience as "the motivational force within everyone that drives them to pursue wisdom, self-actualization, and altruism, and to be in harmony with a spiritual source of strength" (p. 313).

Primary Resilience Article

For the purposes of this research the author will utilize the definition of resilience by Richardson (2002) as the conceptual framework. Richardson postulates that the concept of resilience emerged from phenomenological identification of resilient characteristics of survivors, mostly young people, living in high-risk situations. He believes resilience theory emerged via research into three components described as waves: (1) resilient qualities, (2) resiliency process, and (3) innate resilience.

The first wave of resilience research sought to identify personal characteristics of resilience   The focus of this wave is on a paradigm shift from looking at risk factors that led to psychosocial problems to the identification of strengths of an individual. The premise of resiliency in the first wave is that people possess selective strengths that assist them in surviving adversity. Whether resilience is learned or part of one's genetic nature is a common professional debate.

The second wave of resilience research involves the process of attaining resilient characteristics and qualities, and seeks to answer the question of how people attain resilient qualities. The second wave theorizes resiliency begins at any time a person adapts to changes and personal crises. To cope with life prompts - stressors adversity, opportunities, or change - resilient qualities develop allowing events to become routine and less disruptive. Chronic stressors befall people when they do not develop resilient qualities or have not adapted through the disruptions in their life. Almost all disruptions have a potential for growth. When faced with questions of uncertainty, Richardson states that the reintegration process begins, whether consciously or subconsciously, and

involves four stages. Although the stages can be experienced sequentially, most people

reintegrate in one stage or another. The stages of reintegration are as follows:

1. Resilient integration – to experience insight or growth through disruptions;

2. Reintegration back to homeostasis – to heal and 'just get past' a disruption;

3. Recovering with loss – people give up some motivation, hope, or drives; and,

4. Dysfunctional reintegration - occurs when people resort to substances,

   destructive behaviors, or other means to deal with life prompts" (p. 312).

The third wave seeks to discover the source or motivation to reintegrate

resiliently. The resiliency theoretical framework considers this source to be spiritual or

innate. Resilience theory postulates that there is a motivational "force within everyone

that drives them to pursue wisdom, self-actualization, and altruism, and to be in harmony

with a spiritual source of strength (Richardson, 2002, p. 313).

Depending upon the discipline, this force has many names. Richardson (2002)

provides labels and descriptions of this force from the perspective of physics, eastern

medicine, and theology. Physicists allude to a driving force that controls the universe. In

the Eastern Medicine discipline, "Tao" describes the movement, path, or way of universal

energy. Taoism suggests that all things connect with a flow of energy termed "chi".

Only when peace is created within oneself can a person move in tandem with the energies

that circulate within and around that person. Movement against the flow causes internal

as well as external disturbances.   Those who are influenced by a belief in God or creative

force believe that motivational centers/strength comes from their God or a creative force.

Most theological beliefs reflect a faith in the power and influence of a person's God or

creative force. Having such faith fortifies the immune system of the body in addition to increasing self-efficacy and other resilient qualities. The Greek origin of psyche/mind is "soul". In resilience theory, soul refers to the whole integrated being of an individual with one's transpersonal nature or human spirit as the primary guiding force of the system (Richardson, 2002).

First Wave Resilience Research – Resilient Characteristics

As described by Richardson, there are several studies which have attempted to discover the innate characteristics that resilient people possess – the first wave. Corcoran and Nichols-Casebolt (2004) noted that historically, the most commonly utilized interventions which include problem-solving, psychosocial, and cognitive-behavioral have focused on pathology and problems rather than identification of strengths. The authors acknowledge that the risk and resilience framework was developed in psychology and education as a means of understanding individual behavior, primarily of children. This framework emphasizes the balance and interaction of risk and protective factors which determine one's ability to adapt and continue to function despite stressful life events. According to these authors, social work researchers such as Fraser (1997) have broadened the concept of the framework to include micro, mezzo, and macro-level systems and labeling it the "risk and resilience ecological framework." The authors identify protective factors at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. The micro level includes individuals – the child and family members - and protective factors at the micro level include social skills, intelligence, a positive self-concept, and an engaging personality. The mezzo level includes community resources available for families such

34

as churches and schools. Mezzo level protective factors include middle class and affluent neighborhoods, neighbors who can provide support and monitor neighborhood activities, high-performing schools, and religious involvement. At the macro level, available resources utilized as protective factors include stable economies, availability of social services, and inclusive environments. This approach appears to be a better fit for social work practice because of the emphasis it places on strengths and empowerment. Selvini (2004) also applies a strengths perspective to his views on resilience. He states that resilient individuals survive exceptionally stressful and traumatic events like bereavement, emotional neglect and rejection, physical violence, [and] serious illness…" (p. 217). He believes that we should consider these people exceptional and not exceptions.

Gilgun, Klein, and Pranis (2000) also looked at resilience in relation to risk-only models, specifically from the perspective of developmental psychopathology.   The authors hypothesized that risk-only models incorrectly classify some persons as high risk when they are not.   They believe that those who can overcome adversity have innate resources that they utilize to be successful. They identify these resources as assets, but also consider persons who overcome the effects of risk to be resilient. Examples of assets are high IQ, physical attractiveness, verbal facility, parents who care, safe neighborhoods, and adequate family income.

Oswald, Johnson, and Howard (2003) identified resilient characteristics that teachers believe are representative of resilient children. These characteristics are included because they are very applicable to adults and also represent the qualities of resilient adults. According to the authors, resilient persons are: (1) motivated, (2) believe

they are competent, (3), willing to communicate with others, (4) care about themselves as well as other people, and, (4) have a support system.

Cumberland-Li, Eisenberg, and Reiser (2004) identified agreeableness as a personality trait that is related to resiliency in children. They utilize Goldberg's (1992) adjectives for agreeableness that include "kind, generous, warm, cooperative, polite, trustful, flexible, sociable, agreeable, and considerate" (p. 193). They consider agreeableness to be a protective factors which can be utilized as a defense against stress and adverse situations. The authors also consider agreeableness and resilience to be important personality characteristics that can assist in enhancing social functioning. Although the focus of the aforementioned study is children, the concepts are also applicable to adults, especially those that work in stress-filled environments. Agreeableness could be a personality resource to combat the effects of stress and ward off burnout and turnover. Fraser (1999) cited resilience characteristics originally identified in another study (Wolin & Wolin, 1995) which include: "insight, independence, fulfilling relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and the capacity to distinguish good from bad" (p. 135).

Second Wave Resilience Research - The Process of Resilience

Jacelon (1997) considers resilience to be part of the life cycle characterized by a process of disruption and reintegration. The author suggests that "exposure to stressful situations has an inoculating effect, enabling people to better cope with stress later in life… and the promotion of resilience in individuals does not lie in avoiding stressful

situations, but in encountering stress at a time and in a way that allows self-confidence and social competence…" (p. 608)

However, Fraser (1999) believes that being exposed to risk over time – "cumulative risk" - may be more problematic than "problem-specific risk" (p. 132). The author states that the process of prolonged exposure to risk factors may be more influential than experiencing one risk episode. An example of prolonged exposure to risk factors could involve people who experience long periods of depression and are possibly at risk of developing strong perceptions of helplessness (Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, & Maton, 1999). Fraser also states that looking at risk from a cumulative perspective may be beneficial in identification of most, if not all, personal risk and protective factors. The author states that risk and protective factors can be utilized to predict outcomes. Identification of both factors for an individual would provide insight about what causes stress and what personal resources are available to help ameliorate its effects. This would greatly enhance the effectiveness of treatment or interventions implemented to reduce the influence of risk factors and enhance protective ones.

Hobfoll, Jackson, Hobfoll, Pierce, and Young (2002) explored resilience from the perspective of communal-mastery which is based on the premise of personal success attributed to one's community and social interactions. The authors found that individual resilience may be closely tied with the concept of community as a contributing factor to success and well-being. Success achieved by individuals is attributed to and shared with the community. This is different from the concept of self-mastery which views each individual as possessing those qualities that will produce resilience and views the individual as solely responsible for any success achieved. The authors discuss previous

studies that examined self-mastery and a sense of personal control. These studies indicated that persons who have a sense of self-mastery and a belief that they can successfully confront challenges are less impacted by stressful life circumstances than those who do not believe in their ability to confront challenges.

Neill and Dias (2001) believe that the process of resilience can be enhanced through the application of interventions which provide social support. The authors found increases in resilience level could be attributed to social support which they believe is "one of the best predictors of psychological resilience" (Blum, 1998, p. 2). Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, and Maton (1999) believe that resilience involves a process of adaptation which involves personal and environmental factors.

Palmer (1997) identified four types of resilience: (a) anomic survival- living in a constant state of chaos and disruption; (b) regenerative resilience – development of competencies and coping strategies; (c) adaptive resilience – sustained periods of utilizing competencies and copies strategies; and (d) flourishing resilience – extensive use of effective and constructive coping strategies.

Third Wave Resilience Research – Sources Of Motivation

This wave of research seeks to identify the energy or motivational sources needed for resilient reintegration after experiencing adversity and determine from where this energy derives. Some people are motivated by external factors such as compliments and recognition, and others are motivated by internal factors such as pride, self-esteem, and personal values. Although most motivation is obtained from personal sources, business organizations can also be identified as motivational sources. For those persons requiring

external motivation, employee awards and recognition are adequate motivators and for those who receive motivation from within, doing their job well is sufficient.

Is an employee's ability to reintegrate resiliently within the workplace associated with the resiliency of the organization itself? Can the organization be a source of motivation for its employees, contributing to employment longevity? Some researchers have examined the resilience of organizations to determine characteristics that attribute to their success, profit, and ability to retain employees. Kendra and Wachtendorf (2003) state that resilience is "the ability to sustain a shock without completely deteriorating", and "adapting to and 'bouncing back' from a disruption" (p. 41). They note that resilient organizations have an ability to be resourceful, engage in and encourage communication, and can organize and reorganize themselves. They also cite two other authors (Mallak, 1998; Orr, 1998) that have specifically defined organizational resilience as an organization's ability to adapt and remain productive in the midst of turmoil and change. The authors believe that in order for organizations to develop resilience and remain resilient, they must possess skills in maintaining strong, effective organization, maintain the social and technological systems, and an ability to effectively manage change which results in forward movement.

Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) indicate that organizations which desire to become "world class" are faced with the following challenges that require them to attract and retain skilled and qualified employees, create a balanced organization, implement change with few consequences, and address the concerns of all stakeholders. To achieve these goals, organizations have to employ people with emotional intelligence, which the authors believe is a greater indicator of individual success and leadership ability than IQ.

39

The authors included the seven elements of emotional intelligence which they identify as: "self-awareness, emotional resilience; motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, influence, intuitiveness, and conscientiousness" (p. 196)

Since the development of resilience for individuals and organizations involves the same concepts, it is surmised that resilient organizations produce resilient employees. The mission of an organization also appears to be a contributing factor to employee resilience (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Rycraft, 1994). Brown and Yoshioka state that a mission statement serves several purposes such as: "defin[ing] an organization, expressing its values and envisioning its future simply and clearly, and attract[ing] clients, donors, funders, employees, and volunteers to an organization" (p. 5). The authors quote Warren Bennis who is considered "an authority on nonprofit organizations and recognized the significance and importance of missions." He stated "at the heart of every great group is a shared dream. All great groups believe that…they could change the world…. That belief is what brings the necessary cohesion and energy to their work" (Hesselbein and Cohen, 1999, p. 317 as presented by Brown & Yoshioka, 2003).

Rycraft's (1994) study verified Brown & Yoshioka's findings. She found that caseworkers at child welfare agencies identified the mission of the organization as an important component of their decision to stay. Three principles were found to influence employee attitudes toward an organization's mission: (a) awareness, (b) agreement, and (c) alignment. Employees must not only be aware of the mission of their organization and be in agreement with it, they must also see alignment of their personal values and those of the organization.

DeRidder (2004) believes that retention is contingent upon employees'
commitment to their organization. The author states that a high level of organizational
commitment produces employees who act in the organization's best interest. The
findings supported the presence of a strong correlation between an employee's trust in the
organization's management and their level of commitment to the employer and
organization. The author believes that communication within the organization is the
essential element to producing trust and commitment. The author suggests that
organizations should utilize "bulletins, memos, speeches, pep talks, staff magazines, or
intranets" which are shown to be effective ways to disseminate information and
communicate (p. 25). The author also states that management must possess certain
characteristics – "ability, benevolence, and integrity" to produce the desired employee
support. Giffords (2003) also supports the idea that employees' commitment to an
organization affects retention. The author cites Koeske and Koeske (2000) who found
that "interactions between individuals and their environments may contribute to work
outcomes such as turnover, intention to quit and job performance" (p. 6). The author
states that social workers are sometimes forced to divide their loyalties between an
organization and their professional values. This conflict may interfere with their level of
commitment to the profession or organization where they are employed. It could also
negatively impact the social worker's overall well-being. The author also emphasizes the
importance of exploring personal and job characteristics because it has been determined
in previous research (Fink, 1992; Flynn & Tannenbaum, 1993; Kahlenberg, Becker, &
Zvonkovic, 1995; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) that age and tenure are positively related to
commitment. Giffords (2003) conceptualizes commitment as encompassing both attitude

and behavior. Behavior includes continued employment and tenure in the organization.

Attitude relates to a focus on "the mind-set" or feelings of an individual. In this context,

it refers to the similarity and/or differences in a social worker's and organization's goals

and values.

Organizational commitment is comprised of three concepts: "(1) a strong belief

in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert

considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a definite desire to maintain

membership in the organization" (Porter et al., 1974, p. 604). In addition, committed

employees expend their energy on behalf of the organization, resulting in internalization

of the company's successes and failures. Committed employees also feel a personal

effect when the organization is threatened and exhibit their commitment by remaining

employed even if they have opportunities to leave.

Related Concepts

The terms coping skills or abilities have been utilized in some literature as a

similar concept to resilience. Several definitions of resilience involve the process of or

ability to cope. However, coping as an individual concept has been the focus of several

studies. Prelow, Tein, Roosa, and Wood (2000) along with Koeske and Kirk (1993)

utilized Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) definition of coping which involves individual

efforts utilized to decrease the influence of stressors.   Koeske and Kirk state that

adequate coping strategies will assist employees in remaining employed, experiencing

increased physical and psychological health, and improving the quality of the work they produce.

Steinhardt, Dolbier, Gottlieb, and McCalister (2003) examined the relationship between the predictors of hardiness, supervisor support, group cohesion, and the criteria for job stress and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been determined to be influential in "organizational commitment, absenteeism, turnover, and turnover intentions" (p. 382). Predictors of job stress include "job tension, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, poor personal accomplishment, role ambiguity, and role conflict" (p. 382). Job satisfaction is also influenced by "psychological hardiness and interpersonal relationships in the workplace" (p. 383). The authors utilize a definition of psychological hardiness found in a study by Kobasa (1979) which states that hardiness "is a constellation of personality characteristics that function as a resistance resource in the encounter with stressful life events" (p. 383). Their findings indicated that "higher scores on hardiness, supervisor support, and group cohesion and lower scores on job stress were significantly related to higher scores on job satisfaction" (p. 385). The opposite relationships were also found.

Why Employees Stay

CWLA (2002) reported that "no issue has a greater effect on the capacity of the child welfare system to effectively serve vulnerable children and families than the shortage of a competent and stable workforce" (p. 1) Several studies have been conducted to explore retention in child welfare agencies (Baumann, Kern, McFadden, & Law, 1997; Cicero-Reese & Clark, 1998; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Ellett, Ellett, &

Rugutt, 2003; Gibbs, 2001; Jones & Okamura, 2000; Morris, 2005; Nissly, Barak, &
Levin, 2005; Rycraft, 1994; Samantrai, 1992; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2004).

Gibbs (2001) suggests that retention of child protection workers is directly related
to the quality and accessibility of supervision. Supervisors reported that their primary
task is to ensure that the work is completed in a timely manner and adheres to all agency
and practice standards. Supervisors' mid-management status also requires them to be the
liaison between their supervisees and upper level administrators. The supervisors
reported the difficulty of being in this position and trying to appease both levels. She
suggests that the current model of supervision utilized in Australia does not adequately
address the emotional stressors of the job nor does it develop or enhance the resilience of
caseworkers. Gibbs believes that this lack of supervision will further contribute to the
self-perpetuating cycle of high turnover Australia is currently experiencing. The author
notes that high turnover will not only affect those caseworkers that remain with the
agency, but the children and families they are attempting to assist.

Drake and Yadama (1996) examined the role of burnout syndrome as a
contributing factor in the decision of child welfare caseworkers to terminate employment.
Burnout syndrome, originally conceptualized by Maslach and Jackson (1986) as
involving three components - emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal
accomplishment, was operationalized by these authors as three separate and distinct
constructs. Drake and Yadama found that the most significant relationship was between
emotional exhaustion and job exit. They also found that personal accomplishment had
inverse relationships with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Those people
who perceived their work at child welfare as providing a sense of personal

44

accomplishment were able to utilize this perception as a buffer and protective factor against burnout. Education was identified by Shannon and Saleebey (1980) as an additional protective factor. The authors provided instructional workshops for child welfare workers who self-identified as burned out. The workshops included instruction on coping mechanisms, stress-reducing techniques, social support, and biofeedback. Participant feedback was positive and indicated that they could utilize the techniques learned to counteract their feelings of burnout. Koeske and Koeske (1989) identified social support and a sense of accomplishment as potential buffers against burnout. The authors hypothesized that social workers with inadequate or insufficient social support and a poor perception of their accomplishments are more susceptible to the negative consequences of work stressors. They believe burnout is a result of emotional exhaustion that may be brought about by inadequate buffers to stave off the effects of a stressful work environment.

Cicero-Reese and Clark (1998) focused on child welfare employees who remained employed more than two years. They found that "commitment to the well-being of children, …desire to help children, personal fulfillment, job benefits, salary, and inability to get another job" were all contributing factors to retention in descending order. Cicero-Reese and Clark also reported that those caseworkers who stayed were more motivated by internal factors (commitment and feelings of personal fulfillment) than external factors (benefits, salary). The authors also note their findings support previous research conducted by Rycraft (1994).

Rycraft found that those child welfare caseworkers who remained employed with the agency possessed the following characteristics: they believed in the mission of their

jobs and considered their role paramount in carrying out this mission, they believed that they were qualified to do their assigned job, they sought and received adequate supervision, and believed they had a personal and professional investment in the agency.

Morris (2005) noted that the primary factor in retention of child protection caseworkers was also related to a perception of the rewards of the job. She found that the caseworkers perceived their self-worth as positive and viewed themselves as necessary to their organization. The caseworkers in this study reported an ability and willingness to withstand the stressors, criticism, excessive work demands, and a sometimes hostile environment because they believed they were "contributing to a larger good" and perceived "their role as essential to the future of society."   Morris also cited a theory originally conceived by Nelson (2001) which involved the construction of a "counterstory" which is an alternative explanation of what and why something is happening and who is responsible – to cope with the negative aspects of life, or in this case, employment. Counterstories are utilized as buffers or protective factors when individuals perceive "threats of damage to their personal identities" (p. 143). Morris found examples of this in her study. The study participants blamed the media for negative perceptions of the agency and perceived that their moral obligations to save children raised them above any negativity inherent in doing the job.

Nissly, Mor Barak, and Levin (2005) consider stress to be the primary factor involved in child welfare caseworkers' intent to terminate their employment. They found that personal and organizational stress were significant predictors of intent to leave. However, social support, specifically that provided by supervisors and coworkers, was a buffering factor against job termination.

Retention of Master's Level Social Workers (MSW's) in child welfare was the focus of a study that compared the motivations of those who left the agency with those who stayed (Samantrai, 1992). Samantrai examined the factors that influence the decision of MSW-level child welfare caseworkers to leave via interviews with caseworkers still employed and those who had terminated their employment. The reasons for retention and turnover provided by the social workers were related to the following themes: organization climate, academic preparation, motivation and commitment. The social workers acknowledged their jobs were fraught with stressors, but they chose to remain with the agency in spite of these stressors. Samantrai found that wages, benefits, job security, and a desire to work in child welfare were the primary factors that contributed to the continued employment of the caseworkers that stayed. Although the former employees also enjoyed these aspects of the job, they cited the lack of an alternative position to move into after experiencing burnout, and a "critical, nonsupportive, or uncaring" supervisor as the two primary factors in their decision to terminate their employment.

Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick (2004) conducted an evaluation of new employee training, entitled Basic Skills Development (BSD), that compared the responses of those caseworkers who stayed with those who left. Data was obtained regarding caseworkers' perceptions of the basic skills training they received when initially employed and findings were based on the response values assigned to each question. Although the response values of both groups were very close, some of their findings indicate that 84% of the workers who stayed considered their supervisor

instrumental in their learning of job skills, and enthusiasm about the job overall. They also found that those who stayed expressed more confidence in their ability to do the job.

Two studies (Balfour & Neff, 1993; Kaplan & Hartman,1986) provided profiles of child welfare workers in an effort to impact retention. Balfour and Neff explored turnover in human service organizations, focusing on a large child welfare agency. The authors found that there were distinct differences in the characteristics of those caseworkers who were more likely to stay and those more likely to leave. Those more likely to stay had Bachelor's degrees, at least two years experience in the agency, and had prior child welfare experience, or at the very least, had completed an internship with a child welfare agency when completing their degree. Kaplan and Hartman's profiles compared the characteristics of supervisors and workers. They found that those workers who had stayed long enough to advance to supervisors were older, had more formal education, and were female. The authors also found that the job-related stress experienced by the supervisors and workers in their study could be attributed to the time they spent doing paperwork, resolving emergencies, and completing routine job tasks when they preferred to spend their time working with children and families, locating resources, and enhancing their own professional development.

Jones and Okamura (2000) evaluated a Title IV-E Training Program regarding the quality of their education and preparation of students for child welfare employment by comparing those new employees who received Title IV-E training with those who did not. Jones and Okamura found that caseworkers who received Title IV-E training were more satisfied with their salaries, level of responsibility, respect they received from community professionals, and were less stressed about making home visits to areas with

high crime rates. Although retention was not an initial focus of the study, the authors found that those who received Title IV-E training remained employed longer. Almost ninety percent (89.5%) of Title IV-E trained caseworkers were still employed at the conclusion of the 3-year longitudinal study.

The relationships between organizational climate and individual characteristics, and burnout and turnover were assessed in two studies (Baumann, Kern, McFadden, Law, 1997; Ellett, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003). Baumann, Kern, McFadden, and Law explored these concepts by comparing responses of caseworkers from Adult and Child Protective Services (APS/CPS) in Texas. Baumann et al. found many similarities in the responses provided by APS and CPS caseworkers, specifically those related to their reasons for staying with their respective agencies or leaving.   Those who stayed identified job skills, salary, benefits, work environment, job stability, and coworkers as their primary reasons for doing so. Supervisor adequacy and bureaucratic distractions were directly related to burnout, and intentions to leave the agency. Empathy, specifically, personal distress, was a significant individual factor related to burnout and turnover. Those factors which were found to have a significant relationship with burnout and turnover were training, supervisory skills, and organizational climate. CPS caseworkers appeared to be more impacted by organizational factors and their levels of burnout were significantly higher than those of their APS counterparts.

Ellett, Ellett, and Rugutt (2003) compared four groups – case managers, supervisors, county directors, and state office staff – to determine the relationships between personal and organization factors as contributing factors to retention and turnover. Results indicate case managers, also referred to as caseworkers, had the lowest

scores related to their intent to remain employed, human caring defined as caring about others, and professional commitment. On all other items (work morale, professional organizational culture, self-and collective-efficacy beliefs, efficacy expectations, general job satisfaction, factors contributing to leaving child welfare, and factors contributing to continuing employment in child welfare), the responses of employees in these four areas were closely related. Ellett et al. also found that those employees who appeared to have a strong intent to remain employed had the following characteristics: (1) positive work morale, (2) professional commitment, (3) belief that the organization's culture reflects professionalism, (4) belief in their ability to perform job tasks, and (5) higher levels of job satisfaction.

These studies are closely related to this dissertation research which also sought to explore personal and organizational factors and their relationship with the development and enhancement of resilience. However, this research focused solely on those employees, specifically CPS supervisors, who have stayed with the agency, and did not include employees from other areas.

Two additional studies examined retention in other organizations. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001) examined the concept of job embeddedness as a predictor of employee retention, specifically assessing employees' intent to leave their place of employment. The authors state that job embeddedness includes: "(1) links to other people, teams, and groups, (2) perceptions of their fit with job, organization, and community, and (3) what they say they would have to sacrifice if they left their jobs" (p. 1102). They also indicate that those people who remain employed experience greater job satisfaction and higher levels of commitment. De Fatima de Campos Francozo and

Moises Smeke Cassorla (2004) wanted to specifically answer the questions "How do social workers fulfill their desires and goals under [certain] circumstances" and "What keeps social workers in the profession?" (p. 211). By utilizing a qualitative inquiry, the authors identified several themes in the personal stories of the social workers which included rewarding professional experiences, feelings of reward, unfair situations, bad working conditions, and problems in inter-professional relationships . Rewarding professional experiences were considered crucial for personal growth and development. The social workers stated they learned how to function better personally by watching how their clients faced difficulties. The social workers also considered the fact that they were able to contribute to change in their clients as the thing that mattered most. This was important because the process of helping was a reward and encouraged them to continue doing so.

Does Education Make a Difference?

Since Title IV-E programs have infused child welfare agencies with bachelors and masters level social workers, questions have arisen regarding whether their child-welfare focused education is a contributing factor to retention and greater job satisfaction. Jones and Okamura (2000) found that former Title IV-E recipients exhibited less stress about making home visits and appeared to experience more overall job satisfaction, and scored higher on skills assessments. Dhooper, Royse, and Wolfe (1990) and Lieberman, Hornby, and Russell (1988) found that those employees with social work degrees were better prepared to handle the job responsibilities in child welfare than those without a social work degree. However, Baumann, Kern, McFadden, Law (1997) found that education

type (Title IV-E and Non-IV-E) did not have a significant relationship with burnout and turnover

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the three waves of resilience development formulated by Richardson (2002). As Richardson discusses in the first wave of resilience development, this study sought to shift from the paradigms of previous studies which focused on the negative aspects of working at CPS, and emphasizing the characteristics of those employees who left. The focus of this study was on the individual strengths each supervisor brings to the job, emphasizing their ability to remain employed in spite of the negatives associated with employment at the agency. This study explored how the supervisors developed the ability to remain employed (Second Wave), and what motivates them to continue employment (Third Wave). The protocols utilized for the study were developed based on this theoretical framework (Appendices D-G). The goal was to explore the processes involved in staying employed.

Although not considered a theory, the strengths perspective also underlies the research conducted. A strengths perspective focus requires emphasis on personal and environmental strengths. The environment in this study is the organization of CPS and organizational factors which constitute the infrastructure of the organization. A strengths perspective also involves viewing individuals as the experts of their lives, and an understanding that anyone intervening takes on the role of collaborator rather than that of "fixer" (Bell, 2003). Langer (2004) adds that "the strengths perspective focuses on capabilities, assets, and positive attributes rather than problems and pathologies" (p. 614).

Rationale for Study

The literature has identified several factors that could have a relationship with retention of employees at CPS. These factors include individual characteristics and organizational climate, as well as the presence of burnout, and education. However, because previous studies focused on caseworkers and administrators(Balfour & Neff; Cicero-Reese & Clark, 1998; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Ellett, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003; Gibbs, Jones & Okamura, 2000; Kaplan & Hartman, 1986; Morris, 2005; Nissly, MorBarak, & Levin, 2005; Shannon & Saleeby, 1980; Rycraft, 1994), there was a gap in research related to supervisors in child welfare agencies. Baumann, Kern, McFadden, and Law (1997) recommend that future research with CPS caseworkers involve exploration of the relationship between motivational factors - empathy, skills development, supervision – and burnout and turnover. This study sought to explore these relationships with CPS supervisors and provide answers to one of the questions proposed by Baumann et al. regarding whether some employees possess an inner drive to work at CPS. Supervisors previously provided direct delivery casework to clients, have remained employed long enough to advance, and now represent the middle management of authority in the agency. What characteristics enable them to remain employed? From where does the drive to remain employed emanate, and how does the climate of the organization assist in their ability to do so year after year? What makes them stay?

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Methods

  To determine the characteristics and traits that have enhanced the resilience of CPS supervisors, the research design utilized in this study consisted solely of qualitative research methods. This methodology was the most appropriate because of the specific research questions proposed which sought to determine the processes involved in achieving employment longevity. Qualitative inquiry allowed exploration of the resilience theory components identified by Richardson (2002) which included identification of resilient characteristics, the process of resilience development, and the source or motivation to maintain resilience. Utilizing a quantitative research design would have restricted the exploration of resilience to the identification of personal characteristics or traits alone. A qualitative approach allowed exploration of not only personal characteristics and traits, but the other components of resilience theory as well – the process of resilience development and motivational factors. Specifically, a grounded theory approach was utilized to determine the participants' views. Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed grounded theory to provide qualitative researchers with a structured method to analyze data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Strauss and Corbin, "the grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (p. 24). Theory develops through a systematic,

ongoing process of gathering and analyzing data. Data is collected, transcribed immediately, and analyzed. This process allows the research participants to speak for themselves and continues until the data collected is considered exhaustive by the researcher. Data analysis involves the process of coding to determine relationships and meanings of the information gathered. Analysis requires three steps: (1) open coding – identification of themes and categories, (2) axial coding – identification of categories and subcategories, and (3) selective coding – identification of core and related categories. By following these procedures, the researcher is able to identify primary categories of data that are similar and different, subcategories, and data that is exceptional or missing. The theory begins to evolve after the first interviews, focus groups, observations, etc. and further data collection provides a means of verifying and testing the emerging themes (Straus & Corbin, 1990).

Grounded theory was the chosen approach to answer the proposed research questions because it supported the purpose of the study which included the systematic process of developing a theory regarding why supervisors stay with CPS. The process also involved participants identifying the organizational factors that have contributed to their development and maintenance of resilience. This study is characterized as exploratory because it sought to explain why, specifically, why some employees are able to endure the stress inherent in CPS (Rubin & Babbie, 2001).

The initial phase of the study involved focus groups with individual supervisors whereby participants identified and applied their own meaning to the personal and organizational characteristics they perceived as significant in developing and enhancing their resilience levels. In the second phase of the study, individual interviews were

conducted to provide further identification of resilient qualities – personal and organizational – and obtain consensus of the resilient qualities previously identified by focus group participants. Although this study sought to explore the resilience levels of CPS supervisors, resilience was not considered synonymous with length of employment. It was assumed that those supervisors who have been employed more than two years possess resilient qualities that have contributed to their ability to remain employed.

The goal of the research was to identify resilient qualities, how they were developed, and how the organization itself influenced the development of resilience. These resilient qualities were utilized to create a profile of a resilient supervisor and employee (see Appendix H). Creation of a profile is also appropriate for a grounded theory approach because one of the goals of grounded theory is to develop a theory that will guide action (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This profile will be presented to agency administrators in the hopes that it can be utilized by agency staff to implement hiring, promotion, and staff development policies that will accomplish the following: (a) heighten the awareness of resilient characteristics, (b) hire people with resilient characteristics; (c) develop resilience in existing staff, and (d) enhance resilience in those who already possess resilient characteristics. This author believes that hiring people with resilient characteristics and developing the resilience of existing staff will greatly impact retention and reduce turnover.

An application requesting approval for the study from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Texas at Austin was submitted after successful defense of the dissertation proposal. Agency approval for the overall study, interviews, and focus groups was obtained from the Assistant Commissioner of Child Protective Services.

56

Participants

Study participants were current CPS supervisors in four of the main regions in Texas. There were a total of 50 supervisors who participated in the study. Twenty-five participated in the focus groups and 25 supervisors were interviewed individually. There were 39 women, and 11 men of diverse ethnicities (European American, African American, Latino, and Japanese American), and their average age was 42 years. Collectively, they had been employed with CPS for an average of 11 years, and had an average of 4 years supervisor experience. The participants also represented all program areas of the agency and their offices were located in both urban and rural areas. Thirty-five of the participants have Bachelor's degrees, fourteen (14) had Master's, and 22 have social work degrees (10-BSW's and 12-MSW's). (See Tables 1-6 for all demographics.)

The study sample included only those supervisors who were employed with CPS longer than two years. All supervisors who met the length-of-employment criteria were recruited as participants. Each region maintains a current list of employees from which supervisors' names were obtained. The DFPS Program Improvement Plan (2003) indicates that most turnover occurs within the first two years of employment; therefore, two years was utilized as the delineation separating those supervisors included from those who were not. The study sample was initially convenience, comprised of those supervisors who chose to participate. After assessing the demographics of the initial sample which included those supervisors who participated in the focus groups, the interview sample evolved into one that was more purposeful to insure that the interview sample was comprised of supervisors whose characteristics were not represented or were

57

underrepresented in the focus groups. For example, if most of the focus group participants were white females, supervisors who represented other demographic characteristics (e.g. male, ethnic minority, etc.), were invited to participate in an individual interview.   The researcher initially anticipated that there might be a need to include some of the same supervisors in a focus group and an individual interview; however, this was not necessary.   Diligent efforts were made to insure that the focus group and interview samples were representative of the supervisor demographics within the agency related to office location (urban and rural), ethnicity, gender, age, and years of service/employment.

Data Collection

Although several approaches have been utilized to explore child welfare retention issues, this researcher believed that the most appropriate method to answer the research questions proposed in this study was qualitative which included the use of focus groups and individual interviews. This approach provided an opportunity to further contribute to the retention literature and provided information regarding what is working and why. An additional contribution of the research is a more in-depth analysis of the personal and organizational factors that impact retention. Focus groups, first utilized in 1941 by Robert Merton as a marketing tool, have now evolved into a research method utilized across disciplines (Gibbs, 1997; Kahan, 2001; Mansell, Bennett, Northway, Mead, & Moseley, 2004; Webb, 2002). Historically, focus groups have been described as simple discussions, but Mansell et al. describe them as "focused interviews" that provide the researcher an opportunity to explore the innermost thoughts of study participants. Gibbs

states that the primary goal of focus groups is to elicit the "attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions" of research participants at a more in-depth level than can be achieved utilizing other methods (p. 2). Gibbs also notes that focus groups provide benefits to the participants as well as the researchers. Focus group participants may feel more valued because they are considered the experts on the research topic, their participation allows them to have a collaborative relationship with researchers, and they also have an opportunity to affect change within their organization. Kitzinger (1994, 1995) and Duggleby (2005) note that group interaction is a key component of focus groups. Participants are encouraged to interact with each other which produces additional thoughts and ideas as they react to what others have said. Group dynamics occur during the focus group, generating additional questions and confrontation of group members which serves to clarify and assist with the processing of information, thoughts, feelings, etc. This interaction also provides the researcher an opportunity to observe daily interactions and relationship patterns of participants. Utilizing focus groups and interviews in this study elicited detailed and comprehensive responses from the experts - CPS supervisors who have demonstrated an ability to withstand and recover from stressors.

In conjunction with the Assistant Commissioner, it was determined that focus groups and interviews would be conducted to include as many of the 11 regions as possible throughout Texas. The focus groups and interviews were conducted in the four primary regions which included Regions 3 (Dallas/Fort Worth), 6 (Houston and surrounding areas), 7 (Austin and surrounding areas in central Texas), and 8 (San Antonio and surrounding areas). Inclusion of other geographic locations was not

necessary because all supervisor demographics were included in the four regions utilized and the information obtained was comprehensive and responses were exhaustive. There were seven focus groups conducted, with an average of four participants each, and twenty-five individual interviews. There were a total of 50 participants in the study sample. Focus groups and individual interviews were approximately one hour in length.

To conduct the qualitative research for this study, a guide for focus group questions and an interview guide were developed by the researcher (See Appendices D & F, respectively). Prior to initiation of the dissertation study, two Field Faculty members from University of Texas at Austin provided feedback regarding the appropriateness and face validity of the questions in the interview guides. Having other professionals who were familiar with child welfare agencies scrutinize the questions insured that the desired information was elicited from the participants. As expected, the field faculty assisted in modifying the focus group and interview questions insuring that they were balanced, solicited desired information, and were not redundant (see Appendices E & G).

Individual interviews provided participants with an opportunity to identify those unique factors that contributed to their individual employment longevity. The interview guide insured that the researcher remained focused and enhanced interview consistency – asking each participant the same questions in the same manner. Utilizing focus groups allowed participants to not only identify their personal resilient characteristics, but the aspects of the agency that contributed to their employment longevity. Focus groups also provided triangulation of the information provided by each participant, giving credibility to and increasing the validity of their responses. The process of utilizing both interviews and focus groups insured that the characteristics of resilience were explored in-depth and

60

participants were provided an opportunity to utilize their own words and labels, and apply their meaning to the information provided. All interviews and focus groups were audiotaped to insure that all responses were recorded accurately.

Interview and focus group questions were open-ended. Focus groups elicited general responses regarding resilient characteristics participants deemed necessary for employment longevity. Individual interviews provided participants the opportunity to identify specific characteristics that assisted them in remaining at the agency despite any stressors experienced. Participants were asked to provide demographic information including age, education, ethnicity, and years of employment. Additional questions involved why and how they have remained employed, and what organizational characteristics contributed to their longevity with the agency. All focus group responses were recorded by the researcher, and verified with participants at the conclusion of the focus group sessions.

Procedures

Approximately two weeks prior to the onset of the study, personal invitations were disseminated to approximately 150 participants to generate participation in focus groups and interviews (see Appendix A). All invitations included a request to RSVP to assist the author in planning. Focus group participants were over-sampled to insure that there were 5-7 participants in each group just in case some of those invited were unable to participate.   At least ten supervisors were invited to each focus group session to compensate for absences. Although the goal was to conduct focus groups with a maximum of seven people, Webb (2002), utilizing Krueger's focus group guidelines,

recommends conducting focus groups with 4-10 people. There were six participants in one focus group, five in another, and three focus groups were conducted with four participants. The other two focus groups were conducted with only one participant each. Although one participant is not considered a focus group, both persons were asked the focus group, not interview, questions because they were interviewed during the focus group phase of the study (Phase I). More supervisors agreed to participate, but were unable to attend due to workload responsibilities. The researcher decided to conduct the focus groups with the supervisors who were willing and available to participate in spite of the number.

After all focus groups were conducted, separate invitation letters and e-mails were sent to approximately 271 supervisors asking them to participate in an individual interview. Agency administrators also sent e-mails to supervisors encouraging them to participate in the study. Individual interviews were not initiated until all focus groups had been conducted. The supervisors selected for the individual interviews were different from those who participated in the focus groups. The interview sample was more purposive (Rubin & Babbie, 2001) or theoretical (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), in an effort to insure that those supervisor demographics (e.g. rural, urban, ethnicity, age, or gender, etc.) that had not been included in focus groups were represented in the interview sample. In conjunction with agency staff, the researcher identified supervisors from each program area and those who represented demographics not previously included in focus groups.

The researcher attempted to conduct all of the data collection outside of CPS offices, but this was not always feasible. Six of the seven focus groups were conducted outside CPS offices, but one was conducted in a conference room at a CPS office to

accommodate the needs of the participants. All of the individual interviews were conducted in CPS offices in conference rooms or the supervisor's office. Time and workload constraints and the length of interviews, which was approximately one hour, made it more convenient for supervisors to conduct interviews as close to their offices as possible. This allowed supervisors to participate in the study without being away from their offices for an inordinate amount of time. The supervisors participating in focus groups did not voice the same concerns regarding time, and in actuality, appeared to appreciate the time away from their jobs and opportunity to socialize with their peers.

Although it was expected that facilitating interviews and focus groups in CPS offices would be distracting for supervisors and disruptive to overall data collection, there appeared to be no problem with doing so. All participants appeared to talk freely and honestly regardless of the location. An incentive of mid-morning or mid-afternoon snacks was included in the invitation to increase the number of focus group participants; however, the presence of food appeared to have no effect on attendance. The researcher traveled to the approved locations and personally conducted all of the focus groups and interviews. Follow-up letters and e-mails were sent after the first focus groups were conducted thanking those who participated and encouraging those who had not participated to do so.

Although most focus groups were conducted outside the agency and agency administrators granted permission to participate, all employees were not willing or able to participate. Some cited time and workload constraints as their reasons for not participating; however, the majority of supervisors invited did not respond to the invitations or e-mails sent and did not provide a reason for not participating. Therefore,

the responses provided by participants in focus groups and interviews may not be representative of all employees.

All participants were required to read and sign a letter of informed consent (see Appendix B). This letter explained the purpose and design of the study. The letter also acknowledged that anonymity could not be guaranteed for those who participated, specifically in the focus groups. However, participants' names were not included on any of the demographic sheets completed during the focus groups (see Appendix C). The researcher attempted to maintain confidentiality as much as possible throughout the study. All focus group and interview documentation was kept in the researcher's possession and was not viewed by anyone else. No identifying names or marks were placed on the questionnaires when the interviews were conducted. Interview and focus group responses were not viewed by anyone other than the researcher, dissertation committee members, and those who assisted with transcription and data analysis.

Analysis

The audio recordings of focus groups were transcribed after each session to facilitate the ongoing assessment and analysis of data inherent in grounded theory. Ongoing analysis included identification of themes, missing data, and negative cases. Negative cases include those that don't match other cases or responses and could be considered exceptions. However, no negative cases were identified. All of the participants provided the same information, albeit in different words, resulting in exhaustive and comprehensive responses and data. The researcher utilized analysis as an opportunity to modify questions for the next focus group, to obtain responses for the data

missing, or solicit information not previously provided or requested. The researcher also conducted check-ins with focus group participants to clarify and obtain consensus on previous responses. At the end of each focus group session, the researcher asked participants specific questions to elicit information regarding the previous focus group participants' responses if they were not already included in the data collected. The researcher utilized the check-in process with one focus group because the others provided the same general responses to the focus groups questions, and sometimes they provided the same responses to questions asked. Specific data analysis procedures included the following: (1) identification of themes -open coding, (2) coding of data into categories and sub-categories -axial coding, (3) memoing regarding the meanings underlying the responses, (4) and identification of general core categories and related categories - selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process continued after each focus group to begin identification of the evolving theory. The ongoing process of data analysis allowed full exploration of the topic and research questions and development of an exhaustive list of personal and organizational resilient characteristics.

Individual interviews were also audiotaped. Initially, audiotapes were transcribed at the conclusion of each interview, but the majority were transcribed after all interviews were completed. The same structured, ongoing data analysis procedures described above was also utilized to analyze the interview responses. Themes were identified and data was coded based on the grounded theory process of open, axial, and selective coding. Supervisors selected for the individual interviews represented those demographics missing from the focus groups. Individual interviews provided an opportunity to obtain specific information regarding personal and organizational resilience and also provided

the researcher with an ability to assess when the data collected had reached comprehensive and exhaustive levels. To improve the rigor of the study, two additional reviewers were utilized to code transcripts from a randomly selected focus group and an interview. The reviewers were doctoral students, both with professional experience in and knowledge of child welfare. The reviewers' analyses were compared to the researcher's analysis insuring that the researcher maintained objectivity, accurately analyzed study participants' responses, and engaged in accurate identification of data themes.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher served as facilitator for all data collection. The positive aspects of this include the fact that continuity and consistency were achieved throughout the research. The same questions were asked in the same manner, the same process was adhered to for data collection, and data analysis was conducted from the same perspective. This last aspect could have been a negative. Applying the same perspective to the analysis of data could result in missing themes or interpreting them incorrectly. Because the researcher previously worked for CPS for almost ten years and has been working collaboratively with the staff for the last seven years, there may be inherent biases related to the researcher's perceptions of resilience development and the factors that influence it. However, the structure of the study should alleviate or greatly minimize this tendency. For example, participants provided information in their own words rather than filling out a survey with pre-determined responses. Participants were also asked to

verify and confirm the data provided which insured that the data collected was primarily, or solely, the result of participant knowledge and perception.

An additional concern was the perception of the researcher as associated with the agency. Because of the researcher's previous tenure with and continued presence in the agency, it was expected that some agency employees might consider the researcher to be an employee of CPS. The researcher's previous job responsibilities required her to maintain an office at a regional CPS office and interact with agency staff (at all levels) on a frequent and consistent basis. This could have negatively impacted the participants' willingness to participate and/or provide honest responses due to fear of retaliation or appearing disloyal to the agency. This fear was especially anticipated during focus groups because participants were not anonymous to each other. Participants could have accidentally or intentionally shared participants' responses with their peers, program directors, or other upper-level administrators, or feared that the researcher would do so. This lack of anonymity could have caused problems for study participants and verified the fear of retaliation that is sometimes inherent in a bureaucratic system. It was also anticipated that some supervisors might not be willing to provide honest answers about the factors that influence their retention for fear of appearing weak, incompetent, or inadequate in front of their peers, especially if their reasons for retention did not involve resilience. An additional concern was that supervisors who did not want to fall "out of favor," be viewed negatively, or have their reputation tarnished might have been unwilling to fully participate or provide honest answers in focus groups. To alleviate or minimize this issue, more individual interviews than focus groups were conducted. This allowed study participants an opportunity to speak in a solitary and confidential

environment enhancing their willingness to speak freely and provide honest responses. Individual interviews provided a safer environment and alleviated, or greatly minimized, the risks of participation. To allay participant concerns regarding employment safety, it was emphasized with all study participants that they were speaking to the researcher "off the record" and their responses would only be reported to agency administrators after analyzed, and would contain no identifying information. To resolve the aforementioned issues, the researcher conducted data collection outside the agency, emphasized the researcher's status as a student and employee of Texas State University-San Marcos, insured confidentiality, and provided opportunities for individual interviews. Utilizing these methods appeared to resolve all of the anticipated issues. Although politics are a part of CPS, primarily because of its bureaucratic structure, there were few political issues to address because all of the participants were on the same level within the agency – supervisor. Issues related to hierarchy and power were not of concern among study participants.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Each focus group and interview transcript was analyzed based on the grounded theory analysis components – open, axial, and selective coding. Open coding produced general themes, categories, and underlying meanings for each focus group and individual interview. When conducting the axial coding, the themes and categories from each transcript were compiled into a comprehensive list of categories and subcategories. Further analysis, selective coding, produced the core and related categories, which were common in the focus groups and interviews. Axial and selective coding results can be found in Tables 7-10. The findings of the focus groups will be discussed first followed by the results of analysis for the interviews. The researcher will then discuss the core and related categories that represent the aggregate of categories identified. Results of the focus group analysis are reported by question. In reporting the results, the number of participants who responded to each question is identified along with the percentage f participants the responses represent. There was a total of 25 participants in the seven focus groups and 25 participants were interviewed individually. The percentages were calculated for focus groups and interviews based on a total of 25, the number of participants in each, not the total study sample of 50. Each unit of response represents one individual supervisor.

Focus Groups

Why do supervisors stay at CPS?

The primary reason identified by 68% (n=17) of participants for staying at CPS was their own altruism, which they identified as personal missions and callings. The participants who attributed their employment to a personal mission (48%, n=12) identified this mission as a desire to help, make a difference, and serve as a change agent for the children and families associated with the agency.

"I always tell people that I save children for a living."

"It think it's making a difference. As a worker, you always made a difference. As a supervisor, you can make an even greater impact because you insure that the casework is getting done. So your impact is even stronger than it was when you were a caseworker. So that's what kind of keeps me around."

Those participants who believed their employment was the result of a calling (20%, n=5), indicated that divine intervention played an integral part in their initial employment as well as their employment longevity. The participants described their callings as follows:

"I think I've been doing it this long because it's a calling."

"I'm here because this is where I'm supposed to be. It's a higher purpose for me."

"I know without a doubt that I was brought back here for a purpose. I think it's a higher calling."

"And, I told God, I said Lord I don't want to do this… for over a year I was acting supervisor and I would never take the position because I don't want it."

Twenty-eight percent (28%, n=7) of participants also indicated that their altruistic motives included caseworkers. The participants indicated that a part of their personal mission was to develop caseworkers into the best workers they could be and assist them in advancing to supervisor. The supervisors considered the advancement of their staff as evidence of their own success and positive validation of their purpose in the agency.

> "And you get to see caseworkers grow. So you probably had some kind of effect, some kind of contribution to that."

Other reasons for staying with CPS included job and personal satisfaction (52%, n=13 and 48%, n=12, respectively), the benefits (32%, n=8), and support (40%, n=10). Because these participants were able to have their altruistic needs realized and enjoyed their jobs, they experienced personal satisfaction. This personal satisfaction was evident through the influence they exerted with clients, staff, and peers and the pride they experienced working in what they described as an important and noble job. Job satisfaction appeared related to personal satisfaction and the benefits of working at the agency. Those who experienced personal satisfaction appeared to express a higher level of job satisfaction. They were happy to continue working in the agency because it provided them with opportunities to have their personal needs for helping met, resulting in personal and job satisfaction.

> "I think they stay because of the work we do. We have a very important job."

> "We are affecting people's lives completely. We go to work and we're making…life-changing decisions. I feel very important in that situation…

> "I think what we do is important work."

> "…the mission is the mission, but I have my own personal mission statement. I'm here because this is a noble thing to do. I'm here because I do love children.

I'm here because I want to impact their lives.

> "You get calls from the families saying 'I'm just calling… to let you know that we're okay, the children are okay…' Those are the kind of things that help you just hang in there."

One supervisor who left the agency and returned stated that she had to return to the agency to continue fulfilling her personal mission of helping.

> "And, I went to work for a law firm…, then I went to work for a different law firm… After eleven months, I was like what am I doing here. I wasn't helping anybody and I kept wanting to help. How can I help, help, help? So, I started applying back at the agency because this is what I know how to do and I can't imagine myself doing anything else."

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of participants identified salary, flexibility, and the physical location of their office as agency benefits that added to their job satisfaction. Sixteen percent (n=4) participants acknowledged that the agency salaries were not as competitive as salaries in other professions, they expressed contentment with the current salary because of the increases received. Flexibility was identified by 24% (n=6) of participants as a significant factor to their continued employment. Supervisors indicated that they enjoyed the freedom they were given to modify their work hours, work from home, or take care of family obligations (e.g. sick children, household repairs, etc.) without reprise from the agency. Flexibility was also perceived as the freedom to recognize and reward caseworkers during work hours. However, all supervisors indicated that this flexibility was contingent upon their ability to complete workload responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner. All participants of one focus group (24%, n=6) agreed that the close proximity of their offices to their home was an additional benefit because it reduced the amount of driving they were required to do and also allowed them to take care of agency and/or family issues quickly.

"I think one of the reasons I'm still here is because of the flexibility of the job. So, in this position, we are allowed to work much more flexible schedules."

"I love the flexibility I have to take some time and… they don't have to go out on a case right now, if it takes an hour or two to celebrate. I like to celebrate them and show them appreciation."

Several participants (20%, n=5) indicated that they were staying at the agency because they had nowhere else to go or felt they had no options. Pending retirement was one of the reasons provided for these feelings. Participants who will be eligible to retire within 2-3 years, expressed that leaving the agency, starting over elsewhere, and waiting years to retire didn't make sense to them. Some of these participants still enjoyed their jobs, but others expressed that they were biding their time, waiting until they could leave. Other participants believed they had no other options because of the lack of advancement opportunities within the agency, and they wouldn't receive the same salary they had worked so hard to attain if they went to another agency as a new and/or entry-level employee.

"So once you become a supervisor and hit Supervisor II, there's nowhere else to go. There's really nowhere else to advance to unless there's P.D. positions that open up which they very rarely do."

"Sometimes we feel stuck. I don't really know where else to go. Sometimes I would like to leave, but I don't really have anywhere to go."

What personal characteristics do supervisors possess that help them stay employed?

Resilience and characteristics related to resilience were identified by 76% of participants as the primary traits that contribute to employment longevity. Resilience-

related characteristics included tenacity (20%, n=5), stick-to-itiveness (12%, n=3), ability

to handle stress and remaining calm in a crisis (16%, n=4), and being adaptable (32%,

n=8). Personal characteristics identified included patience (12%, n=3), being

confrontational (8%, n=2), passionate (8%, n=2), empathic (12%, n=3), motivated

(8%,n=2), committed (16%, n=4), and accountable (12%, n=3).

> "And they would need to be, oh gosh what do you call it, when you…
> stick-to-it-iveness, tenacity, resilience."

> "Just a tenacity and stubbornness… no matter what's going on to focus
> on the tasks at hand."

> "You have to be able to roll with the punches…"

> "Just ride the waves… and laugh."

> "So, it's the ability to handle all of this stress and pressure and still come
> back everyday."

> "Still come back everyday and be smiling and happy and competent."

Participants identified characteristics that the researcher categorized as protective

factors and competencies. The primary protective factor identified by 84% (n=21) of

participants was a sense of humor. These supervisors stated that a sense of humor was

necessary and served to ameliorate the stress experienced and its effects. There was

unanimous agreement that this sense of humor could be considered dark and was

reserved for only those people inside the agency. Participants indicated that people

outside the agency would not appreciate the humor or understand that it was a significant

stress-reliever.

> "…that's what kept me and a lot of people here, is just keeping that

sense of humor alive."

"I think humor… and maybe even a little sick… dark demented."

"…there are things I would say in the office, that I can't say anywhere else. No way, not even to my family."

"You have to laugh at things because otherwise you couldn't handle it."

Other protective factors included obtaining a support system, being collegial, and having life and work experience obtained prior to employment at CPS. Supervisors reported that support was vital to longevity and might not always be readily available from immediate supervisors. As a result, supervisors stated that finding someone who could mentor and develop them was vital to their ability to stay with CPS. As important, and possibly more important, was finding peer support. They reported that support from administrators was necessary for job security and personnel issues, but peer support served as a consistent coping mechanism. Because of the importance of peer support, supervisors stated that being a good peer was vital and allowed for a reciprocal relationship of support.

"I know I'm there because of (P.D.) support. She's wonderful."

"I think you have to be willing to ask for help occasionally. I don't know all the answers, but I know people who do."

"We're all in the background talking and calling each other."

"We have to communicate and coordinate with each other."

Being able to build a support system appeared to be even more vital for supervisors in smaller or more rural areas because they are usually isolated from their peers.

"You don't have someone there working with you side by side that you can like vent or get support from. You're just out there. We all kind of talk and say are you still there, are you still alive?

Thirty-two percent (32%, n=8) of participants believed the presence of life and work experience serves to ameliorate the effects of stress inherent in the agency. Life experience included the state of being older, and having experienced personal crises and life-changing experiences. Those who identified these characteristics as important, perceived that enduring and overcoming personal crises was a training ground for working at CPS. They expressed that their life experience had prepared them for the atrocities and related stress and had also provided them with a deeper understanding of the life issues faced by clients. As a result, some of the supervisors indicated that they were more compassionate and less judgmental with clients, especially parents. In addition, supervisors believed that being older and more mature also served as a buffer or protective factor. They indicated they had lived long enough to not be surprised by things they were seeing, had endured their own crises which allowed them to see possibilities for clients, and possessed the maturity necessary to face challenges head-on.

"You've been through so much, you have the ability to support your workers…

experience says a lot."

Additional characteristics identified were categorized as supervisor competencies because the participants considered them necessary to be effective supervisors. Those characteristics included being approachable (20%, n=5), having a positive attitude (20%, n=5), being open-minded (20%, n=5), being trustworthy (16%, n=4), being a role model

76

(16%, n=4), able to resolve conflict (16%, n=5), developing caseworkers (8%, n=2), and actively employing retention efforts (8%, n=2). Participants indicated that having supervisory skills was important, but a necessary component of supervising was developing caseworkers and assisting them with their personal and professional growth. Participants considered this to be a part of their role and workload responsibilities and those supervisors not developing their workers were doing an injustice to the worker, the clients they interacted with, and the agency as a whole. Participants also expressed a belief that a necessary part of their job was to do whatever they could to retain their workers because retention enhanced client outcomes. As a result, some supervisors periodically rewarded their caseworkers with verbal praise, awards, certificates, food, and recognition for doing their jobs well.

What are the positive aspects of working at CPS as a supervisor?

The responses for this question mirrored the responses for the first question regarding why supervisors stay. The categories for the positive aspects of working at CPS included job satisfaction (32%, n=8), personal satisfaction (48%, n=12), and support (40%, n=10). The primary positive aspect identified was the support received from workers, peers, and administrators (Program Directors, Program Administrators, Regional Directors). Participants credited their co-workers with making the job enjoyable and contributing to their ability to remain employed.

> "I feel like we have a really good program director. She came in new
> and she is on it. I mean… if we have problems, I know I can go to her
> and for the most part if it's not taken care of really quickly, it's going to
> be addressed."
>
> I think that's (P.D. support) is the key to longevity."

Job satisfaction included the benefits of the job including flexibility, human resource benefits, technology, training, and advancement opportunities. Participants indicated that technology enhanced the ability of caseworkers to complete their daily job-related tasks which in turn, made their supervisory workload responsibilities easier. The internal and external training offered was also viewed by the participants as important for their personal and professional development. Developing their supervisory skills and knowledge allowed them to take advantage of career advancement opportunities within the agency.

"I still have room to grow… I can move up."

"They're getting a lot of training in. So I think things are changing for the positive."

Personal satisfaction was attributed to fulfillment of personal missions, empowerment experienced as a result of being a change agent, and successes which they deemed evidence of their efforts. Supervisors stated that because the agency afforded opportunities to help, make a difference, and serve as change agents, they felt empowered. Feeling empowered served to enhance their self-esteem and self-worth, and feelings of fulfillment.

"You can help change lives of families, children, anybody you come in contact with."

"I like the idea of developing my staff. I really like that. It's teaching me a lot about myself as a person."

"That's what I've tried to instill in my workers (working as a team) and

it's working. I see it and they tell me it's working and it really gives me
a sense of accomplishment. For me, that's a very joyful, a very joyful
experience."

"Working a s CPS supervisor is leading workers, watching workers grow,
watching them develop, watching myself too."

"I guess it's able to work with people and train them and see the results of
all of your efforts."

What are the negative aspects of working at CPS as a supervisor?

There were more responses for this question than any other question explored
during the focus groups. The responses related to the negative aspects of working at CPS
were divided into two categories: internal stressors and external stressors. Unrealistic
expectations (40%, n=10), agency climate (4%, n=1), and staff issues (16%, n=4) are
sub-categories of internal stressors. Participants cited the focus on immediately reducing
caseworker's high caseloads (20%, n=5), their ever-increasing supervisory workload
responsibilities (36%, n=9), long workdays (12%, n=3), and lack of resources (16%, n=4)
as evidence of the unrealistic expectations of the agency administrators.

"…You're telling us that we have to audiotape everybody, but you don't
provide us with tapes."

"I have to know how to do everything. You have to know all policy,
all legal policy, all CPS policy. You have to know how to do that to
do your job, and personnel policy… and having to know about 200 cases."

"…they have put so much pressure on us. When, if I have five workers in
my unit and each one of my workers is carrying 50 cases, you multiply
that by 5, that's 250 cases. I'm not even talking about each child, there
may be six kids in one case. So, that means that I then have responsibility
for my six workers, their families, these 250 families, and all of their
children, all of the services, then the pending reports, then this kind
of report, the tracking log, the annual time and leave report, doing their
annual evaluations that now have to go into a system that nobody knows
how to use because they haven't trained us."

Twenty-eight percent (28%, n=7) of supervisors stated that their caseworkers were working very hard to reduce their caseloads, but were impeded by the assignment of new cases daily, the work required for each case, the physical toll that casework takes, and the "dumping" of cases when other caseworkers leave the agency and leave open cases. Supervisors expressed feelings of guilt because they are required to continue assigning cases and holding staff accountable even though they are aware of the effects their actions have on their workers. They expressed feeling additional guilt when they have to reprimand a worker or require them to work on weekends as mandated by agency administrators. Supervisors indicated that they did not agree with the agency methods of addressing backlog because they do not take into consideration how physically taxing casework is or allow for consideration of personal/family issues and obligations.

> "And, it's really hard to come in and keep assigning work to people you know are doing their best, they're stressed out."

> "Everyone is so overwhelmed, and you're still demanding of them."

> "In a perfect world, we could do all that, but we can't do all that, it's frustrating."

> "It feels bad sometimes, it just feels bad trying to push policies or deadlines or whatever it is we have to push to people who are so overloaded...

> "If we try to do our job, then we're trying to push our people too hard to the point where we're basically pushing them out the door because of the unrealistic tasks we're giving them.

> "We had four (caseworkers) quit at one time... but, I think they were ushered out the door. And they left huge caseloads... and we picked those up."

> "And, when the workload is so great that everyone is overwhelmed, you're still demanding of them... You feel like the bad guy, you really do.

The climate of the agency was an extreme source of stress for 32% (n=8) of participants. These participants stated that it was very difficult to work in the agency right now because of the punitive climate. As mentioned above, supervisors would prefer to work with caseworkers, in what they deem a more humane approach, to resolve caseload and backlog issues. However, the punitive nature of the job and stricter guidelines of accountability don't allow them to do that. Participants also stated that recent policy decisions have caused them to feel de-valued, unheard, disrespected, powerless and caught in the middle.

> "You're assigning them more work, so on the other side of it you've got upper management coming down and saying we've got to get this backlog down, we've gotta get cases turned in, so it kind of puts you in the middle of that."

> "Middle management is very difficult because you have the higher-ups, the P.D.'s [saying] you need to tell your overworked caseworkers that they need to do it this way, this way."

Twenty-eight percent (28%, n=7) of participants expressed dissatisfaction with the agency's change in focus from children and families to numbers – caseloads, backlog, etc. They no longer feel a shared mission with the agency and are working to fulfill their personal missions in spite of the agency's new focus or mission which they perceive to be numbers and not children or their families.

> "Nobody cares about what is really going on. All they want to see is the final numbers and if we don't reach those numbers, then we get penalized. We have failed."

> "And, it's just like people don't care… they don't care that they, that these people are overworked. All they care about is what currency is made, did we go down in our numbers."

81

Forty-four percent (44%, n=11) of participants also expressed feeling frustrated with their

lack of input in agency decisions.   These sentiments were also shared in each focus

group. Participants expressed that not being included in agency decisions when they are

the ones doing the job, didn't make sense to them and made them feel that they are not

valued and that neither their experience nor expertise is recognized.

> "One of the really frustrating things is for decision to be made from up
> above and imposed."

> "And even when they ask for input, they don't want it. Like the other day,
> we got some e-mail about FBSS and conservatorship stuff… Friday night
> after everyone had left and they needed a response by noon Monday morning.
> You don't want my response, you don't care… so why even send it out?"

> "…decisions are already made. It's like when decisions are made… it's very
> evident that those decisions are made without input from the field."

> "It's unfortunate that many times people in the agency are treated like units of
> business, like furniture. If you need this file cabinet to be over in this office
> instead of this one, just move it. You can't treat people that way."

> "That Access HR system is very frustrating. And they decentralized HR
> (human resources) and they didn't consider and ask anybody. Now we're
> reaping from that."

Twenty-eight percent (n=7) report the negative climate of the agency has been

exacerbated by the program divisions that have created more specialized program areas.

Specialization has negatively affected communication, working relationships, and

retention.

> "And now we're so divided. We have different P.D.'s from them… when
> I first stared we were generic, so one supervisor supervised all three stages…
> When we went to specialized unit, at least some units were under the same
> program director. Then we went to separate program directors, then those
> program directors are now under separate P.A.'s. So anytime there's a problem,
> it's hard to work it out."

"We are constantly battling against our own people. And, it's very negative. I have seen it more rampant since we split the stages of services. It's been very trying."

"We beat each other to death. It's not the parents that stress me out."

When discussing the climate of the agency, participants shared that the emphasis on accountability has resulted in a punitive approach to resolution of issues. The punitive style of management has also increased the culture of fear in the agency. Two (8%) participants likened this punitive approach to a witch hunt.

"I can say this is the roughest culture right now. You're decisions will be scrutinized forever and picked at. You're responsible. It's kind of like a witch hunt to some degree. So it's automatically perceived as punishment."

"It does feel like that (a witch hunt). You do feel the fear and that's what I hate the most. It makes me want to cry just thinking about it. You messed up, what did you do wrong?"

"Percentages and a list of who's delinquent and how many cases people are delinquent and… if you have people on that list and they're over 10 cases, then you have to be in front of your program director's office every Monday explaining why your people have more cases, more delinquent cases and what is your plan to get those cases down."

Twenty-four percent (24%, n=6) of participants stated that the lack of adequate financial compensation for the job responsibilities was a definite stressor. Although participants acknowledged that salaries were better, they all believed they were still too low. Some participants discussed their displeasure with the inequities in salaries as a result of specialization and the focus on investigations. Even investigative supervisors expressed unhappiness about receiving an increase when their peers did not. Investigative supervisors stated that supervisors and caseworkers in other program areas (CVS, FAD,

FBSS) work as hard as they do and should be compensated for their efforts. As a result of these inequities, supervisors again expressed not feeling valued by the agency and not feeling as loyal to the agency as they did in the past.

> "A supervisor's been here for ten years and they've (caseworkers) been here for two and they're making more money than you. That's not right, that's ridiculous… I think it's a big part of people not staying or being devoted."

> "I had to be my own caseworker, my own case aide, my own secretary, doing all those roles on the salary they pay you. I have one caseworker now and it will be another 3 months before I get two [more], and another 3 months before I get the next one. If you paid me $60,000 a year, I'll do all these jobs. But you want me to do all these jobs making less than $40,000 a year."

> "…and then you add in that we got the $500 bonus and they didn't and then they got this and we didn't and so you add all that to it… which is ridiculous. All our jobs are hard, we're all working hard and our jobs are the same as far as our job to protect children. I think so many things enter into why it's so bad now."

Four (16%) participants indicated that the lack of tenure and experience among newly hired workers and supervisors was source of frustration and stress. Inexperience of staff required them to spend more time with them providing guidance and support. However, supervisors expressed that this was stressful, but expected with new caseworkers. The difficulty came when they had to train supervisors with little casework or other work experience because they had been promoted before they could acquire adequate casework skills. The participants indicated that assisting in the development of their peers was taxing and took away time from their own workload responsibilities, just to have the supervisor leave after a short period of time.

> "A lot of workers haven't had a supervisor forever and they don't know how to be a supervisor and they don't… They just apply for the job because they want someone in there. It sounds good, but they don't know what they're

getting into… And they don't stay."

Seven (28%) participants identified state legislators and what they perceive as their continued interference in the agency as external stressors. Being perceived negatively by the community and interacting with other professionals were also identified as stressors.

"I think that we're perceived in such a negative manner in the media."

"It's very discouraging when the news keeps focusing on the bad things going on with CPS and you're a representative of CPS. But, also when the attorneys you work with have a negative opinion of CPS.

"I think it's difficult that anywhere you go, you can't be proud and share a whole lot of where you work and what you do. For the most part, if people hear you work at CPS, they just start digging at you about all of the bad things CPS does.

"The legislature even considered, which is totally asinine to me, we have to notify the parent before we interview the child. Hello? Or the parent has to be sitting three when we interview the child. How are we going to provide for child safety? I get frustrated with the folks… the powers that be making legislation for us and not really understanding what we have to do on a daily basis.

"The issues is not do we know how to do it (social work), it's do we have the ability to do it after this legislature and previous legislatures have starved us as an agency for the last 10-15 years. And, now they're dealing with the effects of it which are we are not a functional agency because for the last 10 to 15 years, we've gotten inadequate funding year after year after year. How we've dealt with being starved is we've narrowed our parameters down over and over again to where we no long do any preventative work.

"They (the legislature) want to outsource everything."

"I've been saying for a long time, until the people of Texas and the people of the United States, in general, are willing to spend as much money on CPS, health, and education, as they are on law enforcement and prisons, we are not going to get anywhere. Because the way we deal with social services and law enforcement and prisons is like being willing to build huge state-of-the art hospitals to deal with children with permanent disabilities because you're not

willing to fund inoculation programs."

What about the agency contributes to or helps supervisors stay employed?

Eighty-four percent (84%, n=21) of participants identified agency benefits, 12%

(n=3) identified changing policies, and 20% (n=5) identified retention efforts as

significantly contributing to their employment longevity.   Agency benefits included

flexibility, training, human resource benefits (e.g. medical insurance, vacation,

retirement, etc.) and salary. Two participants (8%) liked some of the new policy changes

because they represent new attempts to address old problems. These two participants

also expressed that the memos distributed by state office informing them of changes

provided clear communication regarding agency expectations, although the agency's

expectations were viewed as both positive and negative. In addition, implementation of

the Supervisor Advisory Council and a formal mentoring program were considered long-

overdue retention efforts by these participants.

> "Well, there are training opportunities."
>
> "I think the communication has gotten much better than it used to be…
> gotten much better from the top. It helps us to know what we're going to
> get smacked with."
>
> "They instituted the Supervisor Advisory council up again… They really
> need things like that for input from below."
>
> "…we're on the cutting edge technology wise… we really have a good
> computer system. Here in region 8, we have a lot more resources, drug
> court, CREST, family group conferencing, the Rainbow Room."

Although participants identified several positives of working at CPS, 16% (n=4) of

participants stated that the agency had done nothing to contribute to their longevity at

CPS. These participants indicated that their reasons for remaining employed were entirely personal and not related to the agency at all.

> "I don't think the agency does anything blatant, outward, or obvious to keep supervisors. They stay because they want to."

> "If you ask me why I'm here…, the agency really has nothing to do with it. It's my workers, my office, my paycheck. That's why I stay. I've been here ten years, I got my first merit raise this year."

If you know any supervisors that are considering leaving, what do they say are their primary reasons for wanting to leave?

Forty-eight percent (48%, n=12) of participants stated that supervisors who are considering terminating their employment are doing so because of the internal stressors they experienced in the agency, especially those related to unrealistic expectations and agency climate. These stressors were previously discussed under negative aspects of working at CPS. Other responses indicated that people were leaving due to family obligations and/or personal issues (12%, n=3) or to pursue careers in other fields (24%, n=6) such as teaching which was perceived as less stressful. Four participants (16%) very openly shared their own intentions to leave the agency in the very near future.

> "He left because of his wife and mother [who are both ill]." He says that if he comes back he wants to be a worker.

> "[She left] to start a family."

> "…what we all have is human capital that is taken for granted… There's a reason why people are not being loyal anymore because we don't find ourselves valued anymore. Especially when we're under a witch hunt."

> "Decisions are made to just do things, move people, do this, do that, with no input, no thought of how that affects a person."

> "They're just a number. This is the second go round we've done this (move workers from unit to unit). Even after all the backlash and, how

87

angry everyone was and how morale was at an all-time low, they do it again."

"Shift in focus to paperwork rather than what you signed up for… because I want to help people."

"It's overload to the max… you feel that anxiety, that you can't do it anymore."

"We got an e-mail on Thursday morning [stating] if you're over 30 (percentage of backlogged cases), you have to work on Saturday. And, these are people who… one girl had a funeral. And, it was, 'you're not going to the funeral or you're going to lose your job.' I had a worker I had to write up because she has a baby shower, and she had no day care, and she had two babies, [ages] 2 and 1 at home. I had to write her up. And, there are no excuses [accepted]."

"Everyone's talking about being a teacher… starting at $41,500, so if you put in your ten to fifteen years, you're retiring at about $60,000. You get to school at seven o'clock in the morning, you're leaving by 4:30 or 5:00 in the afternoon. You may have to prepare for the next day when you get home, but you're not on the road at eleven o'clock at night, midnight, placing children, getting into nasty homes."

"I'm scheduled to retire in January and I'm not coming back."

"I want to be gone because of the culture and I see it changing."

"I hate this place… I've got to get out of here."

"The main reason I'm leaving is money… It's stressful and it's difficult. I've been here 14 years, I'm used to high caseloads…, but I can't deal with that and not get paid."

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Six participants (24%) chose to share additional information regarding why people stay with the agency and provided recommendations for supporting supervisors and staff and improving the agency. These recommendations will be reported in Chapter 5: Discussion. However, one supervisor's response appears to emphasize the importance

of her personal mission as well as her feelings regarding how agency changes are impacting that mission.

> "I'm real scared, you know. I know we always recover, but I'm scared of what's going to happen with all those children because we're hurting them with all the moves and the transitions, and the different workers. I don't know, it's sad."

Individual Interviews

Initial analysis of the interviews produced core categories for each question related to why supervisors stay which includes Questions 12-27. Participant demographics which were the responses to questions 1-11, are reported in Chapter 3: Methodology and Tables 1-5.   Participants in the interviews provided the same or similar responses to the questions related to employment longevity with little variation. This resulted in a lot of overlap in responses as well as the categories identified in the data analysis procedures. After the core categories were identified, all the corresponding questions were grouped under the core category to which they correlate. This resulted in the collapsing of questions to report the findings. Core categories identified during interviews which related to employment longevity are: Personal Mission/Calling, Support, Internal Stressors, Self-Care, and Personal Motivations.

Personal Missions/Calling

Seventeen participants (68%) attributed their longevity with CPS to their personal mission or calling to help children and families. Participants identified their missions/callings as their primary reason for staying with the agency (48%, n=12), the source of their motivation and energy (20%, n=5), and what keeps them employed (48%,

n=12). The presence of a mission/calling appears to also involve the commitment to save

children and improve their family's functioning. As with supervisors in focus groups, the

participants interviewed cited their mission and/or calling as their primary reason for

staying. Participants who characterized their personal mission to help as a calling,

identified their religious faith as an integral component of this calling. The opportunities

to fulfill their personal mission/calling and seeing evidence of their efforts to be change

agents also resulted in feelings of personal satisfaction and fulfillment, enhancing their

ability to remain employed. The participants are able to see that their efforts to affect

change with clients and staff are not futile and result in successes.

What motivates you to continue working at CPS?

> "It's a calling upon my life to do this type of work."
> "And one of those things that we bought into as far as our program is you
> know, is saving the world one child at a time… I get a great sense of
> accomplishment and reward, a reward that I'm doing something to help
> somebody. Making a change. There's kids out there who need our services.
> That keeps me going."
>
> "When I see success in some of the children that we're dealing with, that
> motivates me. It keeps me going."

Where do you obtain the energy to continue working at CPS?

> "From God."
>
> "God is my… I do a lot of praying… I'll refer back to my faith. I think
> that I do rejuvenate myself through faith."
>
> "I am motivated, I would have to say my motivation comes from my
> spiritual life. The Good Lord. I just think my energy comes from the fact,
> like I say, my energy is always fueled by that I look at these children and I
> see successes…"

What keeps you employed with CPS?

"I really think that why I stay working for CPS is because my passion keeps me. I made a promise a long time ago to God that I would do whatever it takes to keep children safe and out of harm and I feel like I'm doing that."

"I really think it's my calling since I've here this length of time… but, I actually think that this is what I'm supposed to do. I know I have touched many a life…"

"I was always taught that you are a part of a bigger community… It is impossible to do this job and not feel like you're giving something back on so many levels."

What would you consider your primary reason for staying with CPS?

"I think it's the mission. Feeling like you're part of something bigger than yourself. Felling like you're having some type of impact."

"Just to change the life of one child. And then of course, once you change the life of one child, you have to change more."

"You know I want to help people. And, I say it and it sounds elementary, but how can I serve today? And, if this is the way that the Lord has designed for me to serve, then I serve."

"My best part of my job, I would have to say, would be developing workers and seeing people grow. The best part of my job too is seeing families that would otherwise not be together had we not intervened and seeing the fact that we are helping people and empowering people to take care of their own children."

How do you cope with the stress at CPS?

Sixteen percent (16%, n=4) of participants also attributed their calling and religious faith with helping them to cope with the stressors experienced in the agency. It appears that their faith serves as a protective factor that assists them in continuing to work in spite of any stress or negativity they encounter.

"I listen to Christian talk [radio] on the way home to get it out of my mind."

"I'm a Christian, I'm a Christian. And, I know God has me here for a reason. And, so I look at it as a ministry. And even though stressors are all around, chaos is all around me, there's a calmness that is from within that I have to go on."

"So, I have a life outside of this. A church life, somewhat of a social life, large extended family and those types of things."

"You know I'm real involved in my local church. I get a lot of… my support comes from above and I do a lot of singing."

How are you able to remain employed?
How did you develop this ability?

When asked how they were able to remain employed and how they developed the

ability to do so, four participants (16%) credited their personal missions – their desires to

help – as the primary factors involved in developing their ability to remain employed.

"I just always wanted to help."

"Because this is what I wanted to do. I've always known and it took me a while to get here, but I eventually I did."

"Things I did personally made a big difference and that helps me to stay employed."

"I keep asking the Lord if I was supposed to be doing something else and he hasn't told me. So, I kinda think I'll stay put."

Support

Sixty-eight percent (68%, n=17) of participants regarded their peers and the

camaraderie they enjoyed as significant facts contributing to their employment longevity.

The relationships they have developed with not only their peers, but also staff and

Program Directors, have contributed to their ability to cope and remain employed. Some

participants consider their relationships with agency staff to be akin to family

relationships that provide invaluable emotional support. This support is directly related

to their ability to remain employed because it allows them opportunities to vent and share

thoughts and feelings that they can't share with their own families. This support is also a

protective factor that buffers the effect of stressors associated with the agency.

Participants credited support with being the best (32%, n=8) and positive (20%, n=5)

aspect of working at the agency, helping them to cope (20%, n=5), providing them with

the ability to remain employed,(24%, n=6) the source of their employment longevity

(8%, n=2), and an aspect of the agency that has contributed to their tenure (32%, n=8).

Is there anything about the agency that has assisted you in staying employed?
What is the best part of working at CPS?
What are the positive aspects of working at CPS?
How do you cope with the stress at CPS?

> "I think the best of my job has been in developing relationships with
> my workers, other program people.

> "The best part of it is the family orientation that we have amongst our staff."

> "What's always worked for me is to go and decompress with somebody
> whether it be a peer or my boss."

> "I have met some great people. One in particular is my current supervisor.
> I'd follow her anywhere."

> "People. I love my unit. I love them to death. But, the think that makes
> me get up and come to work everyday is knowing that I have ea great group
> of people that I work with from my program director to my people… I just
> like everybody and I feel like it's part of a family."

How have you been able to remain employed at CPS?
How did you develop the ability to remain employed at CPS?

> "One of the things that's helped me to stay is that loyalty and sense of family."

93

"I've had so many supervisors, program directors switch every year. So, it's not so much supervision, it's the people at various time that have been a big help for me."

"One of the things that's helped me to stay is that loyalty and sense of family.

"I wasn't supposed to be here past that first year, but you wake up one morning and you know, liking the people and making it a home away from home and looking at the bigger… we're here to protect the children."

Is there anything about the agency that assisted you in staying employed?

"I've had an excellent program director."

"Maybe there have been some changes that have helped out, we're having more tools, but it's really the people."

"I think what happens is you grow up in the system with a group of people… I guess I like the people I work with…"

"The people that I work with from Sherry Gomez down have just been amazing… And, that's the kind of thing that makes you feel proud that you're part of that group."

Internal Stressors

Internal stressors were identified by 88% (n=22) of participants and they include those stressors that supervisors experience as a result of their workloads, caseworker's caseloads, people management, unrealistic expectations, and the bureaucratic structure of the agency. These were the same internal stressors identified by the supervisors who participated in the focus groups. Supervisors interviewed individually described the climate of the agency as negative and they were unable to provide many positives related to the agency. The majority of the responses were provided when asked about the difficult and negative aspects of working for the agency. Forty percent (40%, n=10) of supervisors believe that the agency has unrealistic expectations about the amount of work

and time involved in dealing with the staff turnover, high caseloads, and low morale

inherent in the agency. Fifteen supervisors (60%) reported that their workload

responsibilities including forms, policies, cases, and people management, are also

indicative of the unrealistic expectations of agency administrators. Three (12%) of

supervisors are also carrying their own caseload because they are so short-staffed and can

not continue to overload their caseworkers. All of these stressors are impeding the

supervisors' abilities to achieve job satisfaction and personal satisfaction and/or

fulfillment.

What is the most difficult part of your job?
What are the negative aspects of CPS?

> "I don't like the way management has changed. There's much more
> micro-management going on now. I understand and support
> accountability; however, the current climate… it's become more and
> more difficult to work her and to feel happy in the work."

> "The tracking list. It's a mountain. Between our two units we supervise
> 650 kids and that's a lot of kid to keep up with… Very time consuming."

> "The sheer volume of the e-mails, personality issues, and caseloads are
> much too high."

> "The negative aspects are that even as you close out once case, there's two
> more to build back into that. So, it never seems to end with regards to that."

People management was also a significant stressor for 44% (n=11) of supervisors.

Managing the varied personalities of staff, addressing personnel issues, and holding staff

accountable were also identified as stressors. The inexperience, and sometimes

immaturity of new staff was an additional stressor because of the time needed to

supervise, train, and hold them accountable.

> "You know it's not even the job, it's the people. It's managing the people
> and the different personalities that you have to contend with. These are

95

grown-ups and when you have to manage that kind of thing, it really takes away from what we're all here to do."

"I think the negative is the high turnover rate and young workers right out of college."

"Having to do corrective actions or when you just cannot seem to get them to do anything in a timely manner… trying to get somebody to put it together is like pulling teeth. And a lot of it is, I think it's the younger generation. I'm old enough to be some of their mothers or older really, we're getting them so young nowadays. Their idea of work is different than what I was raised with."

The bureaucratic environment of the agency was identified as an additional stressor by 44% (n=11) of participants. Participants were dissatisfied with the inequities in the agency as a result of the decision to create more specialized areas. Because programs are specialized, supervisors working in close proximity with each other are supervised by different P.D.'s. As a result, the ability to communicate with their peers, especially regarding cases, has been negatively affected. Supervisors must now talk with their respective P.D.'s, wait for them to discuss the situation and then discuss the resolution with their supervisee. Participants reported that this process has slowed the flow of communication and added another level to the decision-making process. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the political nature of the agency and the impact of politics on hiring and case decisions. The participants reported that politics resulted in hiring and promotion decisions which were based solely on the fact that the person was liked rather than their merit and/or skills to do the job. The political climate of the agency resulted in supervisors feeling that they are not valued or respected by the agency and feeling that the agency is no longer loyal to them. They cited the lack of recognition, rewards, or praise as further evidence of the agency's disloyalty.

Participants reported that their loyalty to the agency is waning because it is not being reciprocated.

> "I think it tends to be very political in some areas, it's not what you know it's who you know."

> "I really, really think that we're too specialized at the moment. We're totally specialized, but there's no accountability."

> "Policy, higher people, legislatures making decisions about our job that have never worked a day in their life. I think they expects us to do a job without giving us the support we need."

> "You don't get a lot of thanks from way up… the agency doesn't seem to understand the amount of stress it puts on us emotionally."

Self-Care

Self-care was identified by 72% (n=18) of participants as a coping mechanism and energy source. Participants utilized their families, hobbies, exercise, vacation, and short breaks from the job to maintain balance in their lives and re-energize. Several supervisors stated that having balance in their lives, which they described as being able to separate work from home, was vital to employment longevity. Self-care is a protective factor that assists supervisors in ameliorating stressors associated with the working in the agency and remaining employed.

How do you cope with the stress at CPS?
Where do you obtain the energy to continue working at CPS?
What keeps you employed?
How are you able to remain employed?

> "We have a band, we sing all the time."

> "So, I have a life outside of this. A church life, somewhat of a social life, large extended family, and those types of things."

> "I love to read, so I'll read… and I can see if I'm actually stressed, I'll read

more."

"I enjoy sports, I like fishing and hunting, and I do these things on a regular
basis."

"I guess work out after I eat. When I first started, I was just non-stop, but I
realize now that I have to take some time for myself. I can't be helpful to
my workers, my staff, or the families, if I'm stressed out and overworked."

Personal Motivations

When asked about their primary reason for staying with the agency, three (12%)

supervisors indicated that their primary reason for staying employed was related to the

fact that they would be eligible to retire in the near future.

What would you consider your primary reason for staying with CPS?

"I'm so close to the end, now it would be stupid to quit."

"The thought of counting down to retirement."

"I would have to be honest and say that I do have so many years invested
that to make a change now and affect retirement, I just, it just is not even
a consideration."

Traits/Characteristics

All participants (100%, n=25) identified characteristics they believe have assisted

in helping them remain employed with CPS. These characteristics mirror those identified

by the participants in the focus groups. They include: compassion (2%, n=3),

perseverance (20%, n=5), integrity (24%, n=6), patience (8%, n=2), tolerance (4%, n=1),

committed (20%, n=5) flexible (4%, n=1), having good listening and social skills (20%, n=5), a sense of humor (20%, n=5), a positive attitude (20%, n=5), able to handle crises (16%, n=4), calm (12%, n=3), and management ability (32%, n=8). Three (12%) participants indicated that experience and maturity were very important because they believed that the life and work experiences they brought with them into the agency helped them endure the stress and overall negative climate. Experience has taught them how to deal with stressors and enhanced their self-confidence because they have endured changes, crises, etc. and keep going – persevere. Because the participants know how to deal with life stressors, they reported that they don't get excited or upset about the daily stressors associated with the agency. They indicated that they remain calm and address issues as they arise. Three (12%) participants also reported that supervisors have to be resilient which they believed helped to keep them coming to work everyday.

What personal traits or characteristics do you possess that have helped you remain employed?

"I can manage crisis and work under pressure."

"Resilient…roll with the punches."

"I like to listen to people and I'm easy to get along with."

"I confront calmly when I talk to my workers… if they're really, really doing something wrong, I can not blow up… I mean we can do it in a calm manner. I've had supervisors that can't do that."

"Experience is a good teacher. We've weathered some storms here. And, with each storm that we weather, we come out a little worse for wear and we come out more knowledgeable and more educated as to the does and don'ts within a bureaucracy."

99

Future Goals

Ninety-two percent (92%, n=23) of participants stated that they plan to remain employed with the agency because of all the aforementioned positives they experience being employed with CPS. . Thirty-two percent (32%, n=8) of participants plan to remain employed with the agency and advance to Program Directors and/or Program Administrators as soon as they are able to do so. Seventy-two percent (72%, n=18) plan to remain employed until retirement. Three (12%) participants are eligible to retire within 2-3 years, but the majority are not eligible for more than five years. Twenty percent (20%, n=5) plan to attend graduate school and plan to apply for a Title IV-E employee stipend. One participant (4%) plans to remain with the agency for a little while longer, but doesn't plan to stay for more than 2-3 years. Four (16%) participants indicated that they plan to leave the agency within five years to pursue other career interests - opening an event center, becoming a missionary, attending law school and doing something within the community.

"I will not leave this agency. I will be here until I retire or until we move."

"Well, I do want to be a program director. I want to stay here."

"I've been here 6-1/2 years and I plan to stay until retirement. Unless something just totally turns me against CPS, I plan on being here…My first job from college… They're holding me hostage, but I like it though, so I'll be here."

"So, I mean I don't feel right now that I have a loyalty to the agency and I never felt that way before and that is really, really hard. I don't mind working 80 hours a week and being miserable and freaking out if I feel like Imp part of this bigger thing, but, I don't feel a sense of loyalty. I don't feel any appreciation."

Relationships Between Major Themes And Categories

An additional level of analysis was conducted to explore the relationships

between the major themes and categories : mission/calling, agency climate, support, self-

care, personal motivations, traits and characteristics, job satisfaction, personal

satisfaction, internal and external stressors, and benefits. These relationships were

explored based on the context (supervising at CPS), the process (interplay of stressors,

protective factors, and organizational factors), and the goal (exploration of retention/

employment longevity), three components of Grounded Theory analysis. A graphic

illustration of these relationships is contained in Figure 1 (see Appendices).

Mission/calling, support, self-care, successes, and work and life experience are

protective factors which positively impact job and personal satisfaction. Being able to

carry out a personal mission or calling increases the level of personal satisfaction

experienced and enhances job performance because of the opportunities provided to see

the personal mission come to fruition. Having a support system within and outside the

agency also increases job satisfaction because it provides the necessary resource for

encouragement, venting, advice, etc. Support systems also enhance personal satisfaction

because they provide a safe haven and a sense of belonging. Engaging in self-care

counters the emotionally and physically taxing environment, providing physical, mental,

and emotional stamina to consistently endure. Being able to endure results in self-

confidence and personal satisfaction and consistently having the mental and emotional

stamina to address issues and problem-solve the best solutions enhances not only self-

confidence and self-esteem, but job satisfaction as well. Adequately and competently

addressing staff and client issues provides supervisors with visual evidence of their

efforts and evidence of better outcomes - successes. Increased levels of job and personal satisfaction serves as a protective factor that allows supervisors to withstand, endure, and bounce back from the myriad of daily stressors and overall negative agency climate associated with the agency. Previous work and life experience also provides self-confidence and belief in one's ability to withstand stressors because supervisors have done so on previous jobs, increasing personal and job satisfaction.

Personal traits and characteristics include not only resilience and resilience-related characteristics, but also characteristics that can be considered supervisor competencies. These traits and competencies also serve as protective factors which assist in ameliorating the negative effects of the internal and external stressors of CPS.

Benefits provided by the agency (salary, retirement, vacation, overtime) increase job satisfaction as does continued employment because of salary increases and promotions received. Advancing in the agency also increases personal satisfaction because of the increase in self-confidence, self-esteem, and position of authority. Personal motivations – impending retirement and family obligations – also assist supervisors in remaining with the agency. Some supervisors are putting the needs of their family above their own discomfort. Those who are close to retirement are remaining because it would not be wise to leave and lose the benefits for which they have sacrificed so much.

Opportunities for personal and professional growth also appear to positively impact the ability to withstand the agency climate. Being provided with opportunities to attend trainings and workshops, and promote within the agency provide supervisors with

102

enhanced ability to withstand stressors because of future possibilities to achieve personal goals.

Additional Reviewers

The researcher utilized two doctoral students to review two transcripts - one focus group and one individual interview. Additional reviewers were utilized to increase the rigor of the study and ensure objectivity in the analysis of data collected. The reviewers were given the same focus group and interview transcripts for the purpose of triangulation and to verify the results. The researcher selected the transcripts provided to the additional reviewers because they represented the greater volume of responses and varying content. The focus group transcript had the greatest volume of responses. The supervisors began discussing the agency prior to the onset of the focus group. The transcript of the individual interview was a supervisor who had been employed more than 15 years and had endured a personal attack on the job. The researcher anticipated the transcripts had the potential to distract the reviewers when read, resulting in difficulty identifying resilient themes and categories.

However, the analyses conducted by the additional reviewers produced categories that mirrored or were closely related to the analysis conducted by the researcher. Both reviewers identified core categories, but Reviewer 2 also identified specific themes under the categories. The researcher identified the presence of a mission/calling in supervisors and the reviewers labeled this mission/calling altruism and commitment, and mission. The researcher and both reviewers identified support, agency benefits, and flexibility as key themes. All identified the category of personal traits, but the researcher and reviewer

2 identified specific characteristics supervisors attributed with contributing to their

employment longevity. These characteristics included humor, flexible, balance in life,

and perseverance. The categories identified by the additional reviewers are listed below.

A visual illustration of the common themes and categories identified by the researcher

and the reviewers is provided in Table 11 below. (Table 11 can also be found in the

Appendices.)

Table 11
Comparison of Data Analyses Conducted
By Researcher and Reviewers

Researcher	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2
Mission/Calling	Altruism and Commitment	Intrinsic Rewards Mission
Support Peers Program Directors Caseworkers	Support	Intrinsic Rewards Support
Personal & Job Satisfaction	Self-Efficacy and Confidence	Competence and Skills Enjoy Teaching Staff Staff do Well; Stay
Agency Climate/Benefits	Agency Benefits	Extrinsic Rewards Benefits and Retirement Flexible Schedule Support
Personal Characteristics Sense of Humor Flexible Balance in Life/Self-Care Perseverance Tenacity Stick-to-it-iveness Approachable Develop Staff Personal Growth/Development	Personal Traits	Supervisor Characteristics Sense of Humor Flexible Good Balance in Life Dedicated to Job Perseverance Ability to Delegate Desire to Teach staff Desire to Attend Training Leadership by Example Don't Like Being Punitive
Internal & External Stressors		Agency not supportive Major Challenges Negative public perception Frustration with Legislative Decisions Decentralized HR Too much Paperwork Not enough input into changes

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Research Questions

The findings of the study provided answers to the research questions and these findings are discussed below.

What personal characteristics of resilience impact retention of child welfare supervisors?

Supervisors identified a myriad of resilient characteristics that appear to positively impact their retention - tenacity, stick-to-itiveness, ability to handle stress, remaining calm in a crisis, and being adaptable. All of these characteristics are necessary to bounce back from adversity and crises, and endure any stressors experienced. These characteristics are that much more important when consistently faced with the emergencies, daily crises, and extreme levels of stress inherent in child welfare agencies, specifically CPS.

What process is involved in the development of resilient characteristics and traits?

Having life and work experience appears to not only ameliorate the effects of stressors experienced in the agency, but also assists in the process of developing resilient characteristics. Successfully enduring life and work-related stress, crises, setbacks, etc. appears to have assisted the supervisors in developing the skills needed to endure subsequent stressors, minimizing their impact. Enduring crises also involves the process

of resilience development. Being able to successfully endure and bounce back from adversity (personal and/or organizational), provides supervisors with self-confidence and belief in their ability and potential to do so again.

How does organizational climate influence the development of resilience in child welfare supervisors?

The climate of the organization also appears to influence resilience development. Although the climate of the agency is reported as negative, supervisors have utilized the support of their peers and program directors, and their relationships with staff as buffers against agency stressors enhancing their resilience development. In addition, the negative climate of the agency also appears to serve as a bonding agent which allows the supervisors to experience a sense of belonging in spite of rather than because of the agency helping them to develop resilient qualities in the process.

How does organizational climate influence retention of child welfare supervisors?

The organizational factors supervisors identified as influential for retention include the agency benefits such as flexibility, human resource benefits, technology, training, and advancement opportunities. Some supervisors also identified their salary as a retention factor.

What motivates child welfare supervisors to remain employed?

Supervisors identified their personal missions/callings, support, self-care practices, and benefits as motivators for employment longevity. All of these things not only motivate them to continue working, but also provide them with the energy to do so.

107

Most of the participants in the study have stayed because they possess the ability to successfully utilize their protective factors to maintain employment longevity. They have been able to remain employed in a stressful, and emotionally and physically taxing job in spite of all of the negative aspects of the environment. These supervisors appear to combat compassion fatigue and burnout by focusing on their personal mission and utilizing protective factors to minimize the stressful aspects of the agency.

Comparisons with Previous Research

Supervisors in this study exhibit the three components of resilience as defined by Richardson (2002). They possess strengths (tenacity, stick-to-it-iveness, perseverance, etc.) that assist them in surviving adversity and stressors (first wave-traits and characteristics), have attained resilient characteristics that developed through the process of coping with life and agency-related stressors by utilizing their support systems, self-care techniques, and maturity gained from personal and professional experience, etc. (second wave), and they are motivated by their altruistic motives and religious faith (third wave).

Participants possess the ability to cope with, and respond effectively to life stressors (Neill & Dias, 1999), and they have adapted to the adversity they experience in the agency (Werner & Smith, 1992).   Supervisors that remain with the agency have their own mission above and beyond that of the agency. This finding supports the findings of Cicero-Reese and Clark (1998) who also determined that a mission/calling was related to retention. For most supervisors in this study, their mission is synonymous with the agency's mission of protecting children, however, their mission appears to have a deeper

meaning for them and involves an altruistic motive. The importance of a personal

mission is emphasized as the agency's focus appears to be have shifted to investigations,

and the number of cases closed instead of clients and employees.

Most of the supervisors have been able to utilize support, their personal

mission/calling as protective factors against the stressors inherent in the child protection

system, thus warding of burnout to a manageable level. However, a few supervisors

appear unable to continue doing so. This was evident in the statements of supervisors

regarding their intent to leave the agency in the near future because of low salaries, and

the overall negative climate of the agency. If the supervisors are not burned out, they

appear close. The findings of this study may be similar to the findings of others

regarding burnout due to agency environment (Pines 2002, 2004; Maslach, Schaufeli &

Leiter, 2001; Lecroy & Rank, 1986). As the previous studies found, the supervisors in

this study may be experiencing emotional and mental exhaustion (burnout) which is

manifesting as anger. They appear to possess the three dimensions of burnout identified

by Mashlach, Shaufeli, and Leiter – exhaustion, a sense of cynicism, and perception of

personal ineffectiveness.

Due to the volume of negative responses regarding the agency and agency

climate, these supervisors appear to be experiencing job dissatisfaction because their

work-related satisfaction, autonomy, and self-esteem have been diminished or left

unfulfilled, supporting the findings of Lecroy and Rank (1986). The findings of this

study also support the assertion of Baumann et al. (1997) that organizational factors "may

play a primary role in producing burnout" (p.16). All of the supervisors reported the

agency climate has become more punitive, authoritative, etc. and they no longer

experience the autonomy they once enjoyed as a supervisor. Decisions are imposed and they have little to no input. As noted by Pines (2002, 2004), the findings of this study suggest that the supervisors are experiencing emotionally demanding and draining work conditions that they are having difficulty resolving. However, they remain at the agency in spite of these factors.

Supervisors appear capable of bouncing back from adversity (Ayers-Lopez & McRoy, 2004; Jacelon, 1997). They also appear to possess the resilient trait defined by Neill and Dias (2001) as "a psychological quality that allows a person to cope with and respond effectively to life stressors (p. 5). West (1997) suggested that professional protection should be practiced to buffer the effects of secondary trauma – a natural consequence of working with traumatized children. The findings of the study also support the need for professional protection which would require the agency to support and implement self-care practices of employees.

Discussion

The ability to actually save children from abuse and neglect, and sometimes death, provides a sense of power to supervisors that enhances self-esteem and personal pride. These feelings of power are also important because supervisors feel powerless regarding agency decisions. They are allowed very little input into decisions and changes and must abide by the decisions handed down or imposed from above. Therefore, being able to exert power and influence in a positive manner over their caseworkers and clients, provides them with opportunities to utilize their knowledge and skills to make positive, life-changing decisions. Most supervisors expressed additional feelings of pride and self-

worth regarding their ability to see the successes that they cite as evidence of their efforts. Seeing a family make the changes necessary to allow their child(ren) to return home, and watching workers grow and develop into competent caseworkers empowered supervisors and enhanced their self-esteem. Supervisors expressed feeling personally responsible for family improvements and retention when their efforts were successful.

Supervisors also appear proud of their ability to stay with CPS when other people are unable to do so. Those who stay employed consider themselves to be part of an elite group of which not everyone can become a member. This ability to stay also appears to give them a sense of strength and resilience because they are able to do something that others cannot. Those who attribute their longevity to a calling appear to believe that they have no choice about staying and that a force more powerful than themselves controls their employment longevity. Several supervisors stated that they didn't know themselves why they were staying, but felt that they remain at CPS because it is God's desire that they do so.

Supervisors cited life and work experience as protective factors and this appears to be supported by the fact that 42 was the average age of supervisors participating in the study. Age appears to have a direct influence on decisions to stay with the agency. Being older usually correlates with having previously experienced difficult jobs or places of employment and life traumas or crises. Having endured professional and personal difficulties provides educational opportunities to learn how to endure and overcome negative situations. Experience also minimizes being surprised by unexpected incidents and changes and can enhance or create a sense of calmness when facing daily stressors. The perception of the agency appears to be more positive when compared with previous

occupations and agencies, especially among those with military experience.   Supervisors with military experience described the bureaucratic structure of CPS as minimal when compared with the overwhelming bureaucracy of the military.

Pending retirement is also a retention factor. Those supervisors who are eligible to retire or will be in the near future are unwilling to leave the agency and void all of their hard work and the sacrifices they have made over the years. They are willing to work until retirement, but most indicated that they will retire and not return.

Supervisors were only able to name a few positives about working in the agency. It appears that the supervisors have become disconnected from the agency and view their positions as being separate and apart from the agency. They have become so disillusioned and angry with the agency, it appears that the agency can do nothing right. Supervisors appear to function as if they have blinders on and can only see the clients, caseworkers, their peers, and regional administrators. They have chosen to focus on their own personal missions and job responsibilities and no longer appear to see a connection between themselves and the agency as a whole. Although they identified their salary, human resource benefits, and flexible schedules as primary reasons for their retention, they also indicated that the agency has not contributed to their employment longevity. Participants appear to be unaware that the agency has provided all of these things.

A lot of supervisors exhibited feelings of anger with the agency. They appeared able to compartmentalize their anger because they spoke of the clients and agency staff in positive terms, but were unable to discuss the agency in the same way. This anger may be the manifestation of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, and burnout. Therefore, it may actually be related to clients, the abuse and neglect observed, and the daily stressors

and crises, but is directed at the agency because of their dissatisfaction with agency administrators and the changes that have been implemented. Anger may also be a manifestation of the helplessness and hopelessness experienced when supervisors are unable to serve as change agents and affect positive client and staff outcomes. Therefore, they are unable to fulfill personal missions and achieve job satisfaction and personal fulfillment. Inability to remain employed may be a consequence of protective factors that are no longer able to ameliorate feelings of anger that are actually manifestations of other unidentified feelings. Supervisors identified a myriad of negative aspects regarding working for CPS. One of the main negatives was the lack of input in agency decisions. Supervisors appeared to be particularly resentful of having no input when it involved policy and hiring decisions. They also believe that policies are imposed by people who don't understand how those policies will impact staff and clients. As Arches found (1991), supervisors in this study are experiencing job dissatisfaction because of the bureaucratic structure of the agency which contributes to the lack of connectedness and communication supervisors experience with administrators at the top of the bureaucracy. They believe that allowing staff input into policy decisions will improve the outcomes for clients and alleviate or at least minimize the negative climate of the agency. Supervisors reported that because they were not allowed to participate in the hiring of new caseworkers, they were unable to share their knowledge and expertise regarding those characteristics caseworkers need to be successful in the agency. Therefore, caseworkers who should not have been hired initially, are assigned to their units and they are required to implement corrective and personnel actions to terminate their employment. However, the process of termination could be lengthy because agency policy requires that people

113

are allowed to make several mistakes, participate in a series of conferences, and make improvements before a personnel staffing for termination is conducted. Supervisors believe that this is a fair policy, but don't believe that it should apply to caseworkers who have been with the agency for a short period of time and have demonstrated an inability to do the job. In some instances, caseworkers have been allowed to do an inadequate job for several months or years, because no one has addressed their inadequacies or attempted to develop them. These caseworkers are then assigned to other units and the receiving supervisor is responsible for developing or terminating them. Supervisors believe that not addressing issues is an injustice to the caseworker, the client, and other caseworkers.

Supervisors were satisfied with the training they received in the agency, but they were dissatisfied with not always being able to participate in it. Although the agency is providing training specifically for supervisors in an effort to enhance their supervisory and people management skills, some supervisors were unable to attend this training until after they had been supervising for several months. The supervisors believed that the training would have been much more beneficial if they were allowed to attend training prior to taking on the role of supervisor. They believed they would have made fewer mistakes if they had received information regarding policies, procedures, and effective supervision prior to assuming the supervisor position. Training is especially vital for those people who assume supervisor positions in a program area in which they have no experience or have less than two years total experience in the agency.

All participants identified a sense of humor and self-care as protective factors that are directly related to retention. Self-care includes life balance which includes the ability

to separate work from one's personal life, actively engaging in hobbies, and having a personal support system consisting of friends and family. Although the supervisors in this study appear to actively engage in self-care, there are no indications that this is encouraged by the agency, nor is it practiced by all supervisors or other agency employees. Employing self-care techniques could greatly reduce the effects of stress, burnout, and secondary trauma, reducing turnover at all levels.

There are only a few supervisors who are staying because they will be eligible to retire within the next 2 years and/or they don't have anywhere else to go. Most supervisors remain with CPS in spite of the daily stressors they encounter, their negative feelings about the agency, and the agency's focus on numbers rather than outcomes. Supervisors are utilizing protective factors which more than adequately buffer daily stressors allowing them to remain in spite of the negative climate of the agency and stressors they experience.

Although there were concerns about supervisors being hesitant to share, especially personal information, during focus groups, this hesitancy did not materialize. Supervisors talked freely and honestly and didn't appear to withhold information because their peers were present. Some supervisors talked about themselves and their personal feelings although the focus group questions were phrased to solicit general responses about supervisors as a whole. The participants of one focus group were so eager to share their thoughts that they began a discussion before the researcher started recording or asked the first question. As noted by Kitzinger and Duggleby, the interaction component of the focus groups produced a lot of energy that resulted in a myriad of responses. Participants no only encouraged interaction and reacted to ther's responses, they also

reminded each other of incidents that occurred which had been forgotten by the speaker. This interaction produced clarity of responses because the participants explored concepts in detail without any probing from the researcher. This interaction also exemplified day-to-day communication which involves processing, information sharing and using humor as a coping mechanism. Descriptions of group dynamics were not incorporated into transcripts because the researcher wanted to report actual responses without editorial comments.

Some participants appeared angry with the agency and hopeless about their ability to improve their morale or the morale of their caseworkers. The researcher surmised that supervisors shared honestly based on the fact that participants' responses were direct, critical , and personal even in focus groups where anonymity was not guaranteed or enjoyed. In addition, the responses of the supervisors in both focus groups and individual interviews were identical for some questions and similar for others, although only supervisors being interviewed individually were able to experience anonymity and privacy.

Supervisors in this study have remained with the agency an average of eleven years, although most of them appear to possess a negative perception of the agency and see few agency benefits or positives that the agency contributes to their employment longevity. This researcher wonders whether some supervisors are focusing on the negatives of the agency as a way of deflecting responsibility or focus from themselves. If they consistently emphasize those areas in which the agency is lacking, they can almost justify their lack of loyalty and possible ineffectiveness. They can argue that they can't be expected to be loyal, positive, thorough, or productive because the agency doesn't

provide them the resources needed nor does the agency allow them to do a better job. The negative climate may serve as a motivating factor whereby supervisors experience independence via defiance. The may be defying the agency by remaining and enduring the negative, and sometimes hostile, environment. Supervisors may be in a state of hostile dependence – taking a hostile stance against the agency while being dependent on the agency, resulting in feelings of being "stuck" with few options. The supervisors may be in a love/hate relationship with the agency. They love the personal and job satisfaction, the HR benefits, and perks they enjoy, while hating the agency structure, policies, procedures, and overall negative and punitive climate.

The negative climate of the agency may also serve as a bonding factor for the supervisors. They may experience the negative climate in the agency as a source of belonging and connectedness because of their own negativity. Even though they are negative, they work with other supervisors, caseworkers, and administrators, who also have a negative perception of the agency, clients, and the job overall. The negative climate of the agency has become the norm rather than the exception, creating a negative culture. Supervisors may feel powerless to positively impact or affect change within the environment, so they accept the negative culture as a reality and normal consequence of working at CPS and adapt. This allows supervisor to thrive and develop resilience in spite of the stressful and negative environment.

In addition, supervisors could be experiencing camaraderie, a sense of belonging, and needed support to honestly share feelings and vent frustrations without fear of reprisal or disclosure that allows them to stay. This may explain the high levels of energy involved when discussing negatives of the agency and the inability of most supervisors to

identify positives. The presence of a personal mission/calling could be very realistic, but could also allow supervisors to assume the role of spiritual or religious martyrs who are sacrificing themselves for the greater good. Supervisors may have adopted a "we're all in this together" attitude as well as a "let's all go down together – fighting" approach to working at CPS. These attitudes may serve to increase their levels of tenacity, perseverance, stick-to-it-iveness, and adaptability – resilience. It also appears that administrators may also have adapted to the negative culture as evidenced by the punitive climate and approaches currently employed. If agency administrators have indeed adapted to the negative and punitive climate, they may be unaware of their role in perpetuating the negative culture and the impact of their actions on employees. This may explain why some supervisors don't feel supported by their program directors or other agency administrators. Ignoring and/or denying the reality of the culture may be a necessary part of the adaptation process for administrators. They may not perceive the environment in the same way supervisors do; therefore, they can't be supportive.

Resiling in a negative rather than positive manner, may be an unexpected consequence of the culture of negativity inherent in the agency. The findings of this study may indicate that resilience is not always related to a positive attitude and approach to life, but may involve positive and negative aspects of personality, but still serve the same purpose of enhancing perseverance, stick-to-it-ive-ness, and the abilities to endure and recover from adversity. It may be possible to be resilient and negative, especially in environments like CPS where negativity is a part of the daily culture.

Implications

      The results of this study are significant for child welfare administrators, social work educators, and social work practitioners. Participants provided significant information for CPS administrators regarding why they have remained employed. This information will be useful in assisting administrators with identifying the issues and concerns of supervisors within the agency. Maslach (1982) stated "if all the apples in a barrel are rotten, it is the barrel that should be blamed and not the individual apple" (p. 67). Therefore, the agency administrators could utilize the information to assess the agency's role in the turnover rate. It may be necessary to modify policies and procedures which could improve the climate of the agency and reduce internal stressors that have been identified as primary contributors to supervisor and caseworker turnover. This would insure that policies and procedures are implemented that are supportive of supervisors and caseworkers rather than being a source of blame and stress. Currently, supervisors perceive administrators are looking for someone to blame and punish when cases are not closed or negative case outcomes occur. However, changing this aspect of agency climate would require a change in the mindset of administrators and the culture of the agency.

      Although CPS administrators appear to be working diligently to achieve legislatively mandated hiring goals, participants perceive that there are very few retention efforts being initiated. Currently, most retention efforts are focused on newly-hired caseworkers, ignoring the hard-working, committed, dedicated, and resilient staff who stay. Participants provided information that could be utilized to develop methods to provide more support for staff, and recognize and reward tenured staff, specifically

supervisors. Retention efforts that included tenured staff could greatly improve morale and reduce turnover. The importance of self-care should also be emphasized and encouraged by administrators.

The study results could be utilized by agency administrators to modify hiring and selection procedures to include an exploration of resilient characteristics in the process. Questions could be developed which would elicit information related to the motives for employment or advancement, organizational skills, coping methods, and sense of humor, those characteristics identified as related to resilient. These questions would be asked of newly-hired employees as well as caseworkers seeking promotion to supervisor. Selection of individuals with resilient characteristics could also assist with reducing turnover.

Social work educators could utilize the results of this study to develop curriculum that would develop and enhance the resilience of students, some of whom will seek employment in child welfare. Educators who teach social work practice courses could assist students in developing effective self-care plans which would serve as protective factors, alleviating or minimizing the personal and educational stressors experienced while in school and work-related stressors they will encounter upon graduation. Study results could be utilized by social work educators responsible for field/internship programs to identify students' resilient characteristics and levels of resilience. This would enhance the ability to place students in internship settings whereby their skills could be utilized most effectively and/or place students in settings that would best assist them in resilient development. Social work educators could also partner with the agency to provide curriculum and/or training that could be utilized to consistently enhance the

resilience of employees. Training could include self-care, supervisor competencies, identification of a personal mission, and accessing resources within the agency.

The study results could also be utilized by social work practitioners, especially those who provide clinical and therapeutic services.   Social work practitioners could assist clients with identifying their own resilient characteristics and available protective factors which the clients could employ to improve their personal functioning.

Limitations

Although the study population was representative of agency supervisors, the results cannot be generalized beyond this population due to the small number of participants (n=50). Therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated to verify the results and determine whether they are representative of the population of child welfare supervisors overall.

Future Research

The researcher plans to conduct an additional study with this population utilizing a quantitative approach in an effort to replicate the results and broaden the knowledge base. The resilient characteristics identified will be utilized to develop a questionnaire that can be administered to all agency supervisors. A quantitative approach will provide an opportunity to determine the significance of the relationship between resilient characteristics and retention among child welfare employees with an increased sample size. Future research will also provide validation of participant responses and verify whether study participants were as honest and forthcoming as perceived.

Recommendations

   One of the goals of the research was to affect agency policy, specifically related to hiring and retention. Additional recommendations have been developed from the information provided by study participants and are outlined below. These recommendations will be shared with CPS administrators. They are as follows:

 1. Ongoing support groups for supervisors.

   Participants did not want to leave the focus group sessions and some requested that the researcher meet with them the next week. These support groups could provide much-needed support, but could also provide an opportunity for supervisors to share best practice ideas related to case and people management. Support groups would also serve as a bonding opportunity and alleviate the isolation experienced by supervisors, especially those in rural areas.

 2. Allow supervisors to provide input into agency decisions.

   This was reported by all supervisors as one of the primary negative aspects of the agency. Allowing every supervisor to provide input would not be feasible; however, supervisors could be appointed, on a rotating basis, to hiring and workgroup committees whereby they could provide input regarding hiring and policy decisions. Including supervisors in the decision-making process would recognize their knowledge, skills, and expertise. Supervisor input could result in hiring people who are a better fit for the agency, and could increase awareness of the effects of proposed policies on staff and clients. Hiring people with the necessary skills to become effective caseworkers could also result in better case outcomes, improve the cost efficiency of training funds, and allow for more efficient use of staff. .

3. Implement retention efforts.

   Supervisors reported getting no recognition, rewards, or praise for doing a good job. Certificates and verbal praise are minimal examples of recognition that could positively impact retention.

4. Encourage self-care.

   Supervisors (and other employees) should also be encouraged and actively supported to practice self-care by agency administrators. Supervisors should be encouraged to take leave, exercise, and identify hobbies. Self-care will reduce burnout by allowing employees to re-energize, resulting in improved retention.

5. Develop supervisors.

   Supervisors are sometimes placed in positions and expected to know how to do the job with little to no instruction. There should be training, guidance, and mentors provided to new supervisors to assist them in developing the skills they will need to become an effective and successful supervisor. Training should be provided before supervisors assume a supervisor position, so that they will not make avoidable mistakes. In addition, the development of a BSD for supervisors is recommended. BSD would consist of instruction on policy, procedures, best practice, personnel management, and developing caseworkers.

6. Modify hiring/selection procedures to include assessment of resilience.

   Efforts should be made to hire people with the resilient characteristics identified in the study. The supervisors that participated in the study have shown that the qualities they possess have directly influenced their ability to remain employed with CPS. Hiring

people with these characteristics should improve retention of staff, morale, and overall

agency climate.

Tables 1-6

SUPERVISOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 1 - Gender

Female	Male	Total
39	11	50
78%	22%	100%

Table 2 - Ethnicity

European American	African-American	Latino	Asian	Total
31	11	6	1	50
62%	24%	12%	2%	100%

Table 3 - Years Employed/Supervising

	Range	Average	Total
# Years with the Agency	3-33	11	556.5
# Years Supervising	1-31	4	188.5
Age When Started	22-65	31	1548
Current Age	28-65	42	2108

Table 4 - Program Areas

INV	CVS	FBSS	FAD	PAL	OJT/Training	Total
24	12	8	3	1	2	50
48%	24%	16%	6%	2%	4%	100%

INV: Investigations
CVS: Conservatorship
FBSS: Family-Based Safety Services
FAD: Foster and Adoptive Home Development
PAL: Preparation for Adult Living
OJT: On-the-Job Training Supervisor

Table 5 - Office Location

Urban	Rural	Total
37	13	50
74%	26%	100%

Table 6 - Degrees

Degree	Bachelor's	Master's	TOTAL	%
Biology	1		1	2%
Business Management	2		2	4%
Counseling	0	1	1	2%
Criminal Justice	4		4	8%
Elementary Education	1		1	2%
English	1		1	2%
Geology/Anthropology	1		1	2%
Health Care Administration	1		1	2%
Psychology	7	1	8	16%
Science	2		2	4%
Social Work	10	12	22	44%
Sociology	6		6	12%
Total	36	14	50	100%
%	72%	28%		100%

Table 7.1

Focus Group Themes
Axial Coding

Why Do Supervisors Stay?	Personal Character-istics?	Positive Aspects?	Negative Aspects?	Negatives Continued
Making a difference	Tenacity; Multi-tasker	Growth/ Development	Fiscal Focus	Not valued; Not heard
Change agent; Influence	Flexible; Adaptable	Training	Witch hunt	Inequities
Developing workers	Coping skills	Promotion	Policies imposed	Salary
Advocacy	Patience	Fulfill mission	No incentives	No power No autonomy
Higher plan; Divine intervention	Ethical; integrity	Bonding w/ workers.	Administrators; Middle status; Specialization	Low Morale; Burnout
Balance in life	Sense of humor	P.D. support	Workloads	Not respected
Helping; Niche	Social skills	Peer support; Respect	Technology	No career ladder
Older; Life experience	Tenured; experience	Shared passions	Accountability	Micro management
Commitment	Positive attitude	Change agent	Overloaded	Culture of fear

Table 7.2
Focus Group Themes – Axial Coding (Continued)

Why Do Supervisors Stay?	Personal Character-istics?	Positive Aspects?	Negative Aspects?	Negatives, Continued
Circle of Life	Motivated	Influence	Burnout	Policy
Mission	Imitative	Advocacy	Secondary trauma	Punitive environment
Salary	Open-minded	Flexibility	Turnover	Lack of communication
Important job	Desire to develop	Privileges of position	Isolated	Lack of resources
Client appreciation	Practice self-care	Benefits	Salary	Constant change
Peers, P.D.	Can confront, make changes	Resources; technology	Personnel issues	Physically taxing
Flexibility	Focused; Multi-Tasker	Stipend	Time demands Daily reports	Law enforcement focus
Retirement	Accountability	Evidence of efforts	Stricter guidelines	Delayed resolution
Important role; Pride	Stick-to-it-iveness	Personal fulfillment	No perks; recognition	Loyalty not reciprocated

Table 7.3

Focus Groups
Axial Coding (continued)

Agency Contributes?	Reasons For Leaving?	Reasons (Cont.)
Flexibility	Family obligations	No loyalty
Training	Voluntary demotions	Feeling betrayed
P.D. support	Lackadaisical	Turnover of tenure
Benefits	Leave on high note – Leave good legacy	Increased Accountability
Salary	Retirement	Criticism
New way of doing Business	Change in focus: Paperwork vs. mission	Not valued; not heard; not considered
Clear expectations	Focus on case outcomes And not clients	Betraying workers via agency dictates
Mentors	Punitive management	Feel replaceable
Supervisory Advisory Council	"Buck shot" style of supervision	No control; autonomy
Nothing	Inequities	
	Middle management	
	Outsourcing	
	No support	
	Public perception	
	Witch hunts	
	Overwhelmed	
	Job harder	
	Unrealistic expectations	
	Turnover; vacancies	

Table 8

Focus Groups
Selective Coding

Why Stay?	Personal Characteristics?	Positive Aspects?	Negative Aspects?	Agency Contributes?	Reasons For Leaving?
Mission	Resilience	Support	Internal stressors (listed below)	Benefits	Personal reasons
Calling	Protective factors	Job satisfaction	Agency climate	Retention efforts	Internal stressors (listed below)
Support	Competencies	Personal Satisfaction	Specialization		Agency climate
Job satisfaction	Personal traits	Mission	Unrealistic expectations		Unrealistic Expectations
Personal satisfaction	Self-care	Growth & Development	External stressors		
Benefits					
Work and life experience					

Table 9.1
Interviews -Axial Coding

Difficult?	Best?	Keeps You Employed?	Traits/ Characteristics	Cope With Stress?/ Able To Remain	Develop Ability?	MOTIVATES?
Personnel Actions	Camaraderie	Mission	Maturity	Self- care	Experience	Internal stressors (listed below)
People mgmt.	Support	Calling	Sense of humor	Support system	Mission	Calling
Workload	Successes	Like/enjoy job	Mission	Mission	Calling	Mission
Time mgmt.	Change agent	Change agent	Calling	Organization Skills		Personal Satisfaction
Caseloads	Love job	People	Social skills	Faith		Retirement
Unrealistic Expectations	Personal Mission	Training	Rewards/ Recognition	Personal Obligations		People – peers, Workers, clients
No recognition/ Rewards	Rewards/ Recognition	Advancement Opportunities	Organization Skills			Obligations – Staff and family
Bureaucracy		Calm/Easy-going Personality	Self-care	Military Experience		
Implementing Policy		Life Balance		Personal Fulfillment		
Middle status		Faith				
Inequities		Job security/ Pending retirement				
Accountability						

Table 9.2
Interviews -Axial Coding

Energy?	Primary Reason?	Agency Contributes?	Benefits?	Positives?	Negatives?	Future Goals?
God	Mission	Salary	Flexibility	Mission	Bureaucracy	Advance to P.D.
Faith	Calling	P.D. support	HR benefits	Helping	No recognition	Retire
Camaraderie	Love job	Training	Relationships	Peer support	Workloads	Graduate school
From within	Successes	People	Salary	Advancement	Caseloads	Pursue outside Interests/careers
Mission	Rewards	Shared mission	Advancement	Flexibility	Low salaries	Change This?
Successes	People	HR benefits	Successes	Shared mission	Turnover	Nothing/ Anything
Job satisfaction	Pending Retirement	Technology	Mission fulfilled	Job security	Unrealistic Expectations	Negative climate
		Nothing	Personal satisfaction	Personal fulfillment	No voice, no input, Not heard	Family obligations Personal illness
			Job Satisfaction	Change agent	Inequities	Agency changes
				Supervisor support	Specialization	Outsourcing
				Technology	No accountability	Can't handle it
					Low morale Unfair	Divine intervention

132

Table 10
Interviews
Selective Coding
(Core Categories)

Why Do Supervisors Stay?

Mission/ Calling	Agency Climate	SUPPORT	Self- Care	Personal Motivations	Traits/ Characteristics
Personal Satisfaction	Workloads	Camaraderie	Hobbies	Pending Retirement	Compassion Committed
Personal Fulfillment	Caseloads	Peer support	Vacation	Family Obligations	Integrity Perseverance
Faith	Unrealistic Expectations	P.D. support	Family		Listening and Social skills
Job Satisfaction	No rewards/ Recognition	Family support			Flexible
Successes	Bureaucracy				Tolerance and Patience
					Sense of humor

Table 11

Comparison of Data Analyses Conducted
By
Researcher and Reviewers

Researcher	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2
Mission/Calling	Altruism and Commitment	<u>Intrinsic Rewards</u> Mission
Support – Peers, Program Directors, Caseworkers	Support	<u>Intrinsic Rewards</u> Support
Personal & Job Satisfaction	Self-Efficacy and Confidence	Competence and Skills Enjoy Teaching Staff Staff do Well; Stay
Agency Climate/Benefits	Agency Benefits	Extrinsic Rewards Benefits and Retirement Flexible Schedule Support
Personal Characteristics Sense of Humor Flexible Balance in Life/Self-Care Perseverance Tenacity Stick-to-it-ive-ness Approachable Develop Staff Personal Growth/Development	Personal Traits	Supervisor Characteristics Sense Of Humor. Flexible Good Balance in Life Dedicated to Job Perseverance Ability to Delegate Desire to Teach staff Desire to Attend Training Leadership by Example Don't Like Being Punitive
Internal & External Stressors		Agency not supportive <u>Major Challenges</u> Negative public perception Frustration with Legislative Decisions Decentralized HR Too much Paperwork Not enough Input into Changes

Figure 1
Relationships of Themes and Categories

Context   Process   Goal

Supervisors at CPS ───────────►   Interplay of Protective Factors ──────────►   Retention/
                                        and Stressors   Employment

Longevity

Mission/Calling   Job Satisfaction   Work/Life Experience

                                         ┌─────────┐
                                         │   ▲   │
Support ─────────────────────────────────►│   │   │◄────────────────────────── Self-Care
                                         │   │   │
                                         │   ▼   │
Benefits ◄───────────────────────────────└─────────┘◄────────────────────────── Successes
                                         Personal Satisfaction

Personal Traits/Characteristics ◄──────► ┌─────────────┐ ◄──────► Professional
Growth/Development   │ Internal Stressors │
                                          │   ▲   │
                                          │   │   │
                                          │   ▼   │
Personal Motivations ◄──────────────────► │ External Stressors │ ◄──────► Personal
Growth/Development   └─────────────┘

135

Appendix A
Potential Research Opportunity!

This is a personal invitation to participate in a research study on resilience of Child Protective Services (CPS) Supervisors. This study is being conducted by Angela Ausbrooks, a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin, for the purpose of completing her dissertation.

Because of my past work experience at CPS and continued involvement through my present job, I am very interested in why employees remain with the agency in spite of the increased turnover and stress related to child protection. I worked for CPS from 1991-2000 as an investigator, FBSS, and ongoing, caseworker, ending my employment with the agency as a regional trainer. During that time, I personally observed several people who were unable to remain employed, but I also had the opportunity to know and work closely with those who made CPS their career.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the past to determine the reasons for early termination. I believe that those of you who have remained with the agency and endured the inherent stressors of protecting children possess special skills and characteristics that should be explored and cultivated. To that end, I am interested in finding out those characteristics that have enhanced your ability to remain with the agency. I consider this ability to be resilience and consider you to be resilient. I am particularly interested in determining why you have stayed with the agency.

The study will include focus groups and individual interviews whereby you will be asked to share those characteristics you posses that have allowed you to remain with CPS more than two years. I am also interested in the characteristics of the agency that have contributed to your longevity. I anticipate that focus groups will be approximately one hour and interviews will be approximately two hours. Individual interviews will be conducted by me and will be scheduled after your consent to participate in the study is received. Focus groups will be scheduled throughout the state of Texas and you will be notified of the dates and location as soon as they are determined. Your participation in this study is voluntary and your identity will remain confidential. Your name will not be included on any paperwork completed during the interview or focus groups.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in the study because I consider your participation very important and extremely vital to my research. You are the experts on this subject. I hope that you will seriously consider sharing your knowledge and expertise in what I hope will be groundbreaking research.

Thank you,
Angela R. Ausbrooks
Doctoral Candidate
University of Texas at Austin
ara42@mail.utexas.edu

Appendix B
Informed Letter of Consent

Consent Form

Title: Child Welfare Supervisor Retention: An Exploratory Study of Personal and
Organizational Resilience
IRB PROTOCOL #: 2006-05-0055

Conducted By: Angela Ausbrooks, LMSW
Of University of Texas at Austin: School of Social Work   Telephone: 512-924-0470

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You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information
about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and
answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might
have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You
can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current for future
relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish
to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your
records.

The purpose of this study is to examine the resilience of Child Protective Services (CPS)
Supervisors.   I am interested in the resilience levels of those CPS employees, specifically
supervisors, who have been with the agency more than two years. I hope to learn what
has contributed to your ability to remain employed with the agency, especially when
others are unable to do so. You are invited to participate in this study because of your
length of employment and the fact that you have endured the stressors of the agency as a
caseworker and supervisor.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:
- Participate in a focus group with other supervisors to provide information regarding those
  factors that have contributed to your longevity with the agency.
- Participate in an individual interview with the researcher whereby you will be asked to
  verify the information provided by supervisors in the focus groups and to provide more
  specific information regarding those factors that have contributed to your personal
  employment longevity.
- Most participants will be invited to participate in a focus group OR an individual
  interview, however, some of you will be asked to participate in both research activities.

Total estimated time to participate in this study is approximately two hours for the focus
groups and one hour for the individual interview.

Risks of being in the study include:

137

- Loss of anonymity if you participate in a focus group.
- Having the information you share being shared with others if other participants don't maintain confidentiality.
- The focus groups and interviews may involve other risks that are currently unforeseeable. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

Benefits of being in the study include:
- Serving as an authority on resilience and employment longevity.
- Providing important information that can be utilized to identify resilient characteristics.
- Influencing changes in agency policy and hiring practices.
- Influencing social work research and practice.

Compensation:
- No monetary compensation will be provided for participating in this study.

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:
- The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.
- To insure confidentiality, no names will be requested verbally or in writing and no identifying information will be included on any notes, focus group documentation, or interview documentation.
- All study documents (notes, documentation, etc.) will be kept in a file cabinet in the personal office of the Principal Investigator. No documents will be stored at any of the CPS offices.

The **records** of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Institutional Review Board, and (study sponsors, if any) have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the **confidentiality** of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have any questions about the study please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact Lisa Leiden, Ph.D., Chair of The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, (512) 471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Focus Group
Participant Demographics

The following information is needed to assist the researcher in determining those personal characteristics that may be indicative of persons who have experienced employment longevity at CPS. Please be as honest and accurate as possible in your responses.

_____

1. Age _____

2. Gender _____

3. Number of years employed with CPS _____

4. Positions you have held while employed – Please list all positions **beginning with your current position**.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How long have you been in your current position?_____

6. What is your highest degree? Please circle the correct response.

        Bachelor's   Master's   Doctorate

7. Please identify your major area of study for each degree (Example: Bachelor's in Psychology, Master's in Social Work or B.A. – Psychology, MSW)

_____

_____

_____
Thank you for your assistance!

Appendix D

Focus Group Questions

1. Why do supervisors stay at CPS?

2. What personal characteristics do supervisors possess that help them stay employed?

3. What are the positives of working at CPS as a supervisor?

4. What are the negatives of working at CPS as a supervisor?

5. What about the agency contributes to or helps supervisors stay employed?

6. Based on your conversations with other employees, what is the primary reason they have stayed with CPS?

7. Do you know anyone who is considering leaving the agency?

8. What do they say is their primary reason for wanting to leave?

9. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you for participating!

Appendix E

Focus Group Questions
(Modified)

1. Why do supervisors stay at CPS?

2. What personal characteristics do supervisors possess that help them stay employed?

3. What are the positive aspects of working at CPS as a supervisor?

4. what are the negative aspects of working at CPS as a supervisor?

5. What about the agency contributes to or helps supervisors stay employed?

6. If you know any supervisors who are considering leaving the agency, what do they say are their primary reasons for wanting to leave?

7. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank you for participating!

Appendix F

Dissertation Study Interview Guide

These questions will be utilized by the principal investigator to remain focused on the specific information desired from each participant and insure that the same information is obtained from each participant. The principal investigator will not ask these questions in the form of a survey, but will encourage participants to talk freely, sharing their personal information in their own manner.

1. Did you participate in a focus group?

2. How long have you worked for CPS?
    a. Have you ever terminated your employment?
    b. If so, when did you return? What year?

3. How old were you when you started working for the agency?

4. How old are you now? Gender_____ (M=male, F=female)

5. What is your ethnicity?

6. What is your highest degree?

7. What was your major field of study?
    Social Work Majors:
    a. Did you receive a Title IV-E stipend?
    b. If yes, how many semesters did you receive a stipend?

8. From what college or university did you earn your degree?

9. What is your current position?
    a. How many people do you supervise?
    b. Do they all have the same job responsibilities?

10. How long have you been in this position?

11. What are your current job responsibilities?
    a. What is the most difficult part of your job?
    b. What makes it difficult?
    c. What is the best part of your job?
    d. What makes it the best?

12. What positions have you held during your tenure with the agency?
    a. What was the most difficult part of each of these positions?
    b. What made it difficult?

First Wave: Traits & Characteristics

13. Why do you stay with CPS?

14. What **personal traits or characteristics** have helped you stay with CPS?

Second Wave: Process Of Coping

15. How do you cope with the stress at CPS?

16. What helped you **develop** the ability to stay at CPS?

17. What is your primary coping strategy?

Third Wave: Motivation

18. What motivates you to continue working at CPS?

19. Where do you obtain the energy to continue working at CPS?

20. What is your primary reason for staying with CPS?

Organizational Climate

21. Is there anything about the agency that has helped you stay employed?

22. What are the positive aspects of CPS?

23. What are the negative aspects of CPS?

Future Employment Plans

25. What are your future goals?
     a. What would you like to be doing in 2-3 years?

26. How long do you plan to remain employed?

27. What could happen to change this plan?

28. Anything else you want to share?

Thank you for participating!

Appendix G
Dissertation Interview Guide
(Modified)

These questions will be utilized by the principal investigator to remain focused on the specific information desired from each participant and insure that the same information is obtained from each participant.

1. How long have you worked for CPS?
    a. Have you ever terminated your employment?
    b. If so, when did you return? What year?

2. How old were you when you started working for the agency?

3. How old are you now?

4. What is your ethnicity?

5. What is your highest degree?

6. What was your major field of study?
    Social Work Majors:
    a. Did you receive a Title IV-E stipend?
    b. If yes, how many semesters did you receive a stipend?

7. From what college or university did you earn your degree?

8. What is your current position?
    a. Where is your office located? (e.g. Austin, Waco, rural, etc.)
    b. How many people do you supervise?
    c. Do they all have the same job responsibilities?

9. How long have you been in this position?

10. What are your current job responsibilities?
    a. What is the most difficult part of your job?
    b. What makes it difficult?
    c. What is the best part of your job?
    d. What makes it the best?

11. What positions have you held during your tenure with the agency?
    a. What was the most difficult part of each of these positions?
    b. What made it difficult?

First Wave: Traits & Characteristics

12. What keeps you employed with CPS?

13. What **personal traits or characteristics** have helped you stay with CPS?

Second Wave: Process Of Coping

14. How do you cope with the stress at CPS?

15. How have you been able to remain employed at CPS?

16. How did you **develop** the ability to stay at CPS?

Third Wave: Motivation

17. What motivates you to continue working at CPS?

18. Where do you obtain the energy to continue working at CPS?

19. What would you consider your primary reason for staying with CPS?

Organizational Climate

20.   Is there anything about the agency that has helped you stay employed?

21. What are the benefits of working at CPS?

22. What are the positive aspects of CPS?

23. What are the negative aspects of CPS?

<u>Future Employment Plans</u>

24. What are your future goals?
a. What would you like to be doing in 2-3 years?

25. How long do you plan to remain employed?

26. What could happen to change this plan?

27. Anything else you want to share?

Thank you for participating!

Appendix H

Profile of Supervisor
with Resilient Characteristics

1. Possess personal mission – view position at Child Protective Services as an avenue to fulfill their altruistic need to serve people and change their lives for the better.

2. Work and Life experience – having work and life experience prior to coming to CPS appears to provide person with protective factors to withstand the stressors and minimize their effects

3. Sense of humor – ability to laugh at oneself, and engage in the humor specific to CPS.

4. Organized – organization and time management skills

5. People Management Skills – ability to manage caseworkers, including ability to confront and hold caseworkers accountable

6. Social Skills – ability to get along with others

7. Change Agent – view self as change agent. Consider it part of the supervisory role to develop caseworkers and affect positive changes for staff and clients.

8. Coping Skills – presence of protective factors to ameliorate stressors

9. Self-Care – active self-care techniques

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