ORGANIZATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF STAFF TURNOVER IN OUTPATIENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Danica K. Knight, Ph.D., Jennifer Edwards Becan, Ph.D., & Patrick M. Flynn, Ph.D.

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STAFF TURNOVER

- ...affects service provision (Glisson et al., 2008)
- ...creates financial strain (Shaw, Duffy, et al., 2005)
- ...disrupts organizational efficiency (Alexander, Bloom, & Nuchols, 1994)
- ...threatens implementation and sustainability of new practices (Glisson et al., 2008)

- Is a pervasive problem within the field of substance abuse treatment (revolving door) (Knudsen, et al., 2003; Knight, et al., 2011; McLellan, et al. 2003)
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO TURNOVER DECISIONS

- **Burnout/Emotional Exhaustion**
  (Ellis & Miller, 1994; Knudsen, Ducharme, & Roman, 2006; Lake, 1998)

- **Low Job Satisfaction**
  (Cotton & Tuttle, 1987; DeCotiis & Summers, 1987; Eby, Freeman, Rush, & Lance, 1999; Jenaro, Flores, & Arias, 2007)

- **Stress**
  (Ben-Dror, 1994; Kirk, Koeske, & Koeske, 1993)

- **Organizational Climate**
  (Ducharme, Knudsen & Roman, 2008; Glisson, Schoewald, Kelleher, Landsverk, Hoagwood, Mayberg, Green, 2008)
Turnover occurs within an open and interactive system

Turnover is presumed to be affected by systemic changes

- Decreasing CENSUS
- Decreasing BUDGET
- Increasing WORKLOAD
To determine what happens in an organization after a period of staff turnover, specifically regarding the impact on perceptions of organizational functioning.
Work Environment Demands and Resources

**Demands:** Aspects of a job that require sustained effort
- Organizational functioning examples: stress, inadequate staffing

**Resources:** Aspects of a job that are functional, reduce job demands, or stimulate growth
- Organizational functioning examples: supportive coworker relationships—Cohesion, Communication, Collaboration

Both contribute to personal job strain, motivation, and decisions to remain employed by an organization

Baaker & Demerouti, 2007 (Journal of Managerial Psychology)
1. Are perceptions of job demands higher and supportive coworker relationships lower in programs that have recently experienced turnover?

2. Does turnover affect perceptions of organizational functioning after controlling for

   A. Contextual factors (budget and census change)?
   B. Individual factors (workload and tenure)?
Current Study:
- 353 clinical staff drawn from 63 programs
- Program operations info collected at years 1 and 2
- Staff surveys of organizational functioning collected at year 2
- Turnover, census change, & budget change reflect period between years 1 & 2
### Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 1</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SSO</strong></td>
<td><strong>SSO</strong></td>
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<td>- Parent affiliation</td>
<td>- Clinical staff turnover</td>
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<td>- Service approach</td>
<td>- Budget change</td>
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<td>- Staff Size</td>
<td>- Census change</td>
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**SOE/ORC**

- Counselor demographics, tenure, workload
- Stress
- Inadequate staffing
- Cohesion
- Communication
- Collaboration

Multi-level Analysis using HLM: 353 Clinical staff, 63 Programs

Broome, et al., 2007 (Special Issue of JSAT); Knight, et al., 2008 (HSR)
PROGRAMS
- 73% Not for profit
- 69% Affiliated with parent organization
- 25% Regular, 16% intensive, 59% mixed outpatient
- Employed 5.4 counselors (avg.)
- On average, 26% of clinical staff left

CLINICAL STAFF
- 60% Female
- 76% White, 13% African-American, 11% Hispanic
- Average age 48
- Tenure: 25% <1 year, 27% 1-3 years, 20% 3-5 years, 28% 6+ years
- Average caseload 26 clients
Percentage of Programs Reporting Change in Census and Budget

- Decreasing
- Stable
- Increasing
Hierarchical Linear Modeling

**Level 2**
(Program Responses)

**Program Context**
- Proportion of Turnover
- Census Change
- Budget Change
- Parent Affiliation

**Level 1**
(Individual Responses)

**Individual Factors**
- Age
- Non-minority (white)
- Female
- Tenure
- Caseload

5 separate HLM models, nesting staff within respective programs

**Work Environment Demands**
- Stress
- Inadequate Staffing

**Supportive Work Relations**
- Cohesion
- Communication
- Collaboration
**Staff Turnover and Work-Environment Demands**

**Level 2: Program Measures**
- Increasing Census
- Decreasing Budget
- High Turnover

**Level 1: Individual Measures**
- Stress
- Inad. Staffing
- Longer Tenure
- Higher Load

Arrows represent relationships significant at $p < .05$
STAFF TURNOVER AND SUPPORTIVE WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Year 1

Level 2: Program Measures

Increasing Budget

Level 1: Individual Measures

Low Turnover

Year 2

Communication

Collaboration

Arrows represent relationships significant at p<.05
The current study provides empirical evidence that staff turnover influences how employees perceive demands and support within the workplace.

When turnover is high:
- stress is higher
- staffing is perceived as inadequate
- communication is poorer
- collaboration is lower

Effects of turnover remain even when controlling for program context (budget & census) and individual factors (tenure & caseload)
SUMMARY

Work-environment Demands

 In addition to higher turnover, program context (increasing census, decreasing budget) and individual factors (tenure, caseload) contribute to stress

 Only turnover contributes significantly to perceptions of inadequate staffing

Supportive Work Relationships

 In addition to low turnover, increasing budget is associated with better communication and collaboration

 Associations with cohesion were non-significant
LIMITATIONS

- Relationships among program measures are not accounted for in the models.

- While increased demands and decreased support may lead to poorer organizational outcomes (including increased risk of employee turnover), the current study does not examine measures of organizational functioning over time.

- Generalizability of findings are limited to outpatient substance abuse treatment settings.
Because social relationships can serve as a buffer against potentially negative effects of workplace demands, it is important to understand factors that affect the development of supportive networks within an organization.

Findings document that supportive coworker relationships may diminish following staff turnover, therefore efforts aimed at strengthening social resources appear to be even more important following the departure of an employee.

Determining what aspects of the organization may be contributing to turnover and targeting ways of strengthening relationships to help staff cope with increasing workplace demands following coworker departure may help to reduce employee stress and prevent further loss of staff.
REFERENCES


A National Research Center for addiction treatment studies in community and correctional settings (over 600 free resource files available)

Guide for New Visitors

- Manuals
- Forms
- Conceptual Guides
- Publications

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