Measuring Organizational Culture and Climate in Staff Retention and Training Evaluation Studies

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Originally Prepared for May 22, 2014 NHSTES
Presented as a Post-NHSTES Webinar on September 29, 2014
Measuring Organizational Culture and Climate

**Purpose of this Session**

- We have attempted to measure organizational culture and climate along with other important constructs in understanding the impact of various variables on staff retention and training outcomes.
- We have used these measures in one way - to determine what variables have the most impact on certain outcomes such as desire to exit the agency, job satisfaction or confidence in engaging in key child welfare practices.
- We want to know other ways we could utilize these data on organizational culture and climate with the datasets we have already gathered, but also as we design future research studies.
Purpose of this Session

• We have been interested in these constructs for many years because in our model of training evaluation we build in the notion and findings from a broad set of training evaluation studies that organizational culture and climate affect learning readiness among staff attending training as well as the willingness and ability of staff to transfer learning to the field. But, until the past few years, we have not had access to adequate measures to test these hypotheses.

• We want to have the group think about the role of organizational culture and climate on learning, practice and retention as well as outcomes in child welfare, in particular, but in other human services areas as well.
The University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work child welfare research team was asked to assess organizational culture and climate in the Jefferson County Region of DCBS in Kentucky so as to determine the factors that may be contributing to the deleterious turnover that has been occurring over the past several years.

The research team scoured the literature to find potential measures that touch on most of the constructs deemed important in predicting turnover. Used many measures gathered for the Butler Institute Western Workforce Study.

We identified more scales than the local members of the child welfare field had time to complete, but most critical scales measuring individual risk factors, local and organizational level culture and climate, and effects on work behavior and intent to leave were included in the final questionnaire.
Methodology

- From September 8 through October 31, 2011 researchers from the University of Louisville’s Kent School of Social Work visited Permanency and Protection (P&P) teams in the 8 Neighborhood Places as well as in the L&N Building.
- Participants in the anonymous survey received food and a chance to win one of ten $25 gift certificates. We also offered the survey on-line for several weeks.
- 111 front line workers and 45 supervisors and administrators completed the survey.
- Out of the 225 P&P staff in Jefferson County, we received a 70% response rate (N = 157)
- The data are representative of the workforce in that sector of the Jefferson County office and are a reliable reflection of the attitudes and behaviors of these employees.
Demographic Measures

- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Age
- Educational background including whether or not they were graduates of the PCWCP program
- Years with DCBS and in current position
- Placement of office (L&N or Neighborhood Place)
- Type of team they worked on (e.g., Intake, Investigations, Ongoing work with children 12 and under, the Adolescent team, R&C, Adoption)
- Number of hours worked per week
- Dimensions of their caseload and workload
Personal Risk and Resiliency Measures

- **Stress** (TCU, 2005)
- **Secondary trauma** (Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale, Bride, Robinson, Yegidis & Figley, 2004)
- **Personal distress** (Davis, 1980, 1983)
- **Empathic concern** (Davis, 1980, 1983)
- **Citizenship** (Smith, et al, 1983)
- **Job satisfaction** included both personal items of actual satisfaction with the job as well as some local and organizational level items such as pay, benefits, resources and fairness (Spector, 1994)
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Local Level Climate Measures

- **Supervisor quality** (Saylor & Wright, 1996)
- **Supervisor support** (McCarthy, 2010)
- **Co-worker support** (Ellett, 2010)
- **Team cohesion** (McCarthy, 2010)
- **Shared vision** (Ellett, 2010)
Organizational Culture and Climate Measures

- **Leadership** (Leake, 2010)
- **Readiness for change** (Leake, 2010)
- **Solving disproportionality and disparities clients face** (Morales, 2010)
- **Worker safety** (Morales, 2010)
- **Role conflict** (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970)
- **Role overload** (Barbee, 2011)
- **Staffing levels** (TCU, 2005)
- **Training system** (Leake, 2010)*

*Some of the training items also focused on preparation for the job which could also be considered a personal risk or resiliency factor.
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Outcome Measures

- **Organizational commitment** (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1979)*
- Exit
- Voice
- Loyalty
- Neglect
- **Cynicism, aggression and inappropriate behaviors**
  that could be precursors to leaving the organization
  (Liljegren, Nordlund, & Ekberg, 2008, Naus, van Iterson & Roe, 2007)

* Could also be seen as a resiliency factor
Questions?
Front Line Workers Intent to Leave (Exit)

• 65% are considering leaving the job

• 42% indicated a high degree of agreement to the statement “I intend to change employers.”

• 34% are actively looking right now for other jobs in the child welfare field

• 34% are looking outside of the field of child welfare for employment
Overall Culture and Climate Shows

- Role conflict mean elevated ($M = 33 \text{ vs } 27$)
- Staffing mean elevated ($M = 20 \text{ vs } 12$)
- Stress mean elevated ($M = 17 \text{ vs } 10$)*
- Overload mean elevated ($M = 47 \text{ vs } 30$)*
- Leadership mean depressed ($M = 33 \text{ vs } 35$)*
- Exit mean elevated ($M = 19 \text{ vs } 15$)*
- Cynicism mean elevated ($M = 19 \text{ vs } 15$)*

*More elevated (or depressed) for front line workers than administrators (supervisors and managers)
Secondary Trauma Overall

• Brian Bride developed a secondary traumatic stress scale (STS) with 17 items that correspond to one of the 17 PTSD symptoms as delineated in the DSM-IV-R (APA, 2000). It is designed to assess the frequency of
  • Intrusion symptoms (criteria B for PTSD)
  • Avoidance symptoms (criteria C for PTSD)
  • Arousal symptoms (criteria D for PTSD)
• Associated with STS resulting from working with traumatized populations
• In an article he published in Social Work in 2007, he assessed secondary trauma among 294 social workers in one state and described how to analyze results of participants taking the scale to better understand the secondary trauma they may be experiencing.
• Only 7% of that study’s sample were child welfare workers.
• 15% were classified as having PTSD.
• Thus, it is important to see how child welfare workers, supervisors and managers are similar to or different from social workers in other fields of practice such as mental health, substance abuse, gerontology etc.
Measurement of Secondary Trauma

- An STS symptom was considered to be endorsed if the respondent indicated that the symptom was experienced occasionally (3), often (4) or very often (5) in the preceding week.
- See attached chart
- In order to reach clinical levels of PTSD a person needs to be exposed to traumatic events which all child welfare workers do. Endorse with a rating of 3, 4 or 5 at least:
  - 1 re-experiencing symptom on the intrusion sub-scale
  - 3 avoidance symptoms on the avoidance sub-scale
  - 2 hyper-arousal symptoms on the arousal sub-scale
- Replicating the analysis in the Bride (2007) article it was found that 49% of Jefferson County P&P staff have clinical levels of PTSD. And another 30% have elevated symptoms of secondary trauma and are vulnerable to PTSD if no intervention occurs.
- This is 3 times more PTSD than the sample of social workers in the 2007 article of 15% with PTSD.
Yet...There are Pockets of Resiliency

- Many employees have strengths (higher than average means on)
  - Empathy
  - Citizenship
  - Organizational commitment
  - Willingness to voice concerns
- There are many positive teams who rate these areas higher on average
  - Supervisor quality
  - Supervisor support
  - Coworker support
  - Team cohesion*
  - Shared vision*
  - Job satisfaction*
- Positive Thrust of the entire organization around dealing with disparities*
- Positive Training System and Preparation for the Job*

*Front line workers scored lower than administrators on these variables. So, while there is resiliency overall, this is less true for front line workers
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What Leads to Exit?

More Secondary Trauma

Less Job Satisfaction

Exit
What are the Mediators?

- What makes people more likely to experience secondary trauma?
- What makes people more likely to have less job satisfaction?
What Leads to Secondary Trauma?

Those who had
• More stress
• More personal distress
• More role overload
• Higher perceptions of staffing deficits
• Less perceived supervisory support were the most traumatized.

• Supportive supervision and having a limited number of roles and adequate staffing can help prevent trauma.
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What Leads to Job Satisfaction?

Those who perceived
- *High levels of quality supervision*
- *Positive about leadership*
- *Positive about the training and preparation they received*
- *Perceived less role overload*
- *Perceived less staffing problems*
- *Perceived less role conflict* were more satisfied with their jobs

Job Satisfaction

- Supervisor Quality
- Leadership
- Training
- Role Overload Conflict
- Staffing Problems
Questions?
Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Conflict (11 items)</th>
<th>Alpha = .86</th>
<th>Front Line Worker Means (s.d.) N = 109</th>
<th>Front Line Supervisor and Managers Means (s.d.) N = 45</th>
<th>Overall (including 3 who did not fit worker or administrative role) Means (s.d.) N = 157</th>
<th>Anovas where significant differences or trends were found comparing workers to administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have to do things that should be done differently.</td>
<td>3.42 (.90)</td>
<td>3.28 (.90)</td>
<td>3.40 (.90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lack of policies and guidelines to help me.</td>
<td>3.60 (.98)</td>
<td>2.40 (.90)</td>
<td>2.55 (.96)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.</td>
<td>3.01 (1.12)</td>
<td>3.00 (.85)</td>
<td>3.01 (1.05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it. 3.12 (1.24) 3.21 (1.0) 3.14 (1.17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment</td>
<td>2.60 (1.08)</td>
<td>2.44 (.98)</td>
<td>2.56 (1.05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.</td>
<td>3.20 (1.14)</td>
<td>3.74 (1.07)</td>
<td>3.35 (1.15)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.</td>
<td>2.94 (1.05)</td>
<td>2.67 (1.02)</td>
<td>2.86 (1.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.</td>
<td>3.32 (1.15)</td>
<td>3.21 (1.15)</td>
<td>3.29 (1.14)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive an assignment without the adequate resources and materials to execute it.</td>
<td>3.07 (1.23)</td>
<td>3.09 (1.04)</td>
<td>3.08 (1.17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work on unnecessary things.</td>
<td>3.01 (1.17)</td>
<td>2.72 (1.01)</td>
<td>2.94 (1.13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to work under vague directives or orders.</td>
<td>2.94 (1.13)</td>
<td>2.69 (1.05)</td>
<td>2.87 (1.11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Question for the Group

• Look at the sheets of means on the various scales. Does the group that uses many of these measures in other studies have means and standard deviations for other child welfare systems? In order to give this agency a sense of how they “scored” on various aspects of organizational culture and climate - I just compared their scores with the mid-way point for each measure. My guess is that most child welfare agencies are skewed in a slightly negative direction on many of these measures. How else can I use this data to give the agency a profile of organizational culture and climate?

• Besides running multiple regressions to show the impact of various aspects of individual risk and resiliency variables as well as organizational culture and climate variables on exit from the organization, how else might I have utilized the scores on the various culture and climate measures?

• How have others utilized these types of measures in their work with organizations?

• One other way that we used these measures was in assessing variables that may enhance or derail various training approaches.
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Training

• During the Fall of 2012 through the Fall of 2013 the U of L, CWTA research team attempted to contact 257 Credit for Learning (CFL) participants who had completed Academy training, 79 PCWCP graduates who had begun working in DCBS, and 16 MSW Stipend graduates for a total of 352 people in order for them to complete a six month follow up survey focusing on how the training or educational program prepared them for the job as a child welfare worker. Other questions were also asked that can give insight into how other variables such as workplace supervision, co-worker support and stress can affect the ability to engage in positive workplace behaviors.

• Out of the 257 CFL participants, six months after the completion of the Academy, 70 had already left employment. Of the remaining 187 CLF trainees, 129 total completed the questionnaire for a 70% response rate. Out of the 79 PCWCP graduates, 71 were still employed by the Cabinet and 59 completed the questionnaire for an 83% response rate. Out of the 16 MSW Stipend graduates, all were still employed by the Cabinet and 15 completed the questionnaire for a 94% response rate. Thus, the results described below are based on a valid sample of training and education participants.
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Training

- CLF scored higher than the other groups on professional development, and exit and neglect.

- PCWCP seemed strongest in leadership, shared vision but also staffing, STS, and overload confirming the notion that they are given a great deal of responsibility quickly, but despite that were lowest on exit and highest on organizational commitment.

- MSW Stipend grads seemed to score highest on stress, but also voicing concerns, loyalty, job satisfaction, co-worker support, team cohesiveness, professional development, change and citizenship.
# Measuring Organizational Culture and Climate

## Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSW</th>
<th>PCWCP</th>
<th>CFL</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Support</td>
<td>Supervisor Support</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STS</td>
<td>STS</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>STS</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Cohesion</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor Quality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>STS</td>
<td>Overload</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Quality</td>
<td>Supervisor Quality</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Variables Affecting Transfer of Learning

• Generally, having a supportive supervisor and lower stress was most related to more confidence in key child welfare practice behaviors.

• Perceived positive leadership was a variable for all three groups in feeling positive about the professional development opportunities they have been given and the impact of that on their jobs.

• For the more seasoned workforce (MSW and PCWCP) experiencing less secondary trauma is key, while feeling that co-workers are operating from a shared vision helped the newest workers from CFL appreciate professional development.
Variables Affecting Retention

- Job satisfaction was predicted by high commitment across the MSW and CFL groups and feeling that the team was cohesive was a strong predictor for PCWCP graduates.
- The satisfaction of CFL trainees was influenced by supervisor quality and overall positive leadership.
- PCWCP students also were happier when they were experiencing less secondary trauma.
- In this study, not feeling confident in the quality of leadership and supervision was critical to wanting to leave the organization.
- In addition, PCWCP graduates experiencing more STS wanted to exit.
- CFL trainees who reported feeling overloaded and who had lower levels of organizational commitment were more likely to indicate an intent to leave.
- Thus, each group may need different strategies in retention.

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Questions?
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Training Questions

• What else could I do with this organizational culture and climate data?
• What have others done with organizational culture and climate data when assessing training and professional development in child welfare or other human services?
• One interesting thing is that the first study was focused primarily on veteran workers and supervisors and the second was focused primarily on new workers. What impact does time in the agency have on the influence of organizational climate and culture on perceptions, work habits and feelings about the agency?