The Climate of Child Welfare Employee Retention

Helen Cahalane and Edward W. Sites

This article describes differences in perceptions of the child welfare work environment among Title IV-E educated individuals who remain within public child welfare and those who sought employment elsewhere after fulfilling a legal work commitment. Job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and personal accomplishment were predictive of staying versus leaving. The empirical evidence suggests that efforts to retain highly skilled and educated public child welfare workers should focus on creating positive organizational climates within agencies.

Helen Cahalane PhD is Clinical Associate Professor and Principal Investigator, Child Welfare Education and Research Programs, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Edward W. Sites PhD is Professor Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Public child welfare is under great stress in the United States. All informed parties acknowledge that the patchwork quilt of state and federal laws, regulations, and agencies do not always function as a coherent system. Indeed, many child welfare agencies have been found deficient by the courts and the agencies in more than two dozen states have been taken over by receivers under court order. In virtually every public child welfare agency, personnel issues are among the most challenging (U.S. Government Accounting Office, 1995, 2003). High personnel vacancy rates, high staff turnover rates, and excessive caseloads are among the most frequently identified problems contributing to the difficulties child welfare agencies have in fulfilling their legal mandate and in achieving the standards of service the public has a right to expect of the agency entrusted with protecting the well being of society's most vulnerable children (U.S. Government Accounting Office, 2003).

In the field of public child welfare, the shortage of professional personnel is recognized as a nationwide problem. The United States Children's Bureau, the Child Welfare League of America, the National Association of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Education, the American Public Human Services Association, the American Humane Association, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust, federal and state courts, state governments, and others have been working individually and collectively to understand and reverse the trends that have so seriously eroded public, professional, judicial, and legislative confidence in public child welfare. High personnel vacancy and turnover rates, less than desirable educational levels of staff, court determinations of inadequate service, the results of the federal Child and Family Services Review, and other indicators of instability and substandard competency levels are as prevalent as the explanations for the

problems (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993; U.S. Government Accounting Office, 2003). In recent years, the media have overflowed with sensational stories of abuse, neglect, and even death, too much of which has befallen children under official supervision or care.

The enormous rate of turnover facing many child welfare agencies has both direct service and fiscal implications. Vulnerable children and families must be continually reassigned to new workers, and children and youth agencies must undergo both the expense and the uncertainty of hiring and training new employees. The factors associated with this pressing personnel issue are complex and interrelated. For example, high staff turnover tends to lead to high vacancy rates, which increase the workloads of those workers remaining. Increased workloads lead to frustration, poor services, and eventually more turnover. It is known that better trained workers can handle more complex caseloads (Albers, Reilly, & Ritter, 1993; Booz-Allen & Hamilton, 1987; Child Welfare League of America, 1990; Dhooper, Royse, & Wolfe, 1990; Helfgott, 1991; Lieberman, Russell, & Hornby, 1988; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Rittner & Wodarski, 1999). This research suggests that because better trained workers are able to perform their tasks more competently (Ryan, Garnier, Zyphur, & Zhai, 2005), they experience greater job satisfaction and, therefore, are less likely to leave the agency. In order for these workers to function, however, the conditions under which they work must be supportive (Anderson, 1994; Cicero-Reese & Black, 1997; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; McMahon, 1999; Silver, Poulin, & Manning, 1997). Support takes many forms including quality of supervision, suitability of job assignment, good personnel practices, provision of opportunities for learning and advancement, respect, and adequate salaries (Ellett, Ellet, & Rugutt, 2003; Harrison, 1995; Reagh, 1994; Rycraft, 1994).

Almost every discussion of the difficulties in the child welfare system eventually raises several interrelated issues: high caseloads, worker turnover, the high intensity nature of the work, low sala-

ries, and agency working conditions. Recent national surveys have shown fairly consistent agreement on the issues across the country and the elusiveness of simple solutions (American Public Human Services Association, 2001, U.S. Government Accounting Office, 2003). Despite these obstacles, a certain percentage of workers remain in the public child welfare system. Indeed, the question often becomes, "Is it the nature of the high risk clientele that contributes to worker turnover, or is it working conditions that make serving such a high risk clientele unrewarding?" To this, a second question is raised, "What may contribute to a worker's decision to remain in public child welfare?" All of these questions are directly related anecdotally and empirically to the recruitment and retention of workers. Moreover, all of these closely related questions and variables are clearly related to the quality of services. Little sound research is available, however, to guide agency strategy in retaining qualified workers in positions working with these vulnerable, at-risk children and families in the public child welfare agency. As evidence-based practice and standardized outcomes become more the norm, greater demands will be placed on the child welfare system to recruit, train, and retain workers in ways that assure quality services.

A perusal of the relevant research finds that the many variables offered as explanations for retention or turnover can be divided into three categories: personal characteristics (worker values, experience, education, motivation, education, etc.), work factors (nature of work, client population, severity of cases, paperwork, workload, etc.), and agency factors (climate, supervision, clarity of policies, opportunities for professional growth, etc.; Bernotavicz, 1997). Several studies have explored the specific personal benefits of having a master's degree in social work which include reducing worker burnout (Anderson, 1994; Smith & Laner, 1990), performing better at tasks (Booz-Allen & Hamilton, 1987; Child Welfare League of America, 1990; Olsen & Holmes, 1982; Rittner & Wodarski, 1999; Ryan et al., 2005), and experiencing one's self as competent (Lieberman et al., 1988; Jones & Okamura, 2000). While advanced educa-

tion is an important factor to consider, the source of many obstacles to worker retention appears to lie within the child welfare agencies themselves. Recent empirical research on antecedents to retention, for example, have identified that many of the major predictors of turnover among human service employees are organizational or job based (Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Ellett, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003).

High workload has been consistently cited as a reason for exodus from the child welfare system (American Humane Association & Walter R. McDonald and Associates, Inc., 2000; Beaugar, 2000; Child Welfare League of America, 1990), as well as low salary (Beaugar, 2000; Child Welfare League of America, 1990; U.S. Government Accounting Office, 1995, 2003). Perceived deficit in administrative support, which generally included supervision, has also figured heavily in high turnover (Anderson, 1994; Barak et al., 2001; Ellett, 2000; Hopkins, Murdick, & Rudolph, 1999; Rycraft, 1994; Samantrai, 1992; U.S. Government Accounting Office, 1995; Whelley & Mericle, 1994).

The long-term retention of workers clearly shows the importance of agency climate, quality of supervision, intrinsic worker fulfillment, and job satisfaction from appropriate assignments, and personnel policies as key issues in retention (Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998). The question of what contributes to workers staying in child welfare despite the intensity of child protective service work, high caseloads, often difficult working conditions, and low salaries is one key to understanding the complexity of worker retention. There is much speculation about causes of the enormous rates of turnover in public child welfare, but little research evidence has been provided to guide agency strategy in addressing this issue. This article reports on findings of a study that examined the difference in the perception of organizational climate between highly educated workers who remain in public child welfare and those highly educated workers who choose another career opportunity after working within the public child welfare sector.

Organizational Climate

A great deal of interest in understanding the dynamics of work environments has been generated among researchers as well as practitioners, particularly given the fact that both organizational climate and organizational culture have been demonstrated to have the power to influence and affect the behavior, attitudes, and health of individuals working within an organization (Glisson, 2000b). The relevance of the work environment extends beyond those employees of an organization as well and is linked to client outcomes. The work of Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998) provides compelling evidence regarding positive work environments as the primary predictor of improved psychosocial functioning of delinquent and dependent children served through the public sector. In essence, employees' interaction and experience within the organization in which they work is replicated with those who receive their services.

Organizational climate is defined as the collective perception that employees have of their work environment (Schneider, 1990). On an individual level, psychological climate is an individual's perception of the psychological impact of the work environment on his or her own personal well-being and ability to function effectively as a professional. As defined by James and colleagues (i.e., James & James, 1989; James, James, & Ashe, 1990; James & Jones, 1974; James & Sells, 1981), organizational climate is a collective perception of the work environment by the individuals within a common system. Climate, as such, is a stable organizational characteristic that is maintained over time and which gains considerable inertia as generations of workers come and go (Wiener, 1988). The climate itself may consist of salary, caseload, fellow employee trust, quality of supervision, how supportive the administration is of worker autonomy, and whether there are sufficient resources available to conduct one's work. The critical issue is that workers who perceive a positive organizational climate are those same workers who report higher job satisfaction and a greater commitment to their organization (Glisson, 2000b; Glisson & Durick, 1988).

Method

Research Question

Why do many workers who choose to leave public child welfare go on to serve the same population of at risk children and families in either the private or public sector? The primary research question guiding this study was whether differences in perceptions of the child welfare agency work environment distinguishes workers who remain and workers who choose to leave public child welfare. Approval for the study protocol was granted by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB# 090599 & 0603048).

Participants

Participants in the study were graduates of a large Title IV-E educational program in Pennsylvania administered by the University of Pittsburgh in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators Association, Inc.[1] The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program, initiated in 1995, provides funding for graduate-level education to qualified public child welfare employees in collaboration with all nine CSWE accredited MSW programs in Pennsylvania. Participants are required to maintain employment with their sponsoring child welfare agency upon completion of their degree program for a period of time equal to that for which they received financial support. Individuals selected for the study were those graduates who had satisfied their legal work commitment following completion of their graduate social work degree. This included individuals who had obtained their degree between 1996 and 2004.

The CWEL program is one component of a larger public child welfare education, training, and research program in Pennsylvania, which also enrolls undergraduates from 14 Council on Social Work Education accredited undergraduate programs as "persons

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1   Pennsylvania is a county-administered, state-supervised system.

preparing for employment"; provides 35,000 days of preservice and in-service training per year to public child welfare caseworkers, supervisors, managers, fiscal officers, and administrators; and trains 9,000 to 10,000 foster parents per year. Multiple funding streams are used in addition to IV-E for the range of programs.

Measure

The Children's Services Organizational Climate Survey developed by Glisson and Hemmelgarn (1998) was used to measure organizational climate in this study. Based upon the Psychological Climate Questionnaire developed by James and Sells (1981), the instrument consists of 115 items that measure 14 separate domains of the work environment. These domains include areas that assess an employee's perception of conflict, cooperation, role clarity, personalization, fairness, personal accomplishment, growth and advancement opportunities, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Each subscale taps a theoretically and empirically meaningful dimension of the overall organizational climate and has established alpha reliability. Questionnaire items from select domains are contained in Appendix I. Additional items were added to the inventory to capture relevant demographic information as well as specific information regarding safety concerns, perceived respect in the workplace since completion of a graduate social work degree, and issues related to resource capacity, part-time employment, and opportunity to use professional skills and abilities since acquisition of the advanced degree.

Data Collection

Data were collected over a four-year period as four different graduate cohorts became eligible for the study. At the time that data collection was initiated, 244 students had graduated under the CWEL program and a total of 149 had fulfilled their legal work commitment. By the fourth year, there were a total of 491 graduates, with 381 eligible participants. The individuals eligible for the study thus represented 78% of the overall graduate group.

After an introductory letter explaining the project, participants were mailed a self-report questionnaire. In order to obtain the highest possible response rate, several follow-up mailings were made employing the survey procedure detailed by Dillman (1978). On the survey cover sheet, respondents were asked to identify whether they were currently employed by their county child welfare agency or whether they were employed elsewhere. Those participants currently employed elsewhere were directed to respond to the survey questions based upon their experience during their period of employment within public child welfare.

Results

A total of 305 graduates took part in the study, yielding a response rate of 81% for the overall sample. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown on Table 1. The mean age range of participants was between 36 and 40 years, and the majority of the sample was Caucasian (78%) and female (86%). Respondents reported an average of 11 and 15 years in child welfare, with an average of 6 and 10 years with their present agency. Following completion of their graduate social work degree, 47% had been promoted.

Respondents were grouped according to their current employment within, and outside of, public child welfare. Of the total respondents, 245 (80%) reported current public child welfare employment, and 60 (20%) reported employment elsewhere. Significant demographic differences between the two groups were total years in child welfare and promotion postdegree. Those respondents remaining in their agency reported an average of five years more total experience in the public child welfare arena than did those respondents who had obtained employment in either the private sector or in another public sector agency outside of child welfare. This difference was not explained by time spent in non-child-welfare settings since agency departure. Rather, it represented a difference in the total time spent serving the child welfare population in either the public or private sector. Lack of promotion was

TABLE 1

Respondent Characteristics—Total Sample

CHARACTERISTIC	N	PERCENTAGE
Gender		
Male	44	14.4
Female	261	85.6
Race		
Caucasian	237	77.7
African American	53	17.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	.3
Hispanic	4	1.3
Native American	3	1.0
Other	7	2.3
Age		
26–30	79	26.0
31–35	75	24.7
36–40	34	11.2
41–45	37	12.2
46–50	41	13.5
51–55	34	11.2
Over 55	4	1.3
Missing	1	
Years in Child Welfare		
1–5	38	12.5
6–10	141	46.2
11–15	71	23.3
16–20	33	10.8
Over 20	22	7.2

TABLE 1 cont.

CHARACTERISTIC	N	PERCENTAGE
Average Caseload		
Less than 15	8	2.7
15–20	97	33.1
21–30	155	52.9
31–40	29	9.9
Greater than 40	4	1.4
Year of Degree		
1995	1	.3
1996	11	3.6
1997	28	9.2
1998	26	8.5
1999	30	9.8
2000	48	15.7
2001	48	15.7
2002	24	7.9
2003	47	15.4
2004	42	13.8
Promotion since Degree		
Yes	144	47.4
No	160	52.6

reported by 67% of those respondents who had left public child welfare, while approximately equal numbers of the respondents who remained in public child welfare employment were given job promotions or were not promoted.

An independent samples *t* test was used to assess the differences between the two groups of graduates in the 14 dimensions of organizational climate. As shown in Table 2, significant differences

TABLE 2

Group Comparison of Organizational Climate Domains

CLIMATE DOMAIN	REMAINING (N =245)		DEPARTED (N =60)		
	M	SD	M	SD	T
Depersonalization	2.13	.733	2.25	.753	−1.14
Emotional Exhaustion	2.99	.916	3.58	.873	−4.57***
Fairness	2.85	.876	2.47	.761	3.04**
Growth and Advancement	2.38	.887	1.94	.751	3.48**
Hierarchy of Authority	2.91	.646	3.09	.686	−1.87
Job Satisfaction	3.11	.715	2.63	.616	4.78***
Organizational Commitment	3.20	.626	2.87	.671	3.63***
Routinization	3.55	.571	3.47	.631	1.00
Cooperation	3.34	.639	3.05	.744	2.98**
Formalization	2.91	.693	2.88	.592	.25
Personal Accomplishment	3.73	.603	3.71	.620	.20
Role Clarity	3.36	.790	3.13	.783	2.07*
Role Conflict	3.05	.655	3.38	.665	−3.50**
Role Overload	3.54	.661	3.88	.590	−3.62

*p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001*

were noted for several of these dimensions. Those individuals remaining in public child welfare had significantly lower scores on emotional exhaustion, role overload, role conflict, and significantly higher scores on fairness, growth, advancement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and cooperation. Emotional exhaustion is the degree to which an individual perceives their work experience to be emotionally draining and overwhelming. Those individuals who had left public child welfare employment reported significantly higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to those individuals who remained. Perceived fairness also distinguished the two groups of graduates. The dimension of fairness

measured the degree to which the organization is perceived as determining the award of recognition, promotions, and other types of rewards based upon merit rather than favoritism or bias. Individuals who left employment perceived significantly lower levels of fairness within their agencies. They also experienced greater levels of role conflict and role overload. These work environment dimensions reflect perceptions of pressure to engage in mutually exclusive behaviors and role performance as being affected by inadequate time, training, and resources.

Growth and advancement, the perception that a career path involving increased responsibility and advanced job status is available in the organization, was higher among those individuals remaining in their child welfare agency. This was also true for perceptions of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Those individuals remaining in child welfare reported a higher level of satisfaction with job tasks. Additionally, these individuals had a higher level of perceived pride in the organization as well as a positive identification with the organization's mission and goals. Perceived cooperation among work group members was also higher among those individuals remaining. A marginally significant difference was noted for role clarity, with those remaining in child welfare scoring higher on this work environment dimension than those workers who had left the public child welfare system.

To further explore the impact of the various organizational climate variables in employee retention, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. Forward logistic regression was used to determine which work environment variables predicted the outcome of staying within public child welfare or leaving. As indicated in Table 3, logistic regression identified three predictors: emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and personal accomplishment. The results indicated that the overall model fit of three predictors was somewhat reliable, but statistically significant in distinguishing between those who stayed and those who left ($x^2(3) = 32.415$, $p < .0001$). The model correctly classified 80.8% of the cases. Individuals who reported experiencing lower levels of emotional exhaustion and

TABLE 3

Logistic Regression Model: Logistic Regression Coefficients for
Factors Explaining Child Welfare Retention or Departure

VARIABLE	B	P
Depersonalization	−.06	NS
Emotional Exhaustion	.49	.04*
Fairness	−.36	NS
Growth and Advancement	−.09	NS
Hierarchy of Authority	.01	NS
Job Satisfaction	−.93	.01*
Organizational Commitment	−.31	NS
Routinization	−.22	NS
Cooperation	−.20	NS
Formalization	−.17	NS
Personal Accomplishment	.65	.04*
Role Clarity	.43	NS
Role Conflict	−.17	NS
Role Overload	.01	NS

N = 305

higher levels of job satisfaction and personal accomplishment char-
acterized those who remained in their public child welfare agency.
Conversely, those individuals who experienced higher levels of
emotional exhaustion and lower job satisfaction and sense of per-
sonal accomplishment characterized those who had left their child
welfare agency, often after quite a few years of employment.

Discussion and Implications for Child Welfare Agencies

The information obtained in this study addresses a serious, wide-
spread concern in public child welfare regarding worker retention.
While it documents the importance of agency climate in worker's

decision making, it does not identify any new information beyond that found in the literature and identified by numerous authors as contributing to turnover. Its usefulness, therefore, is in looking at the individual items reported by the respondents and the very clear examples of what those who are leaving pubic child welfare are telling us about powerful agency climate variables.

The issue that most characterizes those who leave is a profound sense of job dissatisfaction. These individuals perceive little opportunity to make use of their skills and abilities, little freedom to use their own judgment, and little recognition for doing a good job with a difficult client population. A lack of prestige in the community and the tendency for negative publicity is only one facet of their struggle. The more significant issues for these individuals appear to be the lack of accomplishment they perceive in their day to day activities and the lack of opportunity to perform their job tasks in a way that utilizes their talents. This has significant implications for those individuals who are more highly educated and is particularly worrisome for child welfare agencies who strive to increase the level of professionalism among their employees. Public child welfare agencies are losing many highly trained professionals because these individuals do not perceive the opportunity to use the advanced skills they possess. It is important to note that while job promotion was one variable that distinguished individuals who stayed within child welfare from those who sought employment elsewhere, only half of those who stayed reported being promoted. It may be that factors other than promotion are equally important to experienced workers, including the opportunity to perform different and expanded tasks for which they are recognized by their peers as well as their supervisors. The ability to utilize their advanced skills in new and innovative ways may also explain why those workers who remained in public child welfare also reported significantly higher levels of personal accomplishment compared to those who left. Perceived effectiveness in positively influencing children and families and making an impact in their lives is clearly an energizing facet of direct service work. This sense of fulfillment

is in stark contrast to the report of emotional exhaustion which was significant among those who had left public child welfare employment.

The individuals in this study who left public child welfare also reported high levels of role overload and role conflict. This is reflected by a heightened sense that their job performance was negatively affected by pressure to engage in conflicting or mutually exclusive behaviors as well as inadequate time and resources. These dynamics appear to be so disconcerting to workers that they seek employment elsewhere, although many go on to serve at-risk children and families in other settings in the public or private sector. It is not their commitment to improving the safety and well-being of children and families that is in question. The workforce issue with which child welfare agency administrators and supervisors must grapple is how to retain those well-educated, more highly skilled workers who have benefited from extensive training and who have an enduring commitment to children at-risk and their families.

Supervision is very frequently cited by graduates of the CWEL program as crucial to their success, their level of job satisfaction, and their sense of support by the agency. This is consistent with a wide range of texts on supervision and studies which place supervision at the very intersection of practice and agency administration and at the heart of the climate that surrounds practice and supervision (American Public Human Services Association, 2005; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003; Ashby, 2004; Bernotavicz, 1997; Child Welfare League of America, 1990; Ellet, 2000; Harrison, 1995; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; National Association of Social Workers, 2004; Rycraft, 194; Shulman, 1993; U.S. Government Accounting Office, 2003). Graduates of this program, like their peers around the country, view the quality of supervision as a major factor in whether the environment is supportive or unsupportive, hospitable or inhospitable, hot or cold.

The experiences reported in this study are similar to the findings of the annual program evaluations conducted with all graduates of the Pennsylvania IV-E master's degree program. Many

graduates report not being well integrated into their agencies following completion of their graduate degrees and not finding opportunities to put their advanced skills into practice. Agency administrators also independently report this same dynamic and note fairly strong resistance from workers toward returning graduates. Given the feedback of graduates as well as administrators, it should be no surprise that many experienced workers leave public child welfare. The task at hand is the development of strategies that address the areas of worker dissatisfaction that have been clearly identified. This involves improving the internal working climate of agencies and creating an environment that encourages innovation, provides both tangible and intangible rewards, and offers supportive, individually oriented supervision.

Limitations

A limitation of the study is the subgroup of child welfare employees included in the sample. The sample included individuals with high levels of academic achievement and, most likely, a higher level of motivation to improve their job skills. The individuals included in the study were graduates who had been personally selected by their child welfare agency to attend school and who were granted educational leave to pursue an advanced education. This subgroup does not represent the majority of workers in public child welfare, as approximately 75% do not have an advanced degree. These are, however, likely to be the more articulate, the more highly motivated, and the more highly skilled individuals in public child welfare. For this reason, their feedback about the child welfare work environment is essential, and we must take what they have to say seriously. This is the group we should most want to retain.

Conclusions

Much effort has been placed upon understanding the complexity of worker retention in public child welfare. Previous work (e.g., Samantrai, 1990) has distinguished factors associated with retention

from factors associated with departure. Indeed, attempts to understand this perplexing problem have often led to a discussion of leavers versus stayers. Another facet of this emerging discussion may be that not all personal, work, and agency variables are associated with both groups of public child welfare workers. Future research efforts may be best directed toward exploring how the agency environment interacts with personal factors and the nature of public child welfare work itself in influencing the career decision of the individual worker.

APPENDIX I

Select Questionnaire Items by Organizational Climate Domain

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1 = not at all; 2 = to a slight extent; 3 = to a moderate extent; 4 = to a great extent; 5 = to a very great extent

* items are reverse scored

Job Satisfaction

How satisfied are you with the prestige your job has within the community?

How satisfied are you with being able to do things the "right" way?

How satisfied are you with the chance to do things for children?

How satisfied are you with the chance to do something that makes use of your abilities?

How satisfied are you with the way agency policies are put into practice?

How satisfied are you with the chances for advancement?

How satisfied are you with the freedom to use your own judgment?

How satisfied are you with the chance to try your own approaches to working with children?

How satisfied are you with your working conditions?

How satisfied are you with the recognition you get for doing a good job?

How satisfied are you with the feeling of accomplishment you get from your job?

Organizational Commitment

I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.

I really care about the fate of this organization.

There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.*

Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.*

For me this is the best of all possible organizations to work for.

It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.*

This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.

I feel very little loyalty to this organization.*

I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.*

I am extremely glad that I chose to work for this organization.

I am willing to put in a great deal of effort in order to help this organization be successful.

I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

Emotional Exhaustion

I feel emotionally drained from my work.

I feel used up at the end of the work day.

I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.

I feel burned out from my work.

I feel I'm working too hard on my job.

I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

Growth and Advancement

This agency rewards experience, dedication, and hard work.

There are more opportunities to advance in this agency than in other jobs in general.

Opportunities for advancement in my position are much higher compared to those in other positions.

This agency emphasizes growth and development.

This agency provides numerous opportunities to advance if you work for it.

Fairness

Other agencies receive more recognition for their work than my agency.*

Compared to people in other agencies, I am paid fairly.

I have to work a lot harder than the people in other agencies.*

The salary I receive is fair in light of my job performance and responsibilities.

In getting a promotion, being liked is more important than doing a good job.*

Politics determine who gets a promotion here.*

Role Conflict

How often do you end up doing things that should be done differently?

How often do you have to bend a rule in order to carry out an assignment?

How often do you feel unable to satisfy the conflicting demands of your supervisors?

How often does your job interfere with your family life?

Interests of the children are often replaced by bureaucratic concerns
(e.g., paperwork).

Rules and regulations often get in the way of getting things done.

The amount of work I have to do interferes with how well it gets done.

I have to do things on my job that are against my better judgment.

Inconsistencies exist among the rules and regulations that I am required to follow.

Role Overload

How often do your coworkers show signs of stress?

How often do you have to work irregular hours?

No matter how much I do, there is always more to be done.

The amount of work I have to do keeps me from doing a good job.

I have to work a lot of overtime.

There are not enough people in my agency to get the work done.

Once I start an assignment, I am not given enough time to complete it.

To what extent are you constantly under heavy pressure on your job?

Cooperation

How often is there friction among your coworkers?*

There is a feeling of cooperation among my coworkers.

When I face a difficult task, the people in my agency help me out.

To what extent do your coworkers trust each other?

Depersonalization

I feel I treat some of the children I serve as "impersonal" objects.

I have become more callous towards people since I took this job.

I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.

At times, I find myself not really caring about what happens to some of the children.

It's hard to feel close to the children I serve.

Personal Accomplishment

I deal effectively with the problems of the children in my caseload.

I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.

I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with the children for whom I'm responsible.

I feel exhilarated after working closely with the children in my caseload.

I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.

In my work, I am calm dealing with the emotional problems of others.

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