


Organizational Social Context

 Glisson, C., Green, P., & Williams, N. J. (2012). Assessing the Organizational Social Context (OSC) of child welfare systems: Implications for research and practice. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 36, 621-632.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This study is the first to assess the Organizational Social Context (OSC) measurement system using a national sample of child welfare systems. This national survey was completed in 2011 as part of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being. Eighty-one child welfare systems provided data for the OSC study. The OSC model has already been confirmed with a nationwide sample of mental health clinics, and this study contributes to the field by establishing national norms for the OSC measurement system in child welfare agencies.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?



The OSC system includes three domains of social context: organizational culture (expectations and priorities), organizational climate (worker perceptions of their own wellbeing), and individual worker attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment). These three domains are assessed using the dimensions described below:

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIAL CONTEXT (OSC)

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE:	Rigidity (expectations that workers have little flexibility), Proficiency (expectations that workers are competent, have up-to-date knowledge) & Resistance (expectations that workers will have little interest in change)
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE:	Engagement (workers are personally involved in their work), Functionality (workers have a clear understanding of success in the organization) & Stress (workers are overloaded and emotionally exhausted)
INDIVIDUAL WORK ATTITUDES:	Morale (job satisfaction & commitment to the organization)

Results indicate that workers in child welfare agencies with more engaged and functional climates and less rigid cultures have higher levels of job satisfaction. Similar to other studies, more educated respondents were less satisfied, but caseworkers with social work degrees reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Functional and engaged climates also increased workers' organizational commitment, or their intent to remain with the agency.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

-  Confirmation of the OSC model with child welfare organizations is consistent with previous research using this model. The OSC can be a useful tool in child welfare research and evaluation efforts by linking organizational variables to individual worker outcomes.
-  Agencies can take steps to improve worker morale and job satisfaction by allowing workers more flexibility in working with individual families and improving engagement and functionality within the organization. Child welfare will always be an inherently high stress field, but organizations can overcome the detrimental effects of worker stress by emphasizing a functional climate that encourages workers to become personally engaged in their work with families.