



Worker Resilience

 Lawrence, C. K. (2017). Building Caseworker Resilience Through Engagement with Children, Families, and Peers. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 98(4), 266–274.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

Lawrence weaves together quantitative and qualitative research to explore how social workers build and maintain resilience in an emotionally and mentally taxing field.

METHODS: Data was collected via survey, focus groups, and individual interviews across three public systems: two Midwestern states and one urban West Coast county. In total, 60 focus groups and four interviews with 442 participants occurred. In addition, 2,018 caseworkers and 501 supervisors completed a Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment survey.

For an overview of this assessment process, visit:

http://ncwwi.org/files/Org_Environment/Comprehensive_Organizational_Health_Assessment_COHA.pdf

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Evaluation of the data found three areas of support and motivation that develop and maintain worker resilience:

The worker's passion for working with children

"I think all of us sitting here ... can say that our biggest concern is the welfare of those children. We go over and beyond for our children."

The worker's passion for working with families

"I love seeing the resiliency of our family members and children and they remind me about how precious life is. I think that's what keeps me going."

The support workers receive from peers

"I really feel supported, and we can laugh together and vent; I definitely wouldn't have made it here without my co-workers."

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

- Retention of engaged caseworkers stems in part from the degree to which caseworkers build and maintain positive client relationships and deliver effective practice leading to positive outcomes for children and families.
- Peer support offers an important protective factor for worker engagement.
- Agencies can support their workforce by offering supports, such as regular supervision, team case consultations, and peer-based reviews, to focus on casework practice and working with families toward positive outcomes.

By focusing on strengths already in the workforce, agencies can help to build and maintain worker resilience.