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Job burnout among Monmouth County probation officers : an exploratory study

Peggy A. Hill
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exploratory study**

Hill, Peggy A., M.S.

San Jose State University, 1991

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**JOB BURNOUT AMONG MONMOUTH COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

**A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the
Administration of Justice Department
San Jose State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science**

**By
Peggy A. Hill
December, 1991**

APPROVED FOR THE
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

JOB BURNOUT AMONG MONMOUTH COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

by Peggy A. Hill

This study examined the relationship between probation officer assignments and job burnout, utilizing the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The data for this analysis were drawn from 81 probation officers of Monmouth County, New Jersey, drawn from five subgroups (Juvenile Supervision, Adult Supervision, Criminal Case Management, Child Support, and Family Intake). The analysis indicated that probation officers experience high levels of burnout. The results also indicated that officers assigned to Criminal Case Management experienced higher levels of burnout than their counterparts. However, no significant patterns of relationships to the burnout dimensions were established.

The consequences of job burnout and suggestions on preventing or decreasing job-related stress that can lead to burnout are incorporated in this study. It is also suggested that future research be undertaken to provide more in-depth information regarding burnout and its causes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research owes much to the support and assistance of several individuals and Monmouth County Probation Department. I extend my sincerest appreciation to those officers who participated in the study and completed surveys. The information these individuals provided was invaluable and, without it, this thesis would not have been accomplished.

I would like to express my thanks to Scott Lukenda and Colleen Christie, who assisted me in the distribution and collection of the surveys. Without their help, the response rate would not have been as great. I offer George Christie a special thanks for his continued support and expressed desire to receive the final results of this project to use it for the benefit of all probation officers within the state of New Jersey. Additionally, George facilitated this study by acquiring additional information necessary for the completion of this thesis. I express sincere thanks to my friends at Monmouth County Probation Department for all their support and interest in my research. I, too, hope that this research project will present positive changes for these professionals.

A very special thanks to Bev White of Keystone Junior College, Factoryville, Pennsylvania, for her invaluable

assistance with the statistical analysis of this project. Without her vast knowledge of statistics programs and her availability during a short period of time, the most significant part of this study would not have been completed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The origins of probation appeared in Medieval and Early Modern European law in the form of "...suspension of punishment subject to good behavior...."¹ Legally, probation was first established in the United States in 1831 by Judge Peter Thacher of Boston, Massachusetts, who initially recognized "Release upon own Recognizance." In 1841, a shoemaker named John Augustus volunteered his services to the Court by posting bail for a drunkard. After his first successful case, he began to post bail for other offenders, and subsequently developed methods and practices still used today. Some of these methods include interviewing the offender; considering the offender's family history; and working with schools, employers, and other agencies.

Probation officers have been considered a part of the correctional system for decades. Over the last decade, however, their roles have expanded and become more diverse than that of a surveillance officer. Although these officers do supervise activities of offenders on probation, they also conduct thorough pre-sentence investigations and make recommendations to the Court pertaining to the instant offender's case. They may also

¹Charles L. Newman, Sourcebook on Probation, Parole, and Pardons 3rd ed., (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1972), 3.

conduct family crises intervention, and assist in such domestic disputes brought before the Court as child abuse, spouse abuse, and parental visitation rights. They frequently administer child support payments. Officers often find themselves performing the role of educational adviser, employment service agent, and counselor.

Probation officers are concerned with rehabilitation and enforcing the rules and conditions imposed by the Court. They are there to ensure that offenders on probation do not further violate the laws and, if this occurs, to bring the matter before the Court. These are only a few examples revealing the wide variety of tasks and duties performed by a probation officer. Given these examples, it can be seen that many of their functions are related to those of a social worker and/or a law enforcement official. They interact with the public in much the same way as these other human services professionals.

Probation officers are officers of the Court and, per se, facilitate this alternative form of corrections. However, the extent with which probation officers may further be involved in human lives is an additional example of the worker known as a Human Services Professional. As such, they are also susceptible to the same kinds of job stress and job burnout that might result from the numerous and sometimes conflicting aspects of the job.

During the past 20 years, there have been a number of studies regarding job burnout. In general, such research has established that burnout is, to a high degree, associated with those individuals employed in the human services field. These professionals provide significant services to society, and the negative consequences of job burnout are major concerns. The magnitude of job burnout can adversely affect the services and care provided to the client and, in turn, affect both the public and the overall effectiveness of the organization. Of particular importance is the impact of job burnout on the employee.

Most probation departments are organized into several different units which perform varied roles (preparation of pre-sentence investigations, surveillance, therapy, employment, development, and so on) and thus it is reasonable to study job burnout as it affects each unit. This study will help identify more specifically whether different jobs or functions within a probation department create greater levels of burnout. The results of this study could help probation officers and probation administrators to become aware of the existence and extent of job burnout. It will enable them to focus attention on specific problem areas and suggest solutions that can either prevent or help to alleviate the causes and problems of burnout.

The purpose of this study was to determine the

extent of job burnout among probation officers across a range of specialized duties, and to investigate the possibility that officers assigned to the criminal case management unit experienced a higher degree of job burnout than officers assigned to other units.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Job Burnout

Throughout the literature, job burnout has been predominantly defined as a syndrome or condition which occurs from continuous, work-related stress. However, inherent in most of the research is the distinction between job stress and job burnout. Job stress is primarily viewed as a significant factor (independent variable) that leads to burnout. Cary Cherniss, a leading researcher in the area of job burnout, most amply defines burnout as:

...a process that begins with excessive and prolonged levels of job stress. This stress produces strain in the worker (feelings of tension, irritability and fatigue). The process is completed when the workers defensively cope with the job by psychologically detaching themselves from the job and becoming apathetic, cynical, and rigid.²

Christina Maslach, an empirical investigator on the subject, also views stress as a major contributor of job burnout to the extent that it affects a person emotionally and physically. Maslach considers burnout:

...a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do "people work" of some kind. It is a response to the chronic emotional strain of deal-

²Cary Cherniss, Staff Burnout: Job Stress in the Human Services (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 21.

ing extensively with other human beings, particularly when they are troubled or having problems.³

Another key aspect in defining job burnout is that stress, which ultimately leads to burnout, is continuous or chronic. "Burnout is a chronic condition, something a person has been working toward over a period of weeks, months, even years."⁴ Pines and Aronson similarly define burnout as:

...a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding. The emotional demands are most often caused by a combination of very high expectations and chronic situational stresses.⁵

Although there appears to be a variety of definitions, burnout is basically what happens to persons who have been subjected to continuous, intense stress directly related to their jobs. The results of this condition are not merely seen in the form of negative job performance, but also in the individual's mental and physical being as well. Paul W. Brown stated:

Not only does the employee suffer, but the client and the mission of the organization

³Christina Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 3.

⁴Herbert J. Freudenberger and Geraldine Richelson, Burn-out: The High Cost of High Achievement (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1980), 13.

⁵Ayala Pines and Elliot Aronson, Career Burnout: Causes and Cures (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1988), 9.

are also adversely affected. The initially promising employee may abandon a career early or may remain on the job and become less productive, more negative, and cynical with time.⁶

For these reasons, it is then crucial to consider exactly what the causes of job burnout are and how burnout relates to probation officers.

Causes of Burnout

Past research indicates there were two major theories of the causes of job burnout. As previously mentioned, Christina Maslach, a leading theorist in the field of job burnout, contends that staff-client interaction is the major source of burnout. Cary Cherniss, on the other hand, considers organizational factors as the more significant source of burnout. Cherniss, however, does not discount staff-client interaction as a cause, but views it as only part of the problem. Cherniss argues that, to some extent, this interaction can be controlled or governed by the organization. Maslach does not argue that staff-client interaction is the only source of burnout but, perceives that this interaction and all its correlates are the chief cause of burnout.

In an earlier article, Maslach maintained that staff-client interaction is often filled with negati-

⁶Paul Brown, "Probation Officer Burnout: An Organizational Disease/An Organizational Cure, Part II," Federal Probation 51 (September 1987): 17.

vity.⁷ In other words, the Human Services Professional (whether a social worker, nurse, police officer, or probation officer) primarily comes in contact with a client because of some problem. The course of this interaction then concentrates on the problem (or problems) and:

...as a consequence of this negative focus, the interaction between client and staff person is often charged with strong emotions, such as embarrassment, fear, frustration, or anger.⁸

Another important point stressed by Maslach is that human services workers do not get to choose their clients, some of whom are perceived as being irritating and insufferable. Many seem to have an abundance of problems which commands a lot of time and effort on the part of the caregiver or case worker. There are also those individuals who are overly demanding and insist that they be given a certain amount of assistance or services. In essence, the personality make-up of a client can contribute to the amount of tension and stress felt by the provider and, in turn, lead to burnout.

An example in probation is seen in the Child Support Unit. Client-interaction is frequent and often very unfavorable. The probation officer not only receives dis-

⁷Christina Maslach, "The Client Role in Staff Burn-Out," The Journal of Social Issues 34 (1978): 114.

⁸Ibid.

troubling calls from spouses who have not received their child support, but also must communicate tactfully with the spouse who has not paid the child support. In the Family Crises Unit, client-interaction can be extremely negative when, for instance, visitation of a parent and child must be supervised by a Probation Officer. The parent may resent the presence of the officer and may consider it an intrusion. In this case, the officer is often viewed as the enemy.

In the Criminal Case Management Unit, many defendants report to a probation officer for a lengthy interview after a full day or even a week of court appearances. Many have been found guilty by trial and their attitude is such they do not wish to cooperate during the investigation. They are then perceived as being defensive or angry. These are but a few examples of how negative staff-client interaction can occur within a probation department and can result in an officer developing feelings of frustration and a lack of accomplishment.

Maslach further argues that human services providers seldom, if ever, experience positive feedback from their clientele. When they do help someone, then assistance is merely seen as "That's their job, that's what they're supposed to do." Further, when the problem is solved or the case is taken care of, the original person goes away

and the next case is assigned. Clearly, by the very nature of the job, positive client contact is minimal, and providers perceive that they are not appreciated.

"Contact with a troubled human being will always be more emotionally stressful if the trouble has personal relevance to the helper."⁹ Maslach contends that this type of involvement can have its advantages: the helper has some knowledge and understanding of what the individual may be going through. However, it can also be detrimental, as the helper may become too emotionally involved. Conversely, the helper may impose distance themselves from the case and become unresponsive to the client's needs. In either event, both attitudes can affect or bias the helper's judgment and decisions. It is an exceptional helper who can relate on a personal and emotional level to the client's problems and not experience some level of stress.

Additionally, Maslach indicated that interaction between staff and clients is often structured by rules and guidelines as set forth by the organization. These policies, rules and directives often make it difficult for the staff to be creative in dealing with clients who may have individual problems and particularistic needs. It is small wonder that many of these restrictions cause feelings of frustration and can lead to burnout.

⁹Ibid.

Furthermore, caseloads in the Human Services Profession are often quite extensive. Many probation officers supervise 120 to 150 cases. Consequently:

...the emotional strain of dealing with so many people may lead the provider to pull back psychologically and get less involved with each of them.¹⁰

Although Maslach alluded to such other influences contributing to job burnout as the work environment and individual characteristics, the foundation of her work identified involvement with people is the primary cause. Maslach focused on the idea that burnout occurs as a result of the stresses and tension that derive from this involvement and through the development of staff-client interaction.

Cary Cherniss also agreed that staff-client interaction is a significant factor in job burnout. He indicated that "particular kinds of clients will tend to be identified as sources of burnout more than other types...."¹¹ Cherniss identified this as "person-role conflict" wherein:

The worker usually lacks the skills or other resources necessary to "reach" the client. Sometimes there are "breakthroughs," but frequently the worker goes for long periods without seeing any perceptible signs of success.¹²

¹⁰Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹Cherniss, Staff Burnout, p. 84.

¹²Ibid., p. 85.

He further described person-role conflict in terms of individuals' expectations of the particular role they should play on the job. However, Cherniss argued that client-staff interaction is an intervening variable, a part of the organization which can be controlled by those who manage the organization. Moreover, Cherniss believed that "the greatest underlying source of strain is the structure of the professional's job and work setting."¹³

Cherniss indicated there are several characteristics inherent in the structure of the organization that contribute to job burnout. He explained that the way in which the workload is distributed and assigned among the different jobs can lead to burnout. One problem that can result from this is "role-conflict."¹⁴ Problems of role-conflict occur when the demands are excessive and the employee cannot meet these demands. Perhaps the caseload is too great that the employee is unable to maintain adequate client contact to provide the necessary services required. Often an employee is pulled in several different directions by directives of superiors, and is unsure which is the correct way to proceed.

An example of this type of conflict occurred to a Probation Officer, who was assigned a case for a Pre-

¹³Idem, Professional Burnout in Human Service Organizations (New York, NY: Praeger, 1980), 56.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 79.

Sentence Investigation interview. The officer was instructed by her immediate supervisor that the policy of the organization directs interviews to be conducted the very day the defendant reports to the Criminal Case Management office, after having signed the plea agreement. The officer advised the defendant that the interview would take place immediately, and was met with resistance from the defendant's attorney. The attorney in the instant case was quite adamant in refusing to allow his client to be interviewed that same day, arguing he needed time to prepare his client. The officer attempted, at length, to explain that this was office procedure. Over-hearing the discussion, the Criminal Case Manager came forward and permitted the attorney to set up an appointment with the officer for another date to conduct the interview. The manager's intervention not only embarrassed but confused and frustrated the officer. The officer's co-workers were also astounded, as they too thought it was office policy to conduct same-day interviews. A subsequent meeting with the immediate supervisor was held, in which he explained that same-day interviews was not office policy but an office rule, a preferred method of procedure. The way in which the leaders defined and enforced the "same-day interview," whether as office policy, procedure, rule or guideline, obviously created role-conflict for the officers.

Cherniss also defined role-ambiguity as another source of burnout.

Role-ambiguity occurs when the role player lacks the information necessary for adequate performance of the role.¹⁵

This includes a general lack of information concerning organizational goals, expectations and job performance.

Cherniss also attributed boredom as a source of strain leading to burnout.¹⁶ He stressed the need for a variety of roles, as well as continual education and on-the-job training to keep employees stimulated. This also provides meaning to their work.

Cherniss further explains that the organizations power structure has an impact on burn-out.¹⁷ The power structure essentially sets the limits on how much autonomy persons have over their work setting.

Although many factors influence the extent to which staff in a program feel helpless, clearly, the degree to which they are able to exercise power and control over their work settings will be a salient one.¹⁸

Cherniss conducted an exploratory research of 28 new professionals from four different occupational groups. Multiple interviews of these professionals between October 1974 and May 1976 found that:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁸Ibid.

...lack of autonomy and control over their work life compared to what they had initially expected and wanted, was a major source of dissatisfaction and frustration for many of them.¹⁹

Professionals do expect, to a certain degree, to be able to conduct their jobs and accomplish work goals in a manner best suited to their work nature. However, if the work environment is so structured that employees are not allowed some individualism, even to the extent of how they perform their duties, such lack of independence will increase stress and tension, ultimately leading to burn-out.

He continued that one of the major contributors to job burnout is the very nature of the traditional bureaucratic system that most court systems and probation departments follow. Because this system has been in place for a number of years, more traditional methods of administration and management styles are used. Many managers and officials strictly conform to the rigid rules of their governing agency, which does not allow for extensive flexibility or much creativity. Additionally, bureaucratic systems tend to promote petty rules and frequent policy changes. As bureaucracy increases its rules, policies and procedures, initiative is stifled. Furthermore, bureaucracy tends to promote the status-quo and discourages staff participation in the decision-

¹⁹Idem, Staff Burnout, p. 62.

making process. It is as if managers seem to say they do not trust their employees will do what is best for the organization, or they will not complete their work if they are not lead by "horse and whip-style" management. As Cherniss appropriately iterated, "Bureaucracy is perhaps the greatest enemy of professionalism."²⁰

In 1981, John T. Whitehead conducted a study of approximately 400 New York State Probation Officers, testing both Maslach's and Cherniss' theories of job burnout.²¹ Whitehead found that probation officers did not perceive contact with offenders as stressful. In fact, his analysis found that 51% of the sample reported favorably on offender contact. Furthermore, according to his findings, role conflict, job dissatisfaction and age were the primary factors impacting on job burnout. Thus, he concluded that the data supported Cherniss' theory "in that lack of organizational responsiveness seems to be related to burnout."²²

However, Gary F. Kolske and Randi Daimon Kolske, compared two separate studies to determine the effects of

²⁰Ibid., p. 58.

²¹John T. Whitehead, "Probation Officer Job Burnout: A Test of Two Theories," Journal of Criminal Justice 15 (1987): 1.

²²Ibid 1.

workload on burnout.²³ The authors utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory and included a questionnaire focusing on workload indicators. Only social workers in the Pittsburgh area were sampled. The analysis of their data seemed to support Maslachs' theory in that a demanding workload was related to the number of clients seen in a day. They also found that social workers who felt they were ineffective with clients experienced greater levels of burnout. However, they felt this was more indicative of those who were concerned with "short-term crises interventions."²⁴ This study is suggestive of how staff-client interaction can be a source of burnout.

Aside from organizational structure and staff-client interaction, there are other influences identified by Maslach, Cherniss and other researchers that can also lead to job burnout. Poor leadership is one such influence that has been recognized as a determinant, and may greatly effect feelings of tension and stress, leading to job burnout.

It appears that one of the leading complaints regarding supervision, reflected throughout the literature on job burnout, is the lack of feedback. Feedback, whether positive or negative, serves to provide direction

²³Gary F. Kolske and Randi Daimon Kolske, "Work Load and Burnout: Can Social Support and Perceived Accomplishment Help?" Social Work 34 (May 1989): 243.

²⁴Ibid., p. 247.

and reinforcement. Lack of feedback from a supervisor leaves the staff feeling frustrated and speculating about how effectively they are performing their jobs. Staff may lack confidence in their job performance. Furthermore, lack of feedback enhances perceptions of being unappreciated.

Another common issue concerning supervision was found to be perceived lack of support. This lack of support can occur in a variety of ways. Supervisors not only ensure that rules and policies are followed and that the workload is accomplished, but also disseminate important information regarding the organization. However, if a supervisor fails to communicate this information, staff members will feel they are of no value or significance to the organization. This essentially affects their morale and loyalty. If they feel that the organization does not care enough to let them know what is happening, then why should they give consideration to the organization? The same could be said for the supervisor. If a supervisor neglects his staff, these workers may not feel allegiance towards the supervisor. This situation will definitely impede work progress.

Although supervisors appear in many cases to be primarily concerned with the quantity of work, they are there to provide support. As a supervisor and leader, they should have gained the knowledge and expertise

through their years of experience to offer technical support and advice. A supervisor who is not available to provide this kind of support to staff may significantly contribute to the amount of frustration experienced by staff. This is equally true of the supervisor who is unresponsive to staff members. When supervisors are not sensitive and understanding and do not show interest in what their staff members communicate, it is likely the staff members will believe the supervisor does not regard what they have to say as having any merit. Staff members will feel they are not valued. As Cherniss indicated:

One of the underlying causes of burnout is a sense of helplessness, a belief that one's responses have no effect on important sources of reinforcement. When supervisors are unresponsive, they unwittingly foster this condition.²⁵

This feeling of not being valued also occurs when leaders and supervisors do not allow participation in the decision-making process. The staff perceive they are not involved in the organization. They may feel they have much to contribute to their work goals but, when their participation is not invited, they may perceive that they are considered merely employees, not as professionals.

Possibly the most consequential factor in how leadership affects burnout is whether or not the supervisor has experienced burnout. As Ayala Pines and Elliot

²⁵Ibid., p. 117.

Aronson described:

...there is nothing quite as burnout producing as a supervisor who was once burned out and then changed to administration.²⁶

As they continue to explain, the supervisor conveys the attitude, "I've been there, you just wait and see."

Pines and Aronson argue this attitude only serves to discourage staff.

All of these aspects related to poor supervision also affect staff morale and motivation, and may cause discouragement and job dissatisfaction. Staff members who perceive they do not have the support of their supervisor, whether it be through absent feedback or nonresponsiveness, can experience frustration, anxiety and stress. Additionally, there will be a certain level of tension between the supervisor and staff members because of this poor leadership. Poor supervision is seen as a significant factor in job burnout.

"The physical structure of a work environment affects professionals directly by supporting or thwarting their work-related goals."²⁷ A work environment that is physically uncomfortable, has too many distractions, or is designed so that conducting tasks and duties is made difficult can affect the staff's concentration

²⁶Pines and Aronson, Career Burnout: Causes and Cures, p. 18.

²⁷Ibid., p. 45.

levels and interfere with work performance. Inappropriate room temperature, broken desks, chairs that do not offer back support, poor lighting, and unavailability of proper supplies serve to disrupt work progress and lessen motivation. Yet, much of this is experienced by human services organizations whose budget and resources are primarily dependent upon public taxes. Even in the distribution of monies, those individuals at the bottom of the organization do not gain much of the percentage of allocations for salary increases, much less for a new desk or larger office space.

More critical, however, are the safety aspects of the work environment. Clearly, a building that is not structurally sound or is perhaps contaminated with asbestos presents certain health hazards. If the organization does not ensure that the work environment is safe and free from harmful elements, employees will become embittered, perceiving that the organization does not care about them. Aside from becoming distressed and angry, motivation will also diminish. Worse, absenteeism due to sickness and health problems will increase.

Almost as important as an overcrowded working space in generating burnout is the design of work space. If the work environment is designed so that

social support among peers is restrained, it will be to the detriment of work performance. The availability of one's peers is usually necessary to optimal motivation. Co-workers can often answer questions or provide information instantaneously, and they are frequently more accessible than supervisors. This support also enhances positive competition among co-workers and provides encouragement through the exchange of ideas, communication that can increase productivity.

Conversely, tension among co-workers increases levels of frustration and the mere thought of going into such a work environment can be almost unbearable. Such tensions can be caused by individual differences and individual tolerance level for these differences. Anytime a group of people come together and begin to interact, a wide range of attitudes and emotions could emerge and be exchanged. Although it is not likely that everyone will become friends, most individuals do discover that co-workers may share similar attitudes and beliefs. However, if a person cannot find this support among his peers, then work can become discomfiting and even unhealthy. As Pines indicated:

When the social environment is noxious, burnout will occur, even if other things are acceptable; if the social environment is very supportive, burnout will not occur, even if

the work itself is extremely stressful.²⁸

Interestingly, Burke and Greenglass conducted a study of 833 teachers using the Cherniss model, and found that the work setting and the social support of the organization had direct effects on burnout.²⁹ They reported:

...in every case, a more adverse work setting, e.g. greater reality shock and greater experienced stress, was associated with greater burnout.³⁰

Furthermore, they found that "individuals reporting less social support also reported greater burnout."³¹ In a study conducted by Kolske and Kolske, previously cited, also found that "...the most critical condition was low social support, particularly low co-worker support."³² Their analysis indicated that social support among co-workers does indeed impact on burnout.

Job dissatisfaction has also been identified as a stressor leading to burnout. If a person is not content

²⁸Ayala Pines, "Changing Organizations: Is a Work Environment Without Burnout an Impossible Goal?" in Whiton Paine, ed., Job Stress and Burnout: Research, Theory, and Intervention Strategies. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 199.

²⁹Ronald J. Burke and Esther R. Greenglass, "Psychological Burnout Among Men and Women in Teaching: An Examination of the Cherniss Model," Human Relations 42 (1989): 261.

³⁰Ibid., p. 267.

³¹Ibid.

³²Kolske and Kolske, "Work Load and Burnout," p. 247.

with what they are doing, this will be revealed through feelings of tension and frustration, and eventually disregard of work. To be happy in one's job, one has to either find meaning in the work or hold a special interest in that particular type or rewards of that work. There has to be some gratification to make work feel worthwhile. As Pines indicated,

"One of the most common reasons for job dissatisfaction and turnover is the belief that the work has no significance, that it is meaningless and futile."³³

Earnings can also play a role in job dissatisfaction. The value of a job has frequently been equated with the salary received, especially in the human services profession. As with most human services organizations, salaries are determined by local governments that are reliant upon public revenues. The latter will be distributed according to what the local politics and values dictate as important. Consequently, those in human services may feel their government leaders and the public they serve do not consider their profession to be very significant if the remuneration is low, and they may begin to perceive their jobs as meaningless. Although salary is not considered a motivating factor, it does place a value on one's job.

Perhaps, more than any other factors, lack of pro-

³³Pines, "Changing Organizations," p. 196.

motional opportunities and insufficient rewards for good performance lead to greater job dissatisfaction. Lack of promotions, when such avenues exist, signifies a lack of progression and growth. There is nothing more unsettling than the realization of getting nowhere on the job, even after years of service and maximum effort. Lack of rewards, such as merit raises or even simple acknowledgement, gives a sense that work accomplishments are not recognized and therefore not considered meaningful. In many bureaucratic and civil service organizations, such as a probation department, pay and promotions are primarily determined by the length of time in service. Work performance is generally disregarded. Promotions are often based on test scores, not whether an individual is capable of doing the job. In the study of 400 New York State Probation Officers, Whitehead discovered that 88% of the officers were dissatisfied with promotional opportunities and 71% were dissatisfied with the pay.³⁴ The findings of his study indicated that job dissatisfaction was strongly correlated with job burn-out.

Although there appear to be a large number of factors that may precipitate burnout, individual traits also play an important role. An individual's personality and character traits may pre-dispose that person to burn-

³⁴Whitehead, "Probation Officer Job Burnout," p. 14.

out resulting from the way he or she manages the stresses imposed by the work environment, the organization, and the clientele. Other such characteristics include the person's emotional level, attitudes and beliefs, flexibility, creativity, ability to work with people, and communication skills. For example, shy and introverted individuals may have extreme difficulties openly discussing the client's personal problems. They may feel uncomfortable asking pertinent questions that are necessary to gathering information concerning their client's case, a process with which they are not familiar. Additionally,

...burnout tends to afflict people who enter their professions highly motivated and idealistic, expecting their work to give their lives a sense of meaning.³⁵

Expectations are good for goal setting; however, unrealistic expectations will possibly not be achieved and feelings of stress and frustration may be experienced. Many new employees come into a job eager to succeed and accomplish what they feel are the true goals of the organization. In reality, such a new probation officer may not succeed at rehabilitating even one of his or her probationers. The fact may be that the organization does not expect rehabilitation to occur. It is

³⁵Pines and Aronson, Career Burnout: Causes and Cures, p. 10.

reasonable to assume that, in any circumstance when expectations are not met, individuals' self-esteem and confidence in their ability to accomplish work goals will be affected.

Apart from personality traits, there are also other factors which researchers have found that may pre-dispose an individual to burnout. Maslach and Jackson conducted a comparative analysis of numerous human services professionals utilizing the Maslach Burnout Inventory.³⁶ Surveys addressed a number of groups: teachers, social service workers, medical workers, mental health workers, and others (including probation officers) from across the nation. The demographic data of this broad-spectrum survey indicate that there are some differences in burnout across such variables as sex, ethnic background, age, marital status, and education.³⁷

Maslach, has also indicated that men and women differ, albeit only slightly, in their experience of burnout.³⁸ Maslach maintains:

Women tend to experience more emotional exhaustion, and to experience it more intensely, than men. However, men are more likely

³⁶Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson, Maslach Burnout Inventory (Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, 1986), 3.

³⁷Ibid., p. 34.

³⁸Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 58.

to have depersonalized and callous feelings about the people they work with.³⁹

Maslach determined that this was in large part due to the way men and women are socialized. Women have learned to be more emotionally involved, and men have learned to distance themselves from such emotional involvements.

Robert L. Thomas surveyed Federal probation officers and managers of 17 districts in the Western United States.⁴⁰ He mailed questionnaires to 335 officers and 65 managers, and received a response rate of 63%. One of the results of this study supports Maslachs' opinion: women in this survey reported higher levels of perceived stress, and men reported more depersonalized feelings. Furthermore, the analysis suggested that female managers had higher levels of perceived stress than did their male counterparts.

Maslach also found that Caucasians tend to burn out more than minorities. This is attributed to the fact there are not as many minorities in the helping professions. She indicated:

Compared to whites, blacks do not burn out as much. They experience much less emotional exhaustion and much less depersonalization. This is true for both the frequency and the

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Robert L. Thomas, "Stress Perception Among Select Federal Probation and Pretrial Services Officers and Their Supervisors," Federal Probation 52 (September 1988): 48.

intensity of these feelings.⁴¹

Maslach also considers age as another intervening factor. She contends:

There is a clear relationship between age and burnout. Burnout is greatest when people workers are young and is lower for older workers.⁴²

Maslach explains that younger workers tend to burn out more as they are less experienced in their jobs as well as being more inexperienced in how to cope with the stresses of the job. She further contends that, more than likely, they will generally experience burnout within the first few years of being on the job.

However, Thomas found:

...officers under the age of 30 had the lowest burnout, whereas those in the 41 - 50 range had the highest, at which point the curve dropped in the 51 - 60 group. However when looking at the seniority factor (length of service), the burnout relationship was linear ($p = .014$).⁴³

An earlier study on stress and burnout and correctional teachers, conducted by Belcastro, Gold, and Grant, also found that seniority (as opposed to age) was more closely related to burnout.⁴⁴ Their study focused on the

⁴¹Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 59.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Thomas, "Stress Perception," p. 56.

⁴⁴Phillip A. Belcastro, Robert S. Gold, and Justine Grant, "Stress and Burnout: Physiologic Effects on Correctional Teachers," Criminal Justice Behavior 9 (December 1982): 387.

physiologic effects of burnout of 127 public school teachers in the Illinois state correctional facilities. They used both the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the Teacher Somatic Complaint and Illness Inventory. Their analysis indicated that "...burned out teachers were in the profession and at their current work site longer than those teachers not burned out."⁴⁵

Whitehead used the Maslach Burnout Inventory in an exploratory study to survey 1,517 probation and parole officers in New York, Indiana, and Connecticut, as well as Federal probation and parole officers of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.⁴⁶ Of the 1,517 questionnaires mailed out, 968 were returned. The findings reflected that those individuals who were on the job for less than 6 months reported the lowest levels of burnout. Those individuals who had been on the job for a period of 6 months to 3 years reported the highest levels of burnout. However, the most experienced officers reported levels of burnout as low as those who had only been on the job less than 6 months. Contrary to the study of the correctional teachers, the more senior probation officers experienced less burnout.

In her research, Maslach has also found that an in-

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 394.

⁴⁶John T. Whitehead, "Job Burnout in Probation and Parole: It's Extent and Intervention Implications," Criminal Justice and Behavior 12 (March 1985): 91.

dividual's marital status plays a role in burnout. She determined that single people and those married without children are more inclined to experience burnout.⁴⁷ It seems that having a life "outside of work" helps to alleviate those feelings that lead to burnout on the job. In essence, when homelife is supportive, work is put into perspective.

Maslach has also established that burnout occurs more frequently to those individuals with higher education. However, she further indicated that those who have not received any postgraduate education tend to show higher levels of burnout.⁴⁸

As the literature indicates, there are a plethora of sources which can contribute to job burnout. The studies have shown that there is no one single source that is the primary cause of burnout. However, it has been demonstrated that when burnout occurs, it results from a combination of factors. It would seem that burnout is contingent upon an individual's own tolerance levels and ability to cope with the pressures and demands inherent in the job. These pressures and demands result in feelings of stress and tension brought about by the organization, work environment, and clientele. As people are different, their reactions to certain stresses (both

⁴⁷Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 60.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 61.

positive and negative) will be different. What may exasperate one individual may only mildly irritate another. Whatever the stress, if it is not remedied, the individual's response may be apparent through work performance.

The Signs and Symptoms of Burnout

It is evident that burnout results when the stresses and frustrations go beyond a person's ability to cope effectively on the job any further. He or she can no longer provide the tools from within to deal with additional demands. Just as there are a number of causes leading to burnout, there are signs and symptoms which can identify when a person has reached this point. There are signs and symptoms indicative of persons who may be experiencing job burnout. However, it is very important to note, as Freudenberger stated:

...in the very strongest of terms, that individuals who are burned out are generally not malingerers, who are using burnout symptoms in order to avoid their responsibilities. Rather they are often the very people who have given too much. Further, they are neither psychotic, having nervous breakdown, nor mentally ill.⁴⁹

"Perhaps the most visible impact of burnout is the change in people's work performance."⁵⁰ Individuals

⁴⁹Herbert J. Freudenberger, "Counseling and Dynamics: Treating the End-Stage Person," in Whiton Paine, ed., Job Stress and Burnout: Research, Theory, and Intervention (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 177.

⁵⁰Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 77.

experiencing burnout lack motivation and present a cynical attitude towards job, organization, and clientele. They essentially express an apathetic demeanor and often communicate the "I don't give a damn" message, on occasion even verbally to their coworkers. Consequently, this message is clearly perceived in their work performance. Other indicators could be a decrease in work output, failure to meet deadline dates, missed appointments, or failure to attend training sessions.

Detachment is another indicator of burnout. Often burned-out individuals will become emotionally and physically distant from their clientele. For example, a normal pre-sentence investigation interview conducted by a probation officer may last as long as 45 minutes to an hour. A probation officer who is experiencing some level of burnout may quicken the interview to 30 minutes or less, thereby restricting time spent with an offender. Their perception is they do not need all that time to get the necessary information to perform their jobs reasonably well; in reality, this minimal time and sense of urgency to get the offender in and out may reduce the likelihood of a thorough interview. Information is incomplete and the value of the investigation report to the sentencing judge may have been diminished.

In addition to becoming detached from their clientele, burned-out individuals also begin to withdraw from

the job. As Maslach stated:

Over time, the burned-out provider will withdraw physically from the job. Coffee breaks become longer, lunch 'hours' are more than sixty minutes, and the time to go home comes earlier in the working day.⁵¹

Further, a burned-out individual may experience physical symptoms that range from a loss in energy to experiencing headaches, stomach problems, backaches and lingering colds. These are the same kinds of psychosomatic symptoms which have been closely associated with stress. In their study on correction teachers, Belcastro, Gold and Grant found that teachers who have been in their profession and in their current job longer experienced greater levels of burnout.⁵² Of the 127 respondents, they determined that 17 were burned-out. The burned-out teachers were then compared to the nonburned-out teachers for the presence of 12 illnesses that included cardiovascular disorders, ulcers, hypertension, kidney disorders, benign tumors, malignant tumors, hypotension, gall bladder disorders, gastroenteritis, migraine headaches and depression. The teachers indicated whether they developed any of these illnesses prior to teaching or after teaching. Furthermore, these illnesses had to have been diagnosed by a physician before they could be counted as an illness. This study found that all the

⁵¹Ibid., p. 79.

⁵²Belcastro, Gold and Grant, "Stress and Burnout," p. 394.

burned-out teachers developed gastroenteritis and/or migraine headaches after becoming a teacher. One burned-out teacher was diagnosed as having depression before teaching, but eight of the burned-out teachers were diagnosed for depression after becoming a teacher. The results indicate that the corrections teachers developed these illnesses after becoming a teacher, and is most assuredly associated with burnout.

Low morale among the staff is also an indicator that burnout is occurring. The staff members do not seem to have that esprit de corps and are more concerned with who is doing what as opposed to working together. Low morale not only extends to lack of cohesiveness among the staff but is also:

...evidenced by workers and management expressing increased feelings of mutual disrespect and distrust that may lead to both sides insisting that their respective rights, responsibilities, and relationships be legally codified; staff members arriving late or failing to show up for important meetings and appointments; and management spending more and more time away from the organization and otherwise reducing the amount of time spent in direct contact with line staff.⁵³

Other signs of job burnout include the individual's emotional well-being. These emotions encompass feelings of stress, tension, frustration, anxiety and a lack of

⁵³Jerome F.X. Carroll and William L. White, "Theory Building: Integrating Individual and Environmental Factors Within an Ecological Framework," in Whiton Paine, ed., Job Stress and Burnout: Research, Theory, and Intervention Perspectives (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 43.

emotional energy. These feelings can lead a burned-out individual to become more easily tired, irritable, impatient, over-sensitive, and even experience a loss of good humor. They may become easily upset and even over-react to changes. Furthermore, they experience a sense of lack of control over their life. Burned-out individuals may also feel their work no longer offers any satisfaction or meaning. They may also feel as though they are being used by their organization and that they are unappreciated. As a result of this drain on their emotions, burned-out individuals begin to care less about most if not all aspects of their job.

Edelwich and Brodsky have recognized the following as indicators of the frustrated or apathetic individual:

1. Decline in quality or quantity of work.
2. Pattern of absenteeism or lateness.
3. Pattern of personal 'emergencies' necessitating leaving work early.
4. Psychosomatic illness.
5. Use of alcohol while on the job.
6. Persistent failure to perform required tasks (such as paperwork).
7. Acting-out behavior at meetings (silent withdrawal, destructive criticism, raising irrelevant issues, and so on).
8. Constant denigration of colleagues, together with unwillingness to engage in effective resolution of conflict.
9. Spreading apathetic attitudes among other employees through backbiting, nitpicking, sabotage (beyond the normal level of complaining observable at any workplace).⁵⁴

⁵⁴Jerry Edelwich and Archie Brodsky, "Training Guidelines: Linking the Workshop Experience to Needs On and Off the Job," in Whiton Paine, ed., Job Stress and Burnout: Research, Theory, and

These are signs and symptoms that indicate an individual is feeling frustration as a result of conflict on the job. However, it should be emphasized that having any one of these symptoms does not necessarily mean the individual is experiencing burnout but perhaps has good reason for being late every morning. Yet, an individual who is experiencing job burnout will exhibit one or more of these symptoms over a period of time. These symptoms represent substantive indicators and should be utilized in recognizing job burnout.

Consequences of Burnout

Stress, frustration, anxiety, tension and other such related characteristics are the dominant results of a burned-out person. However, there are other serious repercussions that can occur as well. Job burnout can have a profound impact on an employee's personal life, as well as have an effect on the clientele and organization.

Burned-out individuals may take their anger and frustrations home with them. Consequently, this condition may negatively impact on marital relationship and family.

As Maslach indicated:

The provider who is emotionally exhausted will come home feeling tense, upset, and physically tired. A lot of time will be spent bitching and complaining about the job. Lacking the emotional energy to handle everyday hassles calmly, the helper at home is irritable and

Intervention Perspectives (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 138.

impatient, a problem that the family has to learn how to deal with.⁵⁵

The reverse can also be true. Often, service deliverers are unwilling to discuss work with their spouses in an attempt to distance themselves from their work. However, this can backfire, in that the spouse may feel left out and helpless to offer support. As a result, the relationship suffers for lack of open communication. The stress may be felt by all family members.

Another potential harmful consequence is job-related activity interference in personal life. This includes being on-call and having to pull extra duty. An example of this is seen in many probation departments where officers are utilized in supervised visitation. Many officers must give up a few hours each weekend to conduct supervised visitation between a parent and child, times when the parent is free to make this visit only on weekends. Although the officers may be compensated in some manner, this duty still limits their personal time. Being "on-call" is just as bad (if not worse) in many instances. A call can intrude on a family outing, birthday party, or social function, and may even disrupt sleep. A burned-out person will soon resent these intrusions, as will perhaps his family. These intrusions may present another problem for the employee.

⁵⁵Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 81.

The same physical problems discussed above as signs and symptoms of burnout are also a result of burnout. A person who is burned-out may experience one or more physical illnesses which can be a result of continued stress and tension. Maslach argued that people who experience chronic tension will report always feeling tired, and subsequently:

Being chronically tired and tense can make one more susceptible to illness, and, indeed, people experiencing burnout mention the colds that linger too long and the headaches that do not go away.⁵⁶

Job burnout can also lead to substance abuse, including alcohol abuse. Burned-out individuals may turn to drugs or alcohol as a way to cope with stress and tension on the job. Having that martini or beer at lunch may become a tactic to get through the rest of the afternoon or relax after a particularly stressful day, in much the same way that having a few beers after work helps one to unwind and relax. However, if drinking patterns like these become the norm and exceed the occasional glass of wine at lunch, they may portend a more serious problem.

Aside from the emotional stresses, the individual may experience such psychological problems as loss of self-esteem and confidence. The burned-out person may assume a negative and cynical attitude about people in

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 74.

general. Sequentially, this attitude is carried to the outside world, and the burned-out person may become suspicious of everyone. Because of this attitude, the burned-out person may withdraw from friends and such other outside social support groups as religious organizations. Additional problems may arise when the person incorporates these coping patterns at home, and treats family and friends as if they were clients or offenders. It may become difficult to separate work from private life, and they maintain the non-emotional demeanor they have established at work. As Maslach stated: "Here, perhaps, is the most devastating legacy of burnout - a permanent hardening of the human heart."⁵⁷

In many bureaucratic organizations, management and administration appear to blind themselves to the emotional stresses their employees are experiencing as a result of the job. Most of these managers and administrators do not express genuine empathy for employees, and they themselves convey a detached attitude. Many administrators will argue that, if an individual experiences stress at such a level that they burnout and eventually leave the organization, then perhaps they were not prepared for that role anyway. Organizations, in an attempt to excuse a high turnover rate, will also assert that acquiring "new blood" is beneficial to the organization. Further-

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 85.

more, the argument has been made that turnover is less costly, as the organization will not have to assume the costs involved in providing the retirement package. Since it seems that the organization is primarily concerned with expenditures, then perhaps it should be aware of the indirect and hidden costs that it acquires as a result of job burnout, as well as potential legal and financial liabilities resulting from ignoring the situation.

Although the individual seems to be the one who suffers the most as a result of burnout, the organization may suffer equal consequences in terms of expenses. One of these expenses will be seen in increased insurance premiums resulting from increased employee illness and disability claims. It has been shown that burned-out employees suffer psychosomatic symptoms and other chronic illnesses. Furthermore, in the event an employee retires on disability, the organization is faced with the costs of hiring a replacement or substitute. These costs not only include salary but also benefits and training.

Additionally, as employers are responsible for providing a healthy work environment, there could be legal ramifications as a result of burnout. As Minnehan and Paine have noted in their article:

There are legal precedents for workmen's compensation claims for stress-related disabilities. One basis for a claim is that stress gradually accumulates on the job and eventually

disables the worker. For example, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently ruled that a worker who died of a heart attack at home while writing a speech was eligible for death benefits, because the heart condition was deemed the result of accumulated job stress.⁵⁸

Aside from the monetary costs in terms of medical and disability insurance, the organization will pay a price in high absenteeism. Employees who suffer burnout tend to use most if not all of their sick time; the organization pays the price in less productivity. When the employee is not on the job, the work is not getting accomplished. Basically, the organization is paying a day's wages to someone who is not there to perform the job. Considering the consequences of absenteeism alone, the organization may want to take the potential of job burnout more seriously.

Since burnout has a direct effect on job performance, the related outcome may be a decline in productivity that burdens the organization by hindering its primary objective or mission. For example, if five probation officers in the pre-sentence investigation unit are experiencing burnout and are unable to function to their full capabilities, the consequences may be seen in their failure to complete their investigations. Subsequently, their reports are not turned in by the

⁵⁸Robert Minnehan and Whiton Paine, "Bottom Lines: Assessing the Economic and Legal Consequences of Burnout," in Whiton Paine, ed., Job Stress and Burnout: Research, Theory, and Intervention Perspectives (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 104.

sentencing hearing date, and the Court disposition of those cases may be adjourned to a subsequent sentencing date. However, the result is that the court calendar is then further strained and dockets have exceeded their limits by the sentencing date. Courts may find it necessary to incur the costs of running into overtime in an attempt to accommodate the extra load. The organization is then responsible to make compensation for overtime to court personnel. Additionally, attorneys, judges, witnesses, victims, police officers, the offender and other individuals called to court on those particular cases have also been affected by the change. This is not to say that the probation officer is entirely to blame for demanding court calendars, but that burnout can have a profound effect on the entire organization.

Another significant impact of burnout is indicated by high turnover of personnel. Many persons who are experiencing burnout may elect to find a new occupation or even opt for early retirement. The organizations may argue that this allows them to hire new, innovative and creative people; in terms of costs, this is not the most economical venture. The organization stands to lose personnel in whom they have invested a great deal of expense in training and job experience. The organization must then invest additional money in hiring and training new personnel. Although there may be substantial dif-

ferences in salary, the organization will be disadvantaged by losing highly qualified employees who already have working knowledge of the organization and the organization's work goals.

Although burnout initially appears to be a personal issue, it does have its negative impact on the organization. As Minnehan and Paine have suggested, the consequences:

...should be of significant and increasing interest to decision makers, particularly those concerned about such issues as decreasing staff productivity, quality of life, burgeoning medical and legal costs, declining quality of output, deteriorating labor relations, increasing personnel problems, risk management, and long-range planning.⁵⁹

The client, offender, defendant, or service recipient (however they may be called) will, in some manner, also be affected by burnout. Since burned-out persons eventually become detached and cynical, those receiving their care or services will also be subjected to this phenomenon. The employee will begin to treat the client in a less than respectful manner, perhaps even dehumanizing them. The purpose of their job is to address these people and provide certain services, yet they may develop an intense dislike of being with their clientele. Consequently, they treat them in an indifferent if not callous manner.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 95.

Furthermore, as a result of their feelings and attitudes about their clientele, they may avoid interpersonal contact as much as possible. By decreasing the amount of client contact, the burned-out individual may unintentionally omit or neglect pertinent information regarding the client and, hence, submit incomplete work. In other words, a probation officer who avoids contact with his probationers by spending minimal time with them may fail to detect that one of the probationers exhibits signs of alcoholism. The result is that the probationer is not encouraged to attend Alcoholics Anonymous or enter a rehabilitation center. The probationer continues to engage in certain freedoms from which he is prohibited as a part of the terms and conditions of his or her probation. Minimizing contact reflects poor work performance and diminishes the job's true objectives.

Burned-out persons may intentionally avoid contact as a method of coping with the stresses being experienced. They often argue that it is not necessary to spend more than a certain amount of time and that this allows them just what is absolutely necessary to do their jobs. They refuse to recognize special circumstances and often contend that, if there is anything more required, then such needs are beyond the scope of the job or cannot possibly be germane to work objectives. In essence, they deny the need of spending more time with their client or

defendant by rationalizing that it simply is not necessary. This may be indicative of burned-out persons who find it easier to cope with the stresses inherent in the job by avoiding client contact. This is one area in which they have some control and it is their choice.

In a sample of 70 child protection workers, McGee utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory in order to determine how burnout may be associated with decision-making in particularly demanding cases.⁶⁰ It was found that burnout was related to work avoidance in that:

For individuals who denied risk in a case of chronic child neglect, higher burnout scores were associated with making an earlier decision, held with greater and less variable certainty. However, among those who eventually decided 'yes', the child was at risk, there was no relationship between burnout and decision-making variables.⁶¹

The conclusions of this study indicate that burned-out individuals avoid client contact and justify this avoidance by denying the need for involvement. This study further demonstrates how this avoidance can impact on the client.

Probation and other social service workers often excuse the sub-standard assistance and direction by denigrating clients. The prevalent attitude is that the of-

⁶⁰Robin A. McGee, "Burnout and Professional Decision Making: An Analogue Study," Journal of Counseling Psychology 36 (July 1989): 349.

⁶¹Ibid.

fender is the criminal and has not earned the right to be treated with the respect given to a normal human being. The burned-out officer may take this perception even further, and maintain the "I don't give a damn what happens to the defendant" attitude. Thus, such behavior will affect the type of services provided and which most likely will be insufficient. Take as a most severe example of such perceptions, the relentless and brutal beating of Rodney King by several Los Angeles police officers on March 3, 1991.⁶²

What is not always understood by the organization and officer is that the effects of burnout have a more profound impact in terms of what the public sees. Public image or how the public views probation as a viable alternative to incarceration can be impacted. It is also relevant to how the public regards the officers as professionals, whether or not the entire organization is considered to be achieving intended goals, or the system is perceived as working. In essence, the organization and the officer have to consider carefully the effects of burnout on the offender as it relates to other public relations. This can mean the difference between support and nonsupport of an agency.

Although it may be felt that the offender is not worthy of respect, the job and its goals should be given

⁶²Alex Prud'Homme, "Police Brutality," Time, March 1991, 16.

equitable consideration. In order to secure professional status, the organization and the worker must also share mutual respect. This can only occur by working together to alleviate and reduce those stressors attached to the job, thereby decreasing the risk of burnout.

As this literature review has indicated, probation officers are very much susceptible to job burnout, and the consequences can be destructive. Studies across various probation departments can investigate the amount of burnout experienced by probation officers, and facilitate identifying the sources of stress which may lead to burnout. The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine whether or not probation officers of Monmouth County, New Jersey experienced any significant levels of job burnout and to explore the relationship between burnout and being assigned to certain departments within the organization.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

In 1985, Wallace, Roberg and Allen conducted an exploratory study of 115 East San Francisco Bay police officers from five law enforcement agencies.⁶³ The officers were collapsed into three subgroups--current narcotics investigators, former narcotics investigators, and patrol officers. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to survey the officers on perceived levels of burnout. The results of this study found that duty assignment had a direct relationship to burnout: narcotics investigators experienced higher levels of burnout while on assignment but, once they left that assignment, burnout decreased.

Roberg, Hayhurst and Allen conducted another study using the MBI in exploring the relationship between civilian law enforcement dispatchers and job burnout.⁶⁴ This sample was compared with the earlier sample of the 115 sworn law enforcement officers in the San Francisco Bay area. Their analysis found that, while narcotics

⁶³Paul A. Wallace, Roy R. Roberg, Harry E. Allen, "Job Burnout Among Narcotics Investigators: An Exploratory Study," Journal of Criminal Justice 13 (1985): 549.

⁶⁴Roy R. Roberg, David L. Hayhurst, and Harry E. Allen, "Job Burnout in Law Enforcement Dispatchers: A Comparative Analysis," Journal of Criminal Justice 16 (1988): 385.

officers experienced significantly greater stress than did dispatch personnel, dispatch personnel scored significantly higher than both patrol officer or ex-narcotics officer groups. They concluded that dispatch personnel experienced a significant amount of burnout.

These studies have shown that there is a direct relationship with duty assignment and job burnout. Therefore, it seems possible this same relationship may also exist within a probation department, and warrants further investigation.

After more than two years as a probation officer assigned to Monmouth County Criminal Case Management, this officer observed that a number of colleagues appeared to exhibit those characteristics commonly defined as job burnout. These individuals were apathetic to defendants and victims, as well as toward the system. It would only be a slight over-generalization to suggest that their primary concern was to put in their eight hours and collect their paychecks. They seemed intent on giving the minimal amount of effort necessary to get the case work done. Some cases, they procrastinated on the work load, thereby not meeting due dates of the reports. These individuals' reports were scant, containing very little information. In those areas where they were given freedom to be creative, they chose to be redundant and generally failed to carefully consider all aspects of the

case. In those areas where their opinion was requested, they offered none. Some of these officers reacted radically to any proposed form of change or additional work. It is not that these officers were any less intelligent or feeling than their colleagues; they just maintained an "I don't care" attitude, which reflected on their work and subsequently on the morale of the entire office. Consequently, it was thought necessary to survey Monmouth County probation officers to determine whether assignment in a particular department causes higher levels of stress leading to job burnout, in an effort to test the generalizability of the Bay area researchers.

Study Design

The data for this analysis were drawn from 52 probation officers and 29 senior probation officers of Monmouth County New Jersey, a jurisdiction selected on the basis of availability. Geographically, Monmouth County is located in central New Jersey. Situated about an hour's drive from New York and on the shoreline, Monmouth County is considered one of the more affluent counties in New Jersey. In 1988, the per capita personal income for Monmouth County was \$24,003 and was ranked fifth in the state.⁶⁵ The starting salary for a Monmouth County pro-

⁶⁵N.J. Department of Labor, Division of Labor Market & Demographic Research, "New Jersey Personal Income, 1969-1988," July 1990 (personal income data).

bation officer in 1990 was \$22,000. Based on total number of years in service, the average annual salary for a probation officer in 1990 was \$23,137; the average annual salary for a senior probation officer was \$30,795.

Respondents were separated into five groups, based on department to which they were assigned. The first group (n=8) consisted of those probation officers assigned to the Juvenile Supervision unit. Juvenile supervision is defined as case supervision of juvenile offenders who received a probationary sentence. Case supervision includes surveillance, guidance, counseling, rehabilitative services, and proper administration of the case. The second group (n=25) consisted of those probation officers assigned to the Adult Supervision unit. Adult supervision is defined as case supervision of adult offenders who were sentenced to a term of probation. The third group (n=13) consisted of probation officers assigned to the Family Intake component, comprised of officers who conducted preliminary exploration of all matters concerning family and/or domestic relations. This includes but is not limited to temporary restraining orders, restraining order violations, modifications to visitation and child custody orders, and public defender eligibility for juvenile offenders. The fourth group (n=6) consisted of probation officers assigned to the Child Support unit. Child support is primarily respon-

sible for collections of money for child support. This included applications for child support, administration of child support cases, wage garnishment, and location of individuals who elude child support obligations. The fifth group ($n=29$) embodied those officers assigned to Criminal Case Management unit. The criminal case management unit provided pre-sentence investigations, pretrial reports, central intake, bail review, and application review for public defender eligibility.

Instrumentation

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was utilized to collect the dependent variable data (see Appendix A).⁶⁶ The MBI was developed as an instrument to measure perceived burnout experienced by those individuals primarily in the human services fields. The latter included nurses, doctors, police officers, social workers, probation officers and teachers. The MBI measures three aspects of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. The instrument also measures both the frequency and the intensity of feeling for each of these aspects, thus yielding six indicators of burnout.

In the MBI, emotional exhaustion refers to a person's experiencing feelings of being emotionally spent

⁶⁶Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson, Maslach Burnout Inventory, p. 1.

and unable to give anymore of themselves. Such individuals feel they are overextended and exhausted by their work. Depersonalization connotes a negative and cynical attitude towards one's clientele. Not only do such service providers maintain a dislike for their clientele, they also display a detached and apathetic view of those they are supposed to be serving. A lack of personal accomplishment specifies that individuals do not feel they are very successful at providing their services. They have diminished feelings of achievement and proficiency regarding their work. Individuals may feel dissatisfied with their job and their job performance.

Hypothesis

Since the MBI consists of six subscales and as the sample contained basically five subgroups, it was necessary to formulate thirty research hypotheses in job burnout between Criminal Case Management and the other four subgroups, Juvenile Supervision, Adult Supervision, Family Intake and Child Support. Since there was no empirical basis for projecting outcomes, null hypotheses were tested. Basically the five sets of hypotheses are set forth below:

- (a) There will be no significant differences between burnout scores of officers assigned to Criminal Case Management and those assigned to Juvenile Supervision in regard to (1) emotional exhaustion; (2) depersonalization; or (3) lack of personal accomplishment by frequency or intensity.

(b) There will be no significant differences between burnout scores of officers assigned to Criminal Case Management and those assigned to Adult Supervision in regard to (1) emotional exhaustion, (2) depersonalization or (3) lack of personal accomplishment by frequency or intensity.

(c) There will be no significant differences between burnout scores of officers assigned to Criminal Case Management and those assigned to Family Intake in regard to (1) emotional exhaustion, (2) depersonalization or (3) lack of personal accomplishment by frequency or intensity.

(d) There will be no significant differences between burnout scores of officers assigned to Criminal Case Management and those assigned to Child Support in regard to (1) emotional, (2) depersonalization or (3) lack of personal accomplishment by frequency or intensity.

(e) There will be no significant differences between burnout scores of officers assigned to Criminal Case Management and all other officers combined in regard to (1) emotional, (2) depersonalization or (3) lack of personal accomplishment by frequency or intensity.

There, are in sum, 30 null hypotheses to be tested.

Data Collection

The MBI was administered to 94 probation and senior probation officers in their respective departments. All officers were contacted by the investigator in their offices and asked to complete the questionnaire. Eighty-one questionnaires were returned, resulting in a return rate of 86%. The average time for completing the instrument was fifteen minutes. Appropriate measures were used to assure anonymity: questionnaires were placed in a sealed box after completion by respondent, and no identi-

fication of questionnaire was possible by duty assignment and name. Self-reported demographic data on respondents were gathered on a separate biographical data sheet attached to the MBI. These are summarized in Tables 1 through 5.

The frequencies of all variables for the entire sample are described in Table 6. It is interesting to note that 63% of the sample are female. Eighty-five percent of the officers are white, 13.6% are black, and only 1.2% are hispanic. No other minority was represented at the time of this survey. Furthermore, 64% of the officers ranged from age 26 to age 35. The majority of the officers have been employed in the Probation field and working for Monmouth County for a period of one to five years.

DATA ANALYSIS

T-tests were used to compare for differences between Criminal Case Management and the other departments on each of the MBI subscales. Each of the thirty (30) hypotheses was tested to determine if any department experienced significantly higher levels of job burnout. On the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales, higher mean scores correspond to higher degrees of experienced burnout. However, on the Personal Accomplishment subscale, lower mean scores correspond to higher degrees of experienced burnout.

TABLE 1

DESCRIPTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY DEPARTMENT:

Juvenile Supervision

Variable	Range	Mean
Gender:	Female = 3 Male = 5	n/a
Age:	21 to 45 years old	n/a
Ethnic Identity:	White = 8	n/a
Marital Status:	Single = 3 Married = 5	n/a
Educational Level:	4 year degree = 8	n/a
Work Classification:	Probation Officer = 3 Sr. Probation Officer = 5	n/a
Length in Probation Field:	3 to 5 years (or more)	4.38
Length Employed by Monmouth County:	1 to 5 years (or more)	4.13
Length of Time in Present Department:	1 to 5 years (or more)	3.88
Participation in Training:	At least once a year to 4 times a year or more	3.25
Participation in Physical Exercise:	Occasionally to at least 3 times a week	2.75
Alcohol Consumption in the last 12 months:	At least several times a week to none during the year	3.75
Description of Alcohol Consumption:	Non-drinker, very light drinker, social drinker, heavy drinker, or ex-problem or ex-alcoholic drinker	2.25

(n = 8)

TABLE 2

DESCRIPTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY DEPARTMENT:

Adult Supervision

Variable	Range	Mean
Gender:	Female = 14 Male = 11	n/a
Age:	21 to over 45 years old	n/a
Ethnic Identity:	Black = 5 White = 20	n/a
Marital Status:	Single = 10 Married = 14 Divorced = 1	n/a
Educational Level:	4 year degree = 24 Masters or higher = 1	n/a
Work Classification:	Probation Officer = 13 Sr. Probation Officer = 12	n/a
Length in Probation Field:	3 to 5 years (or more)	4.28
Length Employed by Monmouth County:	1 to 5 years (or more)	4.20
Length of Time in Present Department:	Less than 6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.60
Participation in Training:	Never to 4 or more times a year	3.24
Participation in Physical Exercise:	Never to daily	3.48
Alcohol Consumption in the last 12 months:	At least several times a week to none during the year	3.72
Description of Alcohol Consumption:	Non-drinker, very light drinker, social drinker, heavy drinker, or ex-problem or ex-alcoholic drinker	2.32

(n = 25)

TABLE 3

DESCRIPTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY DEPARTMENT:

Family Intake

Variable	Range	Mean
Gender:	Female = 11 Male = 2	n/a
Age:	26 to over 45	n/a
Ethnic Identity:	White = 13	n/a
Marital Status:	Single = 5 Married = 7 Divorced = 1	n/a
Educational Level:	4 year degree = 12 Masters or higher = 1	n/a
Work Classification:	Probation Officer = 8 Sr. Probation Officer = 5	n/a
Length in Probation Field:	3 to 5 years (or more)	4.00
Length Employed by Monmouth County:	1 to 5 years (or more)	4.08
Length of Time in Present Department:	1 to 5 years (or more)	3.92
Participation in Training:	At least once a year to 4 or more times a year	2.92
Participation in Physical Exercise:	Occasionally to daily	3.62
Alcohol Consumption in the last 12 months:	At least several times a week to none during the year	4.00
Description of Alcohol Consumption:	Non-drinker, very light drinker, social drinker, heavy drinker, or ex-problem or ex-alcoholic drinker	2.23

(n = 13)

TABLE 4

DESCRIPTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY DEPARTMENT:

Child Support

Variable	Range	Mean
Gender:	Female = 4 Male = 2	n/a
Age:	21 to over 45 years old	n/a
Ethnic Identity:	Black = 2 White = 4	n/a
Marital Status:	Single = 2 Married = 3 Separated = 1	n/a
Educational Level:	6 - 4 year degree	n/a
Work Classification:	Probation Officer = 4 Sr. Probation Officer = 2	n/a
Length in Probation Field:	Less than 6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.67
Length Employed by Monmouth County:	Less than 6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.67
Length of Time in Present Department:	Less than 6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.33
Participation in Training:	At least once a year to 2 or 3 times a year	2.50
Participation in Physical Exercise:	Never to at least once a week	2.50
Alcohol Consumption in the last 12 months:	At least several times a week to none during the year	3.17
Description of Alcohol Consumption:	Non-drinker, very light drinker, social drinker, heavy drinker, or ex-problem or ex-alcoholic drinker	2.33

(n = 6)

TABLE 5

DESCRIPTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES BY DEPARTMENT:

Criminal Case Management

Variable	Range	Mean
Gender:	Female = 19 Male = 10	n/a
Age:	21 to over 45 years old	n/a
Ethnic Identity:	Black = 4 White = 24 Hispanic = 1	n/a
Marital Status:	Single = 17 Married = 9 Divorced = 3	n/a
Educational Level:	4 year degree = 26 Masters or higher = 3	n/a
Work Classification:	Probation Officer = 24 Sr. Probation Officer = 5	n/a
Length in Probation Field:	6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.79
Length Employed by Monmouth County:	6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.69
Length of Time in Present Department:	Less than 6 months to 5 years (or more)	3.31
Participation in Training:	Never to 4 or more times a year	2.31
Participation in Physical Exercise:	Never to daily	3.24
Alcohol Consumption in the last 12 months:	At least several times a week to none during the year	3.48
Description of Alcohol Consumption:	Non-drinker, very light drinker, social drinker, heavy drinker, or ex-problem or ex-alcoholic drinker	2.34

(n = 29)

TABLE 6
FREQUENCIES OF ALL VARIABLES

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	51	63.0
Male	30	37.0
<u>Age</u>		
21 to 25 years	7	8.6
26 to 30 years	30	37.0
31 to 35 years	22	27.2
36 to 40 years	8	9.9
41 to 45 years	7	8.6
over 45 years	7	8.6
<u>Ethnic Identity</u>		
Black	11	13.6
White	69	85.2
Hispanic	1	1.2
Asian	0	0
Native American	0	0
Other	0	0
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Single	37	45.7
Married	38	46.9
Separated	1	1.2
Divorced	5	6.2
Widowed	0	0

Table 6 (Continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<u>Educational Level</u>		
Bachelors Degree	76	93.8
Masters Degree	5	6.2
<u>Department</u>		
Juvenile Supervision	8	9.9
Adult Supervision	25	30.9
Family Intake	13	16.0
Child Support	6	7.4
Criminal Case Mgmt.	29	35.8
<u>Work Classification</u>		
Probation Officer	52	64.2
Sr. Probation Off.	29	35.8
<u>Length in Probation Field</u>		
Less than 6 months	1	1.2
6 mos. to 1 year	1	1.2
1 to 3 years	20	24.7
3 to 5 years	32	39.5
5 or more years	27	33.3
<u>Length Employed by Monmouth County</u>		
Less than 6 months	1	1.2
6 mos. to 1 year	1	1.2

Table 6 (Continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
1 to 3 years	24	29.6
3 to 5 years	30	37.0
5 or more years	25	30.9
<u>Length in Present Department</u>		
Less than 6 months	4	4.9
6 mos. to 1 year	2	2.5
1 to 3 years	34	42.0
3 to 5 years	27	33.3
5 or more years	14	17.3
<u>Participation in Training</u>		
Never	3	3.7
Once a year	28	34.6
2 to 3 times a year	32	39.5
4 or more times/year	18	22.2
<u>Participation in Physical Exercise</u>		
Never	3	3.7
Occasionally	22	34.6
At least once a week	20	24.7
At least 3 times/wk	22	27.2
Daily	14	17.3

Table 6 (Continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<u>How Often Consumed Alcohol in the Past Year</u>		
Once a day	0	0
Several times a week	9	11.1
Once a week	26	32.1
Once a month	31	38.3
None	15	18.5
<u>Description of Alcohol Consumption</u>		
Non-drinker	13	16.0
Light drinker	31	38.3
Social drinker	36	44.4
Heavy drinker	1	1.2
Ex-alcoholic	0	0

ANOVA was used to measure the effects for gender, age, ethnic identity, marital status, education level, department, work classification, length of time in present department, participation in training, participation in physical exercise, frequency of alcohol consumption, and description of alcohol consumption on the six MBI subscales. Two-way ANOVA was utilized for the entire sample using department and all other demographic variable in turn as the independent variables (and the MBI subscales as the dependent variables) to determine whether there was a significant impact on burnout scores.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

An assessment of the MBI subscales by the categorizations of low, average, and high for the entire sample and for each individual department is presented in Table 7. This comparison procedure is consistent with the earlier works of Maslach. However, this overall evaluation of the degrees of burnout is intended primarily as feedback for the respondents and for the organization. Further empirical analysis is necessary to determine whether burnout scores vary by assignment and are influenced by independent variables.

The thirty hypotheses were developed to compare the group mean burnout scores with one another and examine the variation among the values within each group. T-tests were conducted to assess if any differences were significant at the .05 level.

The first set of six hypotheses compared the mean scores between Criminal Case Management officers and Juvenile Supervision officers (see Table 8). The null hypotheses stated that there would be no difference in burnout scores between the two groups on any subscale. The null hypotheses would not be rejected as there were no differences at the statistical level of significance between the two groups on any of the burnout subscales. The findings indicated that Criminal Case Management

TABLE 7
CATEGORIZATION OF MBI SCORES

Range of Experienced Burnout						
MBI Subscales	Low	%	Moderate	%	High	%
<u>Overall Sample</u>						
EE	13	16.	21	25.9	47	58.0
DP	11	13.6	27	33.3	43	53.1
PA	15	18.5	21	25.9	45	55.6
<u>Subgroup by Dept.:</u>						
<u>Juv. Supervision</u>						
EE	1	12.5	2	25.0	5	62.5
DP	1	12.5	4	50.0	3	37.5
PA	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5
<u>Adult Supervision</u>						
EE	5	20.0	5	20.0	15	60.0
DP	3	12.0	10	40.0	12	48.0
PA	6	24.0	7	28.0	12	48.0
<u>Family Intake</u>						
EE	1	7.7	4	30.8	8	61.5
DP	3	23.1	6	46.2	4	30.8
PA	5	38.5	2	15.4	6	46.2
<u>Child Support</u>						
EE	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0
DP	1	16.7	1	16.7	4	66.7
PA	0	0.0	4	66.7	2	33.3
<u>Criminal Case Mgmt</u>						
EE	5	17.2	8	27.6	16	55.2
DP	3	10.3	6	20.7	20	69.0
PA	4	13.8	5	17.2	20	69.0

(EE) Emotional Exhaustion
(DP) Depersonalization
(PA) Personal Accomplishment

TABLE 8
COMPARISON OF CRIMINAL CASE MANAGEMENT WITH EACH OTHER DEPARTMENT ON
MBI SUBSCALES: HYPOTHESES 1 - 6

Hypotheses		Variable	Group	Standard Standard			Error	t value	P
				Mean	Deviation				
(1)	Emotional Exhaustion/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. Juv. Supervision	2.38 2.50	.78 .76	.14 .27	.39	.70		
(2)	Emotional Exhaustion/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. Juv. Supervision	28.38 32.88	11.32 11.28	2.10 3.99	1.00	.33		
(3)	Depersonalization/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. Juv. Supervision	2.59 2.25	.68 .71	.13 .25	-1.22	.23		
(4)	Depersonalization/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. Juv. Supervision	29.45 22.00	20.36 23.61	3.78 8.35	- .89	.38		
(5)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. Juv. Supervision	2.55 2.63	.74 .52	.14 .18	.26	.79		
(6)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. Juv. Supervision	26.69 26.75	10.64 8.10	1.98 2.86	.01	.99		

officers did not experience significantly higher levels of job burnout than did those officers assigned to Juvenile Supervision. However, they did score slightly higher on the frequency and intensity subscales of depersonalization. They also had slightly lower mean scores on the frequency and intensity subscales of lack of personal accomplishment.

The second set of six hypotheses compared the mean scores between Criminal Case Management officers and Adult Supervision officers (see Table 9). The null hypotheses stated that there would be no differences in burnout scores between the two groups on any of the MBI subscales. Only one null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis indicated that officers assigned to Criminal Case Management had significantly lower scores on the intensity subscale of lack of personal accomplishment scores. While no other significant differences occurred, Criminal Case Management officers had slightly higher scores on two of the remaining five aspects.

The third set of hypotheses compared the mean scores between Criminal Case Management officers and Family Intake officers (see Table 10). The null hypotheses stated that there would be no differences in burnout scores between the two groups on any of the subscales. The null hypothesis was rejected in three of the burnout dimensions. The findings indicated that the Criminal Case

TABLE 9

COMPARISON OF CRIMINAL CASE MANAGEMENT WITH EACH OTHER DEPARTMENT ON
MBI SUBSCALES: HYPOTHESES 7 - 12

Hypotheses	Variable	Group	Standard Mean	Standard Deviation	Error	t value	P
(7)	Emotional Exhaustion/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. Adult Supervision	2.38 2.40	.78 .82	.14 .16	.10	.93
(8)	Emotional Exhaustion/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. Adult Supervision	28.38 28.88	11.32 13.54	2.10 2.70	.15	.88
(9)	Depersonalization/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. Adult Supervision	2.59 2.36	.68 .70	.13 .14	-1.20	.24
(10)	Depersonalization/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. Adult Supervision	29.45 21.28	20.36 21.55	3.78 4.31	-1.43	.16
(11)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. Adult Supervision	2.55 2.24	.74 .83	.14 .17	-1.46	.15
(12)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. Adult Supervision	26.69 32.92	10.64 11.28	1.98 2.26	2.09	.04*

TABLE 10
COMPARISON OF CRIMINAL CASE MANAGEMENT WITH EACH OTHER DEPARTMENT ON
MBI SUBSCALES: HYPOTHESES 13 - 18

Hypotheses		Variable	Group	Standard			Error	t value	P
				Mean	Deviation				
(13)	Emotional Exhaustion/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt.	2.38	.78	.14	.64	.52		
		Family Intake	2.54	.66	.18				
(14)	Emotional Exhaustion/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt.	28.38	11.32	2.10	.27	.79		
		Family Intake	29.38	11.23	3.11				
(15)	Depersonalization/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt.	2.59	.68	.13	-2.16	.04*		
		Family Intake	2.08	.76	.21				
(16)	Depersonalization/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt.	29.45	20.36	3.78	-3.25	.00*		
		Family Intake	10.69	5.54	1.54				
(17)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt.	2.55	.74	.14	-1.76	.09		
		Family Intake	2.08	.95	.27				
(18)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt.	26.69	10.64	1.98	2.04	.05*		
		Family Intake	33.54	8.53	2.37				

Management group experienced significantly higher scores on the intensity and frequency subscales of depersonalization and significantly lower scores on the intensity subscale of lack of personal accomplishment. Family Intake officers had slightly higher burnout scores on the remaining subscales.

The fourth set of hypotheses compared the mean scores between Criminal Case Management officers and Child Support officers (see Table 11). The null hypotheses stated that there would be no difference in burnout scores between the two groups on any of the MBI subscales. The null hypotheses was rejected in only one burnout aspect. The analysis revealed that Criminal Case Management officers experienced significantly higher depersonalization/intensity scores than did Child Support officers. While there were no other significant differences, Criminal Case Management officers did have slightly higher scores on the frequency and intensity subscale of emotional exhaustion, and the frequency subscale of depersonalization. They also had slightly lower scores on the intensity subscale of lack of personal accomplishment. Child Support officers had somewhat higher scores on the frequency subscale of lack of personal accomplishment.

The fifth set of hypotheses compared the mean scores between Criminal Case Management and all other depart-

TABLE 11
COMPARISON OF CRIMINAL CASE MANAGEMENT WITH EACH OTHER DEPARTMENT ON
MBI SUBSCALES: HYPOTHESES 19 - 24

Hypotheses	Variable	Group	Standard Mean	Standard Deviation	Error	t value	P
(19)	Emotional Exhaustion/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt.	2.38	.78	.14	- .13	.90
		Child Support	2.34	.82	.33		
(20)	Emotional Exhaustion/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt.	28.38	11.32	2.10	- .32	.75
		Child Support	26.84	7.14	2.91		
(21)	Depersonalization/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt.	2.59	.68	.13	- .27	.79
		Child Support	2.50	.84	.34		
(22)	Depersonalization/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt.	29.45	20.36	3.78	-2.09	.05*
		Child Support	11.84	4.54	1.85		
(23)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt.	2.55	.74	.14	- .69	.50
		Child Support	2.34	.52	.21		
(24)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt.	26.69	10.64	1.98	.91	.37
		Child Support	30.84	6.34	2.59		

ments grouped together (see Table 12). The null hypotheses stated there would be no differences in burnout scores between the two groups on any of the MBI subscales. The null hypotheses was rejected in two of the burnout dimension comparison. The findings revealed Criminal Case Management officers had significantly higher scores on the intensity subscale of depersonalization and significantly lower scores on the intensity subscale of lack of personal accomplishment. While there were no other differences that reached the statistical level of significance, Criminal Case Management officers had somewhat higher depersonalization/frequency scores. However, all other departments scored higher in the remaining three burnout aspects.

ANOVA was used to test for significant differences between each of the five departments and the six MBI subscales, controlling for gender, age, ethnic identity, marital status, education level, department, work classification, length of time in probation field, length of time in Monmouth County, length of time in present department, participation in training, participation in physical exercise, frequency of alcohol consumption, and description of alcohol consumption (see Table 13). The findings indicate that there were significant differences (at the .05 level) in respondents scores associated with (1) ethnic identity on the burnout dimension, emotional

TABLE 12

COMPARISON OF CRIMINAL CASE MANAGEMENT WITH ALL OTHER DEPARTMENTS ON
MBI SUBSCALES: HYPOTHESES 25 - 30

Hypotheses	Variable	Group	Standard Standard			Error	t value	P
			Mean	Deviation				
(25)	Emotional Exhaustion/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. All Other Dept.'s	2.38 2.44	.78 .75	.14 .10	.36	.72	
(26)	Emotional Exhaustion/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. All Other Dept.'s	28.38 29.38	11.32 11.88	2.10 1.65	.37	.71	
(27)	Depersonalization/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. All Other Dept.'s	2.59 2.29	.68 .72	.13 .10	-1.81	.07	
(28)	Depersonalization/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. All Other Dept.'s	29.45 17.65	20.36 18.17	3.78 2.52	-2.68	.01*	
(29)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ frequency	Criminal Case Mgmt. All Other Dept.'s	2.55 2.27	.74 .80	.14 .11	-1.57	.12	
(30)	Lack of Personal Accomplishment/ intensity	Criminal Case Mgmt. All Other Dept.'s	26.69 31.88	10.64 9.77	1.98 1.35	2.22	.03*	

TABLE 13
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF OUTCOMES

Source of Variation	Emotional Exhaustion			Depersonalization			Lack of Personal Accomplishment		
	F Value	P	Intensity	F Value	P	Intensity	F Value	P	Intensity
Gender	.98	.38	.69	2.45	.09	.19	.65	.52	.24
Age	.42	.66	.71	.08	.93	.55	1.07	.35	.15
Ethnic Identity	3.51	.04*	.97	.44	.65	.57	.03	.97	.81
Marital Status	.13	.88	.80	.11	.90	.30	.19	.83	.58
Education Level	.42	.66	.71	.15	.87	.43	.08	.92	.86
Department	1.35	.27	.89	3.51	.04*	.04*	.58	.56	.12
Work Class.	.99	.38	.62	1.82	.17	.24	.35	.71	.98
Time in Prob.	.99	.37	.58	1.51	.23	.60	.36	.70	.85
Time/Non. Cty.	1.86	.16	.56	1.32	.27	.39	.62	.54	.86
Present Dept.	3.62	.03*	.13	2.84	.06	.39	.07	.93	.52
Training	.23	.80	.84	2.52	.08	.47	.03	.97	.65
Phys. Exercise	1.86	.16	.21	1.46	.24	.49	1.88	.16	.55
Freq. of Alcohol Consumption	4.89	.01*	.38	4.16	.02*	.03*	.72	.49	.24
Description of Alcohol Consumption	3.44	.04*	.65	.30	.74	.76	.09	.90	.55

exhaustion/frequency; (2) department on the burnout dimension, depersonalization/frequency and depersonalization/intensity; and, (3) length of time in present department on the burnout dimension of emotional exhaustion/frequency. The findings also indicated that differences in respondent scores were significant at the .05 level with regard to frequency of alcohol consumption on the MBI subscales emotional exhaustion/frequency, depersonalization/frequency, and depersonalization/intensity. This is the only independent variable which reflects any consistent relationship to the MBI subscales. Furthermore, the scores indicated there was a significant difference at the .05 level concerning description of alcohol consumption and the burnout aspect of emotional exhaustion/frequency. Although Table 13 indicates differences in respondent scores at the .05 level of significance associated with some of the independent variables and the MBI subscales, no pattern has been established.

The main effects of department and each other demographic variable were analyzed in two-way interactions to determine whether any independent variable in the study had significant impact on burnout scores (see Table 14). The earlier findings indicated an impact on the burnout scores at the .05 level of significance associated with the following:

TABLE 14
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF OUTCOMES
2-WAY INTERACTIONS

Source of Variation	Emotional Exhaustion			Depersonalization			Lack of Personal Accomplishment			
	F Value	P	Intensity	F Value	P	Intensity	F Value	P	Intensity	
Department - Gender	1.34	.26	.12	1.41	.24	.69	.29	.88	.42	.80
Department - Age	1.29	.24	.04*	.74	.74	3.09	.79	.69	.86	.61
Department - Ethnic Identity	.46	.63	.69	.62	.54	.25	3.29	.04*	2.98	.05*
Department - Marital Status	.56	.76	.54	2.13	.06	1.13	.64	.70	.35	.90
Department - Education Level	2.66	.08	.08	2.12	.13	.76	1.21	.30	1.14	.33
Department - Work Class.	.78	.55	.51	.82	.52	.68	.79	.54	1.00	.42
Department - Time in Prob.	1.06	.40	.38	1.06	.40	.94	.98	.46	.47	.88
Department - Time/Mon. Cty.	1.30	.26	.11	1.59	.15	2.03	1.55	1.59	.48	.87
Department - Present Dept.	1.30	.25	.08	1.23	.29	1.93	.46	.91	.49	.89
Department - Training	.61	.76	.93	.63	.75	1.02	.68	.70	.76	.64
Department - Phys. Exercise	.64	.79	.94	.94	.51	.24	1.10	.37	.91	.53

Table 14 (Continued)

Source of Variation	<u>Emotional Exhaustion</u>			<u>Depersonalization</u>			<u>Lack of Personal Accomplishment</u>				
	<u>F Value</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>F Value</u>	<u>P</u>			
Department - Freq. of Alcohol Consumption	.80	.64	.54	.87	.67	.76	1.11	1.18	.32	1.04	.43
Department - Description of Alcohol Consumption	.84	.57	.38	.93	1.04	.42	.63	1.60	.14	1.17	.33

(1) Department/Age on the burnout dimension, emotional exhaustion intensity.

(2) Department/Age on the burnout dimension, depersonalization/intensity.

(3) Department/ethnic identity on the burnout dimension, lack of personal accomplishment/frequency.

(4) Department/ethnic identity on the burnout dimension, lack of personal accomplishment/intensity.

(5) Department/length of time in Monmouth County on the burnout dimension, depersonalization/ intensity.

(6) Department/length of time in present department on the burnout dimension, depersonalization/intensity.

Although the findings did reflect that some of the independent variables had an effect on burnout scores at the .05 level of significance, no meaningful pattern or relationship to the burnout subscales was established.

Summary

As noted, T-tests were used to compare for significant differences between the Criminal Case Management unit and all other departments on each of the MBI subscales. While there were no consistent patterns of relationships to the burnout dimensions, the analysis indicated that officers assigned to the Criminal Case Management unit experienced higher levels of burnout than officers assigned to other units.

ANOVA was used to measure effects for significant relationships between the independent variables and the

MBI subscales. Although the findings indicated there were significant differences associated with a few of the independent variables and the burnout dimensions, frequency of alcohol consumption was the only independent variable reflecting a consistent relationship to the MBI subscales.

Two-way interaction analysis between department and all other variables was conducted to determine if any independent variable had significant impact on burnout scores. The results indicated that some of the independent variables had a slight effect on burnout scores, but there were no significant or consistent patterns of relationships to the burnout dimensions.

The results of this analysis indicated that Monmouth County probation officers experienced high levels of burnout. The findings have also suggested that while there were no differences at the statistical level of significance, officers assigned to the Criminal Case Management unit experienced higher levels of burnout than their counterparts. The implication of this research effort, as well as suggestions for future research are found in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Limitations of this Analysis

The results of this study indicated that a significant amount of probation officers within Monmouth County experience high levels of burnout. However, in part because the size of this sample was small, patterns of relationships due to the efforts of independent variables were not observed. Furthermore, the comparison groups were also relatively small and this imposed further limitations on the generalizability of the study. A larger number of cases would be more beneficial for both descriptive and explanatory analysis. Further future research should include larger samples, perhaps by encompassing more than one agency. Although other agencies within the state of New Jersey are essentially organized in the same way, management theory and operating procedures often vary and can effect how officers feel about their jobs. In addition, data for this analysis were gathered by a survey questionnaire; there are many other aspects of job burnout which could not be measured by this approach. Longitudinal studies and field research would be an alternative and perhaps more significant in providing valuable information regarding the development of burnout and its precise causes and effects within a particular agency. Longitudinal studies could also

include data on the influence of burnout in relation to the turnover rate. Such a study would then include ex-probation officers so the possible long term effects of job burnout could be examined. In view of the findings, it is essential that further research be conducted to determine whether or not the high degrees of burnout found among the probation officers in this study can be replicated.

Discussion of the Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not probation officers assigned to Criminal Case Management experienced higher levels of burnout compared to officers assigned to other departments within the Monmouth County Probation Department. It was found that Criminal Case Management, compared to Juvenile Supervision, did not experience significantly higher burnout scores on any of the MBI subscales. Compared to Adult Supervision, Criminal Case Management subjects experienced significantly greater stress in only one of the burnout dimensions, although they tended to have somewhat higher burnout scores on two other dimensions. Criminal Case Management workers experienced significantly greater levels of stress than did Family Intake respondents on three of the burnout dimensions, and scored somewhat higher in one other dimension. Compared to Child Support subjects, Criminal Case Management respondents experi-

enced significantly higher burnout on only one dimension but had slightly higher scores than Child Support subjects on four of the MBI subscales.

This study suggested that, with the exception of Juvenile Supervision workers, significant differences in burnout scores appear when comparing Criminal Case Management subjects in each other department. The results also suggest that, although not at a level of significance, Criminal Case Management officers had higher scores on more of the burnout dimensions than did their counterparts. Although the significant differences that were found did not reflect any obvious patterns or relationships to the burnout dimensions, it appears that Criminal Case Management officers experience at least somewhat higher levels of burnout.

In general, it can be tentatively concluded that Monmouth County Probation officers experience significantly high degrees of burnout. Additionally, those officers assigned to Criminal Case Management experienced burnout to a greater degree than officers assigned to the other departments. It appears reasonable to suggest that this burnout is attributed to department assignment, and is caused by job-related stressors. Continual time pressures to meet due dates of investigation reports, case-load demands, and contact with defendants are among the stressors that have been identified as a leading to fre-

quency and intensity of burnout as measured in this study. It is clear that more extensive research and replication of this study could address more definitive causes and effects of burnout.

Preventing Burnout

The results of this study suggest that the existence of burnout among probation officers' in Monmouth County is very real, and officers assigned to the Criminal Case Management unit displayed higher levels of burnout than any other unit in the Probation Department. Subsequently, the organization might examine the role it played as a contributing factor, and take measures to reduce burnout, increase productivity and improve job performance.

There are several methods which can be adopted by an organization to achieve this balance and reduce any mental and physical fall-out that can occur to officers as a result of burnout. It seems appropriate to begin with prevention of burnout, perhaps at the time of employee hire. "People should have more accurate expectations about the work they are getting into before they actually start on the job."⁶⁷ As new employees begin their jobs, they should be informed of both manifest and latent goals of the organization, as well as the actual functions they

⁶⁷Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 135.

will be expected to perform. Such an orientation could include more precise details of the purpose of their job, how it conforms to the organization mission, and the organization's policies and procedures.

Additionally, at the induction of new officers, training could include education on the risks of burnout, and stresses and frustrations that can occur as a result of working in a bureaucratic organization and that are intrinsic to the job itself. Thus, employees might be better prepared to realize when burnout occurs and accept that it can happen. Furthermore, such training may well enable them to seek help or initiate appropriate steps to reduce or eliminate any burnout they might encounter.

Appropriate training and education do not merely mean learning the functions of the job; they also mean that individuals be taught communication and interpersonal skills that are essential to performing the functions of the job. Such tools are especially necessary for those in professions dealing with people. Such training provides the means to acquire skills in communicating appropriately with a diverse range of personality types. More specifically, it gives the human services worker the means with which to dialogue with clientele about sensitive issues and alternative ways to respond. Proper communication and interpersonal skills can reduce the likelihood of developing stresses and frustrations

that can build as a result of being unable to handle different people across different situations.

In addition to proper introduction into the organization and preliminary training, the initial orienting process should be slow and consist of a steady increase in workload. This would allow the employee time to grasp job functions and build up confidence in ability to perform the job at hand. However, individual differences may be a factor to be considered; some people may learn at a slower or faster pace. Consequently, the degree to which their workload is increased should vary according to their capabilities and over a reasonable time limit.

Burnout can also be greatly reduced through varying work assignments. Not only does this approach offer variety, but can also offer stimulation and more interest on the job. A periodic departure from the routine "can reduce intensity to manageable proportions."⁶⁸ Variety can range from assignment of a workload and specialized cases to special work projects. Shapiro suggests:

The tendency in many work settings is to assign certain kinds of tasks to staff who have exhibited skill or talent in particular areas. Not only does this reduce the opportunity for other workers to gain familiarity and skills with tasks exclusively channeled into a specific person's workload, but the 'chosen' staff

⁶⁸Constance Hoenk Shapiro, "Creative Supervision: An Underutilized Antidote," in Whiton Paine, ed., Job Stress and Burnout: Research, Theory, and Intervention Perspectives (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1982), 225.

member may begin to experience burnout.⁶⁹

In addition, adding changes and flexibility to established work patterns can help alleviate certain stressors. For example, the organization can initiate special days for client contact and reserve some days for other administrative functions. As Maslach offers: "Make some modifications in the operating procedure so that direct contact is less demanding."⁷⁰ In this way, client contact may not be perceived as interfering, and may minimize work interruptions. Furthermore, the employee would then be aware of the schedule and can better prepare his/her own work schedule or agenda.

Other changes can also result from offering special training classes and work sessions. Not only does this function as a way to keep employees updated on the latest technology and methods, but also enhances productivity by offering more alternatives to accomplish work goals. The occasional respite from the work routine can also boost energy and morale levels. In addition to training and workshops, the organization could encourage staff to attend professional seminars and meetings as well. Such meetings provide a sense of professionalism and self-growth by offering support and acknowledgement. It further reinforces cohesiveness among fellow professionals

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Maslach, Burnout - The Cost of Caring, p. 122.

in the same field. These are the elements that increase job satisfaction and, at the same time, reduce another element of burnout.

Allowing for flexibility with work routines also includes more flexibility in work schedules. This does not imply that employees should set their own work hours, or come and go as they please. However, the organization can offer some optional work schedules that could work to the benefit of the employee and organization. Paul Brown specified that one of the ways an organization can help reduce stress and burnout was through flextime, explaining:

Flextime may be one of the more obvious and sometimes easiest, measures to implement. Having employees working earlier or later than the traditional 8 to 5 shift could provide more adequate services to the community as well as allow the employee more personal and professional flexibility.⁷¹

Periodic rotation can also serve to offer variety and change on the job. Not only does it allow the employee to learn new skills, but also provides the organization with more qualified employees who are able to function across a variety of roles within the organization. This may be more applicable when, for example, other employees are on leave or disability.

Stress can also result from being abruptly assigned to unfamiliar territory and expected to function at the

⁷¹Brown, "Probation Officer Burnout," p. 19.

rate of the person replaced, a not infrequent occurrence that can be perceived to be grossly unfair. Rotation can prevent this stressor by providing the employee with experience needed to perform the new assignment. Furthermore, it would prevent stagnation and decrease the likelihood that employees will experience burnout as a result of doing one particular job for a length of time.

Since many Probation Departments can offer little in the way of promotional opportunity, rotation can also be devised as a means to provide some level of advancement. Those jobs that are considered to be more desirable should be given to those who have a reliable and competent work record, thus giving the employee some reward or acknowledgement for good work performance. Although there should be some entry level unit, it is important to maintain individuals who are experienced and considered good employees in that unit. In this way, they are able to set an example, provide advice and guidance, and become teachers or consultants to those with less experience. This approach can also be seen as a positive influence and may provide job satisfaction.

Just as rotation and promotions can be considered rewards, other forms of acknowledgement are also very crucial to the prevention of burnout. Through its management and supervisors, the organization can offer many rewards without having to offer monetary compen-

sation. One of the more important rewards to any employee is receiving acknowledgement from a supervisor or manager for doing a good job. Often, supervisors are unaware of how much more output they can get from a person just by saying "Good Job." Equally, employees want feedback. They want to know how they are doing on the job and whether or not they are doing it correctly. Feedback serves as reinforcement for good work performance and, when constructively administered, can also rectify poor work habits. Feedback sets the boundaries of what is or is not acceptable. Therefore, both positive and negative feedback are important to the organization and to the individual.

Periodic evaluations can also serve as a means to provide feedback to the employee with regards to work performance. Evaluations function as a tool of measurement which recognizes both accomplishments and deficiencies. Evaluations reflect where improvement is needed and where improvement has been achieved. Whether or not an organization conducts periodic evaluations, feedback should be continual so as to give the person time to improve in those areas as needed before the evaluation period. Additionally, continual feedback prevents the person from being emotionally devastated if he or she receives an especially critical evaluation. Shapiro noted:

Ideally, evaluations should be incorporated into the supervisory function of education, with periodic evaluation conferences serving as benchmarks in the ongoing educational process of the supervisee.⁷²

Brown also suggested: "One aspect of recognition is to allow the officer input in the decision-making process."⁷³ By encouraging their participation, supervisors, managers or organizations acknowledge their employees as professionals. Furthermore, it gives employees a sense of job satisfaction. Even though such suggestions or ideas are not always applied, the employees still gain the feeling that the organization has given them consideration before a decision has been made. This is especially crucial if this decision directly affects the employees' job or work environment.

Although participation in the decision-making process can be used as a reward, input from all employees can function to the benefit of the organization. Participation allows for more applicable input by those who must implement the decision that is being made. Furthermore, participation serves to negate ambivalent feelings or apprehension as all the members feel they were made a part of or at least participated in the decision prior to its being implemented. Consequently, the more likely result may be that the decision will be positively

⁷²Shapiro, "Creative Supervision," p. 219.

⁷³Paul Brown, "Probation Officer Burnout," p. 19.

accepted and the transition of employing a new procedure or policy will be smoother.

The success of the execution and implementation of the decisions being made by the organization strongly relies on the support of staff members. This can be achieved through allowing participation in the decision-making process or at least by informing personnel as to what is being considered. Ongoing communication between staff and management is significant to achieving work goals in the most effective way possible. However, if staff remain in the dark and the organization chooses not to inform staff of impending change, any decision could be met with resistance. Keeping staff informed may increase the perception that the the organization is concerned about how decisions will affect them. This in turn can alleviate the stress encountered by employees' feelings of helplessness, lack of control over the work environment, and general job dissatisfaction.

Demonstrating concern for the welfare of employees can be accomplished by ensuring that the work environment is safe and functionally designed. Maintaining a healthy and comfortable working facility will encourage employees to produce more and to work more efficiently. Such efforts include chairs that provide back support, a work space that allows individualism and is conducive to work performance, and an environment free of harmful elements.

Showing employees that the organization is sufficiently concerned to maintain proper work facilities will do much to mitigate many of the stresses directly related to the work environment. Although many bureaucratic units maintain they do not have the funds to allow for such "extravagances," they would do well to reconsider the alternatives in terms of quantity and quality of work.

Within the organization, supervisors can initiate much of the above and reduce the amount of burnout experienced among their staff members. By conducting regular meetings, they can keep their staff apprised of the organization's operations and plans, allow for participation within their own group, clarify policies and procedures, and provide feedback. Furthermore, this will enhance cohesiveness among the group and provide support.

The supervisor can provide much of the needed feedback. As Ayala Pines indicated: "The best feedback is immediate, appropriate, and provided by someone who is in a position to understand the full scale of one's performance, such as a supervisor or an administrator."⁷⁴

The supervisor is also in a position to act as a mediator between staff and organization as they govern the lines of contact between both parties. The supervisor can also reduce stress by being responsive and maintaining open lines of communications with staff. Ad-

⁷⁴Pines, "Changing Organizations?" p. 204.

ditionally, as Shapiro proposed: "The supervisor's encouragement of staff creativity also can reduce the sense of tedium and enhance staff members' sense of competence."⁷⁵

Finally, Shapiro notes the following:

Organizationally, supervisors are in an ideal position to influence internal and external characteristics found in the work environment. Not only can they serve as advocates for their staff by addressing bureaucratic sources of burnout, but they can also influence, on an interpersonal level, staff who may be experiencing symptoms of burnout.⁷⁶

Although there are many options the organization can utilize to reduce the stresses that can lead to burnout, when an individual experiences these symptoms, that person must be confronted. As Edelwich and Brodsky have explained:

The most effective way to approach the apathetic individual is through a concrete and detailed critical evaluation of his or her work. The individual should be confronted on behavior, not attitude.⁷⁷

If the individual is permitted to continue in such a state, the organization will suffer losses in work quantity and quality. Additionally, the burned-out person's attitude will be expressed to coworkers and clientele. Therefore, it is important for the organization to take

⁷⁵Shapiro, "Creative Supervision," p. 225.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 215.

⁷⁷Edelwich and Brodsky, "Training Guidelines," p. 138.

preventive steps by giving the individual options to improve his situation. Edelwich and Brodsky emphasized:

To use the diagnosis of "burned out" as a pretext for protecting someone whose behavior is harmful to the organization is to create a chronic dependency in the place of constructive change. It is necessary for management to set limits and, without being punitive, to enforce them if improvement does not occur within the time agreed upon.⁷⁸

It is important to note that Edelwich and Brodsky have suggested that, although management must set limits, it should not be in the form of disciplinary measures or chastisement. Management has other alternatives: to provide counsel and advice to those experiencing burnout, clarify rules and guidelines, provide advice on how to handle certain situations or clients, or recommend the employee seek counseling.

Management also has the means to provide workshops and training on how to handle stresses at work. These workshops can focus specifically on job burnout. However, such workshops will be more effective if the individuals attending do so voluntarily. Those forced to attend may be resistant and, consequently, they may not exercise many of the suggestions or training techniques.

Although burnout training and workshops can be very useful and successful, Edelwich and Brodsky have warned:

The administrator's version of the workshop high is a blind faith that packing the staff

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 139.

off to a training event will permanently improve the work environment and increase productivity.⁷⁹

Additionally, Edelwich and Brodsky have indicated that misuses of burnout training which should be addressed:

First, burnout training should not be used for the purpose of managerial espionage, that is, to ferret out worker discontent in a covert way. No self-respecting trainer can be maneuvered into the role of investigating and reporting to management on attitudes and grievances expressed at a workshop. It is both unethical and counterproductive.

Second, burnout training should not be used to strengthen individuals so that they can be overworked or otherwise abused for a longer period of time before they 'burnout'. This policy, whatever its short term convenience, is ethically indefensible and, by misusing the organization's human resources, risks massive turnover occurring at just the wrong time.⁸⁰

It is clear that training, along with sound management, is the best way to prevent burnout and to maintain a well functioning organization. Notwithstanding many of the other demands, such as limitations on financial resources, bureaucratic red tape, and conflicts between other departments, it is crucial to the organization's goals to recognize and accept responsibility for burnout among its employees.

Just as the organization must accept it, so must the individual accede to the fact that burnout can occur. They are responsible for themselves and for their pro-

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 140.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 143.

blems; therefore, they must be equally responsible for taking the necessary steps available to them to decrease stresses leading to burnout.

There are many options relating to the job itself that individuals can utilize to help them cope with the stresses leading to burnout. These include learning the organizational structure and the organizations' actual goals. Expectations relating to promotional opportunities, support, rewards, salary, management and administration could thus be clarified. By being realistic about the job and setting reasonable goals, the individual can do much to reduce stress. Avoiding idealistic goals can be accomplished through communications with managers, supervisors, administrators and coworkers. Merely knowing the various purposes and usefulness of ones' work will alleviate much of the stress that results from the process of eventually learning that it is not as significant as first believed. Additionally, individuals can create changes within their own work structure to avoid boredom and routine. For example, they can utilize different questioning methods or interviewing techniques without overstepping organizational guidelines on obtaining information. Essentially, they can avoid doing the same things in the same old way by changing their own routines.

Individuals can also take advantage of training

seminars and workshops. Continual training and education on the job provide alternatives in terms of managing one's workload. This includes such areas as time management, stress management, interpersonal relationship skills, and information related to the job. Employees should not only attend as a means to learn the latest methods and concepts within their profession, but also to improve motivation. Motivation can be increased through learning new techniques that can be applicable to the job by having other options that can improve one's work environment, and by finding support and reassurance among fellow professionals. Finally, stresses can be relieved, even if only temporarily, by getting out of the office for a change.

People working in stressful jobs, and especially those who are constantly interacting with a wide range of personalities, should realize the importance of good health and taking care of self. In today's society, the public can be educated, through the media and publications, on how good eating habits, sufficient sleep and proper exercise routines are significant in stress reduction. Just as these factors are critical to good mental and physical health, so is taking time for self. Taking time means taking lunch hours and breaks to revitalize, taking an occasional mental health day, and taking vacation from work. Furthermore, in order to

achieve a desired emotional balance, people should have outside interests that divert their attention from work. Outside interests and hobbies restore a sense of self and individualism. Good physical health, taking time off from work, and having outside interests are important in maintaining the emotional and physical stamina to withstand the stresses of the job, and can help to reduce the likelihood of burnout.

Finding social support, especially among coworkers, is another means of recovering from stresses that occur as a result of a demanding job. Through social support, coworkers can find common ground and assurance that everyone experiences difficulties within the work environment. By sharing the adverse aspects of the job, individuals will find comfort with the knowledge that they are not alone in their feelings. In fact, having social support can even provide some of the answers and solutions to certain problems. Coworkers often can suggest alternative problem-solving methods.

Discussions among coworkers may focus on negative aspects, but can also include positive attributes of the organization. If one person has a grievance, there are coworkers who may be more informed and could counteract by stating something positive or offer a legitimate reason in answer to the grievance. This may even serve to diminish the complaint.

Colleagues offer help and support by being available and open for discussions, and can offer each other certain rewards by complimenting each other on a job well done. Coworkers are more inclined to recognize good performance and are less reluctant in expressing appreciation among themselves. However, just as they are willing to compliment one another, they also be eager to offer criticism. Although this may lead to resentment and conflict, this can also be beneficial if applied constructively, and could initiate change among those who exhibit poor work performance or work habits.

Furthermore, finding social support among coworkers is essential in maintaining camaraderie. After-hours get-togethers, such as an occasional dinner, cook out, or softball game reinforce "esprit de corps" and fellowship. It allows colleagues to be among one another in a more informal setting affording them the opportunity to get to know one another as more than a coworker. It enhances mutual respect and offers companionship. This cohesiveness creates better working relationships by providing a new understanding of our colleagues. Social support strengthens the emotional balance of the work environment and eases the stresses that arise from the job.

Counseling is another viable and important step in reducing and preventing job burnout. Those who seek

counseling should not think less of themselves or feel that they were unable to cope with the stresses of work. Everyone has different tolerance levels and different coping mechanisms. In fact, obtaining counseling is a strength in and of itself. To be able to recognize that a problem exists, and then to do something about it, is a demonstration of fortitude and self-awareness. Obtaining counseling for job-burnout also reflects concern and responsibility for the job itself, in terms of how burnout has affected job performance and interpersonal relationships. Counseling is not psychiatric treatment, but should be seen as a facility for learning stress management and relationship skills. As Freudenberger stressed:

The overall goal of counseling should be to develop the person's strengths, help him or her to recapture a sense of self, increase confidence, and cultivate his or her ability to be in charge of his or her life once again.⁸¹

⁸¹Freudenberger, "Counseling and Dynamics," p. 184.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the levels of burnout among Monmouth County probation officers and to examine a possible relationship between job burnout and assignment to a particular department within the organization. The analysis disclosed that a significant amount of officers experience high levels of job burnout. Additionally, the data indicated that officers assigned to Criminal Case Management suffer higher levels of stress than did other officers. Considering the results of this analysis, there is justification for concern over how this burnout impacts on the overall mission of the organization, officer and client.

Administrators can incorporate many of the methods mentioned above to prevent or reduce stressors that lead to burnout without compromising their budgets and without forfeiting authority. By alleviating job burnout, administrators enhance productivity. Additionally, the benefits to the organization are realized by retaining employees who have the needed experience and knowledge gained only through the years of working within the organization. By reducing job burnout, administrators can reduce the losses in medical and health benefits, disability insurance and liability claims.

Individuals would also do well to employ some the suggestions indicated above to reduce their own stress levels. Not only will they decrease the possibility of job burnout,

but also gain a sense of being in control of their own situation.

Through cooperative efforts, administrators and personnel can institute changes necessary to reduce the effects of job burnout. In this way, organizational goals can be better accomplished and the public better served.

It is hoped that this thesis has increased awareness by both administrators and probation officers of the existence of job burnout and the serious negative consequences that can occur without intervention. It is further hoped that this study has provided sufficient information to suggest to administrators and officers that implementing methods to reduce the stresses that can lead to job burnout is advantageous to both the organization and the individual.

APPENDIX A
Survey Questionnaire
Instrument

School of Applied Arts and Sciences • Administration of Justice Department
One Washington Square • San Jose, California 95192-0050 • 408/924-2940

March, 1990

Dear Colleague:

We would like to thank you for taking the time to answer this survey questionnaire. This survey is strictly and completely anonymous and confidential.

The information from this survey will be used to measure and analyze Monmouth County Probation Officers attitudes regarding their jobs and the people for whom probation services are provided. Your involvement is crucial because the benefits to the field depend on a high level of participation. The results will be presented to the Probation Officers Association of New Jersey with the expectations that positive change can be made to improve conditions for probation officers.

If there are any questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact Dr. Harry Allen, Department of the Administration of Justice at San Jose University, (408) 924-2940.

Sincerely,

Peggy A. Hill

Exploratory Survey Questionnaire

Monmouth County Probation Officers

Part I

1- 4

Instructions: Your responses are voluntary. Please answer each question to the best of your ability. Read each item thoroughly before completing the appropriate response. Feel free to write in any additional comments you may have. Thank you for your time.

6

1. What is your gender?

1. ☐ female

2. ☐ male

8

2. What is your age range?

1. ☐ 21 - 25

2. ☐ 26 - 30

3. ☐ 31 - 35

4. ☐ 36 - 40

5. ☐ 41 - 45

6. ☐ over 45

9

3. How would you describe your ethnic identity?

1. ☐ Black

2. ☐ White

3. ☐ Hispanic

4. ☐ Asian

5. ☐ Native American

6. ☐ Other, please specify _____

10

4. What is your marital status?

1. ☐ Single

2. ☐ Married

3. ☐ Separated

4. ☐ Divorced

5. ☐ Widowed

11

5. What is your educational level?

1. ☐ Four year college degree

2. ☐ Masters or higher degree

12

6. For which department do you work?

1. ☐ Juvenile Supervision

2. ☐ Adult Supervision

3. ☐ Family Intake

4. ☐ Child Support

5. ☐ Criminal Case Management

13

7. What is your work classification? 14
1. ☐ Probation Officer
2. ☐ Senior Probation Officer
8. How long have you worked in the probation field? 15
1. ☐ Less than 6 months
2. ☐ 6 months to 1 year
3. ☐ 1 to 3 years
4. ☐ 3 to 5 years
5. ☐ 5 or more years, please specify _____
9. How long have you been employed by Monmouth County Probation? 16
1. ☐ Less than 6 months
2. ☐ 6 months to 1 year
3. ☐ 1 to 3 years
4. ☐ 3 to 5 years
5. ☐ 5 or more years, please specify _____
10. How long have you been working in your present department? 17
1. ☐ Less than 6 months
2. ☐ 6 months to 1 year
3. ☐ 1 to 3 years
4. ☐ 3 to 5 years
5. ☐ 5 or more years, please specify _____
11. How often do you participate in training classes offered by your employer? 18
1. ☐ never
2. ☐ at least once a year
3. ☐ about two to three times a year
4. ☐ four or more times a year
12. How often do you participate in physical exercise? 19
1. ☐ never
2. ☐ occasionally
3. ☐ at least once a week
4. ☐ at least three times a week
5. ☐ daily
13. In the last 12 months, how often have you had some kind of drink containing alcohol (including beer, wine, or liquor) ? 20
1. ☐ at least once a day
2. ☐ at least several times a week
3. ☐ at least once a week
4. ☐ at least once a month
5. ☐ have not consumed any alcohol during the year
14. Which of the following items would best describe your alcohol consumption at the present time? 21
1. ☐ a nondrinker
2. ☐ a very light drinker
3. ☐ a social drinker
4. ☐ a heavy drinker
5. ☐ an ex-problem drinker or ex-alcoholic

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE !

Please go to next page . . .

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