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CPS: Past and Present

Child welfare in Virginia finds its roots in England where in the early 1600's the "Elizabethan Poor Laws" came into effect. This act assigned care for the poor and for dependent children to relatives, the parish, and to the local community. The community's response was to provide for the use of almshouses for the care of these people (Guier, 1973).

Colonial Virginia adopted the concept of the Elizabethan poor laws. Almshouses, filthy and unhealthy establishments, were Virginia's answer to the needs of the poor.

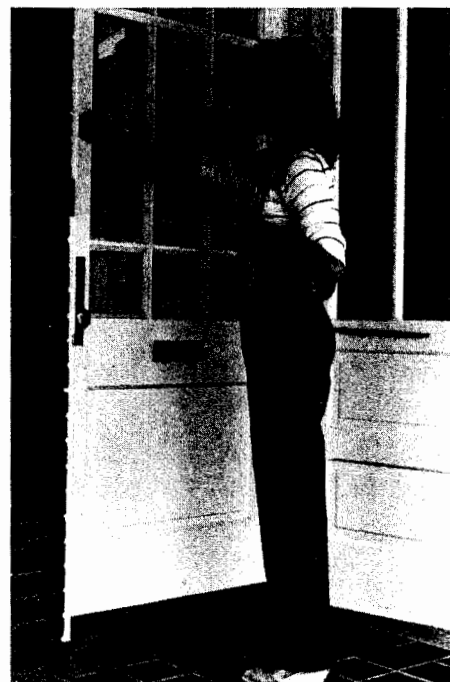
The situation remained unchanged until the 1800's when the beginning of reform in the United States occurred. Children's welfare groups were established, orphanages opened, and there was at least an effort toward general relief for children. Unfortunately, however, these environments often resulted in lax or abusive treatment from the children's caretakers.

One event had a long lasting impact on child welfare concepts. It was the establishment of the Children's Aid Society in 1893 by Mr. Charles Brace. Taking it upon himself to remedy the situation of maltreatment in orphanages, Brace began to send homeless children to pioneer families in the west. Although begun with good intentions, two unfortunate situations resulted from this practice. First, children were used as

sources of free labor rather than being the recipients of charity. Second, this practice fostered the idea that a change of environment is an acceptable solution to the problems of the abused, neglected, or abandoned child. This philosophy governed child welfare practice and legislation for over fifty years (Zucherman, 1982).

The most notable milestone for child protective services occurred in 1875, when the New York case of Mary Ellen came to public view. Attention to the case of Mary Ellen, a severely beaten child, caused the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), to become involved with abused and neglected children. Since there were no statutes protecting children, the SPCA petitioned the court on behalf of Mary Ellen, arguing that the animal protection statutes should apply to her as she was also a creature of God.

As a result of the publicity surrounding Mary Ellen's case, many private societies were formed. By 1900, almost every state had one. The American Humane Association, originally formed to deal with cruelty to animals, organized a children's division to coordinate the growing number of societies. In recent years, the numbers of private agencies have decreased as a result of funding problems and the assumption by public agencies of responsibility for abused



and neglected children. This shift to public responsibility was marked in part by the establishment of the first Bureau of Child Hygiene in New York City in 1902 (Durbseh, 1983).

In 1909, a major step for child welfare was taken by President Theodore Roosevelt who convened the first White House Conference on Children. This conference, which has been held every ten years since its inception is credited with having the greatest impact on the child welfare field (Deubsch, 1983).

One recommendation of the first conference was that a federal children's bureau be created, to investigate and report on all matters in the establishment of standards for the care and treatment of children in areas of child labor, health, and child welfare laws.

In Virginia, child welfare legislation lay dormant until 1939 when the State Department of Public Welfare and Institutions recommended that state funds be allocated for the employment of child welfare workers. This was Virginia's beginning of organized efforts toward adequate care of

Who Is the CPS Worker in Virginia?

With 208 people responding to our survey, VCPN staff can give a good idea of who Virginia's CPS workers are and how they spend their time. Out of approximately 600 people involved in CPS work, 208 people (37 supervisors and 165 workers) returned our survey forms! Many thanks to all who participated, and special thanks to those who included comments.

According to our results, workers are 84% female. The average worker has been involved in child protection for four years, with a range of 0-15 years. Seventy percent

are rural workers. Only two workers did not have a college degree, with 31 (19%) reporting graduate degrees. Thirty-nine percent are members of an M-D team. Most workers received training in 1983. Only 14% recorded no training activity. The average worker received 6 days of training, but there was much variability—one worker reported 63 training days.

Supervisors had a slightly different profile. Supervisors are also mostly females (81%). Supervisors have been in the system

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VaNCPCA News

VaNCPCA Awarded Two Grants!

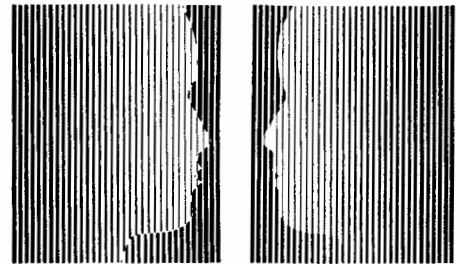
The Virginia Chapter of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse has recently been awarded grants from the Family Violence Trust Fund. One grant for \$28,000 will fund two salaried positions: an Executive Director and a part-time secretary. The second grant is for \$13,000. This will provide funding for 50 performances of Hugs and Kisses for the fall of 1984 and spring of 1985. If you are interested in requesting a performance, you may receive information by calling 1-800-235-8687.

Conference Corner

1985 Virginia Conference on
Child Abuse and Neglect

April 24-26 at the Marriott
in Richmond

More information available from:
Janet P. Rudy
Conference Planning Committee
9625 Ground Hog Drive
Richmond, VA 23235



Profiles

This issue of VCPN focuses on the Child Protective Service worker. To us, this is a special breed of person, confronted with hostility and pain on a regular basis. A tribute to the CPS worker came during Child Abuse Prevention Week in June, 1982, when the Virginia Department of Social Services recognized one outstanding worker from each region of Virginia. We would like to introduce our readers to six of these award recipients (we were unable to locate the seventh for an interview) in recognition of their efforts towards the protection of Virginia's children.

Zenobia Ferguson

Because of her positive, supportive relationships with people and her refusal to believe that people were unable to change, Zenobia Ferguson was nominated for the Roanoke area's Outstanding CPS Worker Award by her supervisor Barbara Dowdy. These two attributes guided Ferguson's work in her 6½ years as a CPS worker.

After a successful career as a cosmetologist, Ferguson decided to develop her lifelong interest in social work. She graduated from Hollins College at age 50. She had been a volunteer social worker for several years and had been involved in various community activities, such as the Sexual Harrassment Committee.

Ferguson was also cited for her high energy and production levels. Always wanting to work things out within the home, her philosophy was a forerunner of the current trend of removing children only as a last resort.

On a personal level, Ferguson likes people and loves to talk. She says these traits have helped her in court where she spends a great deal of her professional time. To avoid the burnout so common in CPS workers, Ferguson says that she dealt with each case separately and looked for the good side of each person. At home, she developed her dramatic and musical interests and "prayed a lot." Unfortunately, Ferguson has had to retire since winning the award in order to care for her ailing mother.

Nancy Rowlett

Nancy Rowlett was post-humously awarded the Certificate of Recognition for her many years of social work service. This included direct service to families, work as a supervisor of social work, and participation on a state level with CPS work.

Rowlett, who grew up in Lee County, graduated from Berea College in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts in Education. Her early employment included

Governor's Advisory Committee News

Public Hearings

The public hearings, held in five locations in the state during the last year, are now complete. A final report with recommendations will be available this fall. Requests for copies of the report may be addressed to: Joann Grayson, PhD, Department of Psychology, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807.

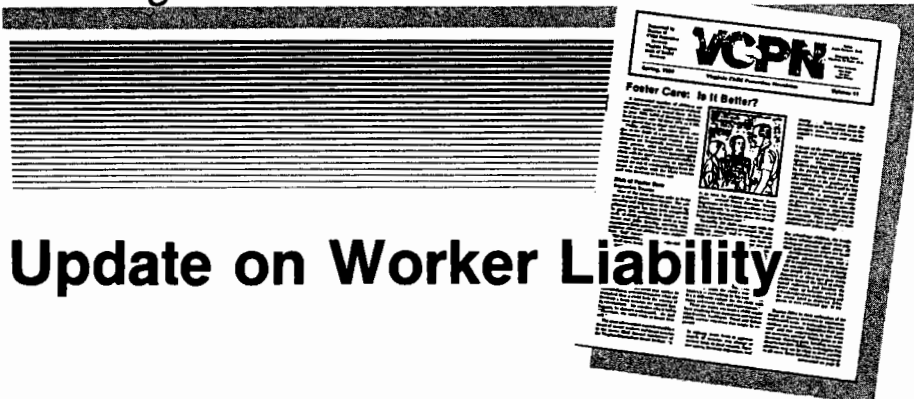
Upcoming Meetings

The GAC meets quarterly. Upcoming meetings: Sept. 7, December 7, March 9 and June 8.

Certificate of Appreciation Awards

At the June 1 meeting in Richmond the GAC presented Certificates of Appreciation to nine individuals who have made noteworthy contributions in the field of child abuse and neglect in Virginia. Congratulations to: Zoe Breen of Richmond, Ray Fischhoff of Lynchburg, James Holmes of Mechanicsville, Laura Knaup of Monroe, Betsy Carter of Appomattox, Lois Lungwitz of Gouster, Sheila Plott of Petersburg and Johanna Schuchert of Richmond.

Coming Next Issue . . .



Update on Worker Liability



Zenobla Ferguson



Nancy Rowlett



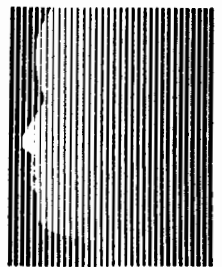
Jerry Lerman



Brenda Perry



Catherine Hargan



waitressing and a job as a traffic operator for C&P Telephone. Upon receipt of her degree, however, she became involved with the Lee County Department of Social Services where she worked for sixteen years until an automobile accident ended her life in 1982.

Initially, she worked with the Aid to Dependent Children program, the Work Experience and Training Program and the Work Incentive for the Needy Program. From 1973 until 1979, Rowlett served as Social Work Supervisor for the entire service department with her main focus upon family and CPS services. Striving beyond the required duties, Rowlett was continually concerned not only about families' present problems but about their future well-being.

Rowlett's interests extended to other social service areas such as serving as the Protective Service Coordinator for Lee County and starting the multi-disciplinary team for CPS in Lee County.

On a personal level, Rowlett was a well-respected member of her community. Her busy professional life did not keep her from being treasurer of the Lee County Chapter of the American Cancer Society or from pursuing various hobbies such as playing the piano and collecting paintings.

Jerry Lerman

Jerry Lerman, a worker in the Norfolk office, was nominated from the Tidewater area largely for his dedication to many years of service in CPS work. A native of Norfolk, he received his B.A. from Old Dominion University in 1969. After serving in the Army, where Lerman cultivated his interest in social work by acting as a sergeant responsible for the welfare of many young men, he joined the Norfolk Division of Social Services in 1972 as a Senior Eligibility Worker. In 1973, he was promoted to Social Work Trainee and in 1978 to Senior Social Worker.

Throughout his career in social services, Lerman has participated in and conducted numerous workshops and inservice training seminars. He has taken the knowledge gained from his participation and applied it to his casework. His skills in this area are excellent, according to Supervisor Audrey Campbell.

In addition to his duties as a CPS worker, Lerman is a member of the Norfolk Sexual Trauma Team, which he helped establish.

Lerman has been commended for his excellent relationship with clients as well as with co-workers, his energy and enthusiasm, and his seemingly never-ending thirst for knowledge and new approaches to his work. He attributes his longevity both to his lifelong interest in the field of child welfare and to his ability to separate work from his private life.

Brenda Perry

Brenda Perry of Spotsylvania was presented with the Outstanding CPS Worker Award for the Northern Virginia Region. Diane Kash (Perry's supervisor) recommended Perry for the award, emphasizing her eight year involvement with the agency and her kindness, professionalism, and expertise. Kash cited Perry's abilities to establish a fine rapport with her clients, her ability to handle problems well, and her sense of humor.

Perry majored in sociology in college and began her career as an eligibility worker. In 1978, she was promoted to CPS coordinator and became responsible for investigation and case management.

Perry's work has brought her into close contact with her community. She works with the local sheriff's department on child sexual and physical abuse cases. Also, she is involved in public speaking to incoming teachers and to community groups such as the Ruritan Club and the PTA. She is a member of the Venture Club of Fredericksburg as well as a member of the Board of Directors of Rappahannock Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

When asked about the stress created by her career, Perry notes, "It is important to maintain a sense of humor and to communicate well with other workers. Advice should be given and crises shared so as not to place too much burden upon any one worker."

Catherine Hargan

In recognition of her perseverance in an agency with a large turnover rate and for her initiation of new projects within the agency, Kathy Hargan was nominated for the Outstanding CPS Worker for Region II by her supervisor Mary Anne Powell.

Upon graduating from Virginia Commonwealth University with a Bachelors of Social Work, Hargan joined the New Kent County office as a drug abuse counselor. After 1½ years, she assumed her present position of generic social worker, responsible for many cases including CPS.

One of Hargan's outstanding accomplishments involved the upgrading of the Charles City/New Kent County Multidisciplinary Team. In an interview, she stressed the importance of the concept of child abuse as a community problem. "Involvement with police and other mental health professionals is the answer to the problem," she said. "Out of the involvement comes a close working relationship which eases the stress." Multidisciplinary teams, she feels, cannot only be used for consultation but also as a public resource.

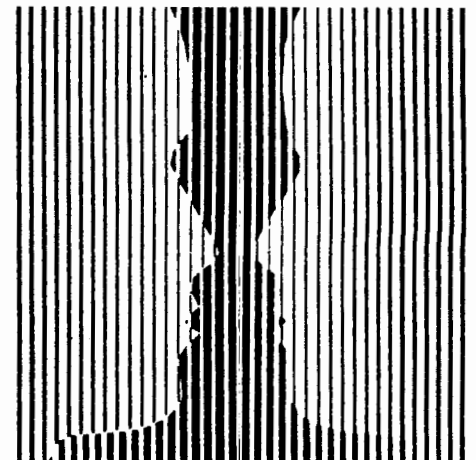
Hargan credits her longevity to her constant search for challenges. Also helpful are conferences with peers in the mental health field, and an ability to leave her work behind when she goes home. At home, she and her husband concentrate on their 18-month-old daughter. Hargan's hobbies include outdoor activities such as walking and playing softball, and singing in her church choir.

Betty Norwood

Betty Norwood's admirable dedication to the field of CPS work earned her the honor of being named Outstanding CPS Worker for the Lynchburg Region. Her nomination for the award was submitted by the Director of Mecklenburg Department of Social Services, Jeanne Trent. Trent cited Norwood's knowledge, hard work and conscientiousness, and her ability to understand her clients.

Norwood is presently the Child Abuse and Neglect Coordinator for her department and is thus involved in case work, receiving complaints, performing investigation, and appearing in court. A CPS worker since 1975, she was active in general social work four years prior to being involved specifically with child protection. Norwood finds her job challenging and used her skill to organize a multi-disciplinary team to aid and educate the community. Also, she works closely with the sheriff's department on issues of child sexual abuse.

Although her job creates a large amount of stress, Norwood has the support of her family to keep her going. "The rewards of my work—helping to protect children and working with families to keep a child in the home if possible—are worth occasional difficulties."



The Burned Out Worker

Because this issue of the newsletter focuses on the Child Protective Services (CPS) practitioner, VCPN staff felt we could not avoid discussing worker burnout. It is an issue that should be of profound interest to all workers and supervisors. A "burned out" worker can result in the loss of a valuable staff member. Additionally, a "burned out" worker because of lack of empathy or less than optimal performance is a high risk for malpractice actions, according to several sources.

Technically, burnout is defined as "a syndrome of physical and emotional exhaustion involving the development of negative self concept, negative job attitudes and loss of concern and feelings for clients." (Pines and Maslach, 1978).

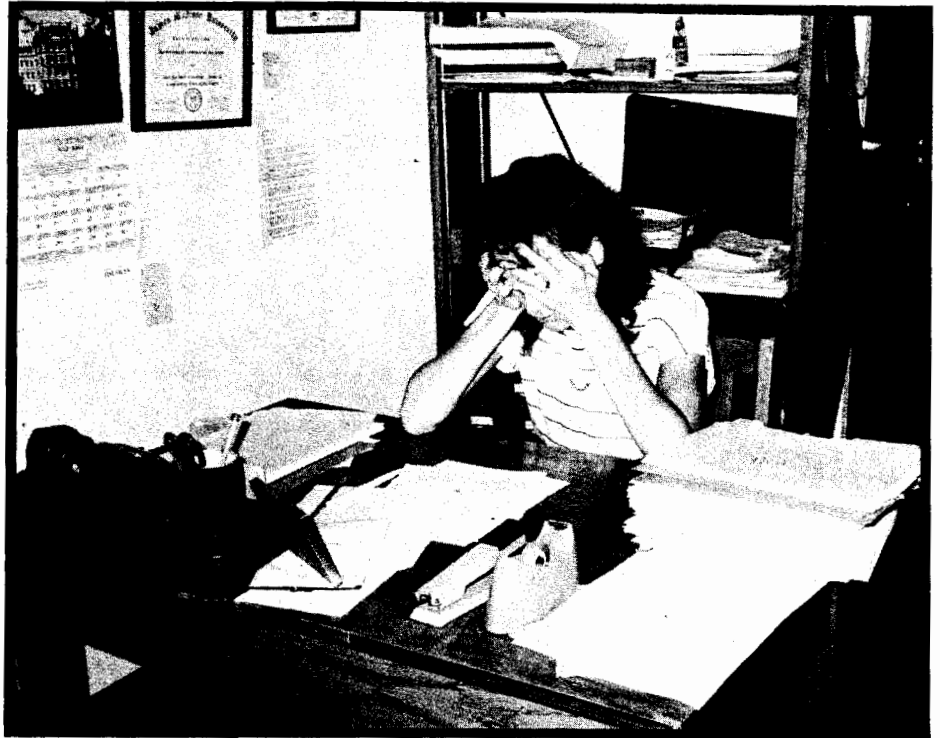
What causes the phenomenon? A variety of factors, some external, others internal.

One of the most important external factors—factors often out of the worker's control—is the amount of stress associated with the job. VCPN conducted a survey of Virginia CPS practitioners this spring. When asked about the causes of burnout, they frequently commented on the high stress levels. "We are under a tremendous amount of stress," writes Richard Grosse, CPS worker from Louisa County. "I believe it comes from the helplessness we feel in the effect we have on clients."

Indeed, CPS workers are under stress for a variety of reasons. They are often confronted with hostile families, and may infrequently see significant change or resolution of a family's problems. The literature confirms the role stress plays as an external cause of burnout. "Helping professionals are constantly under pressure. Yet, they rarely enjoy the luxury of feeling that the problems they deal with have been solved. As a result, they may not be able to rest, physically or emotionally, after the stresses of the day—or even the previous hour. They do not return to any resolution and, as a result, find themselves operating with less and less energy." (Bramhall and Ezall, 1981, p. 24).

Another factor Virginia's CPS workers mentioned in our survey was lack of support. "I feel a general lack of support from my administration," writes one worker who also commented on the administration's lack of flexibility. Several others remarked on the generally poor quality of supervision they received. One respondent summarized the comment of a majority of workers when he wrote that burnout was caused because of "nonsupport and lack of recognition of the importance of and stress associated with our work by local agency supervisors, the local welfare board and the community."

Supervisors, too, commented on the general lack of support they receive. They, however, find their lack of support coming from



directors, from state administrators, and from the community.

Both CPS workers and supervisors commented on several other external factors which can contribute to burnout. Too many cases, low pay, vast amounts of paperwork, 24 hour call systems, and draining court appearances were among those mentioned most frequently. "Often the job is too big to handle and there is no way to stop the cases from coming," was one worker's comment. Research substantiates the importance of such variables.

A variety of internal factors contribute to the incidence of burnout, too. One factor is the actual expectation that burnout will occur; a self-fulfilling prophesy, as it were. As the word has been bantered about, workers have become aware of the problem of burnout. They, therefore, have developed an expectation that burnout will occur in themselves and their coworkers. (Shannon and Salusy, 1980.) Thus it does.

Other internal factors are many and varied. They include inability to handle the amount of responsibility that is an integral part of CPS work, inability to cope with the occupational stress, poor time management, and lack of diversions (Esper, 1981). In addition, those workers who tend to be most prone to burnout are people who have a strong need to give and are so dedicated that they work too long and intensely (Freudenburger, 1974).

One additional factor which may influence the high rate of CPS burnout is the possibility that an individual is not suited to

the job. While this can be true of any profession, the ranks of CPS workers contain a relatively large number of workers who have no specialized social work education or training. Our survey showed that out of 208 respondents, 66 (32%) had MSW or BSW degrees, 19 (9%) left the question blank, and 123 (59%) listed other areas of study. Some authors suggest a lack of specific preparation for CPS work can be a significant factor in causing burnout (Pines and Maslach, 1978). If CPS work, for whatever reason, is not the worker's preferred job, then lack of interest can compound the problem of lack of expertise.

Symptoms

The literature points to several emotional and physical symptoms which might identify a burned out worker.

Emotional manifestations include apathy, anger and hostility, fatigue, and depression. Dislike for clients and problems with coworkers often develop. Tempers rise and feelings of helplessness and inadequacy are inevitable.

"Burnout victims lose their ability to laugh. They get angry easily. They literally are sick and tired, often suffering from headaches, backaches, and stomach aches—illness associated with stress. Even when they get plenty of sleep, they feel constantly exhausted. They wake up in the morning with a sense of anxiety and dread accompanied sometimes by morning nausea. At night they may have trouble sleeping while distressing scenes from work go through

their heads." (Bramhall and Exall, 1981, p. 25.)

These authors state that persons suffering from burnout are usually acutely aware of these feelings. Our survey of Virginia social workers confirmed this statement. Most of the 208 people responding knew very well the agonizing symptoms of burnout. And in the VCPN survey, most respondents felt the causes of turnover within an agency were the same as the causes of burnout. Thus, turnover can be a symptom of burnout.

Prevention

How do agencies and individuals deal with burnout? The most efficient way is to prevent it.

Virginia CPS workers mentioned a multitude of techniques they personally use to prevent burnout. These include exercise, hobbies, vacations, and spending time with friends who are not in the social work profession. Others use escapes such as movies, television and good books. Some, though a few, mentioned the use of alcohol as a means of escape.

When asked "what do you do on a personal level to eliminate burnout?" one worker captured the spirit of many. She wrote, "Be good to myself. Make sure other activities distract me so I am not consumed by the ineffectiveness and frustration I feel. I vent my frustrations in a journal and occasionally to my family or friends." On the lighter side, another's response to the question was that she has "a baby every year in order to get maternity leave!"

The literature underscores many of the suggestions used by Virginia's workers. In addition, the literature suggests intellectual as well as physical distance from the client as an important preventative tool. Caution, however, should be taken so that the worker does not become too cold or mechanical. The client should never be harmed by the worker's efforts to protect himself from burnout (Maslach, 1978).

Agencies can also do a great deal to promote the prevention of burnout. According to Bramhall and Ezall (1981), "the essence of burnout prevention is learning how to live with a job as well as how to perform it. Administrators and supervisors must devise a way to help workers do this . . . Administrators who do not adopt positive, vigorous burnout prevention strategies will inadvertently find themselves operating according to the 'dixi-cup'—use them up and throw them away—school of management. Without a burnout prevention plan, staff can be expected to work anxiously, frantically—and less productively. All too soon, they burn out" (p. 33).

These authors outline strategies that administrators and supervisors can use to

prevent worker burnout:

Administrators need to 1) provide training in burnout prevention for new and veteran employees; 2) use sound management techniques that mitigate, reduce or eliminate recognized situational cause of burnout; 3) provide ongoing support groups for staff; and 4) implement procedures for treating acute cases of burnout among staff.

Sound management with an eye to burnout prevention might include 1) varying tasks in the day to day work schedule; 2) limiting an individual's work hours; 3) working with staff to institute flex time; 4) keeping a roster of on-call workers to maintain client/staff ratios during periods of absenteeism; 5) making workplace surroundings as clean and pleasant as possible; 6) using written job descriptions and ongoing supervision to focus staff efforts; 7) sharing openly concerns about funding and finances; 8) providing carefully graduated levels of responsibility for new staff; and 9) streamlining paperwork.

While it's the administrators that set prevention strategies, it's the supervisors who need to implement and teach them. They need to: 1) teach time management, stress management and self-care skills; 2) support staff in establishing practices; 3) be flexible and willing to negotiate; 4) enforce guidelines concerning overtime and caseloads; 5) trouble shoot, spotting and treating individual cases of staff burnout in a timely manner; and 6) listen, as listening is the first step towards understanding, reducing and preventing burnout.

Elimination of Burnout in CPS Workers

Burnout will occur. While the problems may seem insurmountable, a burnout victim can be and should be treated. These are valuable staff persons who have in the past and can again offer a great deal to an agency. They must not be discarded; rather a treatment plan must be instituted to assist workers in the regeneration of their productive self.

Book Review

Helping In Child Protective Services—A Casework Handbook, by M. Holder and Mohr, 1980, \$7.50. Available from: Child Protection Division, The American Humane Association, Englewood, Colorado 80111.

This book is a helpful guide for child protective workers since it delineates and explains the tasks involved in social service delivery. Detailed descriptions of the technical processes provide a thorough overview of child protection services and an understanding of the special skills that are necessary to the profession. In addition to a general review of social work standards, the authors analyze each particular stage of the casework process. For example, role responsibilities, self-awareness, use of authority, and dynamics of abuse as well as interviewing, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment

are discussed in detail.

In the Spring 1981 issue of *Public Welfare*, (1981), Bramhall and Ezall developed what appears to be a sound treatment plan for burned out workers. VCPN will outline the primary concepts of this plan. However, the staff encourages you to read the original article and find a way to assist your agency in incorporating into agency policy as many parts of this treatment plan as possible.

The Plan

Bramhall and Ezall make several suggestions, organizing them according to weekly activities. For the first week a worker should assess the level of burnout she is experiencing, then elicit aid and support from co-workers in arranging leave time and task sharing. Make schedules for each day, which include rest time as well as nonwork related activities. Incorporate exercise and avoid junk food.

The second, third and fourth weeks of the plan contain all the element of the first, with gradual increases in work time. The plan suggests that the worker slowly increase time back at the office, eventually getting back to full time; while increasing exercise time from an initial 10 minutes to 30 minutes. Above all, the authors emphasize the need for enlisting friends and coworkers to support and help, not only during the recovery process, but even when the worker is feeling normal and healthy.

Basically, then, prevention of burnout includes good coping skills as well as strategies for maintaining a healthy and active mind and body. Everyone benefits from prevention—worker, agency and client!

References Provided Upon Request

The authors have specifically geared the information toward the child protective services caseworker, with an emphasis on effective social service delivery. The detailed descriptions and examples highlight the excellent text.

—Betty Black

CPS: Past and Present continued from page 1

children including abuse, neglect and abandonment cases.

After these initial efforts, child welfare experienced a period of slowed development until the 1960's. Then, as a result of medical advances such as radiological improvements and Kempe's formulation of the "battered child syndrome," the public again became sensitized to the problem of abused children and pressed for solutions.

At this time, three major events occurred: the recommendation by the latest White House conference on children and youth that all states pass legislation to authorize local communities to delegate the responsibility of receiving abuse and neglect complaints to a specific social agency; amendments to the Social Security Act requiring states to develop a plan extending child welfare services; and the creation of a model law for the reporting of abuse and neglect. Virginia adopted the model reporting law in 1966 giving the juvenile courts and the Youth Bureau the authority to investigate complaints. However, in 1975, new legislation, reflecting a different philosophy, shifted the authority to local departments of social service where it remains today.

Current Developments in CPS

Over the years, the role of the Child Protective Services worker (CPS worker) has evolved into a very complex one. The worker receives and investigates reports, presents cases to the court and must also deal with treatment issues for the child and parents in order to try to keep the family unit intact. Frequently, he or she carries a large caseload, bringing with it vast amounts of paperwork.

The large amount of responsibility given to CPS workers has resulted in some concern on the part of the State Department of Social Services. The concern centers upon the level of skill and training needed to perform the complex and important tasks of child protection. And, this concern has led to some dialogue about the possibility of "certification" for CPS workers. The term certification takes on many different meanings, depending upon the context of its use.

Licensure and certification, for the most part, take on professional and legal connotations. In Virginia, to be licensed to practice a profession, one needs to have met certain educational requirements and to have passed standard examinations. For example, Virginia licenses social workers if they 1) hold a Master's Degree in Social Work from a school accredited by The Council on Social Work Education, and 2) they pass a written as well as oral examination. BSW's can be licensed for case management and supportive services after successfully completing the exams plus two years of post degree experience with 135 hours of supervision. The result is licensure through the Health

Regulatory Board. Licensure is the "strongest form of professional regulation, . . . a mechanism in which the state, with the involvement of the profession, defines what requirements must be met to practice within the profession and limits what activities the individuals meeting the requirements can perform" (Schulz, 1981, p. 74).

Certification is a different kind of credential. In Virginia, a counselor can be certified to practice in a specific setting. In order to be certified, one must submit their educational credentials for review. For instance, to be a certified alcoholism counselor, a person must have met minimal course standards in counseling alcoholics plus qualified supervision. However, no state examination is required. This certification is also obtained through the Health Regulatory Board.

Without legislative change, licensing and certification for CPS workers through the Health Regulatory Board is not possible. First, there are no guidelines for such a procedure. Second, under the current hiring practices by the Department of Social Services, evaluation of an applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities is used rather than

specific educational requirements. "There are no regulations specific to hiring CPS workers," states Janine Tondrowski, CPS program specialist with the central office.

How are knowledge, skills, and abilities evaluated? Anita Prince, training specialist with the central office, explains, "A panel of experts established a range of responses that would indicate the ability level of a prospective CPS employee. The personnel office uses these guidelines to screen applicants."

The result of these practices is that child protective service workers are not necessarily professional social workers. Therefore, credentialing through the Health Regulatory Board is not currently possible.

VCPN recently surveyed social work practitioners across the state. Out of approximately 600 CPS practitioners in Virginia, 208 responded, 98 of whom worked specifically in CPS, 37 who were CPS supervisors, and 67 who were either generic workers responsible for some CPS activity, directors, or supervisors of generic workers. Nine respondents did not state their role in the agency. When reviewing the credentials held by these workers, our staff found that of the 160 respondents that had

Virginia CPS Worker continued from page 1

longer than workers (8 years as compared to 4 years for workers) with a range of 2-22 years. The same percentage (70%) as workers were rural. All supervisors have college degrees and 30% have graduate degrees. The majority of supervisors (51%) belong to M-D teams. Supervisors also received an average of 6 days of training in 1983, with 11% receiving no training and some receiving as many as 22 days of training.

How do CPS personnel spend their time? Our data suggests that the largest portion of

the work week is spent in paperwork. Investigation is the next largest time consumer. The least amount of time is spent in program evaluation and giving supervision or training to others. Treatment of children and families also occupy little of the CPS worker's day (95% spend 20% or less of their time treating children, while 80% spend a similar amount of time treating families).

About one fourth of the workers noted that they spend 5-20% of their time in court. Check the table for exact comparisons.

How Virginia's CPS Workers Spend Their Time

Activity	% of Time						
	None	Less Than 5%	6-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	Over 80%
Treatment of Children	33.5	15.5	45.5	4.5	0.5	0.0	0.5
Treatment of Families	26.0	10.0	44.5	16.0	2.5	0.5	0.5
Case Management	18.0	15.5	53.5	9.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Investigation	15.0	12.5	26.5	27.5	12.5	5.5	0.5
Paperwork	6.0	6.5	44.5	36.0	4.0	2.5	0.5
Supervision/Training	11.6	40.2	41.7	5.5	0.5	0.5	0.0
Giving Supervision/Training	54.5	15.5	11.5	7.5	8.5	2.5	0.0
Consultation to Other Professionals	8.5	31.7	54.3	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Program Evaluation Research	60.3	25.1	13.6	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0

Based on combined data (worker and supervisor) from 199 respondents



college degrees, 31 different majors, including music, physical education, social work, psychology, history, sociology, business, political science, philosophy, electronics, chemistry, and English, were represented. Of the 208 responses, two respondents had no college degree while graduate degrees, primarily in counseling and social work, were held by 44.

A second type of certification possible for CPS workers follows a model used by South Carolina. The policy has recently changed, but at the time of implementation, South Carolina had minimal educational requirements for workers. In cooperation with Winthrop College and the American Humane Association the central office for the Department of Social Services developed and implemented a ten day intensive training program for CPS workers. At the end of training, a certificate was awarded. South Carolina has recently expanded its program to include all welfare classifications.

This is the kind of certification program Virginia's Department of Social Services originally planned to implement. "We received a federal grant to develop a CPS training package, and to look at the possibility of certifying workers successfully completing the program," Prince explains.

However, the concept met with problems. A number of issues were raised concerning the basic idea of certifying CPS workers. First, is the concept of elitism—the idea that child protective service workers are special. Many of the comments VCPN received from supervisors concerning certification supported this belief. "I am opposed to certification," said a director of one agency, "I feel it would create morale problems."

Another negative aspect of certification is a concern about the fragmentation of services. "One concern I've heard expressed is the need to reduce compartmentalization of services," says Vernon Simmons, Regional Service Specialist in the Richmond

Regional Office. "Child Protective Services is just one piece of the whole picture."

Walter Credle, Assistant Director of the Virginia Beach Department of Social Services summarized these concerns succinctly when he wrote, "The view of training and certification reflected in your survey reflects a view that isolates child protective services issues from the organizational context in which those issues exist. The local administrator is responsible for looking at all programs in the social service system and for integrating them into an effective organizational whole . . . The local administrator must take into consideration, for example, that training is needed for foster care workers, adult protective service workers, spouse abuse workers, and community based workers, etc., in addition to protective service workers. The skill requirements, and frequently the liability issues, are just as great in these other program areas as they are in child protective services, and it is important that scarce training funds be distributed accordingly."

Credle concludes by stating, "The issue of certification by job specialty carries with it a strong connotation of elitism. Certification of child protective services alone cannot be justified . . . The issue, however, of certification for all public social service professionals is one which has much greater potential merit."

VCPN's survey queried workers about both negative and positive aspects of certification. Respondents were asked to rate 'expense,' 'time,' 'increased stress,' 'discourage people from entering the field,' 'create morale problems,' 'lose good workers,' and 'increased paperwork' as possible negative aspects of certification. The five point rating scale ranged from 'very negative' to 'definitely not negative' with 'not sure' being a neutral response. On all variables, except 'lose good workers' the most frequent response was 'not sure.' And for 'lose good workers,' the most frequent response was that this is probably not a negative aspect. The average for all responses was approximately three—the 'not sure' value, meaning that as a group, there appear to be no strong feelings among workers that certification has negative aspects.

There are some potential benefits to certification, too. The primary one is a recognition of the level of sophistication needed to perform CPS duties. "CPS workers have acquired a larger amount of statutory authority and responsibility," explains Simmons. "There is an increased need for a higher level of expertise, especially in dealing with the courts. Certification gives credence to the idea that CPS workers use skills unique to CPS."

In our survey, VCPN asked workers about potential benefits to certification. The same 1-5 point scale was used. As a group, there were stronger responses to the

positive aspects of certification. For example, 70.6% of the respondents believed that better salaries would be one benefit of certification. In addition, 72% believed that client services would improve while 68.8% believed they would experience improved morale as a result of certification. Another benefit relates to professionalism, with 58% of the respondents believing that certification would result in higher status.

VCPN was also curious as to whether workers believed that a decrease in turnover as well as decreased worker burnout would be a benefit of certification. Interestingly, the average response was that workers aren't sure. This was also true when queried about lower caseload. Most workers on the average, are not certain that certification will benefit them in these important areas.

As far as training for certification is concerned, the overwhelming response on the survey was positive. When asked if they would be willing to undergo further training to become a certified CPS worker, 80.7% responded that they were willing. Only 6% said they were not, with the remainder expressing ambivalence.

However, at this point, the central office has put certification "on the back burner." Prince explains, "We are focusing our energies on training. Later, we will look again at credentialing."

Regardless of certification, workers are pleading for more training. One area of particular concern relates to legal aspects of CPS. Richard Grosse, in the Louisa County Department, voiced a common concern when he wrote that his own skills "lack in the area of law, court procedure and counseling in general. I feel these areas need to be addressed during initial CPS training. The court room is intimidating enough to the observers let alone to the CPS worker who has to testify."

Other training issues identified by workers were stress management, time management, interviewing skills, use of community resources (and what to do when there are none!), family therapy (particularly structural), and how to deal with hostile clients. One worker would like to see videos of actual investigative interviews, while many others expressed concern about their investigation skills in general.

Workers had ideas about what training their supervisors need also. For the most part, they believe supervisors need the same kind of training that they need with some additions. Training in flexibility (particularly when working with their staff!), dealing with worker stress, management skills, and general supervision were mentioned most frequently. As one worker put it, "Many supervisors have no experience in CPS and many more have no recent experience. They need training to bring them up to date."

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Workers, you'll be glad to know, supervisors concur! Many expressed a need for training in all the areas workers mentioned and more. Supervisors would also like training in grant writing, resource development and malpractice issues.

Central office is not insensitive to these concerns. While all workers must receive CPS training—called New Worker Training—within the first year of employment, the central office realizes the training is inadequate.

At this point in time, each new worker is given a large notebook which contains information on CPS history, policy, legal aspects of CPS, misconceptions about child abuse, a practice regimen for diagnosis and treatment, sexual abuse issues, and crisis intervention theory. The packet was developed by Howard University, which conducted training for trainers in 1976. Each region is responsible for providing training around the topics covered in this outline. Simmons considers this training as "a concentrated overview of the realm of child protective services. Each region is responsible for how the material is used. They usually have a training specialist present, and sometimes

assistant attorney generals and judges will help with legal aspects. It's intensive—usually lasting three and four days—and didactic."

The other kind of training new workers receive, according to Simmons, is on-the-job-training. When a worker first begins, he or she receives very close supervision, either from another CPS worker, a supervisor, director, or sometimes a regional specialist, depending on the agency's resources.

Realizing training inadequacies, central office is providing more extensive training. Called the Child Protective Services Training Project, it has been offered to approximately 200 workers who have had at least one year CPS experience.

"This training package is a three week program for workers. Supervisors receive the same three week program plus an additional week of training on supervision. The entire training is spaced over three to four months," Prince explains.

Rather than a didactic approach, this training uses the adult training theory method. This method employs an experiential approach and is skills and application oriented. "We tend to look at the big picture,

tying content together in a logical and sequential order," Prince comments.

Simmons, who is undergoing training in order to become a trainer, is very enthusiastic about this approach. "I see this adult learning theory approach as the strength of the program," he says.

The first phase of the project will be completed in December, 1984. After that point, Prince hopes that all of the evaluation data—pretraining and post training—can be analyzed and a statement of effectiveness can be made. At present, training is planned through July, 1986, using the evaluation data to make improvements and revisions.

Child protective services practice is extremely difficult in these very complex times. Regardless of certification, adequate training is of utmost importance in the delivery of quality services to children and family members. However, training issues go beyond client services. They are also closely related to malpractice issues as well as worker satisfaction and burnout. Hopefully, CPS workers and supervisors will soon find themselves receiving the amount and quality of training they desire.

References Available Upon Request



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