

Staying Power!

A Director's Guide to
Child Welfare Retention



A Product of
**THE
R&R
PROJECT**
Child Welfare Staff
Recruitment & Retention
An Evidence-Based Training Model

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Agenda

Staying Power!

A Director's Guide to Child Welfare Retention

Session 1—What Does the Research Say about Retaining Talented Child Welfare Staff?

Welcome and Participant Introductions

What about Turnover?

What does the Future Hold?

What are Your Costs of Turnover?

Why do Talented Workers Go or Stay?

Lunch Break

Session 2—How to be a Retention Leader

The Truth Hurts—or Does It?

Stages of Worker Development

An Environmental Scan: What are the Internal and External Factors Affecting Retention in Your Agency?

How Have you Been Successful?

What Will it Take to Keep Our Talent?

Definitions

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. The organization's culture is the personality, values, and character of the organization. (Schein, 2004 *Organizational Culture and Leadership, Third Edition*, p 17.)

Organizational Climate

Organizational climate is a component of the organization's culture. Climate is defined as the collective perception that employees have of their work environment (Schneider, 1990). As defined by James and colleagues (James & James, 1989; James, James & Ashe, 1990; James & Jones, 1974; James & Sells, 1981), organizational climate is a collective perception of the work environment by the individuals within a common system.

Climate, as such, is a stable organizational characteristic that is maintained over time and which gains considerable inertia as generations of workers come and go (Wiener, 1988). The climate itself may consist of salary, caseload, fellow employee trust, quality of supervision, how supportive the administration is of worker autonomy, and whether there are sufficient resources available to conduct one's work.

The critical issue is that workers who perceive a positive organizational climate are those same workers who report higher job satisfaction and a greater commitment to their organization. (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Glisson, 2000).

Workforce Trends

Workforce Trends in the United States

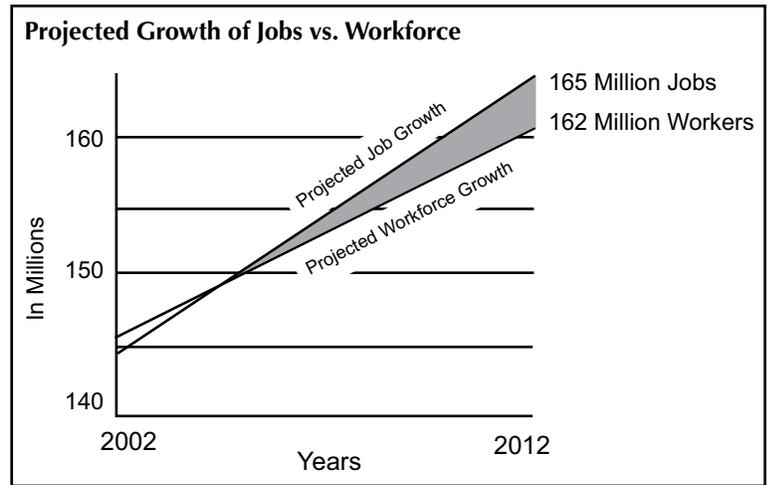
(US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004)

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects a 15%

growth rate in employment between 2002 and 2012. The highest growth rates will occur in:

- ☞ Education & health services
- ☞ Professional & business services

Projected labor shortages especially among skilled workers will lead to a “sellers” market for skilled workers.



Workforce Trends in Social Work

- ☞ 30% are 55 and older as compared to 13.9% across all occupations
- ☞ High growth occupation (greater than the 14.8% projected national average) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004; Barth, 2001)
- ☞ Social workers earn about 11% less than those in other service occupations (Barth, 2001)
- ☞ Social workers have high commitment which may lead to “stickiness” & help depress wages (Barth, 2001)

Workforce Trends in Child Welfare

- ☞ Vacancies are staying open longer than in 2000.
- ☞ Vacancy rates for public child welfare workers are significantly higher than those of other state and local government workers.
- ☞ Average salaries are markedly lower than for nurses, teachers, police officers & fire fighters (APHS, 2004).
 - To read the survey report, go to <http://www.aphsa.org/Home/Doc/Workforce%20Report%202005.pdf>

Workforce Trends in North Carolina

- ☞ 73% of employees with less than 5 years experience
- ☞ Statewide vacancy rate = 31%
- ☞ Turnover rates highest in Case Management and Investigations
- ☞ At least 71 days needed to fill a SW III position (North Carolina Office of State Personnel Study, 2004)

Workforce Priorities Mobility and Motivation

U. S. Workforce

High mobility

- 46% want to change jobs in the next 6 months
- 75%, in the next 12 months

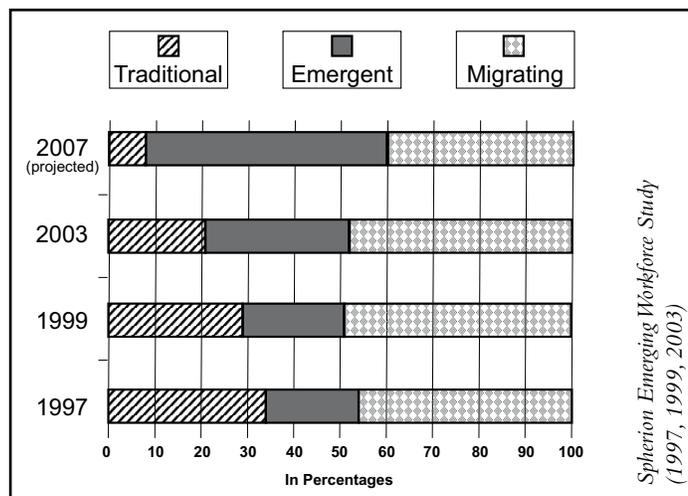
Changing priorities

- 86% cite work fulfillment & work/life balance as #1
- 35% cite being successful at work & moving up the ladder

What motivates workers?

- ☞ Traditional workers prefer job security and stability and like employers to pave their career path.
- ☞ Emergent workers take charge of their careers, want to learn new skills and embrace change.
- ☞ Migrating workers have a mix of both emergent and traditional workplace values.

Dimensions	Traditional Worker	Emergent Worker
Loyalty	Tenure	Contribution
Job Change	Damaging to career	Vehicle for growth
Career Path	Company responsibility to provide	Employee responsibility to pursue
Advancement	Based on longevity	Based on performance
Job Security	Required as a driver of commitment	Rejected as a driver of commitment



Are your workers traditional, emergent, or migrating workers?

An on-line self assessment tool can be found at the Spherion website: http://www.spherion.com/about_us/emerging_workforce/workers_defined.jsp

All Turnover is Not the Same

Employer actions likely to prevent or delay turnover	Employer actions may prevent or delay turnover	Employer actions have little influence on turnover
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations not met • Few opportunities for growth and advancement • Poor fit with job • Most of the factors on the “Top 10” list (see Handout 1G) • Strong selection process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commuting distance • Family needs • Additions to family • Return to school • Promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement • Promotion • Illness or disability • Relocation

<p>Voluntary Departures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer actions may prevent or delay turnover 	<p>Voluntary Departures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer actions are unlikely to prevent or delay turnover
<p>Involuntary Departures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer initiated 	<p>Unavoidable Departures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee initiated and unavoidable by either employee or employer

Pull Factors Promoting Retention



Characteristics of the Worker

- ☞ Education and training
- ☞ Sense of mission and investment
- ☞ Desire to help
- ☞ Self-efficacy

The Nature of the Work

- ☞ Realistic job preview
- ☞ Match/"Goodness of fit"
- ☞ Challenging work
- ☞ Diverse tasks
- ☞ Autonomy/decision-making

Co-Workers

- ☞ Need for affiliation
- ☞ Supportive and competent

Supervision

- ☞ Practice support
- ☞ Learning support
- ☞ Mentoring
- ☞ Emotional Support

The Workplace: Agency Climate

- ☞ Clear vision & mission
- ☞ Affirmation & recognition
- ☞ Learning organization orientation

The Agency and the Community

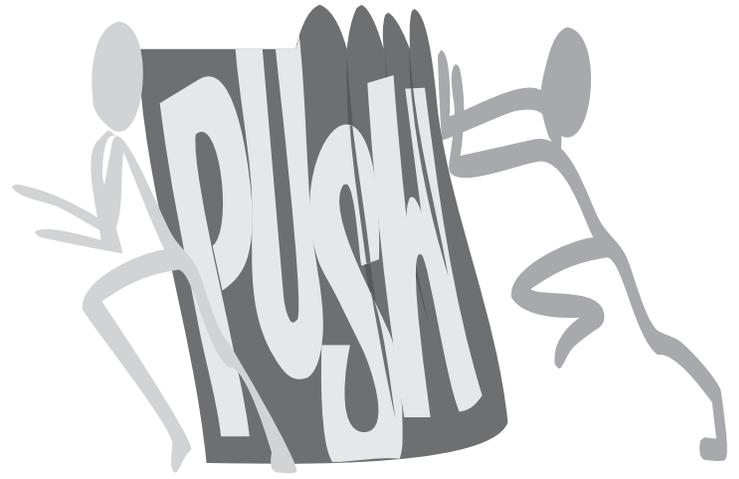
- ☞ Community engagement
- ☞ Positive perception of the agency

Session 1

Handout G

Top 10 Push Factors

Why do people leave?



1. Expectations not met
2. Mismatch between the person and the role
3. Mismatch between the person and the organizational culture
4. Insufficient opportunities for growth and advancement
5. Insufficient recognition or appreciation
6. Problems with direct manager/supervisor
7. Dissatisfaction with pay
8. Stress
9. Lack of work/life balance
10. Loss of confidence in the organization, particularly the leadership

Expanded from Branham, L. (2005). The 7 hidden reasons employees leave. New York: AMACOM.

Inventory of Current Retention Strategies

In the box to the right of each category below, please write one example of each strategy

Strategies that target...

1. The Worker	
2. The Work	
3. The Supervisor	
4. Supervisory Practice	
5. Professional Development and Learning Organization	
6. Other aspects of Agency Climate	
7. The Community	

Your Costs of Child Welfare Turnover

Item	Costs for the Last Year
Advertising	
Time reviewing applications (director, supervisor, human resources, etc.)	
Interviewing time (director, supervisor, etc.)	
Lowered morale and productivity (other workers picking up vacant caseloads; time talking about it around the water cooler)	
Other staff leaving because of their increased workload	
Past training time and expenses (for worker who left)	
Training time and expenses (for new worker)	
Other	

(Adapted from Training and Development, April 2000, pp. 30–33)

Session 2

Handout A

To: Ms. Director, Helping Everyone Agency

From: Joe Dedication

cc: Mr. Supervisor

Re: Reasons for Leaving

I have thought a great deal about whether or not to write this memo, and have decided that it is important for me to express how I feel about leaving this agency. I hope you understand that there are many things I liked about my job and the organization. However, I also feel that it might be helpful if you knew of some of my concerns. When I originally interviewed for this position, I was pleased to find that your mission and vision mirrored my own so well. It has always been important to me that I work at something that I love and with people who shared this commitment.

However, when I arrived, I found that there was little support for my learning. You hired me because I did have some valuable experience but I had to learn the ins and outs of dealing with clients on my own, with a supervisor too busy to give much direction or reassurance. I soon understood that because of many vacancies, I would have to sink or swim alone. I rose to the challenge, but soon began to burn out. I was also fearful that I would make a costly mistake with a client, for which I felt extreme daily stress. I was distressed that I did not have someone to share my concerns with.

Your mission and vision speak to the importance of teamwork, employee support, and recognition, but I frankly found little. When I did have major accomplishments, there seemed to be no one who had time or energy to celebrate with me.

When I began 2 years ago, we talked about my interest in learning other facets of the agency, and about my interest in management. You seemed to be pleased with my performance (although my performance evaluations were always rushed and shallow) and I cannot recall a time when I received any negative feedback. However, my requests for additional training and opportunities received no response.

I realize that new initiatives are part of this work. Many of the initiatives I found exciting and challenging, but no one ever bothered to explain how they all fit together. I felt like I was missing major pieces to the puzzle and ended up feeling lost in my day to day work. Some initiatives even ceased and we employees were never sure why.

I know you must think that I am leaving to go to “Pie in the Sky, Inc.” because they are paying me more, but this is not true. I really wanted to work for your agency. I hope that you will contemplate the issues I have outlined here, and address them for future employees.

I wish you much success. Sincerely, Joe Dedication

Staying Power! An Employee Perspective

According to research conducted by the Gallup Organization, these questions measure the critical elements needed to attract, focus, and keep the most talented employees.

Staff Needs	Critical Questions	Director Tasks
What do I get?	1. Do I know what is expected of me at work? 2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?	
What do I give?	3. At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day? 4. In these last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work? 5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person? 6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?	
Do I belong here?	7. At work, do my opinions seem to count? 8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important? 9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work? 10. Do I have a close friend at work?	
Can I grow here?	11. In the last six months has someone at work talked to me about my progress? 12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?	

Buckingham, M. and Coffman C. (1999). First, break all the rules.

Session 2

Handout C

Stages of Child Welfare Worker Development

Stage	Worker Characteristics
<p>High anxiety</p> <p>Day 1 to 6 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overwhelmed with everything they have to learn and to do ● May feel inadequate to perform necessary tasks ● May be confused about their feelings toward abusive or neglectful parents ● May be confused about their own roles & responsibilities ● Anxiety about life & death decisions ● May have positive feelings – enthusiasm, a sense of excitement, challenge
<p>Make it or break it</p> <p>1–6 months (may overlap high anxiety stage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ambivalence ● Familiar with job and questioning if this is a good fit ● Some degree of confidence in concrete tasks ● May still feel overwhelmed by less concrete tasks ● May still have anxiety about certain roles and responsibilities
<p>Basic skills</p> <p>6 months +</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Core competencies in place ● Recognition of need for more advanced or specialized skills ● More aware of obstacles to effective job performance (caseload size, paperwork time, lack of resources, etc.) ● May desire less supervision ● Feelings of satisfaction and feeling of disillusionment may coexist
<p>Relative independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong sense of confidence and competence regarding the knowledge, skills, and ability to perform the job ● Capacity to identify problems and options ● Strong sense of independence and autonomy

Factors that affect how quickly they move through stages: Educational background, previous social work or child welfare experience, preservice training, supervisory interventions

Salus, M.K. (2004). *Supervising child protective services caseworkers. Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual Series. Washington, DC: DHHS, Administration for Children and Families.*

Environmental Scan Worksheet

Internal and External Factors Affecting Retention

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>What community factors affect recruitment and retention for your agency? Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of workers • Talent pool • Competition from other organizers 				
<p>What data are available about turnover and retention for the agency as a whole and for each unit in the agency?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention data or turnover data (statistics, exit interviews) • What new data will I need to create? 				
<p>What do the data suggest about targeting strategies for retention? How can your agency become an “employer of choice?”</p>				

Retention Strategy Ideas

1. Collect and analyze all turnover and exit interview data.
2. Conduct a survey and compare what staff at different levels think.
3. Organize and conduct a “Future Pull” session.
4. Gather insight and input from focus groups and interviews.
5. Compile and position data.
6. Tap a retention champion.
7. Prepare supervisors to become owners.
8. Build evaluation and accountability systems.

(From Training and Development, April 2000, pp. 30–33)

The Retention-Oriented Director Worksheet for Professional Development

1. Key points from the discussion in small group and full group:
2. My strengths as a retention-oriented director:
3. What are areas that I might decide to strengthen?
4. What can I do to strengthen these areas? How can I build on my strengths?

Moving from Information to Action

Recommended Action #1	
A. Who in the agency does this action involve?	
B. Who does it involve outside the agency?	
C. How will you bring people in as owners of this retention commitment process?	
D. How will you track progress to see if these changes actually impact the outcome?	
Recommended Action #2	
A. Who in the agency does this action involve?	
B. Who does it involve outside the agency?	
C. How will you bring people in as owners of this retention commitment process?	
D. How will you track progress to see if these changes actually impact the outcome?	
Recommended Action #3	
A. Who in the agency does this action involve?	
B. Who does it involve outside the agency?	
C. How will you bring people in as owners of this retention commitment process?	
D. How will you track progress to see if these changes actually impact the outcome?	