

BURNOUT AND EMOTIONAL LABOUR AMONGST PROBATION PRACTITIONERS

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BACKGROUND

- Emotional labour in probation practice – 2015-16
- Evaluation of NPS Staff Supervision and Line Management Framework/SEEDS2 training for SPOs
- Professional curiosity in probation practice
- Staff wellbeing and burnout

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL LABOUR?

“the management of a way of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display...for a wage.” (Hochschild, 1983, 7fn)

- Display and manage emotions in a way expected by organisation
- Emotional detachment for professionalism and efficiency
- Voice to voice/face to face
- Produce an emotional state in another person
- Employer exercises control over the emotional work of the employee

EMOTION DISPLAY RULES IN PROBATION PRACTICE

Feeling rules - includes who does the emotional work in the organisation; specifying: range; duration; intensity and object of emotions that should be experienced (Hochschild 1983:89)

Display rules: publicly observable behaviour rather than the management of feelings (Ashforth and Humphrey 1993)

- organisational
- occupational
- societal

- "Professionals have often to balance the feeling rules of their profession against the instrumental demands of public policy, or the dictates of the public bureaucracy which offers them employment" (Bolton, 2005: 95)

PERFORMING EMOTIONAL LABOUR

- Surface acting – displaying emotion without feeling the emotion
- Deep acting – changing one's emotional state so that it fits with the display rules, and displaying that emotional state

BURNOUT

- 'Burnout refers to the emotional depletion and loss of motivation that result from prolonged exposure to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job.' (Leiter, Maslach and Frame, 2015)

Key dimensions (Maslach, 2006):

- Emotional exhaustion = the feeling of being “burned out” from your work
- Depersonalization = the feeling of becoming more cynical and detached.
- A sense of ineffectiveness and a lack of accomplishment.
- A cumulative reaction to ongoing stressors-tends to be prolonged

BURNOUT IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE STAFF

- Adams et al (2010) stressors and strains amongst Police;
- Schaible and Gecas (2010) emotional labour and value dissonance on burnout amongst Police Officers;
- Collins et al (2009) stress and well-being perceived by probation trainees;
- Griffin et al (2009) job satisfaction and burnout correctional staff;
- Tewksbury and Higgins (2006) emotional dissonance and work stress amongst correctional staff.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND BURNOUT

- Relationship between emotional labour and levels of burnout (Brotheridge and Grandey; 2002; Krummel and Geddes, 2000)
- Potential link between surface acting and burnout

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH BURNOUT

Organisational stressors

- caseload, feeling of being undervalued, high workloads, policy change, paperwork and administrative tasks, insufficient human resources, workplace relationships and tensions, lack of opportunity to develop professionally, overtime. Work-life balance/WFH.

Operational stressors

- perceived or actual threats to personal safety from those under their supervision, emotional labour, unpredictability, vicarious trauma,

Individual factors

- sleep, experience, training routes, grade, age, gender, emotional intelligence, ethnicity, cultural differences

(Ricciardelli and Carleton, 2021; Norman and Ricciardelli; Schaible and Gecas, 2010; Adams and Mastracci, 2019)

METHODS

Mixed methods study: survey -> interviews

- Survey –Feb-March 2020
- POs/PSOs: 1509 responses
- SPOs: 218 responses

- Interviews – Dec 2020 – March 2021
- POs/PSOs/RWs – 28
- SPOs – 27

SURVEY SAMPLE
- FRONTLINE
PRACTITIONERS

Total		1509
Role	PO	40.2% (n=557)
	PSO	26.6% (n=360)
	PQIP	17.7% (n=246)
	Other	16.1% (n=224)
Gender	Male	25% (n=285)
	Female	72.3% (n=836)
	Prefer not to say/other	2.7% (n=31)
Time in service (mean, years)		10.74 (SD = 9.19)

INTERVIEW SAMPLE

- Female: 37
- Male: 18

- Range of divisions
- Mix of settings: generic OM, residential workers, AP staff, court staff, prison,
- Mix of specialisms: VLOs, report writers, sex offender specialists, PQIP

BURNOUT

Emotional Exhaustion ($\alpha = .876$)

- Working with people all day is really a strain for me.
- I leave work feeling emotionally exhausted.
- I feel "used up" at the end of the workday.

Depersonalisation ($\alpha = .624$)

- Working in this job has hardened me emotionally
- I've become more callous toward people since I started working in probation
- People I deal with at work blame me for some of their problems

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AND GENDER

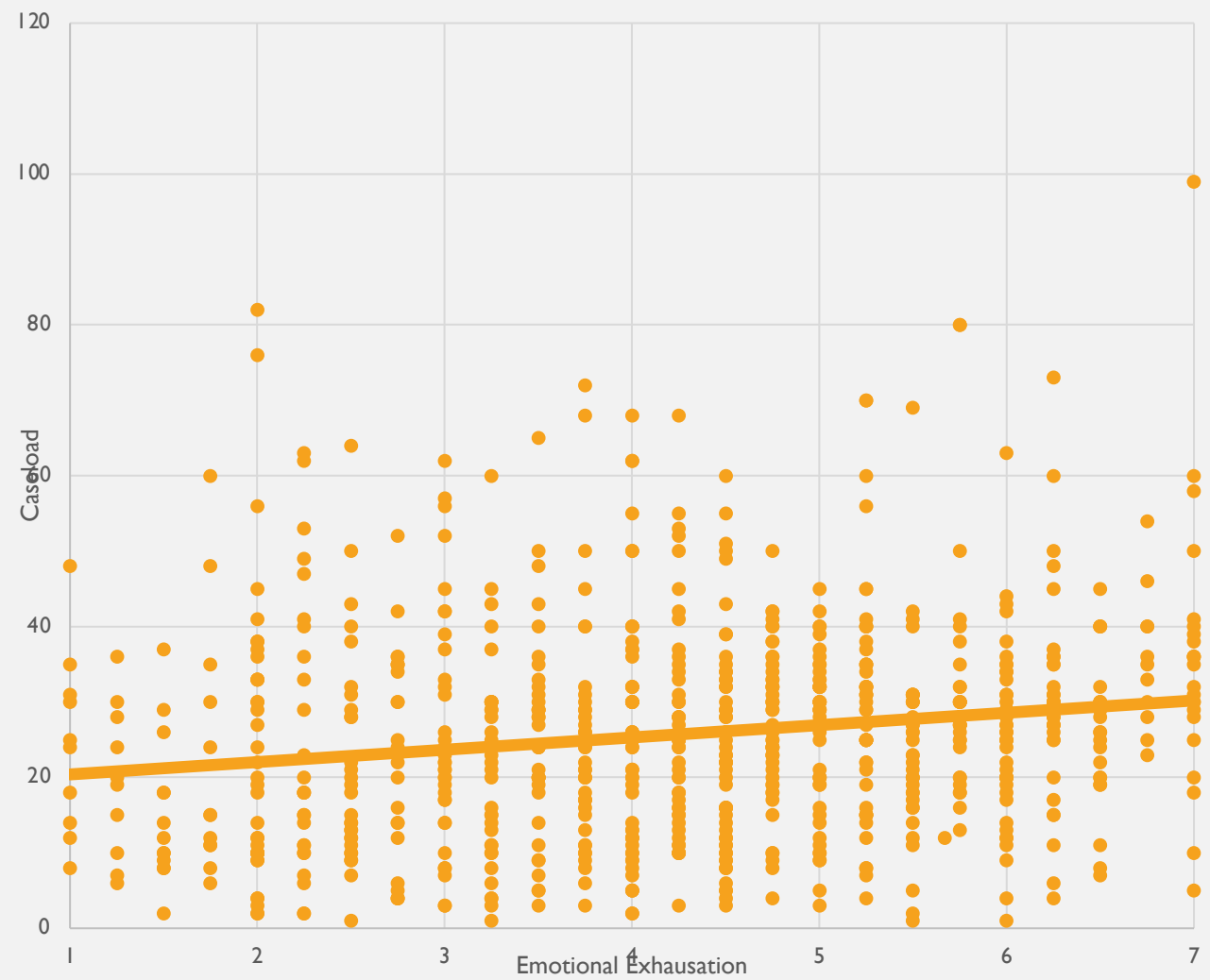
Male (n=282)		Female (n=809)			
Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p
3.81	1.46	4.19	1.5	-3.74	<0.001

BURNOUT AND ROLE

	MEAN	N	STD. DEVIATION
Probation Officer	4.5322	505	1.42725
Probation Services Officer	3.8323	311	1.40829
PQIP student	3.7762	197	1.39579
Other (please specify)	3.5319	180	1.60629
Total	4.0740	1193	1.49936

• $p = 0.001$

BURNOUT AND CASELOAD



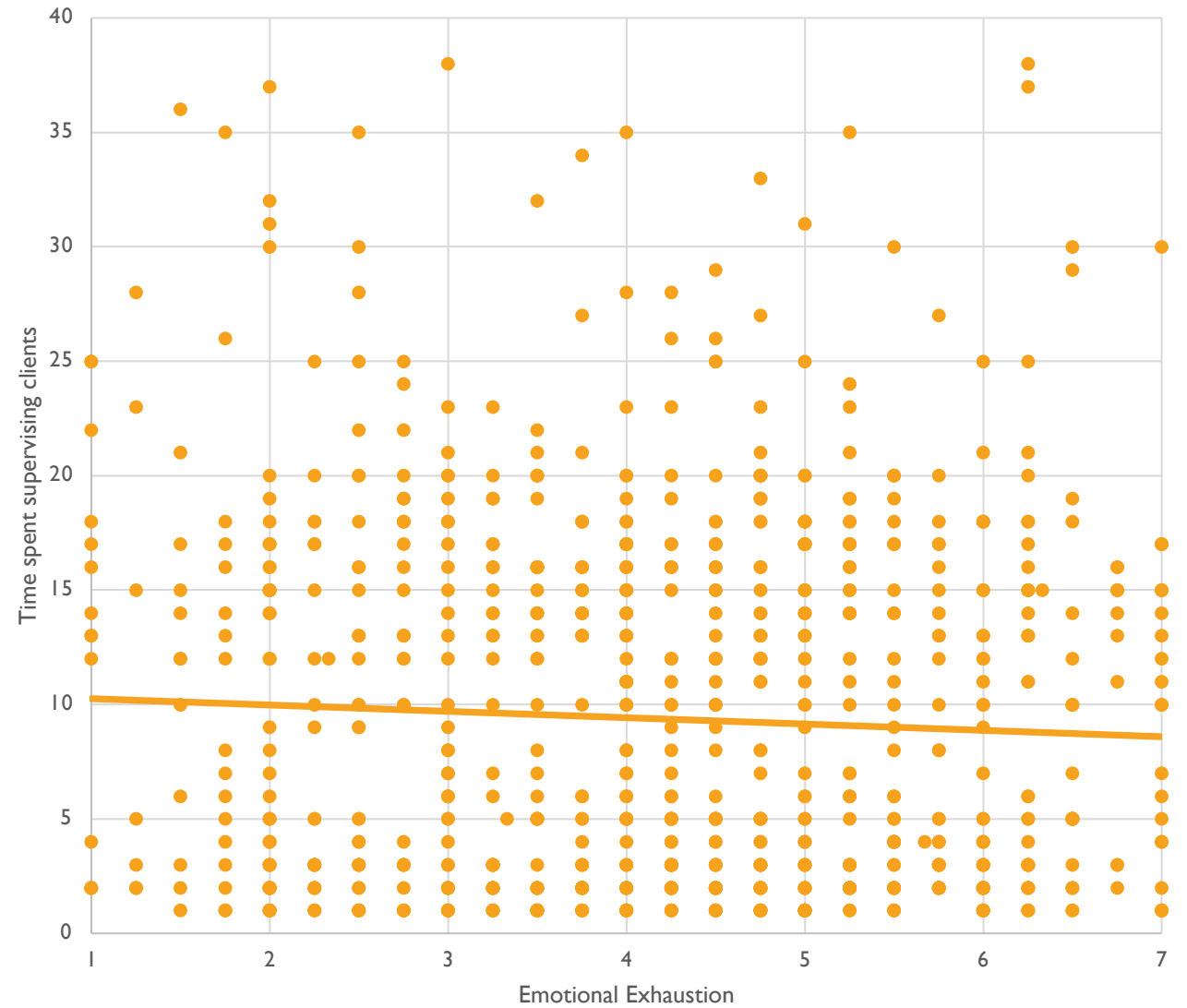
p = 0.001

BURNOUT AND QUALIFICATION ROUTE

What probation officer qualification did you complete?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Diploma in Social Work (DipSW)	4.1486	37	1.60777
Diploma Probation Studies (DIPS)	4.3222	97	1.36548
Community Justice Honours Degree or Graduate Diploma (Probation Qualification Framework)	4.6484	224	1.44674
Professional Qualification in Probation (PQIP)	4.6891	115	1.35181
Other (please specify)	4.2344	32	1.40411
Total	4.5322	505	1.42725

- $p = > 0.05$

BURNOUT AND TIME SUPERVISING CLIENTS



WHAT
CONTRIBUTES
MOST TO
BURNOUT?

Organisational stressors	Operational stressors	Individual stressors
Perceived organizational support	Surface acting	> 7 hours sleep/day
Perception of MH support from organisation	Deep acting	Age
Caseload	Use of/experience of fear	Gender
Hours overtime	Suppression of emotion	Time in service
Length of 'shift'	Pretend display rules	Emotional self awareness
		Emotional regulation
		Emotional awareness of others

RESULTS FROM LINEAR REGRESSION

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Emotional regulation	-.267	.055	-.168	-4.844	.000
Perceived organisations support	-.171	.040	-.187	-4.246	.000
Surface acting	.157	.038	.147	4.092	.000
Pretend display rules	.254	.054	.164	4.696	.000
Emotional awareness of others	.261	.059	.158	4.394	.000
Approximately how many hours of overtime do you work per month?	.212	.059	.116	3.565	.000
Do you get at least 7 hours of undisturbed sleep in a 24 hour period?	.337	.097	.114	3.478	.001
How many clients are you currently supervising?	.008	.003	.101	3.122	.002
Emotional self awareness	-.144	.042	-.124	-3.406	.001

$R^2 = 0.324, p = < 0.001$

PERCEIVED
ORGANISATIONAL
SUPPORT ($\alpha = .960$)

Values my contribution to its success.

Considers my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.

Values my opinions.

Takes pride in my work accomplishments.

Cares about my general satisfaction at work.

Provides help and support when I have a problem.

Strongly considers my goals and values when making decisions that affect me.

PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

- Fear of SFOs – not supported by organization. ‘Chucked under a bus’
- Only get attention if negative – from organization (and public)
- Support mechanisms (e.g., PAM assist too generic)
- Clinical supervision – been restricted for many years
- Contact with ‘organisation’ comes through SPO. Perception contingent on the SPO and relationship between the practitioner and SPO.
- Appears dependent on location e.g., prison, AP, courts, VLU and effected by change
- Communities of coping

EMOTIONAL
REGULATION (α
= .875)

I am quite capable of
controlling my own emotions.

I can always calm down quickly
when I am very angry.

I have good control of my own
emotions.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- Essential component of probation practitioner role
 - People apply to be practitioners once they've worked-out they are good at emotional regulation
 - Those who are not as good at emotional regulation end up leaving or do not apply in the first instance
- Culture and values – non-judgmental, unconditional positive regard
- Recruitment

PRETEND
DISPLAY RULES (α
= .655)

My department expects me to act confident and self assured while on the job.

My department expects me to act calm even when I don't feel that way on the job.

My department expects me to show emotions I don't really feel as part of my job.

My department expects me to be friendly towards people as part of my job.

PRETEND DISPLAY RULES

- Suppression of unwanted or 'unprofessional' emotions and the display of emotions deemed 'appropriate' through surface acting.
- Linked with the need to be seen to be professional-to be visibly calm on the outside despite being worried (or even scared) on the inside
- The need to be seen to be 'resilient'
- Tensions between true feelings and the expectation to build rapport and demonstrate empathy whilst maintaining professional boundaries.

SURFACE ACTING
($\alpha = .775$)

I resist expressing my true feelings at work.

I pretend to have emotions that I don't really feel at work.

I hide my true feelings about situations and people I encounter at work.

SURFACE ACTING

- Surface acting is 'part and parcel' of the job-normalised by interviewees
 - Hiding true feelings e.g., about certain offences (in particular sexual offending)
 - Hide feelings of guilt over decisions e.g., a recall when the service-users mother died whilst he was back in prison
 - Suppressing some positive emotions to maintain boundaries, stay professional
 - Suppressing feelings of frustration at other colleagues / criminal justice professionals
 - With threatening clients or with clients in distress
 - Anger or frustration towards a service user who is behaving inappropriately.
 - VLOs acting calmly when they feel sad or sympathy for the victims they are working with.

EMOTIONAL
AWARENESS OF
OTHERS ($\alpha = .913$)

I always know the difference between my friends' emotions from their behavior.

I am a good observer of others' emotions.

I am sensitive to the feelings of others.

I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS OF OTHERS

- Required to support the building of rapport and trust with service users as well as effective working relationships with colleagues (both internal and external to the organisation)
- Supports the practice edgework e.g., knowing when and how to use humour or to display negative emotions to service users.
- Communities of coping – being sensitive to the feelings of your colleagues and providing emotional support when needed.
- Possibility of link to professional curiosity

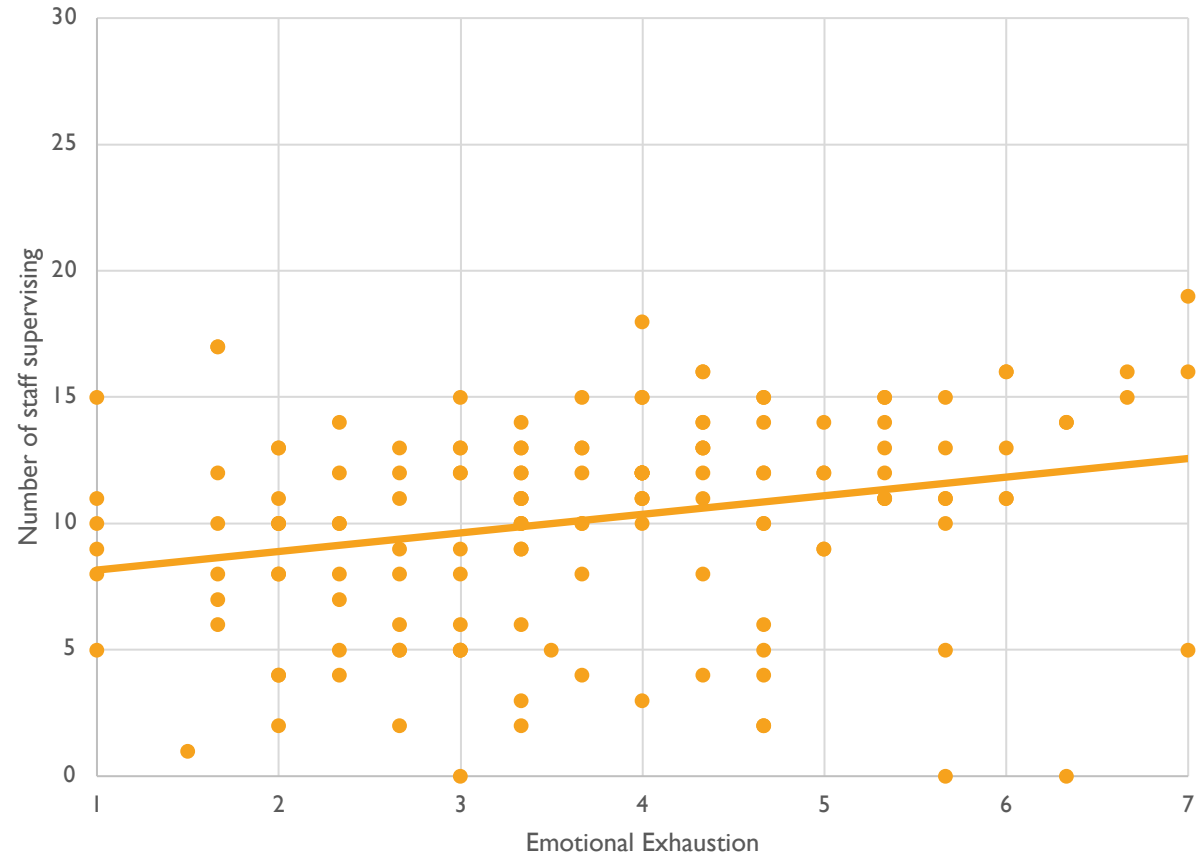
BUT

- Professional advantages come at a cost- Hypervigilance - Worklife spill-over, skewed view of world
- The higher the levels of emotional awareness, the greater the risk of burn out
- Emotional self-awareness needed to offer protection

SURVEY SAMPLE - SPO

Total		218
Role	Generic	39.2% (n=82)
	Specialist	60.8% (n=127)
Gender	Male	27% (n=38)
	Female	67% (n=93)
Time in service (mean, years)		19.5 (SD = 6.45)
Time as SPO (mean, years)		6.77 (SD = 6.38)
Number of staff supervising (mean)		10.72 (SD = 4.22)

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AND NUMBER OF STAFF



$p = <0.001$

SENIOR PROBATION OFFICERS

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std.	Beta		
		Error			
ELdetail	.746	.172	.310	4.344	.000
Pretend	.474	.117	.283	4.032	.000
Affil	-.349	.100	-.308	-3.501	.001
Exchange	.171	.086	.176	1.984	.049
Using the sliding scale please answer the following questions: - How many members of staff do you supervise?	.104	.026	.281	4.079	.000

EMOTIONAL LABOUR ($\alpha = .590$)

- Making someone afraid of something you could do to them
- Hiding your fear of someone who appears threatening.
- Apologizing to someone for something, when I don't mean it.
- Remaining calm even when you are anxious.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR

- Hiding their nerves when dealing with a challenging employee (perhaps over performance issues)
- Soaking up frustration, anger from staff but not showing a reaction to that.
- Being expected to know what to do in challenging situations.
- Being caught in the middle, as middle managers, having to apologise for the actions of management/the organisation, and also their supervisees.
- Being isolated but not displaying that.
- Anxiety around SFOs

AFFILIATION (α
= .808)

I feel a strong sense of
belonging to this organization.

I feel like a part of the family
at this organization.

The people I work with care
about what happens to me.

AFFILIATION

- Isolation of being an SPOs often work alone, with little peer support
- Difficulty of transitioning to SPO – change in dynamic, different power dynamic
- Challenge of balancing position of authority/manager with being responsibility for development
- Position of NPS within broader field – NPS has been subsumed by HMPPS and Civil Service
- Lack of embedding values of SEEDS2 into organisation

PRETEND
DISPLAY RULES (α
= .572)

My department expects me to act confident and self assured while on the job.

My department expects me to act calm even when I don't feel that way on the job.

My department expects me to show emotions I don't really feel as part of my job.

My department expects me to be friendly towards people as part of my job.

PRETEND DISPLAY RULES

- Stuck in the middle – apologizing on behalf of the organization adds to surface acting – performing emotional labour to two audiences
- Boundary spanning – struggle with adhering to values that were imbued when PO and marrying values with managerial demands of the organization
- Having to tell POs/PSOs that they have to do SEEDS2, but not getting it themselves – tension

NUMBER OF STAFF BEING SUPERVISED

- Having to deal with everyone's problems
- Emotional bucket
- Ad hoc/reactive – open door policy
- Vicarious trauma and nowhere to go with that trauma...

IMPACT OF COVID ON ALL OF THE ABOVE?

- Less peer support
- Harder to get recognition from organization
- More spillover from work to home life
- Workloads are higher – people off sick, easier to work in the evening when always at home
- Harder to interpret other people's emotional state and cope with own emotional state
- Uncertainty in terms of working processes and (life more generally!)
- Diversity in implementation
- More difficult to get ad hoc support from SPO/give support as SPO
- More opportunities for agile working and remote supervision

IMPLICATIONS

- Caseload and workload need to be dealt with when it comes to POs and PSOs
- Improve perception around organizational support - PAM assist
- More investment in reflective practice from training right through
- With SPOs – do more to create sense of affiliation/feeling like part of the family
- Reduce number of people SPOs are supervising
- Well-being practices such as taking time out, meditation etc – good but not going to change structural issues. Shifts onus to staff.
- Organisation has to ensure that emotions are not portrayed as ‘bad’ or ‘unprofessional’ or an indication of a lack of ‘resilience’-intrinsic part of the job that need to be explored and understood
- Supporting people with emotional regulation and recruitment (attrition)

SUMMARY

- Burnout highest amongst women and POs, and correlated with length of time supervising staff
- Organisational factors and role content have significant impact on burnout
- Slightly different for SPOs – perhaps due to their role between staff and the organization

THANK YOU!

Any questions?

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