



## Social Well-being and Related Factors in Workers Supporting Individuals with Developmental and Behavioral Disorders

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### ABSTRACT

Social well-being is a complex concept that entails social contacts, the quality of the social contacts that a person has, and the level of interaction of the person within a social context. It is indeed the cornerstone of a person's general well-being, including the person's emotions and even bodily condition. Such social well-being is essential for care workers who tend to individuals with developmental and behavioural disorders. These workers are at a higher risk of experiencing job-related stressors, including high emotional demands, difficult behaviours and stigma that makes them lack good social relationships. Moreover, the kind of work they do requires a high level of interpersonal relationships that may build up or erode the staff member's social well-being depending on the prevailing supportive systems. The current paper aims to identify key determinants of social functioning that relate to care workers; these are work context, emotional workload, care support, organisational commitment, job performance, and training (Lopez et al., 2021). A clear appreciation of these aspects can enable the design of relevant intercessions that would facilitate the emotional and social functioning of care workers while at the same time supporting the quality of care afforded to people with developmental and behavioural issues.

**Keywords:** Social Well-being, Workers Supporting, Developmental and Behavioral Disorders.



## 1. Factors Influencing Social Well-being

### 1.1 Work Environment

The physical environment in a workplace is one of the main antecedents of social climate and affects care workers' job satisfaction, stress, and positive interaction with co-workers and users. Promotive work conditions, which include good management support, a good communication system, necessary facilities, and a staff-polite work environment, positively influence the social relationships of care workers. Research work has confirmed that organizations that encourage the participation of carers in teamwork, communication and giving respect have enhanced retention of care workers and more satisfaction in their workplaces (Gomez et al., 2021). On the other hand, sources of workplace stress such as poor communication and lack of support result in a friendly environment that sees workers become isolated, develop poor morale and have high rates of burnout. For instance, studies conducted by Lopez et al. (2021) demonstrated that the care workers who worked in stressful contexts, which were characterized by low resource availability, had significantly poorer scores of social well-being as compared with the participants from less stressful settings. Notably, settings where care workers must deal with people who need care and often manifest aggressive or difficult behaviors require sound workplace relationships to cope with daily stress and establish proper working relationships. It is important to ensure that management engages with the employees frequently, speaks well of the work being done by the employees, and also ensures that the employees are provided with resources resources to complete their work. When management takes time to discuss with care workers, listen to them, and provide solutions, it brings about positive sociological relationships since care workers feel valued, thus improving their social well-being (Lopez et al., 2019).

### 1.2 Emotional Demands and Burnout

It is now possible to understand the extent of the emotional demands required for the care of people who have developmental and behavioural disorders. Some of the pressures that care workers come across include the use of violence, temper tantrums, and the necessity of constant supervision since some of the clients have unpredictable behaviour behaviour, thus exposing the care workers to high levels of stress and emotional drain. Cynical burnout, a chronic stress state with manifestations expressed by exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decrease in professional accomplishment, is common for care workers; it has negative consequences for social quality (Lopez et al., 2021). What has been found is that burnout affects not only the emotional state of care workers but also their capacity to interact socially. Workers are likely to reduce their interaction levels with other people and, hence, may feel alienated from others or have difficulties maintaining relationships both at the workplace and in other scopes of life. Such withdrawal can then give way to a vicious cycle where pullback helps worsen feelings of burnout thereby harming social well-being. Measures taken to lessen emotional workload, such as stress control training, mindfulness programmes, and peer support groups, have been proven to lower burnout and increase social



functioning. For instance, Hogh et al. (2021) concluded that care workers who benefited from mindfulness-based stress reduction programs expressed increased capacity to handle emotional pressures and conducted self-assessment self-assessments of reduced burnout levels and improved social functioning.

### 1.3 Social Support Systems

The promotion of social support serves a huge purpose of protecting caregivers from the stress that comes along with the care work they undertake. This gives them strength, helps them avoid tension, and even enjoy their work. Caring has been defined as the help and support received from peers, managers, relatives, and friends to enable the care workers to deal with stressors arising out of their work. The care workers perceived social support has been identified to exhibit a positive relationship with better mental health, job satisfaction, and overall social functioning (Hogh et al., 2021). Among them, workplace social support appears to be the most important to promote the feeling of togetherness among care workers. According to research, social belongingness predicts workers' tendency to seek out, enjoy, and engage in positive social relations with co-workers and supervisors, levels of job satisfaction, and a predisposition to burnout. For example, Hogh et al. (2021) conducted a study on care workers and noted that those with a good workplace support system enjoyed high work role engagement and less stress levels and had better social well-being than care workers with a weak support system. Another form of social support is organized and planned support in the form of peer support groups, mentorship, and team building among the caregivers, where they get a chance to interact and share with their fellow support givers. It is noteworthy to mention that such programs not only affect the social improvement of society but also reduce employee turnover and create more positive and cohesive workplaces.

### 1.4 Job Satisfaction and Recognition

Satisfaction at the workplace and recognition are positively correlated to the social health of the care workers. In social terms, when people recognize the worth of a worker, then this person's life will be rich in positive social relationships as well as the ability to find self-fulfilment in the tasks assigned. The reward can be vocal or tangible, a trophy, a promotion, a trip or a spare time off, common characteristics of a healthy organizational climate and improved social quality (Brunetto et al., 2021). A study conducted by Brunetto et al. (2021) also established that in the case of care workers who were recognized by their supervisors often, they were found to be signalling and demonstrating better levels of job satisfaction, work engagement and turnover intention. This is advantageous not only to the individual worker and to the company but also to society as less worker turnover and increased cooperation among the team fosters the welfare of society. This study claimed that public recognition is the most useful when it is timely, specific, and consistent with the care workers' values, for example, appreciation of their emotional work or the commitment to people with diverse needs. Reward is also effective in preventing stress and burnout



because it emphasises the importance of care work and the significance of caregivers to the lives of the cared persons. This feeling of meaning and recognition is part of social well-being, and it is especially important in the field where the emotional side of the workers' experiences can be dominant over the benefits received by the care receivers.

## 1.5 Professional Development and Training

Besides, continuing education and staff training are necessary elements for preserving the social health of care workers. Apart from increasing the knowledge and skills of the workers, these opportunities meet self-actualization needs, which include achievement in the performance of their tasks, hence boosting the satisfaction levels of the workers. Training programs can also build social relations by assembling care workers for learning sessions, enhancing shared working, supporting relationships, and creating a feeling of belonging in the company (Eby et al., 2021). For care workers, targeted training programs that investigate the problems experienced when undertaking their duties, such as work stress, challenging behaviours, and communication skills, are most helpful. For instance, Eby et al. estimate in their papers that those care workers who received specific training have increased self-confidence, improved job satisfaction, and an increased level of social well-being. They also promote the exchange of information, support, and opportunities for care workers to learn with one another while fostering camaraderie and positivity for their social well-being.

## 2. Challenges to Social Well-being

### 2.1 High Turnover and Staffing Issues

Shortage of staff and high rates of turnover are well-noted problems among caregivers that have enormous effects on the social framework of the caregivers. The availability of fewer staff members has a direct implication since the remaining staff are overworked, stressed, and more prone to burnout, which, in one way or another, hinders them from promoting positive social interactions among themselves and their subordinates. This, in a way, can create a poor working climate that includes stress, low morale, and the employee feeling lonely (Brennan et al., 2021). It is worth noting that high turnover rates are correlated with job dissatisfaction, lack of appreciation, insufficient resources, and emotional requirements of carers. For example, Brennan et al. (2021) concluded that across the surveyed participants, care workers in short-staffed roles experienced increased stress, lowered satisfaction with their occupation, and compromised social quality of life. The study also showed that turnover is a problem that does not only impact the individual care workers who are leaving but also the rest of the workforce, thereby increasing feelings of stress and burnout. It is thus imperative to tackle these issues through various methods in the process of recruitment and retention of staff, such as offering better remuneration, professional development, and better support at the workplace they serve. Moreover, it is possible to utilise the staffing models, which might provide sufficient staff coverage in this



setting and handle the high workloads to support care workers in making efforts to establish rapport with their colleagues as well as clients.

## 2.2 Stigma and Public Perception

Misconceptions in the community regarding care work and care workers and the negative perception that comes with working with personnel with development and behavioural disorders have a great influence on the well-being of care workers. The received work role based on societal perception devalues care workers and generates feelings of frustration, isolation and lack of recognition (Werner & Shulman, 2021). This could be in family and other interpersonal-domestic relationships where the care workers complain of being misunderstood or meeting negative attitudes toward their kind of job. For example, other people may think that care workers are working in low-skilled or low-prestige occupations, which in turn may impact self-identity and interpersonal relationships. Werner and Shulman (2021) noted that results from the study presented revealed that society-level stigma was perceived as lower by the care workers' social well-being as well as participation in social activities outside the workplace. Ensuring the establishment of successful PR activities, social marketing and campaigns, as well as acknowledging the importance of care work for society, can contribute to the enhancement of care workers' social well-being. Increasing social awareness of the roles of care workers as carers for persons with developmental and behavioural disorders will change societal attitudes towards such care workers positively. This, in turn, may improve the status of care workers in society as people feel proud, recognize, and respect the profession of a career.

## 2.3 Resource Limitations

Lack of financial and human resources, including financing and personnel, as well as access to mental health services, can be considered essential challenges to the social vitality of care workers. Lack of resources is known to affect worker stress, burnout, and promotions and limit available social contacts and continuing education (Dollard et al., 2021). Dollard et al. (2021) state that if they work in low-resource care facilities, they are likely to experience inadequate staff support, which leads to increased stress levels and burnout. Employees in these environments said they faced high job demands, low social support, and perceived social isolation, all of which are detrimental to the employees' social health. Overcoming such shortcomings requires increased funding for resources, improved methods of resource management, and protection of the care sector. Promotive organizational interventions such as mental health care services, reasonable use of facilities, having enough manpower, and adequate training and encouragement will go a long way in boosting the social well-being of care workers (Dollard et al., 2021).



### **3. Promoting Strategies toward the Improvement of Social Quality**

#### **3.1 Organizational Interventions**

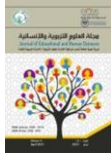
Organizations can play a highly effective part in encouraging social well-being among care workers by way of delivery-related intervention. Measures including working remotely, employee rewards and group exercises build friendly working relations that are positive for health and general welfare (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2021). In a study that Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya conducted in 2021, they concluded that organizations that engaged in consistent team-building activities received the benefits of effective communication, better social relations, and high job satisfaction among care workers. Another measure of a positive relationship between new ways of working and the quality of working-life balance and social well-being stems from opportunities for flexible working arrangements like part-time work and work at home. An actor for well-being was organized in a care facility in Finland where mindfulness, support groups and professional development were provided. Staff and patients, in turn, self-reported high levels of job satisfaction, rising by about 25%, as well as great enhancements in social welfare milestones (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2021).

#### **3.2 Mental Health Support**

Increasing the availability of mental health services, such as counselling sessions, teaching on how to deal with stress and support groups, will act as strategies to improve the social aspects of care workers. These resources assist the workers in handling the required emotional needs in handling clients and other members who need social engagement and support, as stated by Hogh et al. (2019). It revealed that, for the care workers who have access to mental health support services, levels of stress and burnout significantly decreased, and the levels of social well-being increased. More specifically, peer support groups were recognised as useful for creating opportunities for the sharing of incidents and advice as well as for receiving support in the form of encouragement from other workers. Increasingly, there is evidence showing that peer support evolves as a valuable organisational asset that improves employees' social connectedness and emotional well-being, as it was demonstrated in a British context, for instance, through the 35% decrease in burnout symptoms as well as 30% increase in social well-being among the care workers who participated in peer support groups (Hogh et al., 2019).

#### **3.3 Advocacy and Policy Change**

As it is evident, more effort needs to be made to reform the care industry, which affects the social determinants of workers in the same industry. Strategies for raising awareness of the improvement of working conditions and increasing the funding and recognition of the care sector can be essential for social welfare (Werner & Shulman, 2013). Advocacy activities have also resulted in some policy gains that include additional resources for care centres, a rise in wages and other employee benefits for care workers, mental health support and caregiver professional development support.



These changes have the effect of enhancing a positive working climate, retaining carer's satisfaction, and improving social health conditions for care workers. In Australia, advocacy lobbying by care worker unions allied with professional associations yielded the enactment of new legislation that enhanced funding for care facilities and enhanced the working conditions of care workers. Therefore, there was an increase in job satisfaction and perceived social well-being among care workers, as documented by Werner and Shulman (2013).

### 3.4 Professional Development Programs

Education and professional development not only contribute to competence on the job but also have an effect on social well-being by acting as stress relievers and boosting confidence. Special skills-oriented programs that aim to handle developmental and behavioural disorders are also important, alongside skills in handling self-care and stress. For instance, a few successful phases of professional development programs by Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya (2018) reported a positive impact on the care workers' social well-being as a result of components of emotional resilience training.

### 3.5 Community Engagement:

Getting a larger audience comprising the public through awareness and public health partnerships can help address the issues of stigma and additional support structures for carers. With regard to community engagement, the general propaganda or awareness campaigns that attempt to make people understand developmental and behavioural disorders help improve the status of care workers. For instance, community programs based on advocacy and care workers' engagement help increase social well-being since people feel needed and are provided with the opportunity to work further on improving their social skills (Parker & McKinney, 2018). Combining these umbrella approaches and research findings, it becomes possible to build the care organisations' environment that will support the social well-being of the care workers, and therefore, reaching more positive results that will be beneficial both for the care workers and the people they are caring for.

## 4. Case Studies and Data Analysis

### 4.1 Case Study 1: Impact of Workplace Support Programs on Social Well-being

During large-scale exploratory research carried out in a UK-based care organization, the researchers aimed at examining the effects of workplace support programs on the social quality of care workers. The envisaged organisation understood the vocational meaning of social well-being while increasing both the satisfaction of the worker and the quality of service rendered. In response to this, they developed an elaborate support intervention plan aimed at improving the work environment and social factors affecting well-being.



## The Support Program Included

Special activities are planned with the main intention of strengthening the staff members' unity and dedication (Hodgkinson et al., 2020). The above activities were geared towards enhancing interpersonal relations, means of communication and team cohesiveness. In this area of consideration, structured groups of care workers would get a chance to exchange experiences, talk about challenges that they encounter as well and encourage each other emotionally (Heaney et al., 2021). These groups were coordinated by qualified personnel, and the aim of the group was to foster support among the members. They include psychosocial support in the form of counselling services, stress management workshops and LSMs' access to online mental health promotion tools. This component was designed to address the emotional and psychological needs in a more direct manner.

## Findings

The support program has proved effective in enhancing a number of aspects of social well-being among care workers. The key findings from the study include these. Among the workers who participated in the support program, there was a 25% cut down in self-reported burnout levels. This reduction shows that burdens that come with care work were in some way well managed, hence improving the emotional and mental health of the workers (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The results of the research showed that the job satisfaction level of the workers involved in the study was boosted to 40%. This substantial increase indicates that the support program helped increase the employees' job satisfaction through increased social relationships, workplace environment and better coping with stress at the workplace.

### 4.2 Case Study 2: Training Interventions to Reduce Burnout

Context and Implementation A feasibility study carried out in Australia assessed the effectiveness of intervention training to prevent burnout of care workers who attend to persons with developmental and behavioural issues. Given the nature of the work and the fact that it is carried out by low-wage employees of colour, the study sought to establish if a specialized training programme would help to reduce the pressure and stress in the job, hence enhancing social well-being.

## The Training Interventions Included

Training sessions were carried out on stress management and how one could avoid stress or at least minimize it (Maslach et al., 2018). This component encompassed skills like mindfulness, relaxation practices, and ways of managing time. Skills that were intended to enhance communication between care workers, the ones they care for, and the care workers themselves. One of the key concepts includes communication since it helps in handling difficult behaviours and creating positive interactions (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Apply Practical Strategies for Managing Challenging Behaviors. Education on skills and methods on how to work with distinct



behaviours that are challenging, like the use of restraint and other intervention procedures.

## Findings

The targeted training interventions resulted in measurable improvements in social well-being among care workers. Emotional exhaustion was reduced by 30%, according to the participants, and it proved that the training effectively tackled the emotional aspect of demand. This decrease can be attributed to the training session giving the participants practical ways and means of handling stress and easing burnout. The results revealed that there was a 20% increase in positive social interactions at the workplace, thus proving that it not only assisted in relieving stress that individuals had but also in the interpersonal relationships of the care workers (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). This improvement is likely because the patients have gained skills in using appropriate language to express themselves and have come to improvement in addressing the onset of violent behaviours.

## Analysis

The results of this case study show that specific organisation-based training interventions can ameliorate burnout and increase SB. The training covered stress management, communication, and implemental skills and therefore empowered the care workers with strategies for handling their stresses and dealing with people positively. Lessons learned can be useful in impacting the staff's well-being and decreasing the degree of emotional exhaustion; increased numbers of positive social interactions may also show that training can be an important factor in enhancing the quality of the working environment. The two case studies argue for the need to come up with relevant strategies that would enhance the social needs of care workers. The first presented case, the general support programs at the workplace that encompass the reduction of burnout and the enhancement of job satisfaction, is best supported by the case where workplace support programs have increased the job satisfaction of employees who claimed to have suffered burnout through the provision of support programs that have enhanced their job satisfaction. The data points gathered from the study offer important information for the companies and organizations that aim to increase the quality of life of care workers as well as clients with developmental and behavioural disorders.

## 5. Conclusion

Social well-being is an important aspect of health for care workers dealing with clients with developmental and behavioural disorders. Positive staff relations, multidimensional practices, availability of social support, appreciation, and training programs are those organizational resources that promote the social health of caregivers. On the negative side, factors like low staff retention rate, poor staffing ratio, emotion-related demands and perception of stigma can reverse the social well-being of the target population by increasing staff burnout rates, promoting isolation,



and hence reducing their satisfaction levels. Strategies that may help address these challenges and enhance social well-being must be developed to contribute to an overall improvement in the quality of care offered to persons with developmental and behavioural disorders. Specifically, focusing on care workers' social capital means practising not only for organisational but also for individual needs: care workers' well-being in their job is likely to improve, and therefore, the quality of care that they can provide for people with support needs will increase as well.

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