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Assessing Burnout in Early Childhood Educators

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Introduction

- The stress of working as an early childhood educator can manifest as burnout, absenteeism, and increased turnover rates.¹ Burnout is associated with reduced ability to effectively teach and engage with students.²
 - Organizational factors such as leadership styles, school culture, and role ambiguity have been shown to contribute to teacher burnout.³
 - Resilience training has been shown to increase wellbeing of teachers while decreasing perceived stress.²
- Burlington Children's Space (BCS) is an early childhood care and education non-profit that provides support for 50 children and their families. Their team consists of 15 educators and 3 administrative personnel.

Objective

- Provide insight to BCS regarding factors that are linked to educator burnout and could therefore contribute to staff turnover

Hypotheses

- We expect educators who demonstrate higher levels of burnout to (1) display decreased individual resilience and (2) identify increased organizational constraints.

Methods

- Voluntary online surveys were administered via REDCap to 36 current and former BCS educators. Burnout, resilience, and workplace constraints were measured using the previously validated:
 - Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)⁴
 - Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)^{5,6}
 - Organizational Constraints Scale (OCS)⁷
- Former educators were asked their current employment status and reasons for leaving BCS. A follow-up survey was administered to current educators to gather qualitative data regarding their experiences at BCS.
- Data was analyzed using bivariate Pearson correlations, one-way ANOVA, and two-sample t-tests.



Photos courtesy of Burlington Children's Space

Results

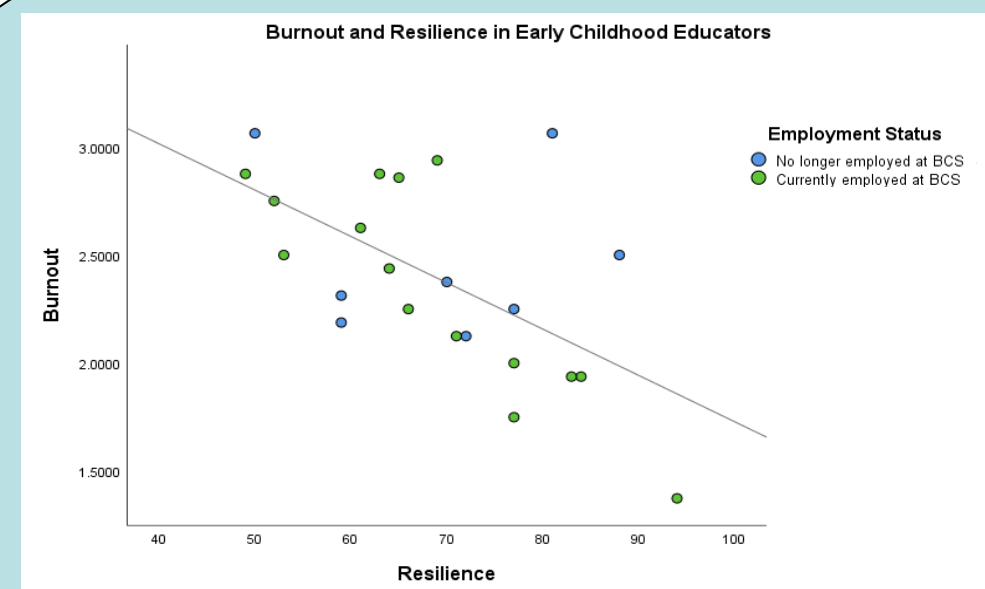


Figure 1: A significant negative correlation existed between burnout and resilience of former and current educators at Burlington Children's Space, $r(21) = -.60, p = .002$.

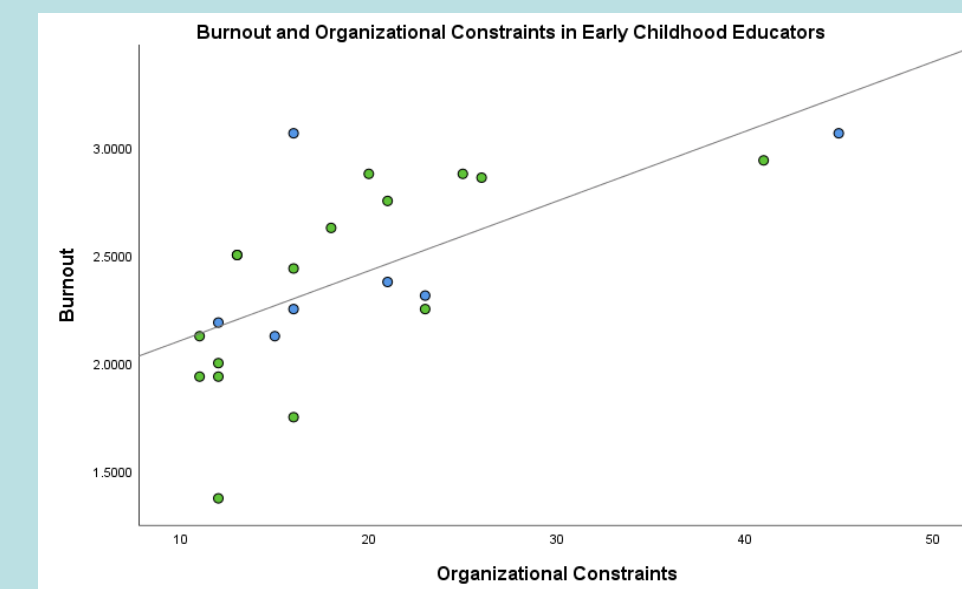


Figure 2: A significant positive correlation existed between burnout and perceived organizational constraints of former and current educators at Burlington Children's Space, $r(21) = .64, p = .001$.

- Current (n=15) and previously employed (n=8) BCS educators participated in the first survey. Four current educators completed the follow-up survey.
- The mean scores for the OLBI, CD-RISC, and OCS were 2.40 ± 0.44 , 68.57 ± 11.88 , and 19.00 ± 8.72 , respectively.
- There was also a negative correlation between burnout and years of experience in early childhood education, $r(21) = -.49, p = .017$.
- Organizational constraints and resilience were each individually correlated with burnout, but there was no significant correlation between the two parameters, $r(21) = -.13, p = .55$.
- There were no significant correlations between age, employment status at BCS, or number of years at BCS with burnout, resiliency, or organizational constraints.

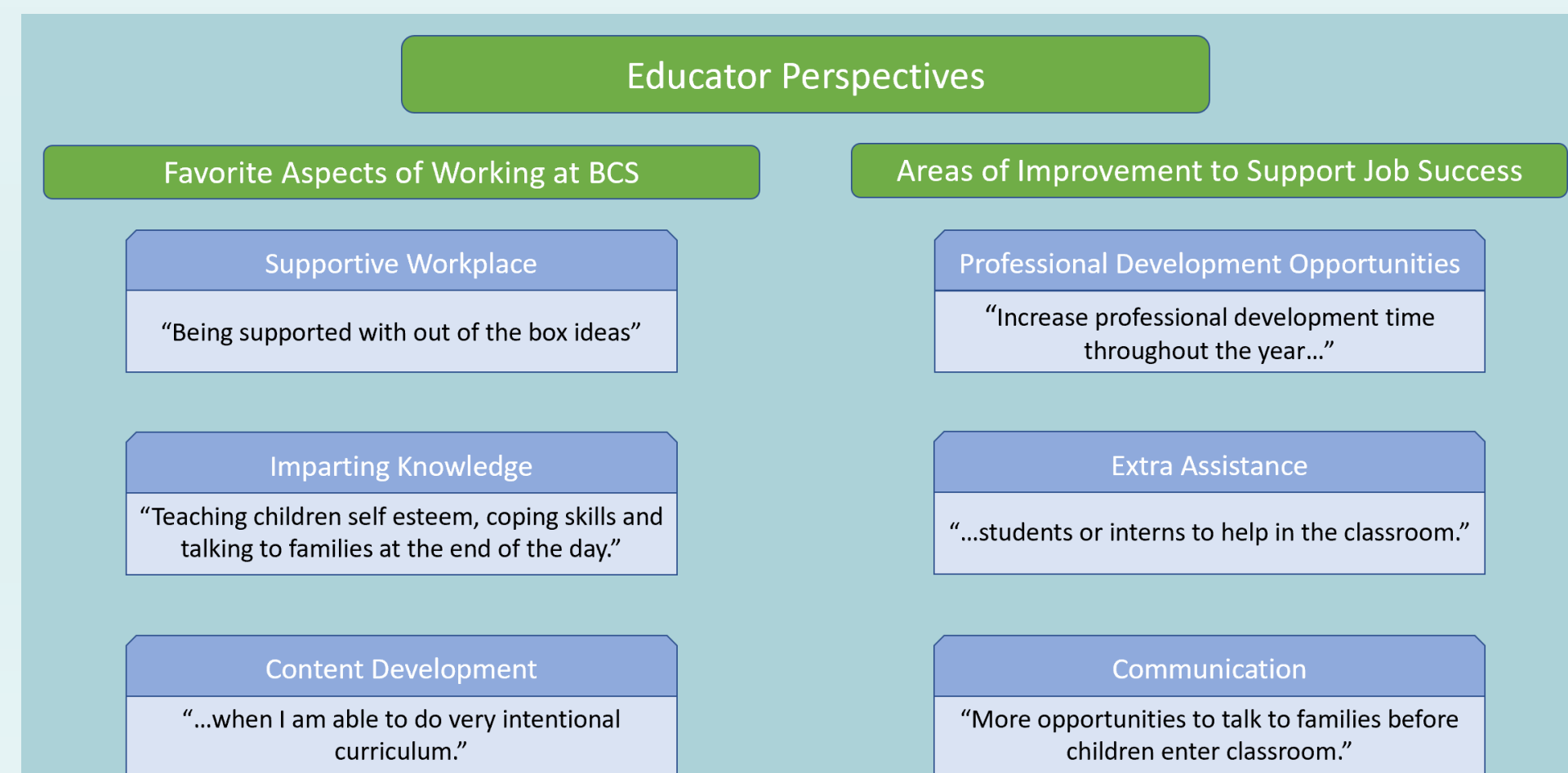


Figure 3: Representative Quotes from Follow-Up Survey

Conclusions

- This study supported the hypotheses that:
 - Educators with lower resilience scores would experience more burnout and,
 - Educators who identified more organizational constraints would experience more burnout.
- BCS educators demonstrated significantly higher burnout and lower resilience than national averages, while organizational constraints did not differ from the general population.
- Resilience scores of this population were similar to those of acute trauma survivors, medical residents in oncology, and individuals with PTSD.⁵
- When asked about opportunities for improvement, educators cited support staff, resources, and professional development, which was consistent with prior studies.⁷

Limitations:

- This study was performed at a single site with a small sample size potentially limiting generalizability.

Future Directions:

- Further studies may benefit from surveying a larger sample from multiple sites and investigating the impact of resiliency training in early childhood education.

Recommendations

- Provide additional appropriately trained staff members, which may include social workers or student teachers, for busy times and transitions
- Explore social-emotional learning and resiliency training for educators
- Tailor professional development to specific educator needs

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