

**Project title: Secondary Trauma in Child Protection Workers**  
**Investigator: Sally Hill Jones**  
**Department: School of Social Work**

**Project summary:**

This study of secondary trauma and burnout in a convenience sample of 129 child protection workers used established instruments for Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS), Vicarious Trauma (VT), and Burnout, and a personal trauma history survey. The extent of STS, VT, and Burnout, the relationships of demographic, work, personal trauma, and intent to leave variables, to STS, VT, and Burnout scores were measured using t-tests, correlations, and multiple regression statistics.

Overall results indicated high levels of STS, VT, and Burnout, significantly related to caseload, hours worked, and job threats, but little relationship with demographic variables.

Having a Master's degree in any field was the only significant education relationship, scores indicating less VT and Burnout, but more job satisfaction. Implications include the need for more effective education and training of social workers in these areas.

Reports of lifetime trauma accumulation, harassment and stalking experiences, and family assault were significantly related to higher secondary trauma and burnout scores. Those reporting child abuse and sexual abuse reported more job satisfaction and lower scores on one burnout measure. In multiple regression analysis, family assault and harassment/stalking were significant factors in VT and Burnout. Implications include further attention to these factors in predicting vulnerability to secondary trauma and burnout.

Intent to leave the job was significantly correlated to levels of some measures of Burnout and STS, caseload, work hours, job threats, and urban work, and inversely correlated with indicators of job satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis indicated levels of Burnout, job satisfaction, and caseload as significant predictors.

**Presentations:**

Jones, S. (2006, February 18). Secondary trauma in child protection workers. 52nd Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Chicago, Illinois. Two papers from this study have been submitted to the Society for Social Work and Research 11th annual conference to be held January 11-14, 2007 in San Francisco, CA.