A MINDFULNESS-BASED BURNOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS AND COLLEAGUES TO PROMOTE RESILIENCY: A GRANT PROPOSAL
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Introduction

Goal

- The Promoting Resilient School Personnel (PRSP) project aims to provide school social workers, teachers, and counselors at Badillo Elementary School with a series of on-site mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) workshops in hopes of reducing and preventing their experience of burnout.

Problem

- Professions that require providing direct services to others on a regular basis are more likely to require higher levels of emotional investment which can make employees more vulnerable to stress and burnout (Johnson et al., 2005; Roeser et al., 2012; Zapf, 2002).

- Interacting with children who display challenging behaviors, are unwilling to engage, and are defiant on a regular basis, requires adults to regulate their reactions and emotions (Johnson et al., 2005; Roeser et al., 2012).

- The different stressors school personnel encounter can have adverse effects on health, confidence and self-esteem, and even their personal relationships (Howard & Johnson, 2004).
Social Work Relevance

- This program is consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics because it aims to enhance school social workers’ and their colleagues’ ability to provide effective services to children in need of an education.

- PRSP values the dignity and worth of school personnel, as it is aimed at addressing and preventing their experience of burnout.

- The relationships between school personnel and students are valued by promoting the well-being of school social workers, counselors and teachers who are expected to provide quality services to students on a regular basis.

- By ensuring children from diverse backgrounds are receiving quality services, PRSP adheres to the principle of social justice.
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), 81.9% of social workers, 71.1% of counselors, and 80.9% of elementary school teachers are female. Given the disproportionate representation of females in these professions, it is essential to consider the impact of gender on burnout, as female service providers are often at a higher risk than males (Blom, 2012; Sprang, Whitt-Woosley, & Clark, 2007). Also, adverse effects on physical health as a result of high employment demands and stress levels have been found to be more prevalent among female service providers (Kim, Ji, & Kao 2011). In addition to gender, ethnicity can also play a role in burnout. It is hypothesized that non-White service providers experience lower levels of burnout as a result of life experiences that allow them to manage stress levels more adequately (Acker, 2008). Diversity in the workplace, specifically in regards to gender and race, can affect burnout and should be taken into account as potential risk factors that increase the likelihood of social workers experiencing burnout.
Methods

- **Target Population:** The Promoting Resilient School Personnel (PRSP) project is primarily for school social workers, counselors, and teachers who provide educational and supportive services to students attending Badillo Elementary School. However, the project could also include administrative and support staff such as the principal and clerical.

- **Strategies Used to Identify the Funding Source:** Potential funding sources for the PRSP project were identified via the use of common online search engines to locate and contact existing online resources, such as grants.gov and promindful.org and fundnetservices.com. Key words utilized to locate potential funders included: financial support, grants, funding, grants for mindfulness, human services, wellness, burnout prevention, helping professionals, grants for school personnel, teachers, mental health, stress prevention, stress reduction, anxiety, well-being, and self-care. After analyzing the mission statement, target population, geographic focus, and limitations of several potential grant funding sources, the following foundations were not selected.
Methods (cont.)

- Funding source selected: The Weingart Foundation was selected as the most suitable possible funding source as it provides funding opportunities for organizations throughout Southern California, including Los Angeles County where Badillo Elementary is located.

- Sources used for the needs assessment: An informal needs assessment was discussed with the principal, two social work colleagues, a kindergarten teacher, and a fifth grade teacher. The discussion focused on their experiences with burnout and how a mindfulness-based stress reduction course could be of help, as Badillo Elementary does not currently offer staff training on burnout or mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques.

- Projected budget range and categories: The total program cost for the PRSP program is $24,920 for the following categories.
  - Total Salaries with Benefits: $19,150.
  - Direct Costs: $5,770
  - In-Kind Contributions: Includes rent, utilities, and refreshments.
Grant Proposal

- Program Summary and Description: The overall goal of the PRSP project is to provide school social workers, teachers, and counselors at Badillo Elementary School with a series of on-site MBSR workshops in hopes of reducing and preventing their experience of burnout. Consistent with MBSR training courses, the PRSP project will provide one 2.5 hour workshop per week over the course of two months. All workshops will be facilitated by the certified MBSR teacher recruited and trained prior to the start of the academic school year. Workshops will be primarily for school social workers, counselors, and teachers who provide educational and supportive services to students attending Badillo Elementary. However, because MBSR trainings can provide services for up to 40 participants, administrative and support staff such as the principal and clerical will be encouraged to participate.

- Population Served: School social workers, counselors, and teachers who provide educational and supportive services to students attending Badillo Elementary School. However, the project could also include administrative and support staff such as the principal and clerical.
Grant Proposal (cont.)

■ Sustainability: A record of the effectiveness of the workshops offered will be made available to future funders who provide monetary support to programs like PRSP.

■ Program Objectives: The specific objectives of the PRSP project are for participants to acquire: (a) resources to understand and help prevent burnout; (b) the opportunity to learn and practice different mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques; and (c) strategies to establish long term self-care habits that promote a high sense of well-being.

■ Program Evaluation: There are three evaluations that may be used for this project. The first is a “Participant Feedback/Satisfaction,” survey which asks the extent to which the PRSP project was useful, valuable and comfortable. There are two more detailed evaluations that could be used for this project: (a) the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981); and (b) the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004). These measures are aimed at determining the program’s effectiveness in reducing the experience of burnout among school social workers and their colleagues after participating in a series of
Lessons Learned/Implications for Social Work

- This project was a self-directed process that required discipline and self-motivation.
- Developing a grant proposal proved to be a learning process that entailed creative thinking and the utilization of available resources.
- The development of a detailed timeline and budget required the writer to strategize the sequence of events for the implementation of the project and the careful development of specific responsibilities for all project personnel.
- Given the rise in research on the adverse effects of burnout, it is essential to identify risk factors and effective interventions, as it is estimated that 4-8% of social service professionals experience symptoms of severe burnout (Gerber et al., 2013).
- By advocating for the opportunity to offer school social workers and their colleagues access to mindfulness-based programs, such as the PRSP project, the social work profession and clients alike could benefit from service providers who are better prepared to manage stress and provide effective services to clients on a regular basis.


