

# RESILIENCY IN CHILD WELFARE WORKERS THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This qualitative and quantitative research study uses statistical analysis and descriptive statistics to analyze survey results. The study was completed using an anonymous survey asking both multiple choice and open-ended questions about child welfare workers experience. It asked questions both about the pandemic specifically as well as general questions around resiliency. The purpose of this study is to examine the frequency of some traits (education, work experience, personal support systems, impact of COVID, and resiliency) of child welfare workers in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was designed around the core values of social work which are service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, importance of human relationship, integrity, and competence.

## KEY POINTS OF LITERATURE REVIEW

**RESILIENCY** – Resiliency is discussed frequently in social work in the context of resilient clients or how to practice resiliency as a social worker. It develops naturally as a response to adversity and all people have the potential to be resilient. In the social work profession, resiliency is developed through one's career and personal life. Professional resilience is a common term in the human services fields referring to the process that allows workers to thrive in stressful work condition (Newell, 2019).

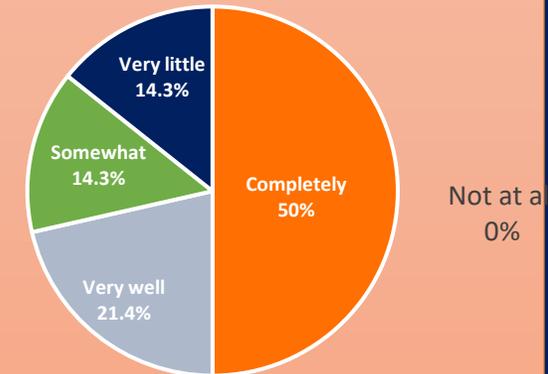
**CHILD WELFARE** – Child welfare is the practice of providing services to ensure safety for children and families as well as ensuring that families have the tools to care for their children. Child welfare agencies work to prevent child abuse and neglect, provide services to protect and care for children, investigate reports of abuse and neglect, find foster homes for children when necessary, support children in foster care, and assess family's needs and strengths. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018)

**COVID-19** – Child welfare professionals have been challenged further by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, restrictions in court have taken a toll on child welfare work. The National Conference on State Legislatures found that court restrictions have dramatically slowed child welfare and prevented workers from performing duties (2020). Child welfare workers had to transition very quickly to virtual or remote work, something that had not previously been practiced in the field (Merritt & Simmel, 2020).

## FINDINGS

*"The number of workers leaving the profession has caused feelings of burnout I never had before the pandemic"*

**Participants were asked to select how much they connected to the statement using a Likert scale:**  
The pandemic caused me to feel burnt out. (n=14)



**Q:** Were there any notable things that you did not enjoy about working from home?

**A:** "Feeling isolated, unable to separate home from work", "lack of communication, lack of emotional support", "isolation"

## REFERENCES

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## IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With such a small sample size (n=14) it was challenging to find reliable results in statistical analysis comparing traits with ability to be resilient through the pandemic. Future studies should include large sample sizes with child welfare workers from all over the United States. Currently, there is very little research regarding child welfare workers ability or challenges remaining resilient through the pandemic. As it has been a time of high turn over and great challenges for many child welfare workers, it is important that research working to understand which workers are resilient and possible reasons for why.



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