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Clinical Supervision In Occupational Therapy, Burnout, And Related Phenomena

Einat Olinky

Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel

This study combines qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine the influence of student supervision on the levels of burnout among occupational therapist preceptors.

The hypothesis: Occupational therapist preceptors will exhibit lower levels of burnout than non supervising occupational therapists.

The study population included 96 occupational therapists practicing independently or in multi-disciplinary teams, in community programs or treatment centers in the center of the country, in the following fields: 35 practicing in psychiatry, 30 with physically disabled or geriatric populations, and 31 in pediatric programs. Department heads were sent questionnaires that included Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)for health professions ,a demographic questionnaire ,a supervision questionnaire, and open-ended questions. 53 questionnaires were completed by preceptors and were used for the research sample, and 43 were completed by non - supervising occupational therapists, which became the control group.

Research findings point to a significantly lower level of burnout and a greater feeling of personal accomplishment among the group of preceptors as compared to non-supervising occupational therapists, when the supervision is just one of the occupational therapist's roles .There was a greater response from therapists practicing in psychiatry .In addition supervision was perceived by therapists in all fields as a positive and enjoyable experience that prevents burnout and empowers both professionally and personally, despite the lack of adequate compensation.

Conclusions: Clinical supervision in occupational therapy decreases rates of burnout and facilitates professional and personal advancement, by changing the status and academic recognition within a work environment with limited opportunities for advancement.

Hopefully this study will serve as a positive incentive to motivate occupational therapists to supervise students, as well as encourage clinical administrators to urge O.Ts to take part in field work supervision.