SECONDARY TRAUMA AND JOB BURNOUT AMONG PROBATION OFFICERS

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B.A., California State University, Sacramento, 2001

PROJECT

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING 2010
SECONDARY TRAUMA AND JOB BURNOUT AMONG PROBATION OFFICERS

A Project

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Division of Social Work
Abstract

of

SECONDARY TRAUMA AND JOB BURNOUT AMONG PROBATION OFFICERS

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Jamie Kathleen Sachs

This study aimed to examine the prevalence of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization among probation officers. Participants in the study included 48 probation officers from Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties in California. Data for the study was obtained from two scales, the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL R-IV) and 11 additional questions regarding the participants’ personal and professional characteristics. Findings from the study indicate that study participants demonstrated a low risk of experiencing secondary trauma. Findings from the study also indicated that study participants demonstrated a moderate risk of experiencing the symptoms of compassion fatigue and job burnout.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Teiahsha Bankhead, Ph.D., LCSW

_______________________
Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Helping others requires that we give of ourselves. However, the act of giving does not come without consequence. The process of helping others may be accompanied by negative aspects such as stress and emotional exhaustion. Compassion fatigue refers to the negative consequences, such as emotional exhaustion, that are experienced by the helping professional as a result of helping others. Furthermore, in order to assist the client and families they are helping, the helping professional is continually exposed to the personal trauma of others. Research has indicated this vicarious exposure to trauma places the helping professional at risk of experiencing secondary traumatic stress (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Dane, 2000, Bride, 2007, Bell, 2003, Adams, Boscarrino & Figley, 2006, Teharani, 2007, Bride & Figley, 2007 & Atkinson-Tovar, 2003).

Based on the exposure to trauma in a vicarious context and the potential of experiencing secondary traumatic stress symptoms, one could ascertain that helping professionals may be at a higher risk of experiencing job burnout than other working professionals. Significant research has been done exploring such factors as they relate to job burnout (Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Etzion, 1984, Salston & Figley, 2003, Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Woody, 2006, Teharani, 2007 & Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997). However, the majority of such research has focused on the helping professions of social work and law enforcement (Bell, 2003, Bride, 2007, Bride & Figley, 2007, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Miller, 2007, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997, Pierson, 1989, Woody, 2006,
Mendenahll, 2006, Kureczka, 1996, Gove 2005). The probation officer is a sort of mix between these two helping profession and little to no research has been done exploring compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and job burnout among probation officers.

**Background of the Problem**

Helping professional work on a daily basis to support, assist and guide individuals and families in their efforts to improve their lives. In order to do this, helping professionals must be able to listen to and empathize with clients in order to provide them with the most beneficial services. Therefore, being vicariously exposed to trauma is an integral part of working with clients who have suffered traumatic experiences (Figley, 1995, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007). However, exposure to such traumatic events, even vicariously has been shown to have undesirable emotional and behavioral consequences for the helping professional (Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Figley, 1995, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Bride, 2007, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006 & Atkinson-Taylor, 2003). Some of these emotional and behavioral responses include secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and job burnout. Secondary traumatic stress is just one of the emotional/behavioral responses that a helping professional may exhibit as a result of working with a traumatized client.

Secondary traumatic stress are the behavioral and emotional responses that come from having knowledge about a traumatizing event that has been experienced by another individual and the stress that results from helping or wanting to help (Figley, 1995). Secondary traumatic stress is nearly identical to posttraumatic stress disorder with the exception that the exposure to the stressor is indirect (Bride, Radey, & Figley, 2007).
Therefore, the symptoms of secondary traumatic stress are also very similar to those of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and may include avoidance, intrusive images, impairment in social functioning, distressing emotions and changes in cognition (Figley, 1995). The most important distinction between PTSD and secondary traumatic stress is that individuals suffering from PTSD have experienced traumatizing events firsthand. Individuals suffering from secondary traumatic stress have been exposed to the traumatic event vicariously through another person (Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997, Figley, 1995). The continuous exposure to secondary traumatic stress may contribute to feelings of emotional exhaustion, thus reducing the helping professional’s ability to empathize and assist the client (Adams, Boccarino & Figley, 2006, Bride Radey & Figley, 2006, McCann & Pearlman, 1990). This reduction in feelings is referred to as compassion fatigue.

The concept of compassion fatigue was developed by Figley (1995) when he focused on the unique work environment of mental health professional and trauma workers. Figley (1995) noted how these helping professional appeared to vicariously experience the effects of trauma. Figley (1995) theorized that compassion fatigue appeared to be a consequence of providing direct services to traumatized clients, especially if the helping professional was exposed to a significant number of traumatized clients and had a strong ability to empathize (Adams, Boccarino & Figley, 2006). In order to empathetically engage with clients, the helping professional is often required to discuss the details of the traumatic experience of the client. This discussion is thought to play a vital part in the rehabilitative process of the client. However, this process can have
an adverse emotional impact on the helping professional (Figely, 1995). The effects of compassion fatigue, as well as vicarious traumatization and secondary traumatic stress may be evidenced by job burnout.

Frudenberger (1974) introduced the concept of burnout which can most easily be explained as the final emotional and behavioral response that may follow the chronic exposure to daily stressors of work (Etzion, 1984). Burnout syndrome is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment (Brown & Campbell, 1990, Hyman, 2004, Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Burnout is often defined as the helping professional’s response to prolonged exposure to demanding interpersonal situations (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). However, burnout is not an emotional response that is exclusive to those working with traumatized clients or even helping professional (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Burnout can be experienced by any individual in the work force who has been chronically exposed to stressors (Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Conflicts at work, overwhelming responsibilities and a felling of loss of control are factors that may also contribute to burnout (Salston & Figley, 2003, Fruedenberger, 1974, Kirschman, 1997). Due to the nature of their work and prior research, it appears helping professionals remain at a significant risk of developing symptoms of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Perron & Hiltz, 2006 & Frudenberger, 1974). In light of these findings it appears essential to further examine the roles of child welfare workers, police officers, sheriff deputies and probation officer and how they may be affected by secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout.
The profession of social work is unique and attended to by many professional holding a variety of job titles. Therefore, it is difficult to explain and comprehend the similarities that unite social workers into a single profession (Morales & Sheafor, 2001). Extremely simplified, social workers respond to human need. Social workers provide services to individuals and families which may help them solve problems that limit their ability to function in society. Social workers also provide services which will hopefully enhance the client’s quality of life and improve the human condition (Morales & Sheafor, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, the prior research reviewed and referred to regarding social work focuses on social workers employed in the child protective system (CPS) or as forensic interviewers of abused children (Figley, 1995, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006 & Bell, 2003). Research has indicated that due to their repeated exposure to abused and victimized clients, CPS workers and forensic child interviewers are at a higher risk of experiencing vicarious traumatization, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization (Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Mendenhall, 2006, Maslach, 1982, & Bride & Figely, 2007). Other prior research focused on will include the prevalence of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization among police officers and sheriff deputies.

People often exclusively correlate police officers and sheriff deputies with the term law enforcement officer. The individuals who work as police officers and sheriff deputies are men and women who wear uniforms, carry weapons and enforce the law.
Their ability to enforce the law may range from writing a speeding ticket to serving an arrest warrant, arresting an individual or helping a stranded motorist. The officers are required to work in shifts, which may ultimately result in them spending more than 12 hours a day on duty. Because of the nature of their employment police officers and sheriff deputies are vicariously exposed to the traumas of others on a daily basis. Because of this, significant research has documented the prevalence of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization among police officer and sheriff deputies (Pierson, 1989, Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997, Gove, 2005, Hyman, 2004, Kirschman, 1997, Harvey-Lintz & Tidwell, 1997, Evans, 1997, Atkinson-Taylor, 2003, Kureczka, 1996 & Sheehan & VanHasselt, 2003).

Probation officers share similar job characteristic to those of police officers and sheriff deputies as they have arresting powers and are required to enforce the law. However, the job assignments for a probation officer also share characteristics of child welfare workers and forensic interviewers as probation officers are tasked with helping to address the human condition of the client system they are working with. Therefore, this tasks the probation officer with enforcing the law while balancing their ability to help and assist clients with rehabilitative services. The dual status of the roles which must be upheld by the probation officer appear important to consider when addressing the phenomena of secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization.
Statement of Research Problem

Significant research has been completed in the past addressing secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization in the professions of child welfare workers and police officers (Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Atkinson-Taylor, 2003, Bride, 2007, Brown & Campbell, 1990, Dane, 2000, Harvey-Lintz & Tidewell, 1997, Gove, 2005, Kureczka, 1996, Miller, 2007, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003). However, little to no research exists exploring these phenomena in the field of probation work. Therefore, the lack of recognition of the exposure to secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization experienced by probation officers will be addressed in this research study. Exploring these phenomena in the field of probation work may help to identify to what extent the phenomena are actually experienced by probation officers.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine the prevalence of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization among probation officers. The primary purpose of the study is to determine the rate at which these phenomena occur in a population which little data has been previously gathered. Identifying the lack or presence of the phenomena in the experiences of probation officers appear important to further examine the prevalence of the phenomena among helping professionals.
Theoretical Framework

The cognitive processing model (Bandura, 1993, Creamer, 1995, Fleischman, 1984) will be examined during this research study as a way in which to further understand the phenomena of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization among probation officers. The cognitive processing model links exposure to trauma to recent adverse events of intrusion (Bandura, 1993, Creamer, 1995). It also theorizes that the intrusion can be linked to avoidance and psychological distress (Creamer, 1995). The model theorizes that painful thoughts surrounding a traumatic event are part of the adjustment and coping process. Avoidance is often a tool that is used to protect an individual from re-encountering the traumatic memory (Hyman, 2004). The cognitive processing model theorizes that the process of change between intrusion and avoidance allows the individual to give the traumatic memory subjective meaning, and that gradual integration of the traumatic event eventually provides for lower levels of psychological distress (Hyman, 2004). The model also theorizes that failing to remain in the intrusion phase long enough or maintaining high levels of avoidance may have negative effects on the process of cognitive adaptation and ultimately result in higher levels of psychological distress (Hyman, 2004).

The cognitive processing model can be considered when examining the phenomena of secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization in the employment of a probation officer. Utilizing this model, it can theorized that probation officers may have intrusive thoughts or feelings from exposure to vicarious trauma. However, probation officers may repress the intrusive
thoughts and/or feelings in order to avoid addressing the effects of the vicarious exposure to trauma. In turn, utilizing avoidance as a coping mechanism may assist probation officers in dealing with the negative aspects of secondary trauma such as psychological distress and compassion fatigue. Furthermore, the cognitive processing model would ascertain that continual high levels of avoidance exhibited by probation officers could be positively correlated with higher levels of distress.

**Definition of Terms**

The terms compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization and secondary traumatic stress are often used interchangeably with one another. However, there are some distinctions in the definition of the terms. Vicarious traumatization refers to the act of exposure to traumatic events while secondary traumatic stress refers to the phenomena of the exposure (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Adams, Boscario & Figley, 2006, Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). Compassion fatigue refers to the emotional response experienced by the helping professional after their vicarious exposure to traumatic events (Adams, Boscario & Figley, 2006, Bride, Radey & Figely, 1997, Dane, 2000). All three terms refer to possible negative impacts that clinical work with traumatized clients may have on the helping professional (Figley, 1995, Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). As a result of exposure to these phenomena, individuals may suffer from job burnout. Where compassion fatigue refers to the emotional response, burnout refers to the emotional strain that can be specifically attributed to the chronic daily stressors of employment (Etzion, 1984). As a result of chronic emotional strain employees may be more likely to
feel unproductive in their work and seek other employment (Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007).

Assumptions

As part of the research effort it would be beneficial for the reader to maintain the assumption that secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout are well documented regularly occurring phenomena (Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007, Salston & Figley, 2003, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001, Maslach, 1982, Hyman, 2004, Frudenberger, 1974, Figley, 1995). Furthermore, it is appropriate for the reader to recognize the similarities and differences shared between the professions of CPS workers, child forensic interviewers, police officers, sheriff deputies and probation officers. This would entail recognition that CPS workers often remove children from the custody of their parents, forensic interviewers interview victims of abuse, law enforcement officers arrest individuals and probation officers enforce the orders of the court. However, while their job duties may differ all of the professions aspire to the goal of bettering the client.

Justifications

This research study will benefit the social work profession by exploring phenomena such as secondary trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization as they pertain to the work of probation officers. The study will obtain information regarding these phenomena in a job field where little to no research has been conducted previously. Thus, the information obtained from the study may be able to provide further insight as how probation officers are affected by secondary
trauma, compassion fatigue and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization. This information may ultimately further benefit probation officers, the clients they serve and society as a whole.

Limitations

In this research study, the researcher will only be obtaining data from 3 probation departments located in rural northern California counties. Based on this, the sample will be relatively small and may not be able to be generalized to probation officers in other states. Furthermore, the study was not longitudinal therefore data obtained was collected at a single point in time rather than over time. The mood of a participant on the day the data was collected may have influenced his/her response to the questionnaire. Therefore, a longitudinal study may have provided for collection of a larger variety of responses. Another limitation to consider in the study would be the lack in identification of social support systems with study participants. Identification and utilization of possible social support systems may help in providing a better understanding of the phenomena of secondary traumatization, compassion fatigue and job burnout as they pertain to probation officers.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Previous research has given significant recognition to the prevalence of secondary trauma and job burnout in the field of helping professionals (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Dane, 2000, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Bride, Radey & Figely, 2007, Bride, 2007, Bell, 2003, Teharini, 2007 & Bride & Figley, 2007). Particularly, prior research regarding these topics has focused on social workers or individuals working in the field of law enforcement (Paparozzi & Demichelle, 2008, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Lewandowski, 2003, Bell, 2003, Bride, 2003, Dane, 2000, McCann & Pearlman, 1990 & Hyman, 2004). However, little research has been done examining these topics within the field of probation work. Probation work is a unique field in that the workers are required to assist clients with locating and utilizing services, similar to the work of social workers. However, probation officers are also responsible for acting in a law enforcement capacity by completing tasks such as searching and/or arresting the very same clients they are assisting with other rehabilitative services. Probation work is stressful and requires Probation officers to assist clients with rehabilitation while also enforcing the order of the court (Simmons, Cochrant & Blount, 1997).

Exposure to vicarious trauma is an inherent part of the process when providing services to people who have suffered traumatic experiences (Sprang, Clark and Whit-Woosley, 2007). Figley (1995) implied that workers who have the greatest capacity for
feeling and empathizing are at the greatest risk for experiencing secondary
traumatization. Secondary trauma is the emotional and behavioral response that results
from knowing about a traumatizing event that has been experienced by another person
and the associated stress that comes with wanting to help the traumatized person (Figley,
1995). Secondary trauma is a response experienced by people who have empathically
listened to the traumatic experiences experienced by others (Nelson-Gardell & Harris,
2003). The utilization of empathetic engagement skills with traumatized individuals
often requires the professional to discuss details of the traumatic experience at great
length and in great depth with the client. This process may be vital to the recovery
process of the traumatized person, however it can have adverse emotional and behavioral
affects on the professional (Adams, Boscarino, and Figley, 2006).

Secondary trauma has been used synonymously with terms such as compassion
fatigue, vicarious traumatization, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and job burnout
(Bell, 2003, Bride, 2007, Bride & Figley, 2007, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Miller,
traumatic stress as “the natural and consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from
knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other-the stress resulting
from helping or wanting to help a traumatized person” (p.7). Secondary trauma shares
nearly the same symptoms of PTSD such as avoidance, distressing emotions,
hyperarousal and cognitive changes, however, the trauma is not experienced first hand
like those who have suffered from PTSD (Bride, Radey and Figley, 2007). Figley (1995)
introduced the term compassion fatigue as a more easily understandable term to describe secondary trauma.

In regards to theoretical orientation, the terms vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue provide some distinctions from one another. The actual exposure to traumatic events is often referred to as vicarious traumatization while the phenomena of the exposure is referred to as secondary traumatic stress (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). Compassion fatigue is the term used to describe the emotional response experienced by the helping professional who has been vicariously exposed to trauma and may feel their ability to emotionally invest in the client is somewhat depleted. While each definition is unique unto itself, all the terms refer to the negative impact of clinical work with traumatized clients (Bride, Radey and Figely, 2007).

While exposure to traumatic events is relatively high in the general population, it is even higher in the subpopulations of individuals and families to whom social workers are likely to provide services (Bride, 2007). A study conducted by Switzer, Dew & Thompson, et. al., (1999) aimed at examining posttraumatic stress disorder and service utilization among urban mental health clients. The sample obtained for the study was taken from an outpatient mental health clinic located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The sample consisted of 181 participants (47 men and 134 women) who were considered “active” clients, had seen a psychiatrist within the past year, and who had at least one clinic visit during the 5 months of data collection (Switzer, Dew, & Thompson, et. al.,
A random sampling method was used to obtain data which was collected via a self-reporting survey from the participant.

Results from the study indicated that between 82 percent and 94 percent of clients receiving outpatient mental health services reported a history of exposure to traumatic events, with 31 to 42 percent meeting the criteria for a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Switzer, Dew & Thomson, et. al, 1999). Among individuals seeking treatment for substance abuse, 30 to 50 percent fulfilled the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD, while 60 to 90 percent report a history of physical or sexual abuse. As part of job duties, social workers are required to assist survivors of physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, violent crimes, drug abuse, disasters, war and terrorism (Bride, 2007). Though these examples do not include all populations whom social workers serve, these examples demonstrate that social workers face a significant amount of professional contact with traumatized individuals (Bride, 2007). While probation officers do not implicitly share the title of social worker, they work with many of the same clients that social workers do therefore they also face a significant amount of professional contact with traumatized individuals.

A study conducted by Perron & Hiltz (2006) examined secondary trauma among forensic interviewers of abused children. The sample consisted of 66 forensic interviewers affiliated with advocacy centers across the United States. Subjects completed an online survey in which they responded to questions from the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory and the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale. Data collected from the
study indicated that 35 percent of social workers reported experiencing symptoms of secondary trauma (Perron & Hiltz, 2006).

Nelson-Gardell & Harris (2003) examined childhood abuse history and secondary traumatic stress among child welfare workers. The purpose of the study was examine if of personal trauma history correlated to a heightened risk for secondary traumatic stress in child welfare workers. The sample from the study consisted of 166 child welfare workers from two southeastern U.S. states that participated in a training program on secondary traumatic stress. Data was collected by a questionnaire that utilized the Compassion Fatigue Self Test for Psychotherapists (Figley, 1995) containing 40 items, and the Burnout Risk Subscale which contained 17 items. Both subscales used a Likert-type scale for responses. The results from the study indicated approximately 36 to 40 percent of social workers surveyed were designated at a high risk of developing secondary trauma, with 31 to 35 percent having a moderate risk, and 27 to 30 percent experiencing a low risk.

A validation study conducted by Adams, Boscarino and Figley (2006) aimed to examine compassion fatigue and psychological distress among social workers. The sample consisted of 236 social workers living in New York City who were members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Subjects in the study were mailed a survey in which they were asked to respond to a 30 item Compassion Fatigue (CF) Scale and a 12 item version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) which both contained a Likert-type scale for responses. Of the subjects participating in the study, 42 percent of social workers acknowledged that they suffered from secondary trauma.
Similar to social workers, officers in law enforcement are repeatedly exposed to trauma evidenced by human pain and destructiveness (Atkinson-Taylor, 2003). As part of their job duties, law enforcement officers are required to respond to intense and traumatic situations (Kureczka, 1996). Law enforcement officers are exposed to traumas that exist throughout the world, such as rape and murder. However, while the general population recognizes the existence of such trauma they do not share the actual experience with trauma as law enforcement officers do. In order to help others, officers cannot protect themselves from acknowledging the reality that such trauma does exist (Atkinson-Taylor, 2003). The realization that such trauma does exist inevitably forces officers to realize the potential for trauma in their own lives (Atkinson-Taylor, 2003).

While law enforcement officers are exposed to secondary traumatic stress on a daily basis, they are also at risk for exposure to serious critical incidents. Critical incidents require a mass response from law enforcement in an attempt to restore order and ensure the safety of the public. Critical incidents can be defined as a unique set of circumstances in which death is likely to occur, if not imminent. Examples of critical incidents include hostage situations and shootings. According to Pierson (1989), as many as 87 percent of all emergency service personnel have been exposed to a critical incident at least once during their professional career. Further studies indicate that approximately 15 percent of all emergency personnel workers suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Kirschman, 1997). Robinson, Sigman & Wilson (1997) investigated duty related stressors among 100 suburban law enforcement officers. Data reported from the study indicated that approximately 13 percent of the officers had been diagnosed with
PTSD which could be directly linked with exposure to traumatic events while on duty (Robinson, Sigman, & Wilson, 1997).

Research has indicated that exposure to such traumatic events has psychological effects which extend beyond the individuals directly affected (Bride, 2007). Being exposed to the stories of people who have experienced trauma often causes the professional to experience emotions similar to those of their clients (Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Salston & Figley, 2003, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Bride, 2007 & Dane, 2000). This experience can be disconcerting because it may include intrusive thoughts, images or “flashbacks” to events which the professional has only become aware of from the testimony or personal contact with the client rather than through first person experience (Tehrani, 2007). The lack of the firsthand trauma may cause more emotional discomfort for the professional because they are unable to rely on their own personal recall of the trauma. Bell (2003) suggested that, at least for some trauma workers, exposure to their client’s traumatic stories may negatively affect the worker’s cognitive schema - beliefs, assumptions and expectations related to their psychological needs that organize the experience of self and the interactions in the world (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Concerns for personal safety, mistrust of instincts and disruptions in basic schemas about themselves are common ways in which workers’ schemas may become distorted (Bell, 2003).

While the literature surrounding secondary trauma in social work and law enforcement is plentiful, it lacks significantly in the field of probation work. By definition, probation officers are agents of the court whose job is to help reduce the
recidivism of criminal offenders within the criminal justice system. In turn, this helps to ensure the safety of the community as well as the lives of the criminal offender and their family (Paul & Feuerbach, 2008). Therefore, probation officers’ job duties are very similar to social workers in that they provide direct services to clients in an effort to affect change within the client or client system. However, probation officers are also considered an arm of the court, and are given the same arresting powers of any police or sheriff officer.

Historically, probation caseloads had been reserved for non-violent and less violent offenders (Paparozzi & Demichelle, 2008). However, due to the financial strains currently being experienced by both state and federal prisons, more and more individuals are being placed on probation rather than being sent to jail. Furthermore, the crimes for which individuals are being placed on probation are becoming more violent (Paparozzi & Demichelle, 2008). The change in type of offenders being supervised is forcing probation officers to act in a law enforcement capacity on a more consistent basis than before. Thus, it could be theorized that probation officers experience secondary trauma similar to that experienced by both social workers and law enforcement officers.

Working with trauma requires both social workers and law enforcement workers to sustain periods of time in which they feel helpless, inadequate, shamed, attacked and even abandoned (Dane, 2000). Intense preoccupation with clients and fantasies about rescuing them may be a way for social workers to disengage from the secondary stress that is associated with trauma work (Dane, 2000). Another way in which workers may disengage is to seek a variety of activities to serve as a distraction such as watching
television, daydreaming or sleeping (Carver, Weintraub & Schier, 1989). The helping professional may implore the use of coping strategies as a way to help effectively deal with undesired feelings or emotions.

**Coping Strategies**

The process of mental disengagement provides the worker with distraction from the behavioral dimension or situation in which the stressor is presenting itself (Carver, Weintraub & Schier, 1989). Haisch and Meyers (2004) found that approximately 44 percent of their study participants (law enforcement officers) admitted to using some type of mental disengagement technique as a way in which to deal with the secondary stress associated with their job experiences. While the job duties of social workers and law enforcement officers may differ drastically, they share the need to find ways in which to disengage from the trauma of their work.

Hyman (2004) examined secondary traumatic stress symptoms in emergency responders. The results of the study were consistent with the cognitive processing model described by Creamer (Creamer, 1995). The cognitive processing model ties exposure to trauma and recent adverse events to intrusion, and further links intrusion to avoidance and psychological distress. According to this model, painful memories associated with traumatic events (intrusion) are part of an adjustment process to the traumatic event. In turn, avoidance is a way to protect the individual from re-experiencing the painful memory (Hyman, 2004). The model theorizes that the process of change between intrusion and avoidance allows the individual to provide the traumatic event with subjective meaning, and that gradual integration may allow for lower levels of
psychological distress (Hyman, 2004). In turn, the model theorizes that high levels of avoidance or failing to remain in the intrusion phase long enough could interfere with the process of cognitive adaptation and result in higher levels of distress (Hyman, 2004). The severity of secondary traumatic stress symptoms may be mitigated by various factors. One of the main factors that may help in the coping of such stressful symptoms is the worker's perceived availability of social support and the satisfaction the worker receives from such support systems (Hyman, 2004). Bell (2003) found that 63 percent of the social workers surveyed reported suffering from stress, however, the workers believed they could adequately deal with the stress with the assistance of their social support networks and personal and interpersonal resources. Bell (2003) also found that most of the social workers surveyed reported experiencing stress however what seemed to make a difference was not the specific actions which workers used to cope. Rather, workers who felt successful about their ability to deal with stressful situations were less stressed overall (Bell, 2003). The belief of having some control over one’s own self and environment may be viewed as a function of self-efficacy and may thus be seen as a strength (Bandura, 1993).

One way individuals can help to combat the effects of stress is to utilize coping strategies such as planning, seeking emotional support and utilizing disengagement strategies (Haisch & Meyers, 2004). Research has shown there may be few coping skills available to law enforcement officers to protect them from the chronic exposure to stress they will inevitably experience (Haisch & Meyers, 2004). Furthermore, the coping strategies utilized by law enforcement officers may not be fully effective (Evans et. al.,
1993) in that officers may actually choose to use particular coping strategies which may actually make the stress worse rather than make it better. Harvey-Lintz and Tidwell (1997) found that law enforcement officers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were twice as likely to use avoidance coping strategies than officers who were not diagnosed with PTSD. Due to the fact probation officers also work in the capacity as a helping professional, it can be ascertained that coping and emotional support also play a role in their ability to effectively deal with secondary trauma. Probation officers may employ similar coping strategies as those utilized by law enforcement officers. Furthermore, probation officers may also experience the same perceived need for social support systems as social workers. However, no research has been done to investigate if these similarities actually exist. Based on the shared job descriptions, it could be theorized that probation officers cope and seek the same emotional supports as other helping professionals such as social workers and law enforcement officers.

Another way in which the effects of secondary trauma can been seen in the individuals it effects is through depression. Depression is currently the leading cause of disability and is projected to become the second leading cause of the global burden of disease within the next ten years (World Health Organization, 2009). Prior research has indicated depression is a significant health concern amongst professional working females (Park, Wilson, & Lee, 2004). Blackmore et al. (2007) found a consistent association between work stress and depression as defined by the criteria of the DSM-IV. The study found low levels of social support, high job strain and increased psychological demands were associated with major depressive episodes among men (Blackmore, et. al.,
Lower levels of social support and lack of decision authority were associated with major depressive episodes among women (Blackmore, et. al., 2007).

As with many professions, there appears to exist a stereotype shared by men and women who work in the field of law enforcement. These stereotypes often centers on preconceived notions that all officers are dominant, controlling, authoritative and lack sentiment towards others (Miller, 2007). These traits are in conflict with traits the public may perceive as important such as being cooperative and openly expressive with emotions and communication. Furthermore, personality traits that may be very common in law enforcement officers are their overprotectiveness of family members, their constant hypervigilence and their divided loyalty between work and family (Miller, 2007). These traits, whether stereotypes or not, may play an important role in job stress and exposure to secondary trauma in law enforcement officials.

Many may maintain the individuals who work as social workers have significantly different personality traits than those working in the field of law enforcement. However, prior studies have indicated that social workers may share common personality traits with law enforcement officers (Paparozzi & Demichelle, 2008, Brown & Campbell, 1990, Fleischman, 1984, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Im, 2009, Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001, Mendenhall, 2006 & Hyman, 2004).

A study conducted by Bride (2007) examined the prevalence of secondary traumatic stress among social workers. A sample of 294 licensed social workers were mailed surveys containing questions pertaining to secondary stress. The Demographic
Information Questionnaire and the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS) were used for the survey and both utilized a Likert type scale. Data from the study indicated that social workers reported experiencing feelings of hypervigilence and emotional numbing. Of the 294 study participants, 9 percent reported occasional feelings of hypervigilence while 22 percent reported occasional feelings of emotional numbness (Bride, 2007). These findings help to explain the effects experienced by the helping professional, while the professional may be employed in the capacity of a social worker or law enforcement officer.

Just as probation officers may employ similar coping and emotional support techniques as those utilized by social workers and law enforcement officers, probation officers may also share similar personality traits. A 1992 study completed by the Federal Probation Officers Association (now the Federal Probation and Pretrial Officers Association) examined assaults and attempted assaults on probation officers nationwide from 1980 to 1992. With 48 percent of jurisdictions responding, officers reported 100 rapes and sexual assaults against probation officers during the performance of their job duties during home visits of probationers (Federal Probation Officers Association, 1992). Based on these statistics, it is easy to come to the conclusion probation officers may also experience symptoms such as hypervigilence, emotional numbing and overprotection of family members.

Another facet to consider when examining secondary trauma in the helping professional is the presence of prior abuse or trauma history experienced by the worker. Social workers in the field of child welfare are often exposed to explicit and gruesome
details of crimes committed against children (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003).

Furthermore, child welfare workers are often called upon to walk a thin line between the safety of the child and the privacy of the family. Nelson-Gardell & Harris (2003) examined childhood abuse history and secondary traumatic stress in child welfare workers. The study examined 98 child welfare workers and the correlation between their own individual traumas and the occurrence of experienced secondary trauma. According to the findings, personal experience of childhood abuse and neglect increases a child welfare worker’s risk of secondary trauma (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003). These findings are cause for consideration when examining secondary trauma experienced by social workers.

Similar to the research done on child welfare workers, Sheehan & Van Hasselt (2003) maintain prior trauma and psychological adjustment before the trauma can be viewed as predictors and possible correlations between secondary trauma experienced by law enforcement officers. Their prior exposure to trauma may act as a factor when officers are exposed to secondary traumatic stress. Furthermore, the existence of prior personal trauma history may impact personality traits as well as coping mechanisms utilized by law enforcement officers. In contrast to social workers, law enforcement officers must complete a series of psychological tests and background interviews prior to employment. These psychological assessments are viewed as a precautionary measure to identify and address any prior trauma experienced by the officer prior to allowing him/her to undergo the daily exposure of secondary traumatic stress experienced in the field. However, the accuracy and thoroughness of the psychological screenings may be
questioned as the tests are usually completed in 1 to 2 business days. The short amount of time the officer spent with the therapist, coupled with the depth of prior traumatic history may not provide an accurate traumatic history of the officer.

As is thematic throughout this literature review, no prior research has been done investigating prior abuse or personal trauma history experienced by probation officers. Just as law enforcement officers are required to undergo psychological testing, probation officers are required to participate in a psychological evaluation prior to being employed. However, no further psychological exams are required after the initial psychological exam, just as is the case with law enforcement officers. The lack of further psychological screenings in relation to time spent as a helping professional, demonstrates the absence of additional accessible information correlating prior trauma history and experience as a helping professional. While probation work is similar to social worker and law enforcement work, it is not the same. Therefore, further research on the topic of secondary trauma experienced probation officers would be beneficial. To further examine the complexity of secondary trauma it would also be beneficial to explore one of the most recognized responses to secondary trauma, job burnout.

*Job Burnout*

Job burnout can best be explained as the emotional strain that can be specifically attributed to chronic daily stresses of employment and is marked by a state physical, emotional and mental exhaustion (Etzion, 1984). Individuals experiencing the emotional strain of burnout often feel as though they are no longer productive in their work and may be looking for other employment opportunities (Sprang, Clark, Whit-Woosley, 2007,
Perron & Hiltz, 2006). Furthermore, burnout is not exclusively experienced by those working with traumatized individuals. An overload of responsibilities, conflict between individual goals and agency goals, a feeling of no control over services provided and little sense of financial or emotional reward may also contribute to job burnout (Salston & Figley, 2003, Frudenberger, 1974, Kirschmann, 1997).

The concept of burnout was introduced by Frudenberger (1974) however the major development in this arena emerged in the works of Maslach (1982). McCann and Pearlman (1989) ascertain a significant difference between secondary traumatic stress and burnout. They stated that burnout may be the “final common pathway of continual exposure to traumatic material” (p.134), whereas secondary trauma is an acute response (Perron & Hiltz, 2006). Maslach & Jackson (1981) describe burnout as a phenomenon containing three possible aspects. The first aspect identifies a state of emotional exhaustion in which workers feel they are no longer able to emotionally connect to the client or client system (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Another aspect of the burnout syndrome is the possible development of a negative attitude or feelings towards the client. The final aspect of the syndrome is the tendency of human service professionals to maintain a negative view of their work with clients, leading the professional to feel as if they have not had enough or significant accomplishments in their work with clients. These feelings can oftentimes lead the worker to feel unhappy with themselves and their work in the human service arena (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This unhappiness is one of the many possible side effects of job burnout.
The possible implications of job burnout are numerous, however, the outcomes of job burnout are important to both the helping professional and the workplace. In regards to job performance, prior research has associated burnout with forms of job withdrawal such as job absenteeism, intention to leave the job and job turnover (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Individuals who remain working as a helping professional appear more likely to maintain a lower productivity rate as well as be less effective in their job duties (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Therefore, job burnout is associated with decreased job satisfaction and a decreased commitment to the job or the employing agency. Furthermore, individuals who experience job burnout may have a negative impact on their colleagues by creating interpersonal conflict and disrupting the flow of successful completion of job tasks (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Research has indicated time pressure is strongly and consistently related to burnout, especially in regards to exhaustion (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Prior research has also demonstrated that job burnout is unique to each individual and their experience and relationship to their work content. Therefore, situational factors such as time management appear to be a significant variable to be considered when examining burnout (Im, 2009). A significant number of helping professionals are employed by government agencies that maintain fast and hard rules regarding “work” time. Furthermore, while technology has grown, thus implicating possible assistance with job duties, government employees are still required to do more work in less time (Im, 2009). Furthermore, helping professionals employed by government agencies may experience specific time stress in relation to the nature of their work. For example, employees of
government agencies are required to keep trying a procedure even when the individual employee knows the procedure is unlikely to produce the desired results (Im, 2009). In contrast, government employees who know how to best accomplish a task may be prohibited by doing so because of organizational factors such as government agency interference (Im, 2009). Governments have many rules, regulations and procedures which employees must adhere to even if the employee believes they are counterproductive. For example, completing paperwork and forms constitutes the majority of time for a supervising juvenile probation officer. Many juvenile probation officers will readily admit time spent providing direct services such as counseling, mentoring and tutoring would be more beneficial to juvenile clients than completing paperwork.

Individual characteristics such as demographic and personality characteristics have found to have a relationship to job burnout. While multiple demographic variables have been studied, age has been the most consistent variable correlated with burnout. Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001) examined 25 years of job burnout research. Their review indicates that research has shown younger employees report a higher level of burnout than employees 30 years or older (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Furthermore, age is often related to years of job experience therefore burnout may be more of a risk earlier in a career rather than later in a career. In regards to personality, individuals who attribute events to others or a higher power (external locus of control) appear to have a higher risk of burnout than those who attribute events to their own effort and ability (internal locus of control) (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).
While there are numerous documented psychological effects of secondary trauma and job burnout, job burnout is also very likely to be accompanied by physical symptoms such as headaches, hypertension and physical exhaustion (Salston & Figley, 2003). Salston & Figley (2003) examined burnout and secondary traumatic stress effects of working with survivors of criminal victimization. In their paper they identified traumatic countertransference and personal prior traumatic history as important aspects relating to job burnout. They maintain countertransference reactions can directly affect diagnosis and treatment of clients which can contribute to undue stress for the professional. Personal trauma history directly experienced by the professional can also be a point of concern due to the potential of a client’s trauma to trigger unresolved trauma in the professional (Figley, 1995, Salston & Figley, 2003). Thus, unresolved countertransference issues and personal trauma history may be a significant source of undue stress ultimately affecting the professional’s level of job satisfaction. Salston & Figley (2003) maintain that an assessment of secondary trauma is important for the helping professional as it can affect his/her relationship with clients as well as other relationships with family or friends. Understanding and recognizing the potential implications from secondary trauma and job burnout continues to remain important to help address self-care issues for the helping professional (Salston & Figley, 2003).

burnout and secondary trauma may be phenomena distinct from one another, prior works have indicated the two often share a correlation with one another. Sprang, Clark and Whitt-Woosley (2007) explored characteristics related to compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction and job burnout in a sample of mental health professionals. The study examined responses relating to job burnout from 1,121 mental health providers. Study participants were mailed a survey containing the Professional Quality of Life Scale. Of the 1,121 study participants, 25.2 percent reported experiencing feelings of burnout at some point throughout their career. Furthermore, results indicated mental health professionals working in a rural setting reported job burnout at a higher rate than those working in an urban setting.

Perron & Hiltz (2006) examined burnout and secondary trauma among forensic interviewers of abused children. In urban settings forensic interviewers often are employed by advocacy centers in which their sole job duties are interviewing abused children. However, in many rural counties child protective services workers, as well as law enforcement officers, are required to act in the capacity of a forensic interviewer due to budgetary issues and lack of resources. Forensic interviewing shares similar demands of other human service professions in that a forensic interviewer is intimately engaged with individuals who have experienced trauma or stress (Perron & Hiltz, 2006). Therefore, the study by Perron & Hiltz (2006) may be relevant to many rural CPS and law enforcement settings.

Perron & Hiltz (2006) examined burnout and secondary trauma among forensic interviewers of abused children. The sample consisted of 66 forensic interviewers who
were affiliated with advocacy centers across the United States. Participants completed an online survey containing questions from the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory and Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale. Of the 66 participants, 43 percent reported experiencing emotional exhaustion while 45 percent reported experiencing disengagement at some point throughout their career in forensic interviewing. These statistics show that burnout is indeed prevalent in the field of helping professionals.

Research has tended to focus on job burnout as an individual problem rather than an organizational issue. Furthermore, prior research tends to focus on and assess the individual characteristics that can be explained as a cause or contributing factor to burnout (Lewandowski, 2003). Therefore, it can be ascertained that burnout research tended to focus on the individual and immediate context in which work occurs rather than the organization as a whole (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). However, a significant amount of work occurs in organizations where structures include the utilization of hierarchies, operating rules, resources and the distribution and utilization of space (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Lewandowski (2003) identified role conflict, role ambiguity, downsizing and increased regulation as organizational factors than should be considered as contributing factors to the burnout syndrome. The proposal of managed care coupled with fiscal concerns is an issue currently faced by governments across the country. These financial concerns should not be discounted when exploring the relationship the organization plays in job burnout. Furthermore, research has shown that individuals who do not have a clear understanding of what is expected in their job role (role ambiguity) are more likely to
experience symptoms associated with job burnout. While individual characteristics should always be considered in regards to burnout, it is important to recognize that an individual’s frustration may originate within the organization (Lewandowski, 2003).

Law enforcement officers are similar to other workers in the social service arena in that they are repeatedly placed in emotionally demanding situations as a part of their job. However, unlike workers in the child protective services arena, law enforcement officers are also required to make arrests and become involved in situations that place their lives at risk on a daily basis. Furthermore, law enforcement officers are under constant view of public opinion and possible suspicion, not to mention clear dislike and disdain for law enforcement authority (Woody, 2006). Ansel (2000) maintains that law enforcement is “one of the most stressful occupations worldwide” (p. 375) and leads to “a high level of incidence of sickness, absenteeism and burnout” (p. 376). Therefore, it appears the secondary trauma experienced by law enforcement officers plays a significant role in job burnout.

Furthermore, consideration should be given to the mentality of law enforcement officers. Woody (2006) maintains that the mentality of law enforcement officers often encourages isolation from non-law enforcement relationships. Much like social workers, law enforcement officers may begin to harbor feelings of disdain towards the clients they serve. However, unlike social workers, law enforcement officers arguably have a more physically dangerous job. Thus, the emotional aspects coupled with the physical factors may place law enforcement officers in a state of mind where they only feel completely comfortable when with they are “with their own”. Woody (2006) explains he witnessed
the expression of such thinking throughout his experience in the police academy. He maintains such thinking is evidenced by the following statements of law enforcement officers: “The world is a jungle; there are a lot of bad people who will harm you and then go home and sleep like a baby; all that stands between good and evil is law enforcement and our survival depends on taking care of each other “ (p.99). Furthermore, such statements are evidence that law enforcement officers maintain a different way of thinking. Such thinking may affect the officers on various levels and ultimately play a part in job burnout.

While the job of probation officer is similar to that of social worker and law enforcement officer, it remains a unique role unto itself. As mentioned previously, probation workers are like social workers in they are required to focus on the rehabilitation of clients. Furthermore, they share characteristics of law enforcement officers in that they are required to enforce orders of the court, maintain arresting powers and often are required to carry weapons as a part of their job duties. Because the field of probation shares similar characteristics with the disciplines of social work and law enforcement, it could be theorized that probation officers also are more susceptible to job burnout. However, research regarding this topic appears to be non-existent therefore making it even more important to further explore this field of study.

Just as seen with secondary trauma, social support and coping mechanisms appear to help mitigate the occurrence of job burnout. Social support has been found to have main effects on burnout, especially in the reduction of work related stress (Etzion, 1984). Furthermore, social support can act as an agent of change in the relationship between
stress and burnout. Social support may assist individuals with high stress to better cope with the stressful situation and develop only moderate levels of burnout (Etzion, 1984). Autonomy, strong role identity and perception of control also appear to be mitigating factors for burnout. However, ways in which to effectively prevent or treat burnout continue to focus on the individual rather than the organization (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

The similarities and differences between the professions of social work, law enforcement and probation have been evidenced throughout this literature review. However, another important topic that should be afforded attention is the existence of turf battles between such agencies. The close proximity of numerous helping professionals in such a small space or single effort is likely to produce competition or conflict between agencies (Mendenhall, 2006). This appears especially relevant to sibling disciples (such as social work, law enforcement and probation) due to the fact the disciplines are more apt to engage in divisive ways with one another (Mendenhall, 2006). For example, the mere mission statements of law enforcement and probation are profoundly different. Law enforcement officers are required to investigate crimes, enforce laws and restore and maintain order whereas probation officers are required to assist in offender rehabilitation while also enforcing elements of the law (Murphy & Worrall, 2007). Based on mission statements alone it is clear to see probation officers remain in a unique category. Supervision and service are two mandatory roles that are very difficult for probation officers to balance (Murphy & Worrall (2007).
When examining the constructs and prevalence of secondary trauma and job burnout within the helping professional, the role identity theory provides plausible explanations for these phenomena. The theory explains that individuals have multiple identities and roles that are arranged in a hierarchy by salience and prominence (Siebert & Seibert, 2007). Furthermore, the theory maintains that roles are actively created and behavior is motivated by internalized identity (Siebert & Seibert, 2007). Because of this, role theory maintains the individual must modify his/her internal identity in order to modify behavior. This theory recognizes and identifies the differences between social identity and personal identity. Furthermore, role theory maintains the conflict between these two identities may contribute to feelings of stress and frustration in the helping professional, and thus may affect the desire to seek help addressing symptoms of secondary trauma or job burnout (Siebert & Siebert, 2007).

Conclusion

The concept of burnout was introduced over 30 years ago and continues to remain a prevalent phenomena in today’s society. While burnout may be commonly experienced in the helping professions it is not exclusive to the helping professions. While Fruedenberger (1974) first introduced the concept of job burnout the major research surrounding the topic came from Maslach (1982). Maslach and Jackson (1981) helped to identify three possible identifying traits of the burnout phenomena. These states include a state of emotional exhaustion, negative attitudes or feelings towards the client and the possession of a negative view towards the work completed with clients (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).
Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001) recognized job withdrawal, job absenteeism, intention to leave the job and job turnover as possible responses to job burnout. Individuals who suffer from burnout and continue to work may become increasingly dissatisfied and decreasingly committed to their job. Furthermore, those individuals may project their feelings onto other co-workers thus creating additional negative aspects of job burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Im (2009) noted that time management is an important variable to consider when examining the effects of job burnout. Personal characteristics as well as job relationships make each experience of burnout unique (Im, 2009). Research completed by Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001) indicated that younger employees (under the age of 30) report a higher level of burnout than older employees.

Salston & Figley (2003) identified countertransference and prior traumatic history as important aspects relating to job burnout. Figley (2003) argued that an assessment of secondary trauma is important for the helping professional as it may affect both personal and professional relationships. Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley (2007) conducted research which indicated that mental health professionals reported job burnout at a higher rate in rural settings rather than urban settings. Perron & Hiltz (2006) studied job burnout in forensic interviewers, a job which shares many similar characteristics with social workers. Data collected from the study indicated almost 50% of participants reported experiencing some symptoms of job burnout during the course of their career.

Figley (1995) argued that secondary exposure to trauma is an inevitable part of the helping process and helping professionals who have the greatest capacity to feel and
empathize are at the highest risk of experiencing secondary trauma. Compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and job burnout are terms that are often used to describe the state and consequences of secondary trauma (Bell, 2003, Bride, 2007, Bride & Figley, 2007, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Miller, 2007, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Perron & Hiltz, 2006 and Salston & Figley, 2003).

Secondary trauma has also been compared to PTSD as they share similar symptoms such as avoidance and distressing emotions (Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). Data collected by Perron & Hiltz (2006) indicated that 35 percent of study participants (social workers) reported experiencing symptoms of secondary trauma during the course of their work while 42 percent of social worker participants in a study conducted by Adams, Boscarino & Figley (2006) reported symptoms of secondary stress. A study conducted by Nelson-Gardell & Harris (2003) indicated that 36 to 40 percent of study participants (child welfare workers) were at a high risk of developing secondary trauma.

Research has also indicated secondary trauma symptoms are prevalent in the helping profession of law enforcement officer. Kirschman (2007) conducted research that indicated 15 percent of all emergency personnel workers suffer from PTSD or secondary trauma related symptoms. Furthermore, results from a study by Robinson, Sigman & Wilson (1997) indicated that 13 percent of law enforcement officers surveyed had been diagnosed with PTSD. Bell (2003) indicated that the significant exposure to trauma may ultimately negatively impact the helping professional’s cognitive schema (McCann & Pearlman, 1990).
While significant literature surrounding secondary trauma in the helping professions of social work and law enforcement exists (Bell, 2003, Bride, 2007, Bride & Figley, 2007, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Miller, 2007, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Perron & Hiltz, 2006 and Salston & Figley, 2003), little exists pertaining to the work of probation officers. Paul & Feuerbach (2008) maintain that the work of probation officers is important as they provide rehabilitative services to the client while keeping the community safe. However, Paparozzi & Demichelle (2008) maintain that a significant increase in the crime rate has led to individuals being placed on probation for more serious offenses than before. The chronic exposure to secondary stress may also make probation officers at a high risk of experiencing job burnout however little research has been done to support this hypothesis.

From reviewing the literature, it appears there has been a significant amount of research regarding secondary trauma and job burnout as it pertains to the helping professional, particularly in the field of social work and law enforcement (Bride, 2007, Maslach & Jackson, 1981, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Figley, 2003, Im, 2009, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Salston & Figley, 2003, Sprang, Clark and Whit-Woosley, 2007, and Kirschman, 2007). However, little research has been done regarding this phenomena in the role of the helping professional in the field of probation work. Probation officers provide supervision like law enforcement officers while also providing services to clients just as social workers do. However, the role of a probation officer is mandated by the court and makes a significant impact on society thus
remaining unique. To help fill the gap of knowledge that exists in this field it is important to further examine secondary trauma and job burnout in the field of probation.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the prevalence of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction and job burnout among probation officers. Helping professionals provide services to people who have suffered traumatic experiences which makes exposure to vicarious trauma, an inherent part of their job. In light of this, the phenomena of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction and job burnout have been well documented among law enforcement officers and social workers (Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Atkinson-Taylor, 2003, Bride, Raday & Figley, 2007, Dane, 2000, Hyman, 2004, Lewandowski, 2003, Figley, 1995, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Pierson, 1989, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Maslach & Jackson, 1981). However, little research exists regarding these phenomena as they relate to probation officers (Evans, 1997, Frudenerger, 1984, Gove, 2005, Miller, 2007, Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997). Probation work is unique in that the workers are required to assist clients with locating and utilizing services, similar to the work of social workers. However, probation officers are also responsible for acting in a law enforcement capacity by arresting the clients they serve in order to enforce the orders of the court. Therefore, probation officers are helping professionals that are in a unique category.
Research Design

The purpose of this research project was to examine the variables of compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction and burnout among probation officers. The design for this study was quantitative and cross-sectional. Data for the study was obtained from two measurements, the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL R-IV) and 8 separate questions referring to their personal and professional characteristics. The data was collected for this study in November of 2009, from probation officers employed by Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties in California. Participants were provided a questionnaire and asked to complete and return it to a locked box while at work. Therefore, participants did not have to leave their place of employment to participate in the study and their data was kept confidential.

Population

The population examined for this study was the population of probation officers. Every county within the state of California is required by law to have a Chief Probation Officer (California Penal Code, 2009) however, all counties also employ probation officers to assist the Chief in carrying out probation duties as assigned. Due to the overwhelming population of probation officers within the state of California, sampling the entire population would have been extremely difficult and time consuming. Therefore, a smaller group of probation officers (from three rural northern California counties) was sampled for the purpose of this study.
Sample

The sample used for this study included probation officers from Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties and purposive sampling was utilized. Chief probation officers and probation aides were excluded from the study due to their limited direct contact with a client case load. The three counties are similar in size and client population served. The three counties are all located in rural populations and serve a client population that is approximately 50% Hispanic. Furthermore, they border one another making them geographically close to one another. The sample appears representative of the population in that all participants in the study were employed as probation officers. Furthermore, the size of the sample obtained for this study included 70 probation officers from three counties.

Instrument

The study focused on two conceptual domains: compassion fatigue and job burnout. These domains were measured using the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL R-IV) (Stamm, 1997-2005). The ProQOL R-IV is a 30-item self-report questionnaire, measuring levels of burnout and compassion fatigue. The psychometric properties of the Prop-QOL R-IV are compassion satisfaction alpha =.87, burnout alpha = .72 and compassion fatigue alpha = .80 (Stamm, 1997-2005). This revised version of the scale has increased specificity and reduced collinearity when compared to the older and longer versions of the questionnaire (Stamm, 1997-2005). The survey asked participants to consider each scale item and indicate how closely it reflects their experience using a 5 point Likert scale (rarely =0 to very often = 5).
Other items included in the questionnaire were questions identifying personal and professional characteristics of each participant. These questions included gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, years of formal education, years employed as a probation officer, current job assignment and less lethal force options carried as part of the job assignment. Additional questions were asked of participants to investigate if any relation existed between job assignments and attributed feelings to compassion. Participants were asked the number of job assignments held during the course of employment as well as which job assignment they attributed with experiencing more negative and more positive aspects of compassion (or helping).

**Measurement**

Higher scores on the CF (compassion fatigue) subscale (10 questions) indicate the participant may be at a higher risk of experiencing compassion fatigue. Higher scores on the CS (compassion satisfaction) subscale (10 items) indicate the subject is experiencing higher satisfaction with his/her ability to help others or provide care for others. Higher scores on the burnout subscale (10 items) indicate the respondent may be at risk of experiencing symptoms of burnout.

**Data Collection Procedures**

A packet containing a letter of explanation, a letter of consent, survey instructions, the two-part questionnaire and a list of resources were delivered to 100% of the sample of 80 probation officers during the course of their workday. This was achieved by depositing the packets in all of the participant’s department mailboxes. The
The letter of consent explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation and the confidentiality of all participants’ responses.

The letter of explanation explained the questionnaires should be deposited in a locked box and the location of the locked box within the department. The letter also informed participants the questionnaires would be collected approximately five business days after they had been delivered. A locked box was left at each department for participants to confidentially return their surveys. The locked box containing all surveys was picked up five business days after the surveys were initially handed out.

Data Analysis Plan

Data obtained from the questionnaire will include data measured at the nominal level as well as the ordinal level of measurement. Furthermore, data collected from the Pro-QOL R-IV will include analysis of responses from the Likert type scale. A correlation coefficient will be determined to examine the reliability of the data obtained for the study. Data analysis will also include the response rate of participants as well as a summary of distribution of variables.

Construction of frequency distribution tables and graphs will be utilized to present data. Frequency distributions will include information on cumulative frequencies and cumulative percentages will also be determined. Bar charts, histograms or pie charts may also be utilized to represent the distribution of variables. Measures of central tendency, such as mode, median and mean will also be utilized in data analysis. Measures of dispersion such as range, variance and standard deviation will also be documented in data
analysis. Furthermore, inferential statistical analysis as well as the examination of statistically significant relationships between variables will also be explored.

*Human Subjects Protection*

Prior to the implementation of the study, human subject approval to conduct the study was received from the California State University, Sacramento, Division of Social Work Human Subjects Protection Committee. Authorization to collect data from study participants was obtained from all three Chief probation officers prior to the implementation of the study. Participants in the study were provided with a letter informing them of the purpose, procedures, possible risks and possible benefits of the research study. Contact information for the researcher and her advisor, as well as confidentiality of participants’ responses were also provided. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants in the form of a letter that was attached to each survey. Participants were asked to sign the letter of consent and return it with their surveys.

Study participants were also informed that there was no penalty for withdrawing from the study and that all data collected would be kept in a locked cabinet and destroyed upon completion of the study. Furthermore, participants were provided with a list of resources which could be utilized by any participant who believed he/she would like behavioral health care assistance as a result of participating in the study.
Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of the study was to examine the prevalence of satisfaction compassion, secondary traumatization and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization as they relate to probation officers employed by the California counties of Colusa, Sutter and Yuba. This researcher sought to identify the level at which study participants were affected by these phenomena. Furthermore, this researcher looked to examine how findings regarding these phenomena related to the sociodemographic variables identified in the study. The study also looked to examine the relationship between the phenomena of satisfaction compassion, secondary traumatization and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization as they related to study participants’ feelings regarding the expression of compassion in relation to particular job assignments.

The data report will begin with a description of the demographic analysis of study participant’s gender, age, relationship status, ethnicity and years of education. It will further document years employed as a probation officer, current job assignment, available force options and number of prior job assignments held as a probation officer. Other results presented will include the job assignments participants’ identified as providing them with the highest opportunity to demonstrate and utilize compassion. Job assignments identified as providing the lowest opportunity to demonstrate and utilize compassion will also be presented. Furthermore, participants’ overall scores from the
Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL R-IV) will be presented as well as levels of compassion satisfaction, burnout and secondary traumatic stress will be presented.

**Sociodemographic characteristics**

*Gender, age & relationship status*

Approximately 70 questionnaires were delivered to probation officers employed by Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties. Of the 70 questionnaires delivered, exactly 48 were returned providing the study with a 69 percent response rate. Of the 48 study participants, 30 (62%) were female and 18 (38%) were male. Participants’ ages ranged from twenty-nine years old to sixty-three years old with the mean age being 39.69 years. Marital status was reported in five categories; single, married, committed relationship, divorced and widowed. The majority of participants, 62.5%, responded as married while 12.5% responded as divorced. Response rates for the categories of committed relationship and single were identical with a 10.4% response while 4.2% identified as widowed.

*Ethnicity*

Five categories were provided for ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino, African American, American Indian, Caucasian and other. The majority of study participants, 77.1%, identified ethnically as Caucasian while 10.4 % identified as Hispanic. Responses for the categories of African American, American Indian and other were identical with a 4.2% response respectively.
Education

In response to years of education obtained, the majority of study participants’, 85.4% reported attaining a Bachelor’s Degree while 10.4% reported some college and 4.2% reported possession of a Master’s degree.

Years employed as a probation officer

The years worked as a probation officer ranged from 1 year to 35 years with a mean of 10.75 and a standard deviation of 7.390.

Current job assignment

In response to current job assignments, 31.3% of respondent’s reported that they were currently assigned to an adult supervision caseload while 16.7% responded that their job assignment entailed the supervision of other probation officers.

Number of prior job assignments

Number of job assignments ranged from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 10 with a mean of 4.90.

Use of force options

In regards to less lethal or lethal force options carried as part of employment, 16.7% of participant’s reported carrying pepper spray, 27.1% reported carrying a firearm and 56.3% reported carrying none of the options. Refer to Table 1 for further data analysis.
Participants were also asked to identify the job assignment that provided them with the highest amount of opportunity to demonstrate and utilize compassion. The response rate on this question was not 100% as with previous questions asked, as 96% of participants responded to the question. In regards to adult supervision, 14.6% of study participants attributed an adult supervision caseload to providing the most opportunities to demonstrate and utilize compassion. Refer to Table 2 for further descriptive statistics and histogram display.

Table 2 lists the eight possible job assignments available to probation officers. Officers assigned to a juvenile supervision caseload are responsible for supervising juvenile offenders and ensuring their compliance with the orders of the court. Assignment to an adult supervision caseload is similar to the juvenile supervision caseload with the exception that the probation officer supervises adult offenders instead of juvenile offenders. Officers assigned to a Prop 36/Drug Court caseload supervise adult offenders who have committed drug related offenses and officers assigned to an adult court caseload write felony and/or misdemeanor adult sentencing reports for the court.
Table 2

*Job assignment associated with being able to utilize and demonstrate more compassion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Assignment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Supervision</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Supervision</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prop 36/Drug Court</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>13.65%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Court</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Court</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor for other Probation Officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Intake</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 also refers to placement, juvenile court and supervisors for other probation officers. In a placement caseload probation officers are responsible for supervising juvenile offenders placed out of the custody of their parents. Similar to adult court, probation officers assigned to a juvenile court caseload are responsible for preparing felony and/or misdemeanor sentencing reports for the court. The job assignment of supervisors for other probation officers is also referred to in Table 2.
Participants were also asked to identify the job assignment that provided them with fewer opportunities to demonstrate and utilize compassion. Similar to the prior question regarding compassion, 6 participants did not respond to this question. The results from this question were the opposite from the prior question regarding positive aspects of compassion. Exactly 35.4% of participants identified adult supervision as the job assignment they attributed to having a limited ability of being able to demonstrate and utilize compassion.

In regards to juvenile supervision, 14.6% of study participants identified juvenile supervision as the job assignment having a limited ability of being able to demonstrate and utilize compassion. Approximately 14.6% of study participants identified adult court as the job assignment having a limited ability of being able to demonstrate and utilize compassion. The job assignments of placement and prop 36/drug court had equal response rates of 8.3% respectively. The job assignments of juvenile court, intake and supervisor for other probation officers had equal response rates of 2.1% respectively. Refer to Table 3 for further descriptive statistics.

Table 3
*Job assignment associated with being able to utilize and demonstrate less compassion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Assignment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Supervision</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Supervision</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Court</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prop 36/Drug Court</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Court</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Intake</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor for other Probation Officers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing from System – Non Response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ProQOL R-IV

The ProQOL R-IV is a thirty item questionnaire aimed at measuring compassion satisfaction, job burnout and secondary trauma. Thirty statements are listed on the tool and participants are asked to respond to the statements using a Likert type scale. Responses were assigned a number and participants were asked to respond to the statement by providing the number that matched their response. Responses and their numbers are as follows: never =0, rarely=1, a few times =2, somewhat often =3, often=4 and very often =5.

Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction refers to the degree to which helping professionals are satisfied with the work they perform and their ability to assist others. The phenomena of compassion satisfaction is one phenomena measured by the Pro-QOL R-IV. Of the 30 statements provided on the ProQOL R-IV exactly 10 were aimed at measuring compassion satisfaction. Participants’ responses to these statements were scored then compared to the ProQOL R-IV score interpretation chart. The interpretation chart
provides for three levels of compassion satisfaction based on the sum of study participants’ scores. A score of 22 or less was identified as low compassion satisfaction, a score between 23 and 41 was identified as average compassion satisfaction and a score of 42 or more was identified as high compassion satisfaction.

Table 4

Statements measuring compassion satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>A few times</th>
<th>Somewhat Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Response rates to compassion satisfaction statements

Statements utilized to measure compassion satisfaction attempt to explore a variety of participant’s beliefs, feelings and thoughts regarding their work as probation
officers. Statements regarding participant’s beliefs were provided to measure the relationship between beliefs and compassion satisfaction. In response to the statement that participants held the belief that they make a difference through their work, the response rate was 23% very often, 42% often, 15% somewhat often, 16% a few times, 4% rarely and 0 participants responded never. Furthermore, in response to the statement participants held the belief that they are a success as a probation officer, 21% of study participants responded very often, 38% often, 32% somewhat often, 10% a few times, 2% rarely and 0 responded never. Based on these response rates it appears the majority of study participant’s beliefs correlate positively with a high rate of compassion satisfaction.

The ProQOL R-IV also provided statements aimed at measuring participants’ feelings in regards to their level of compassion satisfaction. The data obtained from the study indicated that the majority of participants felt satisfied by their work either very often (22%) often (41%) or somewhat often (25%). Study participants also appeared to have received a significant amount of satisfaction from being able to help people as evidenced by their response rates regarding receiving satisfaction from helping others. Over three quarters of study participants (76%) provided very often or often as a response to this statement. Participants’ responses were more varied regarding having happy thoughts about those they help and how they are able to help them. Responses to this statement are indicated as follows: 8% of participants responding very often, 38% often, 33% somewhat often, 15% a few times, 6% rarely and 0 responding never. This data indicates that participants’ feelings regarding their ability to help may not be as strong as other feelings that relate to compassion satisfaction.
Additional statements provided measured the relationship between participants thoughts and their level of compassion satisfaction. From the data collected it appears that the majority of study participants are happy that they chose to work as a probation officer and like their work. This is evidenced by the fact that 79% of study participants revealed that they are happy that they chose to work as a probation officer. Furthermore, 76% of participants reported they like their work as a probation officer with either very often (37%) or often (39%). These statements were aimed at measuring compassion fatigue however additional statements provided in the ProQOL R-IV were provided to measure burnout levels.

**Burnout**

Of the 30 statements provided on the ProQOL R-IV exactly 10 were aimed at measuring burnout. Participants’ responses to these statements were scored then compared to the ProQOL R-IV score interpretation chart. The interpretation chart provides for three levels of burnout based on the sum of study participants’ scores. A score of 22 or less was identified as low opportunity of burnout, a score between 23 and 41 was identified as average opportunity for burnout and a score of 42 or more was identified as high opportunity for burnout. Based on these scoring directions, 12% of participants demonstrated a low opportunity of experiencing burnout, 87% demonstrated a moderate opportunity of experiencing burnout and no participants demonstrated a high opportunity of experiencing burnout.
### Table 6  
**Statements measuring burnout**

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>I am happy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>I feel connected to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>I feel trapped by my work as a Probation Officer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>I have beliefs that sustain me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#17</td>
<td>I am the person I always wanted to be.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#19</td>
<td>Because of my work as a Probation Officer, I feel exhausted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#21</td>
<td>I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work or size of my caseload I have to deal with.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#26</td>
<td>I feel “bogged down” by the system.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#29</td>
<td>I am a very sensitive person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7  
**Responses to statements measuring burnout**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>A Few Times</th>
<th>Somewhat Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#19</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#21</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#26</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#29</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statements provided to measure burnout potential attempted to measure experiences, feelings and beliefs which may affect burnout rates. The statement that aimed to measure experience and its relation to job burnout measured participants' sleep patterns in regards to work with individuals who have experienced trauma. In response to this statement 50% of study participants reported that they had never lost sleep over
traumatic experiences of a person they helped. Furthermore, 25% of respondents responded with rarely and 21% responded with a few times. This finding indicates that an overwhelming majority of study participants did not believe their sleep patterns were affected by the traumatic experiences of the individuals they help.

The ProQOL R-IV also provided statements aimed at measuring study participants’ feelings about their potential for experiencing burnout. Responses to statements aimed at measuring feelings of being “bogged” down by the system or overwhelmed by the amount of work were distributed equally across the Likert scale. In response to feeling “bogged” down by the system, 6% of participants responded very often, 12% often, 18% somewhat often, 22% a few times, 18% rarely, 20% never. Furthermore, in response to feeling overwhelmed by their amount of work 8% of participant’s responded very often, 8% often, 29% somewhat often, 35% a few times, 16% rarely and 2% never. These responses indicate that participants feelings regarding feeling “bogged” down and overwhelmed varied among participants. However, responses were not significantly higher in any one response category when compared to other response categories.

While the prior statements aimed at measuring the more negative feelings of burnout, the ProQOL R-IV also provided statements aimed at measuring more positive feelings. Participants were asked to respond to statements regarding their feelings of happiness and connectedness with others. The majority of study participants (75%) replied that they were happy, either very often (43%) or often (32%). Only 2% of study participants replied that they were rarely happy and no participants reported that they
were never happy. Furthermore, data collected indicates that study participants reported feeling connected to others. This is evidenced by the fact that 90% of responses were made in the response ranges of very often (19%), often (38%) and somewhat often (33%). These responses regarding positive feelings may be correlated with participant’s beliefs. For example, if participants value feeling connected to others they may be more likely to seek and maintain connections with others.

In order to obtain comprehensive data regarding burnout the ProQOL also examined study participants beliefs. Statements regarding being the person they always wanted to be and possessing sustaining beliefs were provided to study participants. Responses obtained from the statement, “I am always the person I wanted to be” indicate that the majority of study participants appeared satisfied with the person they are. This was evidenced by the fact that 84% of responses were made in the response ranges of very often (40%), often (24%) and somewhat often (20%). Furthermore, participants also appeared to maintain beliefs that they believe sustain them. There were no responses to this statement under the response category of rarely or never. Response rates to the sustaining belief statement indicated that 45% of participants responded very often, 45% often and 10% somewhat often. This data may correlate to the variables measured for by the ProQOL R-IV when examining secondary trauma.

Secondary Trauma

Secondary trauma refers to trauma that is experienced vicariously through the helping of others who have experienced trauma (Figley, 1995, Nelson, Gardell and Harris, 2003). The ProQOL R-IV attempts to gather information in an effort to measure
levels of secondary trauma experienced by study participants. Of the 30 statements provided on the ProQOL R-IV 10 were aimed at measuring secondary trauma.

Participants’ responses to these statements were scored then compared to the ProQOL R-IV score interpretation chart. The interpretation chart provides for three levels of secondary trauma based on the sum of study participants’ scores. A score of 22 or less was identified as low probability of experiencing symptoms of secondary trauma, a score between 23 and 41 was identified as a moderate probability to experience symptoms of secondary trauma and a score of 42 or more was identified as a high probability of experiencing symptoms of secondary trauma.

Table 8
*Statements measuring secondary trauma*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#2</th>
<th>I am preoccupied with more than one person I help.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a Probation Officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>I think that I might be “infected” by the traumatic stress of those I help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#11</td>
<td>Because of my helping, I have felt “on edge” about various things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13</td>
<td>I feel depressed as a result of my work as a Probation Officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#14</td>
<td>I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have helped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#23</td>
<td>I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#25</td>
<td>As a result of my helping, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#28</td>
<td>I can’t recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9
*Responses to statements measuring secondary trauma*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>A Few Times</th>
<th>Somewhat Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statements regarding thoughts, feelings and behaviors in relation to secondary trauma were provided to participants on the ProQOL R-IV. Statements examined participants’ thoughts regarding preoccupation with more than one client served and difficulty separating participants’ personal lives from their lives as probation officers. Only 20% of study participants’ reported feelings of preoccupation with more than one client either very often (10%) or often (10%). Equal response rates to this statement were in the categories of somewhat often (22%) and a few times (22%). From the responses provided it appears that the majority of study participants had little difficulty separating their personal lives from their lives as probation officers. In response to difficulty separating personal lives from lives as probation officers, 20% of respondents reported never, 35% reported rarely and 29% reported a few times.

The ProQOL R-IV utilized participants’ statements regarding their feelings to measure levels of secondary trauma. Response rates indicated that a majority of study participants did not report feeling depressed as a result of their work as a probation officer. This was demonstrated by response rates of 34% responding never, 31% rarely, 29% a few times and 4% somewhat often. Furthermore, only 2% of study participants reported feeling depressed very often as a result of their work. Participants were also asked if they felt as though they were experiencing the trauma of someone they had
helped. Once again, data provided indicated that study participants reported a low level of secondary stress. In response to this statement the majority of study participants (83%) provided responses of rarely (31%) and never (52%) in regards to the belief that they were experiencing the trauma of someone they had helped.

In contrast to the statements measuring compassion satisfaction and burnout, statements measuring secondary trauma asked participants about their behavior. Participants were asked if they experienced intrusive and/or frightening thoughts as a result of their helping. Response rates to this statement indicated that the majority of participants did not experience intrusive and/or frightening thoughts. This is evidenced by the fact that 63% responded never and 20% responded rarely to experiencing intrusive or frightening thoughts. In order to further examine behavior participants were asked if they avoided certain situations or activities because they reminded them of frightening experiences of the people they help. Data obtained from this statement is consistent with data obtained from the other statement regarding participant behaviors in relation to secondary trauma. No participants responded with very often or often regarding avoidance and 85% of participants responded that they rarely (29%) or never (56%) avoided certain situations or behaviors because they reminded them of frightening experiences of those they help. Data collected from responses to statements on the ProQOL R-IV will be discussed in further detail in the discussion of results section.

Summary

The findings from this study indicated that most study participants demonstrated an average propensity for experiencing compassion fatigue. Data analysis indicated that
31% of participants scored high risk, 64% scored average risk and 4% scored low risk in regards to experiencing compassion fatigue. The findings also indicated that participants demonstrated an average propensity of experiencing burnout. Data analysis regarding burnout scores indicated that 87% of participants were average risk, 12% were low risk and 0 participants were high risk. In regards to secondary trauma the findings from the study indicated that participants were at a low risk of experiencing secondary trauma. No participants were classified high risk, 6% were classified average risk and 93% were classified low risk. The findings regarding the demonstrated average propensity for experiencing compassion fatigue and burnout will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 5. Furthermore, the finding that study participants were at a low risk of experiencing secondary trauma also appears important as it is in contradiction with prior research regarding the phenomena as it relates to helping professionals. This finding will also be discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to examine the prevalence of compassion fatigue, job burnout and vicarious traumatization (secondary trauma) as a result of job burnout among probation officers. Probation officers from Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties in California, participated in the survey. The ProQOL R-IV, a thirty-item Likert type questionnaire was utilized to measure the prevalence of the phenomena. Demographic questions were also utilized to document variables such as gender, age, marital status, ethnicity and years employed as a probation officer. Findings from the data analysis indicated that participants demonstrated an average propensity for experiencing compassion fatigue, an average propensity for experiencing job burnout and a low propensity of experiencing secondary trauma.

Discussion of findings

Results obtained from participants’ responses to statements on the ProQOL R-IV indicate that overall study participants did not appear to be at imminent risk for suffering from compassion fatigue. It appears the opposite is true as study participants appeared satisfied with their ability to demonstrate compassion towards the clients they worked with. Furthermore, the data indicates that study participants appeared to only be at an average risk of experiencing burnout based on their responses to the ProQOL R-IV. Perhaps the most significant results are those regarding secondary trauma and the fact
that over 90% or participants were identified as a low risk of experiencing the symptoms of secondary trauma.

Compassion Satisfaction

Data collected regarding participants’ responses to statements aimed at measuring compassion satisfaction indicated that study participants did not appear to be lacking in compassion satisfaction. Responses indicated that 31% of study participants demonstrated a high propensity of compassion satisfaction while 64% demonstrated an average propensity of compassion satisfaction. Furthermore, only 4% of study participants demonstrated a low propensity of compassion satisfaction. This data indicates that the majority of study participants appeared satisfied with the compassion they are able to express towards the clients they help. Prior research discussed in Chapter 2 (Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007, Bride & Figley, 2007, Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006, Figley, 1995, Haisch & Meyers, 2004, Hyman, 2004, Perron & Hiltz, 2006 & Tehrani, 2007) documented a fairly high level of compassion fatigue among the helping professions of social workers and law enforcement officers.

Compassion Fatigue

The literature review identifies compassion fatigue as the emotional response experienced by the helping professional who has been vicariously exposed to trauma and may feel their ability to emotionally invest in the client is somewhat depleted (Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). Therefore, the term compassion fatigue may be viewed as the opposite of compassion satisfaction. In reviewing the data collected from study participants it appears that the probation officers involved in the study did not
demonstrate a high amount of compassion fatigue as demonstrated by other helping professionals in prior research (Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007; Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006; Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). Based on the responses provided by study participants it appears the majority of participants are not experiencing compassion fatigue but rather compassion satisfaction. These results may be influenced by the fact that the majority of study participants did not report experiencing symptoms of secondary trauma and were identified as having only an average risk of burnout.

**Burnout**

Responses provided by study participants regarding burnout indicated that the majority of participants, 42 (88%), were identified as having an average risk for experiencing burnout. Furthermore, only 8% of participants were identified as having a low risk of experiencing burnout and no study participants were identified as having a high risk of experiencing burnout. This data does not reflect what current research has reported regarding burnout in Chapter 2 (Etzion, 1984, Im, 2009, Maslach, 1982, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001, Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997, Woody, 2006, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007 & Miller, 2007).

Research cited in Chapter 2 explains burnout as the final result of exposure to traumatic stress (Pearlman, 1989). However, burnout can also be uncovered by examining emotional states, attitudes and feelings regarding their work and the clients with whom helping professionals work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). These phenomena have been associated with compassion fatigue, secondary stress and ultimately the
manifestation of job burnout. Furthermore, the phenomena of burnout has been well
documented among the helping professions of social workers and law enforcement
officers (Etzion, 1984, Im, 2009, Maslach, 1982, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Maslach,
Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001, Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997,
Woody, 2006, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007 & Miller, 2007). Due to the fact
that participants from this study did not demonstrate a high propensity of experiencing
negative attitudes, feelings and/or emotional states towards the clients they work with,
participants from the study were not identified as having a high risk for experiencing
burnout. These findings may be affected by the fact that participants in the study also
demonstrated a low risk of experiencing the affects of secondary trauma.

The research hypothesis regarding job burnout as a result of vicarious
traumatization shared similar characteristics as other studies previously conducted
regarding addressing this phenomena among helping professionals (Etzion, 1984; Im,
2009; Lewandowski, 2003; Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach,
Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Perron & Hiltz, 2006; Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997 &
Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007). However, one significant difference in this study
was that all study participants were probation officers whereas participants from the
studies referred to in the literature review were either law enforcement officers or social
workers.

In regards to burnout, study participant responses from the Pro QOL R-IV were
largely indicative of an average response to burnout. Results indicated that 87% of
participants indicated an average level of burnout while 13% of participants indicated a
low level of burnout. In contrast to research cited throughout the literature review, no participants indicated that they suffered from a high level of burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization. A variety of factors may have impacted participants’ responses to the statements regarding job burnout.

The fact that the majority of study participants demonstrated a low level of compassion fatigue may be directly correlated to the low level of job burnout among study participants. Furthermore, the majority of participants indicated high levels of compassion satisfaction. This indicates that the majority of study participants are satisfied with their ability to empathize with and assist the clients they serve. This satisfaction may also correlate with the low level of job burnout reported by study participants. Furthermore, participants’ responses regarding job burnout may have been affected by their emotional or cognitive state on the day they answered the questionnaire. For example, their responses may have been significantly different if they were experiencing a good day at work or were experiencing a bad day at work.

Secondary Trauma

The most pronounced difference between the literature review and study results was the finding regarding secondary traumatization experienced by study participants. The literature review provided significant information regarding the presence and occurrence of secondary traumatization among helping professionals (Atkinson & Taylor, 2003; Bell, 2003; Dane, 2000; Figley, 1995; Pierson, 1989; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Miller, 2007; Perron & Hiltz, 2006; Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997; Tehrani, 2007). However, the data obtained from study participants was significantly different from that
obtained from the literature review. An overwhelming majority (93%) of study participants indicated a low level of secondary traumatic stress. Furthermore, only 7% indicated an average level of secondary traumatic stress while no participants demonstrated a high level of secondary traumatic stress.

Secondary trauma is a response experienced by people who have empathically listened to the traumatic experiences experienced by others (Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003). Furthermore, the symptoms of secondary trauma may manifest themselves in ways very similar to PTSD. Possible symptoms may include avoidance, distressing emotions, hyperarousal and cognitive changes (Bride, Radey & Figley, 2007). Participants from this study did not indicate a propensity for such symptoms or experiences. This was evidenced by response rates indicating that 94% of participants were identified as having a low risk of experiencing the symptoms of secondary trauma.

The difference in findings may be caused by a variety of reasons. Study participants may honestly believe that they are not affected by secondary trauma as a result of their work with traumatized individuals. As discussed in chapter 2, it may be possible that participants have effectively found a way to “cope” with the exposure to secondary traumatic stimuli (Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006; Dane, 2000; Creamer, 1995). Another possibility may be that reporting was biased. This researcher shares a working relationship with the majority of study participants. The relationship between the researcher and study participants may have affected the way in which study participants responded the survey. For example, participants may have been less likely to
accurately report their feelings on the questionnaire due to fear their responses would affect their relationship with this researcher in some way.

Reporting may also have been biased as participants may have feared that their participation in the study would adversely impact their employment. Fear of reprimand or reprisal may have affected the responses of participants. Furthermore, participants may have felt that their participation in the study would somehow affect the way in which their colleagues viewed them. Therefore, participants’ responses may have been influenced or biased by these thoughts or reservations.

**Professional Assessment and Considerations**

It is apparent from research documented throughout the literature review that compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization are indeed phenomena that do exist (Adams, Boscarino & Figley, 2006; Perron & Hiltz, 2006; Dane, 2000; Figley, 1995; Bell 2003; Atkinson & Taylor 2003; Pierson, 1989; Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997; Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007; Maslach 1982; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). However, after reviewing the data from this study it is apparent that these phenomena do not exist at a high rate among these particular study participants. The most significant contrast between the literature review and the data obtained from this study is the levels of secondary trauma expressed by study participants. Prior research has indicated that secondary trauma appears to have a high rate of occurrence among the helping professions of law enforcement officers and social workers (Bell, 2003, Bride, 2007, Dane, 2000, Hyman, 2004, Davidson & Smith, 1990, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Miller, 2007, McCann & Pearlman, 1990, Tehrani, 2007,
Salston & Figley, 2003). However, this study aimed to measure secondary trauma among the helping profession of probation officers. The data obtained indicated that the study participants did not suffer from secondary trauma at a rate as high as other helping professionals.

However, it is this author’s opinion that the difference in finding may be viewed as a positive rather than a negative. This study has shown that the probation officers surveyed do not report experiencing a high rate of secondary traumatic stress. Therefore, one may ascertain that they may be less likely to suffer from job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization and more likely to experience compassion satisfaction. While these are definitely positive results, they evoke the question of why these helping professionals are less likely to suffer from secondary traumatic stress. This causes this author to return to the exploration of variables in participants’ lives that they view as supportive.

Prior research has indicated that supportive factors play a significant role in reducing the effects of secondary traumatic stress among helping professionals (Etzion, 1984, Fleischman, 1984, Gove, 2005, Hyman, 2004, Park, Wilson & Lee, 2004). The data obtained from the study indicated that most study participants reported being in some type of relationship. This information coupled with the prior research on supportive relationships causes this author to wonder what affect study participants’ relationships had on their level of secondary traumatic stress. Further exploration of this information may help facilitate more practical uses for studies of this nature.
Implications for Future Research

Prior research has documented the phenomena of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious trauma among the helping professions of social workers and law enforcement officers (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Figley, 1995, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007, Hyman, 2004, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Salston & Figley, 2003 Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001, Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997). The findings obtained from this study indicate that study participants’ demonstrated a high amount of compassion satisfaction and a low propensity for job burnout and secondary trauma. Furthermore, participants reported high levels of compassion satisfaction.

Based on data obtained from this study, future research regarding the phenomena of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization could focus on exploring the demographic variables of study at greater length. Future research could attempt to study what factors influence study participants’ experiences with the phenomena. For example, future research may explore protective and/or supportive factors present in study participant’s lives. For example, future research could attempt to further analyze the influence of supportive relationships on participants’ lives. Further exploration into these variables may provide additional information as to the level at which study participants’ are affected by compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization.

Another way in which the research could be improved upon is use of a longitudinal design. A longitudinal design could have implications for the study in that a
participant’s mood on the day the data was collected could have implications on data obtained. For example, if a participant believed he/she was experiencing a good day at work they may have been less likely to respond affirmatively to statements regarding secondary trauma. Because of this a longitudinal study may have provided for more varied responses and would have captured participants’ feelings and emotions as they varied over time. Furthermore, a longitudinal study may have made participants more aware, even if subtly, about the existence of the phenomena of compassion satisfaction/fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization. This knowledge may also have impacted the way in which study participants responded to the statements on the questionnaire.

The study could also be improved upon by modifying the last two questions of the personal demographics section of the questionnaire. These questions asked participants to identify the prior job assignment in which they believed they were most able to utilize and experience more compassion. Participants were also asked to identify the job assignment in which they believed they were able to utilize and experience less compassion. The data from the study indicated that these were the only two questions without a 100% response rate. Some of the participants who did not respond to these questions wrote comments on the survey about not understanding the question. Some of these comments included statements such as “I don’t understand the question” or a question mark in lieu of a response. This leads the author to believe wording these questions differently may have a positive impact on the response rate to these two questions.
Helping professionals are the core of effective social work practice. Therefore, the cognitive, emotional and behavioral states of the helping professional not only affect the professional but the clients as well. Prior research has indicated that vicariously experiencing the trauma of others often has negative side effects such as compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout (Pierson, 1989; Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997; Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007; Maslach 1982; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001;McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Miller, 2007; Perron & Hiltz, 2006; Robinson, Sigman & Wilson, 1997; Tehrani, 2007). However, the helping professionals who participated in the study did not experience compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization at rates as high as other helping professionals (social workers and law enforcement officers) previously researched (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Figley, 1995, Nelson-Gardell & Harris, 2003, Sprang, Clark & Whit-Woosley, 2007, Hyman, 2004, Perron & Hiltz, 2006, Salston & Figley, 2003 Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001, Maslach & Jackson, 1981, Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997). While the findings from this study did not support prior research it should be noted that little to no research has been conducted previously regarding these phenomena as they relate to the helping profession of probation officers. Therefore, it appears important to examine the factors that contributed to the findings provided by the probation officers from this study.

One possibility to consider is that participants from this study may have been exposed to some variable that assisted them in effectively combating the phenomena of
compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization. Possible variables such as job training, supportive environment and the utilization of stress reduction techniques may have assisted in combating the phenomena. These findings may present a significant implication for social work. For example, analysis and identification of such variables may provide future researchers with insight on effective coping strategies or other supportive variables that may be useful to the helping professional. Knowledge regarding prevention techniques may assist the helping professional in reducing the probability of experiencing the phenomena of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and/or job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization.

Resilience may also play a part in the findings gathered from this study. Furthermore, factors such as caseload size or participant’s attitudes and/or beliefs may also affect findings. All of these factors play a significant role in the social work profession as they affect the social worker directly. Identifying ways in which to reduce the side effects of the phenomena of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and job burnout as a result of vicarious trauma will help the social work profession by providing knowledge that will help both client and clinician. Ultimately, being able to prevent these phenomena from occurring would be a desired outcome for the helping professional. However, it is not likely that every helping professional will be able to protect themselves from the possibility of experiencing these phenomena. Therefore, education regarding resilience factors and these phenomena may ultimately increase the effectiveness of the helping professional.
Conclusion

While the hypothesis from this study was not supported, the data generated from it can still prove beneficial. The phenomena of compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress and job burnout as a result of vicarious traumatization can significantly adversely impact the helping professional. Searching for ways in which to effectively address and possibly prevent the occurrence of these phenomena is important to the well being of the helping professional. Therefore, additional research regarding these phenomena as well as the variables that may impact them remains important. The helping professional is responsible for assisting and guiding clients who are experiencing or have previously experienced various forms of trauma. Reducing the affects of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and job burnout as a result of vicarious trauma will allow helping professionals to be more effective in their jobs. In turn this will allow the helping professional be able to more adequately respond to and address the needs of the clients they work with.
APPENDIX A

ProQOL R-IV
Your work puts you in direct contact with the personal lives of others. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. This survey explores your experiences, both positive and negative, as a Probation Officer. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current situation. Select a number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these feelings in the **last 30 days**.

0=Never  1=Rarely  2=A Few Times  3=Somewhat Often  4=Often  5=Very Often

____1. I am happy.
____2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I help.
____3. I get satisfaction from being able to help people.
____4. I feel connected to others.
____5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
____6. I feel invigorated after working with those I help.
____7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a Probation Officer.
____8. I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I help.
____9. I think that I might have been “infected” by the traumatic stress of those I help.
____10. I feel trapped by my work as a Probation Officer.
____11. Because of my helping, I have felt “on edge” about various things.
____12. I like my work as a Probation Officer.
____13. I feel depressed as a result of my work as a Probation Officer.
____14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have helped.
____15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
____16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.
____17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
____18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
____19. Because of my work as a Probation Officer, I feel exhausted.
____20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I help and how I could help them.
____21. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work or the size of my case [work] load I have to deal with.
____22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
____23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I help.
____24. I am proud of what I can do to help.
____25. As a result of my helping, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
____26. I feel “bogged down” by the system.
____27. I have thoughts that I am a “success” as a Probation Officer.
____28. I can’t recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
____29. I am a very sensitive person.
____30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.
APPENDIX B

Questionnaire
Please circle the answer that most appropriately applies to you.

1. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

2. What is your age?

3. What is your marital status?
   - Single
   - Married
   - Committed relationship
   - Divorced
   - Widowed

4. What ethnic group do you most identify with?
   - Hispanic/Latino
   - African American
   - American Indian
   - Caucasian
   - Other

5. How many years of formal education have you completed?
   - No college
   - Some college
   - Bachelor’s Degree
   - Master’s Degree
   - Other

6. How many years have you worked as a Probation Officer?

7. Circle the job title that best fits your current job assignment.
   - Juvenile Supervision
   - Juvenile Court
   - Juvenile Intake
   - Placement
   - Adult Supervision
8. Circle any less lethal or lethal force options you carry as part of your job.

- Pepper Spray
- Baton
- Taser
- Gun
- None

9. How many different job assignments have you held during the course of your employment as a Probation Officer?

10. Of all of the previous job assignments you have held, which one do you attribute with experiencing more positive aspects of compassion?

11. Of all of the previous job assignments you have held, which one do you attribute with experiencing more negative aspects of compassion?
APPENDIX C

Consent to Participate in Research
Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in research which will be conducted by Jamie Sachs, a student in the Master of Social Work program at California State University, Sacramento. The study will investigate secondary trauma as it relates to the work of Probation Officers. Probation officers from Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties will be asked to participate in the study. The collected data will be compiled and analyzed to look for common themes regarding secondary trauma and job burnout as it relates to the Probation Officer role.

You will be asked to complete several questions about your overall job satisfaction, exposure to secondary trauma and factors relating to job burnout. The survey may require up to twenty minutes of your time. Please answer all questions. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants may withdraw from the study at anytime without any consequence. Data from the study will be kept in a locked box and will be destroyed upon completion of the study, in approximately six months.

The procedure in this study is not associated with any physical health risks. However, trauma can have a variety of mental health affects on those who experience it. By responding to the statements on the survey, you may experience minimal distress when recalling feelings, behaviors and/or emotions associated with providing support, guidance and resources for individuals who have experienced trauma.

Participation in this study may help you gain insight into how your work affects you emotionally and behaviorally. Furthermore, it is hoped that the results of this study will be beneficial in addressing the needs of employees in the field of social services, particularly Probation Officers.

There is no need for you to label your survey with any type of identifying information as all surveys will be kept confidential. Only group data from the survey will be reported.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Jamie Sachs at (530) 458-0665 or by e-mail at jamiehembree@comcast.net or her project advisor Dr. Teiahsha Bankhead at bankhead@csus.edu or (916) 278-7177.

Please sign below indicating you have read, understand, and consent to participate in the study.

__________________________
Participant

Date
APPENDIX D

List of Resources
List of Resources

This resource list may be utilized by any participant from the study who believes he/she would like behavioral health care assistance as a result of participating in the study.

Colusa County Department of Behavioral Health
162 East Carson Street
Colusa, Ca 95932
(530) 458-0280

North Valley Behavioral Health
1535 Plumas Ct.
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 790-2520

Sutter North Medical Foundation
480 Plumas Ct.
Yuba City, CA 95991
(530) 749-3500

UC Davis
2230 Stockton Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95817
(916) 734-3574

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REFERENCES


