How Is Workplace Conflict Related to Voluntary Turnover and Lost Cases?

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CONFLICT
Purpose

Conduct a survey using a representative sample of BCBAs to establish preliminary information on the prevalence and impact of workplace conflict.
Participants

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Listserv:
• 15,856 BCBAs & BCBA-Ds (03/08/17)
  • 3,569 (23%) opened email
  • 665 (19%) attempted survey
    ◦ 600 (17%) completed survey

U.S. Professional Employment Survey (APBA, 2014)
• 12,588 BCBAs and BCBA-Ds received invitation
  ◦ 925 (7.3%) completed survey
Method- 25 Total Survey Questions

• Demographics – 10 Total Items  (Kazemi, Shapiro, & Rylander, 2015)

• Conflict Rate  (Azoulay, et al., 2009)
  • “How often do you deal with conflict with…?”
    • Likert Scale (1=never, 5=daily)
  • “How often is conflict unresolved with…?”
    • Likert Scale (1=never, 5=always)
Method - Survey Questions

• Other factors related to workplace conflict – 13 Total items
  • 2 items: Turnover (Kazemi, Shapiro, & Rylander, 2015; Shafer, 2002)
  • 1 item: Lost Cases
  • 2 items: Job Satisfaction (Kazemi, Shapiro, & Rylander, 2015; Shafer, 2002)
  • 2 items: Prior Training (Azoulay et al., 2009)
Method – Definition of Conflict

“dispute, disagreement, or difference of opinion related to the management of a patient”, and “involving more than one individual and requiring some decision or action” (Studdert et al., 2003)
Participant Demographics
### Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median Age: 36 (SD=9.7)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Workload

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Unemployed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specified</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Years with BCBA Credential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little over 1 to 3 years</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little over 3 to 6 years</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 years</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 58%
## Years as Supervisor in ABA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little over 1 to 3 years</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little over 3 to 6 years</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 years</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 61%
## Service Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Setting</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-Based Program</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; Home-Based Program</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day School Program</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Program</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center-Based Program</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some combination of above</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 64%

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Percent: 64%
## Primary Job Duties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervise clinical team</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work directly with clients</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Analyst NOT working with clients</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide behavior services while working in different profession</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Academic/Researcher</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Method – Participant Recruitment and Procedures

Recruitment through Behavior Analyst Certification Board

• National Distribution of Electronic Survey
• Follow-up invitation 2 weeks after initial distribution
• Qualtrics survey platform

Cover letter with invitation to participate

• Voluntary participation
• IRB Exempt (all responses anonymous)
• 15-20 minutes to complete
Results

And the Survey Says...
Total Rate of Workplace Conflict
Median Rate of Conflict with Various Individuals in the Workplace

73% of BCBAs Report Experiencing Monthly Rate of Workplace Conflict
Variables Related to Workplace Conflict
Rate of Unresolved Conflict

Turnover
Lost Cases
Job Satisfaction
Rate of Unresolved Conflict

Turnover
Lost Cases
Job Satisfaction
Turnover Related to Total Mean Rate of Unresolved Conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Total Rate of Unresolved Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay</td>
<td>(M=21, SD=10.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave</td>
<td>(M=23, SD=9.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<.01*

n=280

n=197
Turnover

Rate of Unresolved Conflict

Lost Cases

Job Satisfaction
Rate of Unresolved Conflict

Turnover

Lost Cases

Job Satisfaction
I have lost or had to terminate a case/contract due to conflict.
Rate of Unresolved Conflict

Turnover

Lost Cases

Job Satisfaction
I feel my satisfaction with my overall job is related to how much conflict I face.

87% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement.
Variables Related to Workplace Conflict

- Rate of Unresolved Conflict
- Turnover
- Lost Cases
- Job Satisfaction
Other Factors Related to Workplace Conflict

• Primary job duties related to total rate of conflict (p<.05)
  • Supervising clinical team > No clients
  • Supervising clinical team > Academic/researcher

• Number of clients related to total rate of conflict (p<.05)
  • 1+ clients > 0 clients

• Years as supervisor related to total rate of conflict (p<.05)
  • 3+ years > less than 1 year
Have you ever received formal training on how to resolve conflict in the workplace?

88% of BCBAs Report Interest in Conflict Resolution Training

Percent of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - Workshop</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - Educational Training</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Responses

“I left working with the schools after 5 years of daily conflict because the district simply refused to follow IEPs ....”

“Am leaving my University due to workplace conflict”

“Left a job altogether”

“Workplace violence threat to my personal safety and that of my family and employees from a parent”
Conclusions – What Have We Learned?

• 73% of BCBAs report monthly rate of workplace conflict
  • Most frequently occurs with teachers, caregivers, colleagues, & supervisees

• Unresolved conflict is related to turnover
  • BCBAs perceive workplace conflict impacts lost cases and job satisfaction

• Participant characteristics associated with workplace conflict
  • Primary job duties, number of clients, and years as a supervisor

• BCBAs report interest in receiving formal training in Conflict Resolution
Limitations

• Self-report rather than direct observation

• Snowball sample
  • Possible more applicable to those who find conflict interesting

• No definition of unresolved conflict provided to participants

• No specific information obtained about prior training
  • No definition of empirically validated training (e.g., BST) provided
Implications & Future Directions

• We now have an idea of the impact of conflict for BCBAs

• Participants are interested in Conflict Resolution Training

Next Steps:
• Disseminate

• Develop training tools

• Go out into the community and start training!
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References