

St. Cloud State University

The Repository at St. Cloud State

Culminating Projects in Special Education

Department of Special Education

8-2013

Contributing Factors To Retention of Direct Support Professionals in Group Home Settings

Wendi Rhea Foss

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/sped_etds



Part of the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

This thesis submitted by Wendi Rhea Foss in partial fulfillment of the
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO RETENTION OF DIRECT SUPPORT
hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.
PROFESSIONALS IN GROUP HOME SETTINGS

by

Wendi Rhea Foss

B. A., Whittier College, 2003

A Thesis


Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty 

of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science

St. Cloud, Minnesota

Dean
School of Graduate Studies

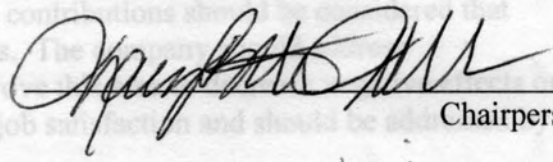
August, 2013

13002037

CONTR This thesis submitted by Wendi Rhea Foss in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

Wendi Rhea Foss

This research investigates the factors that affect job satisfaction and retention of direct support professionals in group home settings. The researcher utilized exit interview surveys from 40 direct support professionals who had resigned from their positions. The researcher examined the results of open-ended survey questions for themes using grounded theory. Major factors affecting job satisfaction and retention were pay, management, and communication. These had both positive and negative effects on job satisfaction as well as retention. The research suggests the company examine these factors to find ways to decrease the negative effects on job satisfaction and turnover. The company should work closer with management to provide training, address issues relating to management that involve turnover, and provide exit interview results to management. Increased financial contributions should be made that include benefits, merit increases, or bonuses. The company should address communication issues and continue to improve staff retention. These factors are affecting job satisfaction and should be subject to further research.



Perry Wilk
Chairperson

Month _____ Year _____

Approved by Research Committee:



Mary Beth Noli
Chairperson

Dean
School of Graduate Studies

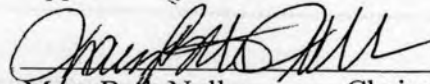
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO RETENTION OF DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS IN GROUP HOME SETTINGS

Wendi Rhea Foss

This research investigates the factors that affect job satisfaction and retention of direct support professionals in group home settings. The researcher utilized exit interview surveys from 40 direct support professionals who had resigned from their positions. The researcher examined the results of open-ended survey questions for themes using grounded theory. Major factors affecting job satisfaction and retention were pay, management, and communication. These had both positive and negative effects on job satisfaction as well as retention. The research suggests the company examine these factors to find ways to decrease the negative effects on job satisfaction and turnover. The company should work closer with management to provide training, address issues relating to management that involve turnover, and provide exit interview results to management. Increased financial contributions should be considered that include benefits, merit increases, or bonuses. The company should address communication issues and continue to improve this area to decrease negative effects on staff retention. These factors are affecting job satisfaction and should be addressed by further research.

Month _____
Year _____

Approved by Research Committee:



Mary Beth Noll

Chairperson

Chapter	Page
Results.....	34
Question 1.....	34
Question 2.....	36
Question 3.....	38
Question 4.....	40
Question 5.....	42
Question 6.....	44
Question 7.....	46
Question 8.....	48
Question 9.....	48
Question 10.....	48
Question 11.....	49
Question 12.....	49
Question 13.....	51
Question 14.....	51
Question 15.....	52
Question 16.....	52
Question 17.....	53
Question 18.....	54
Question 19.....	54
Question 20.....	55
Question 21.....	55
Question 22.....	56
Question 23.....	56
Question 24.....	57
Question 25.....	57
Question 26.....	57
Question 27.....	57
Question 28.....	57
Question 29.....	57
Question 30.....	57
Question 31.....	57
Question 32.....	57
Question 33.....	57
Question 34.....	57
Question 35.....	57
Question 36.....	57
Question 37.....	57
Question 38.....	57
Question 39.....	57
Question 40.....	57
Question 41.....	57
Question 42.....	57
Question 43.....	57
Question 44.....	57
Question 45.....	57
Question 46.....	57
Question 47.....	57
Question 48.....	57
Question 49.....	57
Question 50.....	57
Question 51.....	57
Question 52.....	57
Question 53.....	57
Question 54.....	57
Question 55.....	57
Question 56.....	57
Question 57.....	57
Question 58.....	57
Question 59.....	57
Question 60.....	57
Question 61.....	57
Question 62.....	57
Question 63.....	57
Question 64.....	57
Question 65.....	57
Question 66.....	57
Question 67.....	57
Question 68.....	57
Question 69.....	57
Question 70.....	57
Question 71.....	57
Question 72.....	57
Question 73.....	57
Question 74.....	57
Question 75.....	57
Question 76.....	57
Question 77.....	57
Question 78.....	57
Question 79.....	57
Question 80.....	57
Question 81.....	57
Question 82.....	57
Question 83.....	57
Question 84.....	57
Question 85.....	57
Question 86.....	57
Question 87.....	57
Question 88.....	57
Question 89.....	57
Question 90.....	57
Question 91.....	57
Question 92.....	57
Question 93.....	57
Question 94.....	57
Question 95.....	57
Question 96.....	57
Question 97.....	57
Question 98.....	57
Question 99.....	57
Question 100.....	57
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Historical Background.....	3
Theoretical Background.....	6
Statement of the Problem.....	8
Research Question.....	8
Importance.....	8
Summary.....	51
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	10
V. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION.....	52
Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction.....	10
Conclusions.....	52
Summary.....	24
Recommendations for Future Research.....	53
III. METHOD.....	28
Implications for Practice.....	54
Participants and Setting.....	28
Management.....	54
Procedure.....	29
Training and Orientation.....	55
Measures.....	29
Exit Interviews.....	36
Data Analysis.....	30
Limitations.....	56
IV. RESULTS.....	32
Summary.....	57
Exit Interview Themes.....	32

Chapter	Page
Results.....	34
Question 1	34
Question 2	36
Question 3	38
Question 8	40
Question 9	42
Question 4	44
Question 5	46
Question 7	48
Question 10	48
Question 6	49
Summary	51
V. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	52
Conclusions.....	52
Recommendations for Future Research	53
Implications for Practice	54
Management.....	54
Training and Orientation.....	55
Exit Interviews	56
Limitations	56
Summary	57

Chapter	Page
REFERENCES	58
APPENDICES	

LIST OF TABLES

A. Survey	64
-----------------	----

Table	Page
1 Principles of Normalization	5
2 Summary of Related Literature	24
3 Response Frequency for Question 1	35
4 Response Frequency for Question 2	37
5 Response Frequency for Question 3	39
6 Response Frequency for Question 4	41
7 Response Frequency for Question 5	43
8 Response Frequency for Question 6	45
9 Response Frequency for Question 7	47
10 Response Frequency for Question 8	48
11 Response Frequency for Question 9	49
12 Response Frequency for Question 10	50

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

Table	Page
1. Principles of Normalization	5
2. Summary of Related Literature.....	24
3. Response Frequency for Question 1	35
4. Response Frequency for Question 2	37
5. Response Frequency for Question 3	39
6. Response Frequency for Question 8	41
7. Response Frequency for Question 9	43
8. Response Frequency for Question 4	45
9. Response Frequency for Question 5	47
10. Response Frequency for Question 7	48
11. Response Frequency for Question 10	49
12. Response Frequency for Question 6	50

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Staff retention is one of the greatest challenges group home managers face in their mission to provide direct, quality care for adults with IDD. Direct support professionals within residential settings are defined as “employees who are paid, working part-time or full time, and spend the majority of their time in ‘hands on’ direct service to individuals with disabilities” (Hall & Hall, 2002, p. 328).

Unfortunately, group homes that utilize direct support professionals to care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have especially high rates of staff turnover (Stone, 2004). For example, Lakin and Lakin reported that the turnover rate in small group homes in Minnesota in the late 1990s was 46% (as cited in Hall & Hall, 2002).

Group homes can be four- to six-bedroom homes or apartments or duplexes that provide staff to assist the residents of the home. The number and type of staffing is dependent upon the level of care required. A group home is licensed under state and federal regulations and is defined as:

housing occupied by two or more single persons or families consisting of common space and/or facilities for group use by the occupants of the unit, and (except in the case of shared one bedroom units) separate private space for

each family. It also includes group housing for elderly or disabled persons. Supportive services may be provided. These structures are usually large, single-family units that are being used for this purpose. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD], 1994, p. 1)

In exit interviews with group home direct support professionals, the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP) cited three major reasons why group home direct support professionals leave the position: the need for a higher-paying job, a desire for more flexible hours, and difficult relationships with co-workers and supervisors (NDACP, 2010). According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, group home direct support professionals in 2011 were paid a median hourly income of \$11.63/hour to provide round-the-clock staffing to care for individuals with medical and/or behavioral needs living in the home, which makes it difficult to hire and retain qualified staff (Geiger-Brown, Muntaner, Lipscomb, & Trinkoff, 2004). As the setting is less formal and more intimate, positive relationships among group home staff are vital in creating a satisfying and productive work environment, and building alliances and sharing personal experiences can help workers cope with high levels of stress in difficult situations such as working in a group home (Hall & Hall, 2002; Mittal, Rosen, & Leanna, 2009; Smergut, 2007; Stone, 2004).

Direct support professionals are essential to operating a group home and providing excellent care for people with IDD who live in the home (Hall & Hall, 2002). This remains essential as clients are negatively impacted by high turnover rates as they may receive inconsistent care (Stone, 2004). For example, people who live in group homes could have more accidents and injuries, less time with staff, and diminished physical and emotional health (Stone, 2004). Not only is retaining staff for

long periods of time beneficial to the residents of the home, it is also financially beneficial to the organizations (Ford & Honnor, 2000; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007). Staff retention creates consistency for people in the homes and decreased expenditures for the company (Buykx, Humphreys, Wakerman, & Pashen, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of direct support professionals who work in group homes and to identify factors that contribute to turnover. Specifically, this study seeks to identify key variables related to employee satisfaction, retention, and the implications for administration of group home facilities.

Historical Background

The United States has a long history of providing care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who are unable to care for themselves. Prior to the 1960s and 1970s, people with IDD were typically excluded from public life and placed in large residential or institutional facilities (NDACP, 2010). With the advent of the deinstitutionalization movement during the 1970s prompted by a number of court cases and legislative acts that established the equal rights of people with disabilities, the care and education of children with disabilities shifted toward more inclusive community approaches (Murdick, Gartin, & Crabtree, 2007).

The terminology used to refer to individuals with IDD has also changed over time. According to Comstock (2011), people were referred to as “idiot/moron/imbecile” in the early 1800s which was defined as “madness, an inability to connect to reality and have lower intelligence. Comstock also made a distinction regarding

idiocy in terms of people's developmental ability. Thus, physicians and other professionals began to diagnose people as mentally retarded in the early 1900s (Szasz, 2005). At present, educational and diagnostic classifications of intellectually and developmentally disabled (IDD) has also been established (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2013).

As changes in inclusionary practices and the evolution of terminology reflect the consideration of individuals with disabilities with the respect and dignity, best practice treatments have also evolved. Because of this, children with severe disabilities are able to remain in home settings and adults are now able to choose to live in community-based home-like settings (Hewitt & Larson, 2007; Wolfensberger, 2011a/b). These concepts have been described in the literature as principles of normalization (Nirje, 1969, Wolfensberger, 2011a/b).

Normalization. Nirje (1994), a researcher from Sweden, was one of the first to promote normalization principles when caring for persons who were "mentally retarded" (p. 19). He advocated that people with mental retardation should be provided with similar programs and life experiences as people without mental retardation, regardless of age, or ability. His normalization principle addressed eight areas: normal rhythm of the day, life routine, normal rhythm of the year, normal development, choices and dreams, socialization and the ability to live in a home environment. These areas are described briefly in Table 1.

Table 1
Principles of Normalization

NORMALIZATION AREA	DESCRIPTION
1. Normal rhythm of the day	There is a flow to the day such as rising, getting dressed, and eating breakfast in a manner that suits the person. When these activities are scheduled in a facility, it interferes with their ability to establish their own daily rhythm.
2. Life routine	Life routine is where people are able to go and do things they enjoy, work or socialize as they wish. People's days should not be planned out to the minute; there is a need to have time that they are able to do whatever they want.
3. Normal rhythm of the year	Experience a normal year is where people enjoy holidays, go on vacation and travel.
4. Normal development	Normal development is where people are able to grow and learn through experiences.
5. Choices and dreams	People should be allowed to make choices, have aspirations and dreams in life.
6. Socialization	Socialization is where people are able to interact with different sexes and people throughout their life. People should not be segregated to live with all men or all women as that is a choice they should be able to make.
7. Ability to live in a home environment	People should also be able to live in a home environment, even if that is in a large facility

Wolfensberger (2011b), a researcher who later expanded Nirje's principle, did not feel the term *normalization* was sufficient to describe the positive and negative effects of human relationships. In 1983, Wolfensberger (2011b) revised the principle of normalization and redefined it as *social role valorization* to reflect more clearly the importance of social roles in describing who the general population is and how they behaved. A person's social role is dependent upon its value of the role in society (Wolfensberger, 2000). However, people's social role can also be de-valued to the degree that people dislike or shame them and do not want to be around them (Wolfensberger, 2011b).

In the case of *Olmstead v. L. C.* (Georgia Department of Human Resources, 1999), a decision was made by the court that would change how people were treated in regard to where they could live.

L. C. was a woman who was voluntarily committed due to being diagnosed with Mental Retardation and Schizophrenia. E. W. was a woman who was voluntarily committed due to being diagnosed with Mental Retardation and a personality disorder. They were placed into a psychiatric unit and confined for treatment. Their treating professionals determined that the women were able to move into a community-based program; however, the women remained in the facility. The suit was filed citing that Title II was violated in that they failed to place both women in an appropriate placement according to their professionals. The court determined that the women should be placed in an appropriate setting according to the recommendations of the professionals and that lack of funding is not a reason to not place people in appropriate settings. (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/98-536.ZS.html>)

This case paved the way for people with IDD to be placed in community-based settings, provided treatment according to their needs and provided funding so they are able to live in the community. *Olmstead v. L. C.* had shown that people with IDD should be treated fairly, be welcomed into the community and that the states need to serve the people that need their services.

Theoretical Background

Two theories are relevant to the discussion of staff retention: Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory and John Holland's Vocational theory. These theoretical frameworks are discussed in this section.

Motivation-hygiene theory. Frederick Herzberg developed the theory of motivation-hygiene in 1959. Herzberg determined that motivation factors relate to job satisfaction, whereas hygiene factors relate to job dissatisfaction (Miner, 2005).

Motivation factors are related to the job itself such as acknowledgement, growth, job duties, and responsibility (Bordieri & Peterson, 1988). Hygiene factors are related to the type of job such as working environment, wage, policy and procedure, management, co-worker relations and salary (Bordieri & Peterson, 1988).

Vocational theory. John Holland developed the theory of vocational choice and achievement, which asserts that a person's personality dictates the type of job he or she seeks (Holland, 1963). Holland expanded this theory in 1997 and called it the Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments (Gottfredson & Johnstun, 2009). According to Holland, because there are different types of work environments and different types of people, it is evident that some people fit better in certain environments and some environments are a better fit for certain people (Gottfredson & Johnstun, 2009). To evaluate *personality types*, Holland proposed the use of personality inventories, some of which are purported to analyze up to six personality types. The premise is that such inventories will result in a "goodness of fit" with a job, so that employers can match an employee with a specific job or they can search more effectively for a person who will fit a particular position (Holland, 1963, pp. 548-549).

Summary. Holland and Herzberg both theorized that there are internal and external factors that influence job satisfaction. Their theories support the idea that when staff is happy working in their jobs, they will provide a higher quality of care and routine for people with IDD. Thus, it could be reasonably surmised that job

satisfaction is directly correlated with staff retention. Direct support professionals who fit well in their positions and work well with people with IDD will be able to manage internal as well as external factors that contribute to job satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

Direct support professionals do not remain employed in group homes for longer than 1 year and often work in the DSP position to gain experience to move on to a higher position. The retention of group home direct support professionals is critical in ensuring positive outcomes for its residents, and it also contributes to the company's ability to continue operating to provide essential services.

Research Question

This study was guided by one major research question: What factors contribute to turnover for direct support professionals in group homes? The study also examined factors related to job satisfaction with regard to compensation, employee relationships, and other factors that may influence job satisfaction.

Importance

Working in a home setting entails intimate interactions and supports that cannot be sustained effectively when there is frequent turnover and new staff is continually providing care for residents. The constant rotation of new staff in group homes affects clients' lives, routines, care, self-esteem, and trust. New staff can disrupt the daily routine of the group home residents which can be deleterious to their basic level of functioning. Chaos and novelty often act as triggers to maladaptive

behaviors and can cause not only a cyclical effect of employee stress and resident overt behaviors, but also can have a negative effect on relationship-building and trust between resident and staff member. Additionally, new staff is under time constraints to know all they can about the people for whom they are providing care, regardless of how much training they are given.

It is documented that key areas of difficulty for individuals diagnosed with IDD are the formation of peer and social relationships, problem-solving, frustration tolerance, and use of appropriate coping skills (Agran, Blanchard, Wehmeyer, & Hughes, 2002; Cheng & Chen, 2010; Smith & Matson, 2010; Willner & Tomlinson, 2007). These needs are further exacerbated when the clients have a frequent rotation of individuals that were poorly trained engaging in intimate daily living activities (e.g., assisting with bathing and toileting). Many people with IDD have lived for years with staffing disruptions that make it difficult for them to develop appropriate attachment styles to staff members that may exacerbate a person's medical condition, behavioral issues, and negative interactions with staff.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter I, historical and theoretical background information was presented regarding direct support professionals who work in group homes. In this chapter, a general overview is presented of nine studies that examined factors affecting the job satisfaction of direct support professionals working in group homes.

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

Ford and Honnor (2000) examined job satisfaction in terms of perception and concerns of direct service staff in community group home settings working with people with intellectual disabilities. Participants included 232 South Australian direct services staff who worked with adolescents or adults with severe or profound intellectual disabilities. The staff worked an average of 29.9 hours per week serving three to four individuals in a community-based group home setting. A total of 115 participants completed a questionnaire that took approximately 45 minutes to complete. The questionnaires were mailed to direct service staff at group home sites with a cover letter explaining the study and pre-paid return envelope. The surveys were composed with 22 out of 41 questions that utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging

from *very dissatisfied* (1) to *very satisfied* (5). The remaining 27 questions were analyzed using SPSS-X by categorizing responses into coding units according to specific themes. The reliability was tested for each coding unit and the reliability rating was 82%.

Demographics of the survey participants were shown in percentages. Most of the participants were female (76%), 21 to 30 years old (43%), and had some high school or were high school graduates (63%). Results were reported in four sections: job-related information, involvement in decision-making, job support, and working conditions. All results were presented showing the standard deviations, mean rankings, and t-tests for each section. The job-related information was presented showing the standard deviations and mean rankings for responses to questions. Overall, the participants indicated moderate satisfaction to the questions in this area. T-tests were used to analyze the results, which showed that staff were most satisfied with information from the residents' families ($t = 2.89$) and information regarding residents' medical/ physical needs ($t = 8.87$). The involvement in decision-making showed that the participants' highest satisfaction was with their input in objectives and goals for the residents ($t = 3.70$). The participants were most dissatisfied with how their supervisor responds to their input in decision making ($t = -5.08$). The category of job support showed moderate satisfaction with support they received from co-workers ($t = 7.12$). The working conditions showed that the participants had most satisfaction with requirements of the job and the staff's skill level ($t = 9.63$).

The study revealed that staff has moderately high satisfaction levels with interactions with residents, their jobs, co-workers, and the nature of the work itself. The study indicated low satisfaction regarding the lack of performance feedback, involvement in decision-making, and advancement. The study demonstrated the need for more feedback and better relationships with administrative staff. Furthermore, it showed that staff needs to have more involvement in decision-making with regard to development of goals for clients, input within the agency through their supervisor, and feedback from supervisor as a result of the input. The limitations of this study are that it was a short-term study that focused specifically on community-based group homes. The study was limited as it represented the demographics of the specific agency's residential programs only and was not representative of the field as a whole.

Hatton et al. (2001) examined job-search behavior and factors connected to a staff member's intent to leave an organization. The participants included 450 staff in five services in the United Kingdom; their services included administrative, therapeutic, managerial, and domestic. The participants were mostly female, averaging to be age 30, and reported to be married.

Survey questionnaires were distributed to staff through their internal mail and a freepost return envelope was posted for participants to return their surveys. Four hundred and fifty surveys of the 1,023 surveys were returned. The survey questionnaire examined 20 areas that included job characteristics, degree of autonomy, administrative and collegial support, work satisfaction, and labor conditions.

Hatton et. al. (2001) noted that work satisfaction, easier subjective work labor conditions, and job strain were directly associated with intended staff turnover as well as the behavior of searching for jobs. Younger staff age was directly associated with intended staff turnover only, in which researchers noted that young staff had the intention to leave their job. This study examined more specific variables that affect staff turnover and how employers may be able to prevent that in the future. The study examined intended turnover but not actual turnover. The current study furthered research as to specific factors that influenced staff turnover. Further research would benefit the field and continue to provide tools for companies to decrease staff turnover.

Test, Flowers, Hewitt, and Solow (2003) examined issues relating to how recruitment and retention of direct care staff affected people with developmental disabilities. The authors conducted focus groups with 53 direct support staff, 56 administrators, and 70 people who received services. A total of 181 direct support staff and 108 administrators also completed a survey. Information was gathered from multiple people such as administrators, direct support staff and persons with disabilities receiving services.

Direct support staff focus groups reported the lack of trained direct support staff created emotional concerns for the people who received services. The emotional concerns and lack of trained direct support staff contributed to lower job satisfaction. Administrator focus groups reported that new direct support staff was not comfortable working with people with disabilities. They also reported that people often refused to

work in direct support staff positions due to low wages and often left their direct support staff positions for jobs with higher wages. Both groups agreed turnover created problems for clients and staff, decreased quality of care, decreased staff morale, and increased workload. The people who received services indicated that high turnover created sadness and other personal problems, and that they needed time to build trust in new relationships.

Job characteristics and job benefits for direct support staff as reported by administrators were reported using percentages. Results showed that a majority of staff worked for nonprofit agencies (48%) and primarily with people who had developmental disabilities (95.4%). The authors reported that staff provided a variety of services to people and worked a variety of schedules, but primarily the day shift (88%).

Results revealed the average hourly wage was \$7.82 for new direct support staff and ranged from \$9.13 to \$11.41 for experienced direct support staff. Results showed that health insurance was provided by most agencies (68%), and 52% of agencies provided other benefits. In this study, staff turnover rates were calculated to be 41%.

This study confirmed that recruitment and retention are problems for both people receiving services and the administrators and the staff who serve them. The limitations to this study are small sample size, the possibility of biased or untruthful responses on surveys, and lack of knowledge regarding service type. In order to

address these problems, for staff the authors recommended wage increases, increased benefits, and role clarification.

Test, Flowers, Hewitt, and Solow (2004) examined training needs for direct support staff from perspectives of the administrators, direct support staff, and the individuals who are served. A snowball sampling technique was used to recruit direct support staff and administrators as survey participants. A total of 108 administrators and 181 direct support staff returned the surveys that examined demographic information and training and employment needs in 12 competency areas. Focus groups were also conducted with 56 administrators, 53 direct support staff, and 70 consumers to gather information regarding direct support staff training.

Survey results indicated the majority of direct support staff respondents were not married (53%), female (82%), an average age of 37 years old, and European American (54%). Thirty-two percent had a bachelor's degree and they worked an average of 4 years at their current job. The survey revealed administrator respondents were female (56%), European American (71%), average age of 44 years old, and had a bachelor's degree (68%). The administrators supervised various areas, mostly vocational (31%), residential (19%), and multiple areas (17%).

Direct support staff reported they had already received training in facilitation, documentation and communication. They indicated the need for additional training in community living skills and supports, crisis intervention, advocacy, education, self-development, and training. According to administrators, direct care staff was most

competent in communication, documentation, and crisis intervention. Administrators ranked communication and documentation as training needs for direct support staff.

Focus groups for the direct support staff reported that they needed training in 10 areas: crisis intervention, stress management, personal protection, goals and knowledge of specific disabilities, advocacy for consumer rights, safety, CPR, infectious diseases, medication, and first aid. Administrators reported that direct support staff needed training in many areas: awareness of consumer's needs, general needs of people with developmental disabilities, provision of choices, respect of others as equals, teaching/instruction methods for people with developmental disabilities, client rights, confidentiality, medication administration, development and implementation of behavior management plans, and positive behavior intervention strategies.

Consumers reported that direct support staff needed training in awareness of consumer needs, understanding how different people learn and gain knowledge, methods of communication with consumers, medication administration, behavior management, CPR, and first aid.

Test et al. (2004) noted the low survey return rates and the study were conducted in a specific southern state which limited generalization of findings. They also noted the variance between the direct support staff survey responses and administrator survey responses, which was probably due to the differences in the Likert scales. However, both direct support staff and administrators acknowledged the

need for more training, although limited resources and lack of time prevented administrators from providing this training.

Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, and Bagaka (2008) examined how job satisfaction was affected by stress and support of direct care workers. The participants were 644 direct care workers in Ohio who worked in 49 facilities including home care agencies, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes. The authors noted that, "the direct care workforce is composed of low-income, unmarried, minority women with dependent children" (Ejaz et al., 2008, p. 61). Sites and direct care workers were randomly selected. Data were collected using face-to-face or telephone interviews and surveys mailed to the site liaison. Site liaisons were contacted to complete surveys that were submitted incomplete with their direct care workers over the phone. Job satisfaction was measured through factor analysis of 16 Likert-scale items. Three background characteristics were examined: marital status, age, and race/ethnicity. Five measures of personal stressors were examined: financial adequacy, addictive index, health-related, change in emotional health, and change in physical health. Three measures of job-related stressors were examined: job design, training issues, and pay and benefits. Job-related support variables and organizational issues were also examined.

Results showed that direct care workers were an average of 39 years old, 60% of direct care workers identified themselves as minorities, and slightly more than one-third were married. Direct care workers worried about family and financial issues while at work. Direct care workers reported higher perceived emotional health changes rather than physical health change since becoming a direct care worker.

Direct care workers viewed their emotional health changes to be higher; however, direct care workers had reported low scores relating to depressive symptoms in which 26% were indicative of clinical depression. Direct care workers viewed continued job training and orientation to be important. Forty-nine percent of direct care workers reported having health care benefits. Direct care workers reported hearing fewer racial remarks from co-workers than residents. Three factors were noted to be predictors of job satisfaction: physical health changes, emotional health changes, and depression scores. Job-related stressors that predicted job satisfaction were scheduling, training, and pay and benefits. Regarding workplace support, negative interaction and racial remarks were predictors of job satisfaction. Staff turnover rates were organizational variables that affected job satisfaction, and nursing homes had the highest turnover rates. Higher starting rates of pay increased job satisfaction.

The study noted that personal stressors and emotional and physical health stress for direct care workers could be decreased through offering employee health screenings and programs that promote wellness. Job-related stressors were scheduling, pay, training, and benefits. The author suggested companies could offer ongoing job related training or certification to provide more job satisfaction. The researchers noted they could not fully examine the differences between types of care because the study was conducted in a small area of Ohio with a non-random sample of direct care workers in a limited number of nursing home and group home facilities.

Mittal, Rosen, and Leana (2009) examined the factors associated with retention and turnover of direct care workers, including the rate of rural health workers and part-

time health workers. Forty-seven certified nurse assistants (CNA) and personal care attendants (PCA) participated in seven focus groups that lasted 60-90 minutes each. The Pennsylvania Registry of Health Workers was utilized to recruit participants who worked within the mental retardation or senior health care industry for at least 3 years, met different ethnic and socioeconomic status, and worked for either profit or non-profit agencies. Participants were placed into three categories: chronic leavers, intermittent leavers, and stayers. Data were analyzed using descriptive themes that also had dependability, credibility, and confirmability.

Study results showed that the main motivations for direct care worker turnover for those working in senior care or the mental retardation industry were lack of respect, poor management, work or family conflicts, and difficulty of the work. Results showed that the main motivations for people to remain employed were being “called” to service, patient advocacy, personal relationships with patients and their families, religion or spirituality, and flexibility.

The authors discussed a dual driver model which consists of retention enhancement and turnover prevention that emphasized the importance of understanding direct care workers inside of work as well as outside. Thus, the researchers concluded that workers may or may not be motivated to stay or leave depending on work environment stability as well as whether the position of direct care worker fits them. The study may be limited due to the parameters of the focus groups conducted. The researchers suggested completing a longitudinal approach to examine in depth the causes of direct care worker turnover, how they are related to the

organization, job and the industry. This may provide a greater insight into the causes of turnover and how to better retain direct care workers.

Chou, Kroger, and Lee (2010) examined individual and organizational variables in job satisfaction for staff to determine whether differences existed among residential home, group home, and institutional settings. Participants included 1,301 staff from small residential homes, group homes, and institutions who had participated in a previous study. Questionnaire packs were sent via mail to direct care staff, non-direct care workers, and managers. The questionnaires included information on staff characteristics, also demographics, and organizational characteristics. In addition, participants completed a job satisfaction survey to measure areas of job satisfaction as reported by staff.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Differences between the three setting types were analyzed using ANOVAs and chi square tests. The characteristics of the staff and settings and staff job satisfaction were analyzed using logistic regression analysis.

Results noted significant differences among organizational characteristics and staff individual characteristics in the three residential models. Job satisfaction was significantly noted to be different among the three residential models. Specifically, the job satisfaction level of residential home staff was significantly higher than the other two groups. No significant differences were noted between the small home staff and institution staff relating to operating conditions. Job satisfaction predictors and overall job satisfaction were all statistically significant with the exception of co-

workers. The authors noted that the settings' provider (non-profit, public, or private agency), number of years of education, service model of working setting (group home, institution or small home), age, and worker positions were the most important predictors of job satisfaction. The authors noted that these factors were all strongly associated with high levels of job satisfaction, therefore were predictors of job satisfaction.

Chou, Kroger, and Lee (2010) noted that a person's job satisfaction was directly impacted by the organization's characteristics, working environment, and organizational culture. Administrators would benefit from utilizing proactive strategies and improving strategies regarding job satisfaction in their employees.

Robson, Abraham, and Weiner (2010) examined characteristics of direct support professions in relation to recruitment and retention. The participants in this study were 146 individuals in direct support professional positions with varied demographic information, age and sex for the position of direct support professional who completed a test battery. In a concurrent validation study, 62 other applicants with varied demographic information completed the test battery. Supervisors rated the concurrent participant performance during group sessions. Participants completed the *Performance Perspectives Inventory* (PPI) as well as the *Employee Aptitude Survey* (EAS) to examine the cognitive and personality characteristics as predictors of job satisfaction. The study was conducted over a 15-month period from the date of hire.

The authors reported that the results showed several significant relationships. Overall job performance was significantly related to conscientiousness and

agreeableness. Job performance--specifically the problem-solving domain--was significantly related to cognitive ability.

Composite A which included performance, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and cognitive ability significantly related to overall job performance ($r = .21, p < .05$), problem-solving ($r = .19, p < .01$). Numerical ability was related to job performance ($r = .22, p < .05$). Optimism ($r = .26, p < .01$), problem-solving ($r = .18, p < .10$), dependability and effort ($r = .17, p < .10$) was significantly related to job performance. Composite B which included agreeableness, conscientiousness, optimism, numerical ability were significantly related to job performance ($r = .28, p < .01$), and job satisfaction ($r = .19, p < .05$). Problem-solving ($r = .25, p < .01$), dependability/effort ($r = .22, p < .05$), and interpersonal relations ($r = .18, p < .10$) were all significantly related. Results further indicate that on the rational-empirical composite, retention increases 105% for each point increase.

The study showed that personality measures to hire employees can be good predictors of employee satisfaction, turnover, and job performance. The authors noted that personality measures can be beneficial for jobs where people develop interpersonal relationships. Further research would be beneficial and could clarify what characteristics affect job satisfaction as well as retention.

Delp, Wallace, Geiger-Brown, and Muntaner (2010) conducted research regarding direct care workers factors that determine job satisfaction. The participants for this study were 1,614 2003 California County in-home supportive services workers that spoke English and Spanish which were taken from a larger sample of participants

used for another study by the authors. Participants were given questionnaires regarding their work environment such as work-health demands, emotional, schedule and physical. The questionnaire utilized a 4-point Likert scale for job satisfaction measures and predictors of job satisfaction. The measures of job satisfaction included schedule, emotional, physical, and work-health demands. The predictors of job satisfaction included control and support, potential modifiers of job demands, job demands, and socio-demographic characteristics.

The demographic results showed that workers were middle age, ethnically diverse, women, two-thirds high school graduates, and poor. The workers reported that 71% cared for relatives and some also cared for unrelated clients, 52% cared for relatives with whom they lived, 19% cared for relatives but lived elsewhere, 26% cared for unrelated clients and lived elsewhere, and 4% cared for and lived with unrelated clients. Workers reported being very satisfied with jobs requiring more physical demands (25% more with physical demands and 75% with physical task frequency). Workers reported being 24% more satisfied with their jobs for each increment of hiding their feelings/emotional suppression. Workers who reported abuse in their jobs were 37% less likely to be very satisfied with their jobs. Workers reported being 40% less satisfied with their jobs due to caring for more than one client. Workers who reported unpaid overtime and inability to see a doctor due to cost contributed to lower job satisfaction. Workers with job security were 1.5 times more satisfied with their jobs. Workers whom had social support were 1.4 times more

satisfied with their jobs. Workers who graduated from high school were 1.4 times less satisfied with their jobs than those who did not graduate from high school.

Delp et al. (2010) concluded that providing care is both satisfying and stressful work. Social support along with social norms can contribute to a workers stressors being turned into job satisfiers. A consumer-directed structure in California has created a better working environment for workers as well as consumers. The authors noted that the need for increased health care, voice, control in decisions and support for workers providing care would improve workers' job satisfaction.

Summary

In this chapter I reviewed nine studies that examined factors related to job satisfaction and retention of group home workers. Table 2 provides a summary of these findings. Chapter III describes the methods and procedures used in this study.

Table 2

Summary of Related Literature

RESEARCHERS (DATE)	METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Ford & Honnor (2000)	Qualitative Survey data	232 South Australian direct services staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff has moderately high satisfaction levels with interactions with residents, their jobs, co-workers and the nature of the work itself. • Staff has low satisfaction in the lack of performance feedback, involvement in decision making, and advancement.

Table 2 (continued)

RESEARCHERS (DATE)	METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Hatton et al. (2001)	Qualitative; Survey data	450 staff in five services in the United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff intent to leave in which there was no significance between all job titles. • No significance was reported across job titles pertaining to job search behavior. • With regard to the relationship between job search behavior and intent to leave there was a significant relationship. • Greater intention to leave had four variables strongly associated according to the path analysis: easier subjective labor conditions, less work satisfaction, younger age, and higher job satisfaction.
Test et al. (2003)	Qualitative; survey, focus groups using purposive sampling	181 direct support staff and 108 administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average hourly wage was from \$9.13 to \$11.41 for direct support staff and \$7.82 for new direct support staff. • Health insurance was provided by most agencies along with other benefits. • The mean annual turnover rate was 41%.
Test et al. (2004)	Qualitative; surveys and focus groups	108 administrators, consumers, and 181 direct support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct support staff reported training needs in crisis intervention, stress management, personal protection, goals and knowledge of specific disabilities, advocating for consumer rights, safety, CPR, infectious diseases, medication, and first aid. • Administrators reported direct support staff training needs in awareness of consumers' needs, providing choices, treating people with respect and as equals, teaching/ instruction methods for people with developmental disabilities, clients' rights, confidentiality, administering medication, writing and implementing behavior management plans, positive behavior intervention strategies. • Consumers reported direct support staff training needs in awareness of consumer needs, understanding how different people learn and gain knowledge, methods of communication with consumers, administering medication, teaching behavior management to consumers, CPR, and first aid.

Table 2 (continued)

RESEARCHERS (DATE)	METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Ejaz et al. (2008)	Qualitative; survey data	644 direct care workers in Ohio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct care workers worried about family and financial issues while at work. • Direct care workers reported higher perceived emotional health change rather than physical health change since becoming a direct care worker. • Direct care workers viewed continued job training and orientation to be important. • Direct care workers reported hearing less racial remarks from co-workers than residents. • Three factors were noted to be predictors of job satisfaction; they were physical/ emotional health change and depression scores. • Through job related stressors, predictors in job satisfaction were scheduling, training, pay and benefits.
	Yes	144 direct support professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding workplace support, negative interaction and racial remarks were predictors of job satisfaction. • With respect to the organizational variables, there were several significant factors that affect job satisfaction. • The type of facility affected staff turnover rates namely nursing homes being the highest with respect to turnover rates. • Higher starting rates of pay increased job satisfaction.
Mittal et al. (2009)	Qualitative; focus groups were utilized	47 certified nursing assistants and personal care attendants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main motivations for turnover were lack of respect, poor management, work or family conflicts, and difficulty of the work. • The main motivations for people to remain employed were being "called" to service, patient advocacy, personal relationships with patients and their families, religion or spirituality, job crafting, and flexibility.

Table 2 (continued)

RESEARCHERS (DATE)	METHOD	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Chou et al. (2010)	Qualitative; self-administered questionnaire.	1,301 staff from small residential homes, group homes and institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members' job satisfaction in the three residential models noted significant differences. • Small home staff's job satisfaction level was significantly higher than the other two groups. • Staff working in the small homes had a significantly higher level of job satisfaction with regard to the seven job indicators than staff at institutions. • Job satisfaction predictors and overall job satisfaction were all statistically significant with the exception of co-workers. • The settings provider (non-profit, public or private agency), number of years of education, service model, age, and workers position were the most important predictors of job satisfaction.
Robson et al. (2010)	Two concurrent studies utilizing experimental test batteries	146 direct support professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall job performance was significantly related to conscientious and agreeableness. • Job performance--specifically the problem-solving domain--was significantly related to cognitive ability. • The composite was significantly related to job performance, and job satisfaction. • Problem solving, dependability/ effort, and interpersonal relations were all significantly related.
Delp et al. (2010)	Qualitative; telephone interviews	1,614 California County in-home supportive services workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers reported being very satisfied with their jobs with more physical demands (25% more with physical demands and 75% with physical task frequency). • Workers reported being 24% more satisfied with their jobs for each increment of hiding their feelings/ emotional suppression. • Workers who reported abuse in their jobs are 37% less likely to be very satisfied with their jobs. • Workers reported being 40% less satisfied with their jobs due to caring for more than one client. • Workers who reported unpaid overtime and inability to see a doctor due to cost contributed to lower job satisfaction. • Workers with job security were 1.5 times more satisfied with their jobs. • Workers who had social support were 1.4 times more satisfied with their jobs. • Workers who graduated from high school are 1.4 times less satisfied with their jobs than those who did not graduate from high school.

Chapter III

METHOD

Chapter III provides a description of the participants in this study and the setting in which the study was implemented. Procedures are explained and data collection and analysis procedures discussed.

Participants and Setting

Forty exit interviews were conducted with direct support professionals leaving a large non-profit organization which will be referred to as "Home Partners" in an upper Midwestern urban area in Minnesota. The direct support professionals worked in a variety of settings which provided varying levels of support to the clients based on the person centered approach. Home Partners provided services in various settings including group homes, day training and habilitation programs (DTH), semi-independent living assistance, and traumatic brain injury programs. Home Partners provides residential services through 20 group homes and two apartment programs with 24 apartments. Home Partners provides day training and habilitation services through four DTH settings. Home Partners provides semi-independent living assistance through two settings. The employees of the organization were required to

be at least 18 years old and have a GED or high school diploma to be hired and employed through Home Partners. The exit interviews utilized structured interviews with open-ended questions which were confidential and anonymous. The researcher was not provided information regarding the specific setting where the DSP's were working, the number of people service was provided, or employees demographic information. Due to no demographic or personal information regarding specific employees, permission from employees was not needed to conduct the research.

Procedure

Archival data were acquired and analyzed from Home Partners for the purpose of this study. Written permission from the human resources manager of Home Partners was obtained prior to use of company information and data. The exit interviews were developed as a means for the organization to assess employee satisfaction. Human resources staff completed the exit interviews with exiting direct support professionals whom voluntarily completed the exit interview. The exit interview was given over the phone and the human resources staff documented responses to each question. Responses to the questions were collected for each quarter.

Measures

The survey consisted of 10 open-ended questions (see Appendix A), which provided participants an opportunity to give feedback. The questions were designed to elicit responses regarding their job and about the organization as a whole. The

questions in the exit interview examined the primary reason for people leaving their jobs, the most and least satisfying factors about their job, changes they would suggest, improvements their supervisor could have made, what their perceptions about success at Home Partners, company policies/procedures or any other obstacles that made their job difficult, what they liked most and least about the organization, and anything the organization could have done to encourage them to continue their employment. The exit interview form noted the setting the staff had been employed. (See Appendix A for the exit interview questions.)

The researcher's analysis of the current archival database was approved through the academic institution and organization's subsequent IRBs.

Data Analysis

The proposed study's design involved a cross-sectional, non-experimental design that utilized qualitative methods. Specifically, the research design of this study utilized the grounded theory approach. Grounded theory gathers data using field-based methods of examining people's interactions and actions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Information was focused on the perceptions of those people, which are used to form a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). An open-coding procedure was used to find common themes. The data was then analyzed for subthemes that describe in more detail the phenomenon occurring (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Responses were tabulated according to the occurrence of subthemes within the responses. Due to exit interviews being open-ended questions, multiple responses were given for all of the questions

except questions 7 and 10, which accounted for more than 40 responses to the questions.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

In Chapter III the method of study and data analysis were described. In this chapter, I present findings of 40 exit interviews and the factors that contributed to turnover for direct support professionals in group homes. The exit interviews consisted of 10 qualitative questions. This chapter discusses findings and results.

Exit Interview Themes

A thematic review of exit interview responses initially yielded 22 subjective factors. These factors were then further reduced to nine major themes: (a) personality characteristics; (b) job requirements; (c) pay and promotion; (d) management; (e) organization; (f) co-workers and subordinates; (g) teams; (h) personal life; and (i) turnover. Within these major themes, sub themes were found and included in the definitions of each major theme. The major themes and sub themes were defined by the author below:

- a. Personality characteristics: characteristics that respondents identified as needed to be successful within the company such as humor, organization, and initiative.
- b. Job requirements: travel, paperwork, training, and work schedule

Chapter IV

RESULTS

In Chapter III the method of study and data analysis were described. In this chapter, I present findings of 40 exit interviews and the factors that contributed to turnover for direct support professionals in group homes. The exit interviews consisted of 10 qualitative questions. This chapter discusses findings and results.

Exit Interview Themes

A thematic review of exit interview responses initially yielded 22 subjective factors. These factors were then further reduced to nine major themes: (a) personality characteristics; (b) job requirements; (c) pay and promotion; (d) management; (e) organization; (f) co-workers and subordinates; (g) teams; (h) personal life; and (i) turnover. Within these major themes, sub themes were found and included in the definitions of each major theme. The major themes and sub themes were defined by the author below.

- a. Personality characteristics: characteristics that respondents identified as needed to be successful within the company such as humor, organization, and initiative.
- b. Job requirements: travel, paperwork, training, and work schedule.

- c. Pay and promotion: wage earnings and lateral promotion.
- d. Management: supervising direct support professionals, characteristics such as communication skills and follow-through were included.
- e. Organization: the company, culture, community integration, communication pertaining to company policy and interoffice relationships were found.
- f. Direct support professionals: people that work with other direct support professionals and work with clients. Direct support staff also report to managers/supervisors.
- g. Teams: interdisciplinary teams that included families and clients.
- h. Personal life: aspects of a direct support professional's personal life such as family, activities, and education.
- i. Turnover: staff who resigned their position(s) at Home Partners.

In addition to the aforementioned themes, respondents had indicated that there were no changes needed to questions regarding the company, company policies and procedures. The questions did not allow for respondents to elaborate on their responses. Due to the multiple emerging themes within each response, some responses were coded based upon the most prominent theme. Results were calculated using the rate of response, which was the number of responses divided by the total responses and calculated as a percentage. The frequency of each question was calculated by theme.

Results

Among the identified themes, most respondents reported that the “organization” satisfied their current employment needs. This was consistent with the below sub-themes: job, working with interdisciplinary teams, life-work balance, and identified complementary personality traits of co-workers. This is evidenced by results to job satisfaction questions, which were question numbers 2, 3, 8, and 9. Question 1 discusses reasons people resigned from Home Partners which Home Partners does not maintain control over a majority of employees reasons for resigning. Question numbers 4, 5, 7 and 10 discuss factors that contribute to turnover. Results to questions are discussed below.

Question 1

Respondents stated that the top reason for leaving their job was to change careers or obtain new employment (29%). Respondents stated that moving (17%) and education (14%) were the next top reasons for leaving their job at Home Partners. Respondents changed careers and continued education, which were noted on the results to be mostly in fields different from Home Partners. Many respondents noted they were moving out of the area or out of state. Table 3 summarizes responses to Question 1.

Table 3

Response Frequency for Question 1

	Advancement	Career Change	Family	Financial	Job Satisfaction	Job Support	Moving	Personal Reasons	Retirement	Education
1. What is your primary reason for leaving	3%	29%	5%	12%	8%	7%	17%	3%	2%	14%

Question 2

Respondents stated that the clients (57%) were the most satisfying aspect of their job. Co-workers (10%), management (8%), and their job (8%) were the next top satisfying aspects of people's jobs. Respondents noted enjoyment in working with their clients, especially when they are successful or it changes their life. Note that co-workers are defined as DSP's that work with each other and employees are DSP's that work under managers. Table 4 summarizes responses to Question 2.

Table 4
Response Frequency for Question 2

	Clients	Organization	Co-workers	Families	Job	Managers
2. What was most satisfying about your job?	57%	3%	10%	2%	8%	8%

Question 3

Respondents noted the least satisfying aspect of their job was their job (31%). Management (7%) and the organization (13%) were the next top responses to the least satisfying aspect of people's jobs at Opportunity Partners. Specific job duties were noted to be the least satisfying aspects were paperwork, travel, and schedules. Several respondents noted that travel is very extensive with a lot of driving from site to site and too far away from their job. Respondents noted that management does not always support or know what is going on with changes within the company. Table 5 summarizes responses to Question 3.

Table 4
Response Frequency for Question 2

	Clients	Organization	Co-workers	Families	Job	Managers	Employees	Teams	Training
2. What was most satisfying about your job?	57%	3%	10%	2%	8%	8%	5%	5%	2%

Question 3

Respondents noted the least satisfying aspect of their job was their job (31%). Management (17%) and the organization (13%) were the next top responses to the least satisfying aspect of people’s jobs at Opportunity Partners. Specific job duties were noted to be least satisfying aspects were paperwork, travel, and schedules. Several respondents noted that travel is very extensive with a lot of driving from site to site and took time away from their job. Respondents noted that management does not always support or know what is going on with changes within the company. Table 5 summarizes responses to Question 3.

Table 5

Response Frequency for Question 3

	Advancement and Pay	Changes	Co-workers and Subordinates	Organization	Job itself/Job Duties	Management
3. What was least satisfying about your job?	11%	6%	6%	13%	31%	17%

Question 8
 Respondents stated they most liked the organization as a whole (58%).
 Clients (10%), co-workers (10%), and management (10%) were the next aspects the
 respondents liked most about the organization. Table 6 summarizes responses to
 Question 8.

Table 5
 Response Frequency for Question 3

	Advancement and Pay	Changes	Co-workers and Subordinates	Organization	Job Itself/Job Duties	Management	No Changes	Teams	Turnover
3. What was least satisfying about your job?	11%	6%	6%	13%	31%	17%	7%	6%	4%

Question 8

Respondents stated they most liked the organization as a whole (58%). Clients (10%), co-workers (10%), and management (10%) were the next aspects the respondents liked most about the organization. Table 6 summarizes responses to Question 8.

Table 6
Response Frequency for Question 8

	Advancement	Care About Staff	Clients	Organization	Co-workers and Subordinates	Forward Thinking	Management
8. What did you like most about Opportunity Partners?	2%	3%	10%	58%	10%	2%	10%

Table 6

Response Frequency for Question 8

	Advancement	Care About Staff	Clients	Organization	Co-workers and Subordinates	Forward Thinking	Management	Turnover
8. What did you like most about Opportunity Partners?	2%	3%	10%	58%	10%	2%	10%	5%

Question 9

Respondents stated they least liked pay and promotion (21%) at Home Partners. Nothing (19%) and the organization (17%) were also aspects that respondents liked least about Opportunity Partners. Respondents noted that pay and benefits needed to be increased to assist staff to remain employed. Table 7 summarizes responses for Question 9.

Table 7
Response Frequency for Question 9

	Pay and Promotion	Job	Communication	Co-Worker Interaction	Organization	Management	Nothing
9. What did you like least about Opportunity Partners?	21%	13%	11%	2%	17%	19%	19%

Table 7

Response Frequency for Question 9

	Pay and Promotion	Job	Communication	Co-Worker Interaction	Organization	Management	Nothing	Not Sure
9. What did you like least about Opportunity Partners?	21%	12%	11%	2%	17%	11%	19%	6%

Question 4

Respondents stated that they would change their job (30%). Pay (17%) and the organization (15%) were the next aspects they would change about their job.

Respondents noted that aspects of their job take away time from doing what they were hired to do such as paperwork and travel. Table 8 summarizes responses to Question 4.

Table 8
Response Frequency for Question 4

	Careload	Organization	Hiring	Job Itself	Managements	No changes	Turnover	Pay
4. What would you change about your job?	6%	15%	4%	30%	12%	6%	15%	17%

Table 8

Response Frequency for Question 4

	Caseload	Organization	Hiring	Job Itself	Management	No changes	Co-workers	Turnover	Pay
4. What would you change about your job?	6%	15%	4%	30%	12%	6%	8%	2%	17%

Question 5

Respondents stated that their immediate supervisors did not need to change anything (31%) regarding their management style. Communication (26%), availability (9%), and personality characteristics (8%) were the next top responses regarding improvements immediate supervisors could make. Respondents noted they were happy with their supervisors and mostly there were small aspects the managers could change to improve their management style. Table 9 summarizes responses to Question 5.

Table 9
Response Frequency for Question 5

	Appreciation	Availability	Client Interaction	Communication	Consistency	Direct	Knowledge	Personality Characteristics	Training
5. What could your immediate supervisor do to improve his or her management style?	2%	9%	4%	26%	10%	2%	4%	8%	31%

Question 7

Respondents stated that company policies or procedures made their job more difficult (68%). Respondents noted that company policies were not communicated, differed from what was expected, and were not communicated prior to receiving disciplinary action regarding policies. Table 10 summarizes responses to Question 7.

Table 10

Response Frequency for Question 7

Table 9
Response Frequency for Question 5

	Appreciation	Availability	Client Interaction	Communication	Consistency	Dress	Job Knowledge	Personality Characteristics	No Changes	Training
5. What could your immediate supervisor do to improve his or her management style?	2%	9%	4%	26%	6%	2%	4%	8%	31%	4%

Question 10

Respondents stated that there was not anything (78%) Opportunity Partners could do to encourage them to remain employed. Respondents noted that they were moving, needed higher pay, or were changing careers in which Opportunity Partners did not have anything that could encourage them to stay. Several respondents noted that they were encouraged by staff and/or management to stay. They stated that managers attempted to work with them as much as they were able to within company policies.

	Yes	No
7. Did company policies or procedures (or any other obstacles) make your job more difficult?	68%	32%

Question 7

Respondents stated that company policies or procedures made their job more difficult (68%). Respondents noted that company policies were not communicated, differed from site to site, and were not communicated prior to receiving disciplinary action regarding the policy. Table 10 summarizes responses to Question 7.

Table 10

Response Frequency for Question 7

	Yes	No
7. Did any company policies or procedures (or any other obstacles) make your job more difficult?	68%	32%

Question 10

Respondents stated that there was not anything (78%) Opportunity Partners could do to encourage them to remain employed. Respondents noted that they were moving, needed higher pay, or were changing careers in which Opportunity Partners did not have anything that could encourage them to stay. Several respondents noted that they were encouraged by staff and/or management to stay. They stated that managers attempted to work with them as much as they were able to within company policies.

Table 11
Response Frequency for Question 10

	Yes	No	Maybe
10. Could Opportunity Partners do anything to encourage you to stay?	15%	78%	7%

Question 6

Respondents stated that to succeed at the organization staff need to be flexible (24%). Being a hard worker (9%) and being committed (10%) were also cited.

Respondents noted that staff needs to want to help people, want to work with others, and work there because they enjoy what they do to be successful at the organization.

Table 12 summarizes responses to Question 6.

	Committed	Communication	Training	Publicly Available	Hard Worker	No Take Personally
6. What do you think it takes to succeed at this company?	10%	7%	2%	24%	9%	3%
Continued	Team Player	Integrity	Know Expectations	Organizational	Management	4%
	8%	4%	2%	9%	7%	

Table 12
Response Frequency for Question 6

	Committed	Communication	Training	Problem-Solver	Flexible	Hard-Working	Not Take Personally
6. What do you think it takes to succeed at this company?	10%	7%	2%	3%	24%	9%	3%

	Team Player	Integrity	Know Expectations	Organized	Patience	Motivated	Time Management
Continued	8%	4%	2%	5%	9%	7%	4%

Summary

The responses to the exit interviews gave some insight into factors that affected job satisfaction and ultimately job turnover. The responses clarified which factors the company can and cannot control, and indicated what changes might increase staff retention. Chapter V provides a discussion of these results.

Employee job satisfaction is important in recruitment and retention of direct support professionals (DSP) in a group home setting. Employees have increased satisfaction through relationships with co-workers, rate of pay, benefits and the people they serve. Factors that contribute to DSP turnover in group homes are rate of pay, management, communication, and the job itself. This chapter discusses the conclusions, suggestions for further research, and implications for practice.

Conclusions

The exit interview results revealed several factors that contributed to turnover for direct support professionals in group homes. The main reasons people left their employment were career change, moving, school, financial, and new employment opportunities. Respondents reported management, the job, and pay as the least satisfying job factors. However, respondents reported the most satisfying job factors were the clients, co-workers, managers, and the job. The fact that respondents stated management and the job as both satisfying as well as not satisfying shows there may be inconsistencies within the company or the study itself. Within the company there are people who work in different departments providing direct support services to

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Employee job satisfaction is important in recruitment and retention of direct support professionals (DSP) in a group home setting. Employees have increased satisfaction through relationships with co-workers, rate of pay, benefits and the people they serve. Factors that contribute to DSP turnover in group homes are rate of pay, management, communication, and the job itself. This chapter discusses the conclusions, suggestions for further research, and implications for practice.

Conclusions

The exit interview results revealed several factors that contributed to turnover for direct support professionals in group homes. The main reasons people left their employment were career change, moving, school, financial, and new employment opportunities. Respondents reported management, the job, and pay as the least satisfying job factors. However, respondents reported the most satisfying job factors were the clients, co-workers, managers, and the job. The fact that respondents stated management and the job as both satisfying as well as not satisfying shows there may be inconsistencies within the company or the study itself. Within the company there are people who work in different departments providing direct support services to

clients. Access to this information could provide perspective into specific areas where these responses were reported as satisfying as well as dissatisfying.

The factors that respondents liked most about the company were the mission/vision, services offered, no changes needed and the clients. The factors respondents liked least about the company were pay, communication. Management of the company was both liked and liked least by respondents. Pay/financial and management are the top factors that appear to contribute to turnover for Opportunity Partners. Respondents did like the clients, the mission/vision, and services offered, which contributed to job satisfaction for employees at Opportunity Partners.

Recommendations for Further Research

The current study shows factors that affect turnover for direct support professionals in group homes which contributes to current research. Further research would provide how to address and prevent DSP's from leaving in areas that organizations are able to control. It is important to note that there will be some percentage of turnover for organizations in areas that they are unable to control. Addressing the issue and researching how to legally prevent controllable turnover could greatly increase the quality of services provided to people with IDD. Future research on retention of DSP's should examine solutions other than monetary solutions. Research into how retention would be affected should a nationally recognized profession and training programs for DSP's would benefit organizations.

Implications for Practice

The current study shows that organization has several factors that contribute to direct support professional turnover in the group homes. The organization can examine rates of pay for their DSPs to provide an increase in the starting rate of pay as well as examine the benefits of implementing a merit raise program with their DSPs. The DSPs are the direct care staff who work closely with people and should be compensated well for the work they do. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2011), the median income for DSP's is \$11.63 per hour which is \$3.12 higher than minimum wage. Results of this study show that DSP's would like to be offered more benefits. The company can examine other means of maintaining employees such as benefit packages, paid time off, and retirement packages. These are important financial benefits that employees would greatly benefit especially those who have families or health concerns.

Management

Organizations should examine their management and how to better train the management that is hired. Organizations can provide training to management to address issues relating to communication in general, communication from site to site, staff oversight, general training, and how to provide a productive, positive, and supportive working environment. Communication regarding policies, procedures, and client information is important for DSP's that work at multiple sites. Organizations need to have trained and qualified staff working to provide the best services possible to the clients (Geiger-Brown et al., 2004). Managers should be knowledgeable

regarding the organizations policies and procedures as well as be able to communicate those to staff. Organizations should provide management with the tools to effectively manage and train their staff. Organizations should require managers to work a specific number of hours as DSP's to ensure they know and spend time with their clients. This will allow the managers to be better advocates and provide a higher level of care for their clients. Organizations can provide the training or hire an outside company to provide ongoing training.

Training and Orientation

Training and orientation at organizations should be defined, clear, and reviewed on a consistent basis. Respondents from the current study indicated issues with the job, which the company can address by providing applicants with clear expectations and realistic job previews to decrease turnover. Realistic job previews can be done in several ways such as showing a video of staff performing job tasks or conducting a second interview in which they are observing where they would be working (Hewitt & Larson, 2007). Hiring personnel should be very clear with applicants as to what the job duties will be and what the work entails. Management should meet on a regular basis to review job descriptions, orientation, job requirements, recruitment, and hiring. Creating a strong organizational culture will decrease job turnover, encourage and motivate employees, and create a positive work environment for all employees.

Exit Interviews

The exit interview questions need to be refined to appropriately analyze and be cross-analyzed by the various sites, management, issues that may arise, causes for turnover and collecting input to improve those areas. By utilizing a 5-point Likert scale for exit interview questions along with an area for respondents to add personalized input, results would be clearly coded and have clearer results. The exit interview questions would then be utilized to give management insight into problems and possible solutions to decrease the amount of turnover organizations experience, provided the reasons are within the company's control. Management will be able to see trends that may emerge through exit interview responses and address those issues with managers. Exit interview responses and results should be reviewed with managers on a regular basis to prevent the issue from re-occurring. Issues that may arise during exit interviews regarding allegations of vulnerable adult or child abuse must be addressed with management immediately.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the current study. The small number of respondents from one company makes it difficult to generalize the results. Not all respondents that were contacted provided responses to the HR department. The number of employees contacted for the current study was not available to the researcher; however, the HR manager noted that approximately 40% of employees contacted complete the exit interviews. The wide range of responses to the questions may have limited the ability of the researcher to select themes. The researcher created

the themes upon examining the responses, although it is recognized that another researcher may have coded the responses differently. Due to the open-ended nature of the exit interview questions, it was difficult to code and create themes. The researcher used methods to code responses similar to current research. Employees completing the exit interviews had resigned from the organization; however, they may have had varying personal feelings which could have caused them to not be honest.

Summary

The main factors that contributed to DSP turnover for Home Partners were rate of pay, management, communication, and the job. These can be addressed by further training and examining the importance of DSP's to the organization as well as the clients. Organizations for people with IDD continue to lobby and advocate for legislation that will provide better services to people with IDD. The exit interview questions were a helpful tool for addressing current issues that cause turnover for the company. This study shows how valuable exit interview information can be in regard to job satisfaction and turnover for direct support professionals employed in group homes. Further research into the factors that contribute to direct support professional turnover in group homes and job satisfaction will continue to assist companies to increase employee retention which will in turn provide better care for people with intellectual disabilities.

REFERENCES

- Agran, M., Blanchard, C., Wehmeyer, M., & Hughes, C. (2002). Increasing the problem-solving skills of students with developmental disabilities participating in general education. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*, 279-288.
- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. (2013). *Frequently asked questions on intellectual disabilities*. Retrieved from <http://www.aaidi.org/content/194.cfm?navID=22>.
- Bordieri, J. E., & Peterson, S. L. (1988). Job satisfaction of direct-care workers in community residential facilities. *Rehabilitation, 54*, 62-66.
- Buyck, P., Humphreys, J., Wakeman, J., & Pashen, D. (2010). Systematic review of effective retention incentives for health workers in rural and remote areas: Towards evidence-based policy. *Australian Journal Rural Health, 18*, 102-109.
- Cheng, Y., & Chen, S. (2010). Improving social understanding of individuals of intellectual and developmental disabilities through 3D-facial expression intervention program. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 31*, 1434-1442.
- Chou, Y. C., Kroger, T., & Lee, Y. C. (2010). Predictors of job satisfaction among staff in residential settings for persons with intellectual disabilities: A comparison between three residential models. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 23*, 279-289.
- Comstock, E. (2011). Ability, attention, and the normal scholastic prototype. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 43*, 908-923.
- Deip, L., Wallace, S. P., Geiger-Brown, J., & Muntaner, C. (2010). Job stress and job satisfaction: Home care workers in a consumer-directed model of care. *Health Services Research, 45*, 922-940.

REFERENCES

- Agran, M., Blanchard, C., Wehmeyer, M., & Hughes, C. (2002). Increasing the problem-solving skills of students with developmental disabilities participating in general education. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*, 279-288.
- American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. (2013). *Frequently asked questions on intellectual disabilities*. Retrieved from http://www.aaidd.org/content_104.cfm?navID=22.
- Bordieri, J. E., & Peterson, S. L. (1988). Job satisfaction of direct-care workers in community residential facilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 54*, 62-66.
- Buykx, P., Humphreys, J., Wakerman, J., & Pashen, D. (2010). Systematic review of effective retention incentives for health workers in rural and remote areas: Towards evidence-based policy. *Australian Journal Rural Health, 18*, 102-109.
- Cheng, Y., & Chen, S. (2010). Improving social understanding of individuals of intellectual and developmental disabilities through 3D-facial expression intervention program. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 31*, 1434-1442.
- Chou, Y. C., Kroger, T., & Lee, Y. C. (2010). Predictors of job satisfaction among staff in residential settings for persons with intellectual disabilities: A comparison between three residential models. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 23*, 279-289.
- Comstock, E. (2011). Idiocy, attention, and the normal scholastic prototype. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 43*, 908-923.
- Delp, L., Wallace, S. P., Geiger-Brown, J., & Muntaner, C. (2010). Job stress and job satisfaction: Home care workers in a consumer-directed model of care. *Health Services Research, 45*, 922-940.

- Ejaz, F. K., Noelker, L. S., Menne, H. L., & Bagaka, J. G. (2008). The impact of stress and support on direct care workers' job satisfaction. *The Gerontologist*, 48, 60-70.
- Ford, J., & Honnor, J. (2000). Job satisfaction of community residential staff serving individuals with severe intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 25, 343-362.
- Geiger-Brown, J., Muntaner, C., Lipscomb, J., & Trinkoff, A. (2004). Demanding work schedules and mental health in nursing assistants working in nursing homes. *Work & Stress*, 18, 292-304.
- Georgia Department of Human Resources. (1999). *Olmstead v. L. C.* Retrieved from <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/98-536.ZS.html>.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Gottfredson, G. D., & Johnstun, M. L. (2009). John Holland's contributions: A theory ridden approach to career assistance. *Career Development Quarterly*, 58, 99-107.
- Hall, P. S., & Hall, N. D. (2002). Hiring and retaining direct-care staff: After 50 years of research, what do we know? *Mental Retardation*, 40, 201-211.
- Hatton, C. et al. (2001). Factors associated with intended staff turnover and job search behavior in services for people with intellectual disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 45, 258-270.
- Hewitt, A., & Larson, S. (2007). The direct support workforce in community supports to individuals with developmental disabilities: Issues, implications, and promising practices. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews*, 13, 178-187.
- Holland, J. L. (1963). Explorations of a theory of vocational choice and achievement: II in a four-year prediction study. *Psychological Reports*, 12, 547-594.
- Mayfield, J., & Mayfield, M. (2007). The effects of leader communication on a worker's intent to stay: An investigation using structural equation modeling. *Human Performance*, 20, 85-102.
- Miner, J. B. (2005). *Organizational behavior I. Essential theories of motivation and leadership*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharp.

- Mittal, V., Rosen, J., & Leana, C. (2009). A dual-driver model of retention and turnover in the direct care workforce. *The Gerontologist, 49*, 623-634.
- Murdick, N. L., Gartin, B. L., & Crabtree, T. L. (2007) *Special education law* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson.
- Nirje, B. (1994). The normalization principle and its human management implications. *SRV-VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal, 1*, 19-23.
- North Dakota Association of Community Providers (2010). Report prepared by CMS DSW Resource Technical Assistance Team. Retrieved November, 2010, from <http://www.ndacp.org/ND%20Direct%20Support%20Professional%20Workforce%202010%20Dec-Final.pdf>.
- Robson, S. M., Abraham, J. D., & Weiner, J. (2010). Characteristics of successful direct support professionals: An examination of personality and cognitive ability requirements. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 18*, 215- 219.
- Smergut, P. (2007). Minimizing turnover among support counselors through a value-based culture. *Journal for Nonprofit Management, 11*, 28-39.
- Smith, K. R., & Matson, J. L. (2010). Social skills: Differences among adults with intellectual disabilities, co-morbid autism spectrum disorders and epilepsy. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 31*, 1366-1372.
- Stone, R. I. (2004). The direct care worker: The third tail of home care policy. *Annual Review of Public Health, 25*, 521-537.
- Szasz, T. (2005). "Idiots, infants, and the insane:" Mental illness and legal incompetence. *Journal of Medical Ethics, 31*, 78-81.
- Test, D. W., Flowers, C., Hewitt, A., & Solow, J. (2003). Statewide study of the direct support staff workforce. *Mental Retardation, 41*, 276-285.
- Test, D. W., Flowers, C., Hewitt, A., & Solow, J. (2004). Training needs of direct support staff. *Mental Retardation, 42*, 327-337.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor and Statistics. (2011). *Occupational employment statistics for 31-1012 nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes311012.htm>.

- U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (1994, January 4). *HUD 21 B (3-80) form*. Retrieved from <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/lawsregs/notices/prior95/cpd9401.pdf>.
- Willner, P., & Tomlinson, S. (2007). Generalization of anger-coping skills from day-service to residential settings. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities, 20*, 553-562.
- Wolfensberger, W. (2000). A brief overview of social role valorization. *Mental Retardation, 38*, 105-123.
- Wolfensberger, W. (2011a). Reflections on a lifetime in human services and mental retardation. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 49*, 441-455.
- Wolfensberger, W. (2011b). Social role valorization: A proposed new term for the principle of normalization. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 49*, 435-440.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Survey



We would appreciate your taking the time to answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Your individual responses are treated as confidential, and will not become part of your personnel file.

Name (optional) _____

Department:

Administration

Residential

APPENDIX A

Production

Vocational/Programs

Survey

1. What aspect of your reason for leaving?
2. What was most satisfying about your job?
3. What was least satisfying about your job?
4. What would you change about your job?
5. What could your immediate supervisor do to improve his or her management style?
6. Based on your experience with Opportunity Partners, what do you think it takes to succeed at this company?
7. Did any company policies or procedures (or any other obstacles) make your job more difficult?



We would appreciate your taking the time to answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Your individual responses are treated as confidential, and will not become part of your personnel file.

Name (optional): _____

Department:

Administration

Residential

Production

Vocational/Programs

1. What is your primary reason for leaving?
2. What was most satisfying about your job?
3. What was least satisfying about your job?
4. What would you change about your job?
5. What could your immediate supervisor do to improve his or her management style?
6. Based on your experience with Opportunity Partners, what do you think it takes to succeed at this company?
7. Did any company policies or procedures (or any other obstacles) make your job more difficult?

8. What did you like most about Opportunity Partners?
9. What did you like least about Opportunity Partners?
10. Could Opportunity Partners do anything to encourage you to stay?