Project Information

Title: Fostering Compassion Satisfaction among College & University Title IX Administrators

Client: Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA)

The Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA) is a professional association for school and college Title IX Coordinators and administrators who are interested in serving their professional collaboration to explore best practices, share resources, and advance gender equity in education.

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Second Reader: Barbara Paradiso, MPA, Director of the Center on Domestic Violence, University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs

Third Reader: Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D., Senior Vice President for Program Development, National Center for Higher Education Risk Management (NCHERM) & Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA)

Description of the Problem

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity (Department of Justice, 2015). In 2011, a letter now known as the “Dear Colleague Letter” (Office of Civil Rights, 2011) specified that Title IX should be applied to gender-based violence (GBV).¹ This lead to the establishment of Title IX administrator positions.

There are currently few published studies on this new role in higher education. Title IX administrators are particularly vulnerable to scrutiny and liability and professionals may encounter a steep learning curve in this relatively new role. While the demands on Title IX offices are often understaffed and have limited budgets. These challenges coupled with being regularly confronted with the realities of the pervasiveness of trauma in their communities, leave

¹ Gender-based violence (GBV) is used herein as an umbrella term for multiple forms of violence such as sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, and stalking.
these professionals particularly prone to burnout, a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job as well as secondary traumatic stress (STS), the presence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms caused by indirect exposure to trauma (Figley, 2002; Leiter & Maslach, 2004). Burnout and STS combined can lead to compassion fatigue (CF) or a state of tension and preoccupation and dulled compassion.

Despite these risk factors, Title IX administrators may lack experience with or education in coping with CF. Title IX administrators may not have received education or training on CF and may fear judgment from colleagues. They may also be unaware of how to foster compassion satisfaction (CS), the ability to receive gratification from their roles dealing with traumatized individuals and communities (Simon, Pryce, Roff, & Klemmack, 2006). Luckily, there is robust literature in related fields that can be combined with profession-specific research.

**Research Questions**

1. What are Title IX administrators’ current levels of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and compassion fatigue/secondary trauma?
2. How do Title IX administrators cope with their roles?
3. How do their institutions foster or hinder compassion satisfaction?
4. What training do they receive or do they recommend?
5. How can ATIXA utilize these findings?

**Methods**

This mixed methods study will combine 1) a web-based survey; 2) semi-structured phone interviews. The author will also consult with ATIXA staff throughout the process.

The Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) V is a valid and reliable instrument that is the most frequently utilized measure of compassion satisfaction and fatigue (which includes burnout and secondary traumatic stress dimensions). The fifth edition is the most recent version (Stamm, 2009). This instrument asks for the frequency with which respondents have experienced a range
of feelings, thoughts, and actions within the past 30 days. It consists of thirty statements which
participants rank on a Likert scale. Due to the relatively small size of the field, the survey will
be distributed directly to Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA) members with a two
week completion window and two reminders (at one week and one day remaining). If they
choose to provide contact information, participants will be entered to win one of ten $25 gift
cards. The data will be analyzed using Qualtrics.

Creswell (2003) mentions the importance of thinking beyond quantitative versus
qualitative research to a blend of the two, particularly in newer areas of inquiry. Including
interviews will allow for data triangulation without multiple larger studies (Jick, 1979). This will
allow one method to inform the other, leaving less room for misinterpretation and a more robust
data story (Fowler, 1992; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, Mertens, 2003).

Phone interviews will save significant time and travel expense (Stoneall, 1991) and will
be conducted via Tape-A-Call, an iPhone application that saves recorded calls to a secure
location in the cloud. Within 24 hours, recordings will be transcribed, double-checked for
accuracy, and deleted. The data will then be uploaded to QDA Miner, a computer assisted
qualitative analysis software (CAQDS) and coded through an iterative qualitative content
analysis process (Lieblich, Truval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Interview questions will be
developed based on previous interview studies of the compassion fatigue and satisfaction in
related fields as well as consultation with the client organization (Bober & Regehr, 2006;
interviews will be semi-structured as this is the first study of its kind and participants may have
additional information to add about this unique role that may be salient (Lieblich, Truval-
Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). As there is no exact number of preferred interviews in qualitative
research, the author aims for about 15 interviews or more if saturation has not be reached (Gaskell, 2000). The author will secure interviewees through snowball sampling via relevant member lists. Each interview participant will receive a $25 gift card for one hour of their time.

**Areas of Competency Emphasized**

1. To lead and manage in public governance
   - The student is able to set mission-driven goals and use data, performance indicators, economic concepts, and continuous improvement approaches to manage and lead in service of this mission.

2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process
   - The student is able to identify common barriers to effective implementation and how to overcome them.
   - The student understands how policy and administrative process connect.

3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.
   - The student is able to select and use appropriate research methods and analytical tools for collecting and analyzing data.
   - The student is able to critically assess, review, and understand research.

5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.
   - The student is able to communicate effectively in writing to a variety of audiences.
   - The student is able to communicate effectively in a spoken format to a variety of audiences.

**Timeline for Completion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete by date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/1/16</td>
<td>Secured second and third readers/client organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/1/16</td>
<td>Directed reading on fostering compassion satisfaction final paper and annotated bibliography complete (under the supervision of Dr. Mary Guy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/11/16</td>
<td>Secured permission to use ProQOL</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/22/16</td>
<td>Complete draft methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/31/16</td>
<td><strong>Prospectus Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7/16</td>
<td>Complete instruments and send for review</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/14/16</td>
<td>Submit IRB paperwork for exempt/expedited review; Title IX administrator updated literature review; Complete consultancy interviews and feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/21/16</td>
<td>Begin scheduling interviews, Conduct pilot interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/28/16</td>
<td><strong>Draft of First Sections Due</strong>, Conduct interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/8/16</td>
<td>Send survey, Conduct interviews</td>
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3/15/16  Survey one week reminder, Conduct interviews, Revise first sections based on feedback
3/21/16  Survey one day reminder
3/22/16  Close survey, End interviews
3/27/16  Analyze interview and survey results, write supplemental documentation
4/3/16   Draft of Final Paper Due
4/8/16   Schedule Final Oral Presentation for Week of 5/2/16
4/10/16  Prepare final presentation
4/17/16  Edit final paper
4/27/16  Final Paper Due
5/1/16   Slides, Review Sheets, etc. Due to Readers
5/6/16   Final Oral Presentation
5/13/16  Reader Evaluations Due

References
Ben-Porat, A. & Itzhaky, H. (2009). Implications of treating family violence for the therapist:


working with trauma. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 59(4).


