Work-life balance issues among mental health professionals capstone

Abstract

The Quality of Life Support Plan was developed by this consultant after meeting with the administrative team of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. This report contains background information on the client organization, comprehensive literature review, the data collection used to develop interventions and a high-level performance plan used to address work-life balance issues amongst mental health professionals at the client organization. Furthermore, a follow up exploratory test (i.e. a t-test) was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Quality of Life Support Plan. Results revealed that such a tool provides access towards meaningful discussion to address personnel's needs.

Keywords: mental health professionals, work-life balance, exploratory study, field study, stress, overload, burnout

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Abbreviations: HRD, human resource development; TWI, training within industry; FDOH, Florida department of health; CEUs, continuing education units; CEO, chief executive officer; QOLI, quality of life inventory

Introduction

In 2007, three engineers from world-famous French automaker Renault committed suicide during a 5-month span. In their suicide notes, the engineers identified work-life issues as a major factor in the decision to end their lives.[1] Fortunately, most work-life problems do not result in such devastating outcomes, although they can often lead to poor performance, cause stress-related reactions (e.g., irritability, distancing from peers, etc.), and loss of motivation.[2] Recently, consultants have identified three common work-life balance issues relevant to many professions: job satisfaction, organizational commitment and family interference.[3] Another work-life balance issue that contributes to stress stems from the inability of organizations to provide job security.[4]

Renault and other companies, such as General Electric and Boston Consulting Group, have begun implementing a series of reparative programs specific to work-life balance issues.[1] To combat performance problems related to work-life balance, the Boston Consulting Group and the European Association for Personnel Management carried out a survey initiative involving interviews of individuals in over 27 countries. The survey's findings revealed that managing work-life balance is one of the main themes human resource development (HRD) professionals need to address. As organizations begin to address work-life issues in the context of the employee, identifying specific predictors of work-life balance continues to be important.[1] The mental health field, in particular, lacks specific information on work-life balance. Flynn et al.,[5] has identified the need for increased research on the individual needs of mental health professionals. This intervention contributes to the body of HRD literature and could provide opportunities for further research and insight into work-life balance issues.

The primary goal of HRD is to focus on the development of the individual within the organization.[6] Work-related interventions addressing mental health professionals' work experiences indicate a growing need to create more supportive workplaces through the training and development of personnel who can understand and address the needs of their organizations.[7] Creating supportive workplaces requires addressing the needs of personnel and developing a more meaningful work environment, which in turn require that organizational leaders foster a sense of balance in workers' perceptions of their personal and professional lives.[8] Individuals who experience work-life balance have the sense that their personal and professional lives are in a stable equilibrium.[9] Understanding predictors of work-life balance will help HRD professionals identify factors that contribute to performance and lead to valuable opportunities for future research.

Purpose

For mental health professionals, demands related to work performance continue to grow. Research has indicated that many mental healthcare professionals have difficulty maintaining a balance between work and life.[10,11] The purpose of the intervention was to create opportunities for an organization to address work-life balance issues.

Problem Statement

Employees' work and personal lives are interconnected.[12] Work tends to overflow into life and vice versa.[13] Employees who experience positive work-life balance have the sense that their personal and professional lives are in stable equilibrium.[9] Westman et al.,[14] defined work-life balance as proper prioritizing of work and life. The priorities afforded to personal and professional obligations vary from person to person and are dependent on individuals' needs, experience and goals.[15] Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all explanation for work-life balance; rather, work-life balance is an individual matter.

Companies have begun to understand how important work-life balance is to the productivity and creativity of employees.[16] Many organizations have implemented programs such as flextime and telecommuting, which are tailored to the needs of employees and are intended to improve work-life balance.[14] Organizations that have implemented such initiatives have reported much lower turnover rates and higher degrees of organizational commitment and job satisfaction

among employees.[17,18] Furthermore, turnover is reported to decrease when initiatives specific to commitment and work-life balance are implemented in an organization.[19]

During the past 25years, there has been an increase in the diversification of work due to factors such as information technology, globalization and a competitive work environment.[20] This diversification parallels the growth of the global economy, which encourages diversity in terms of personnel responsibilities in an organizational setting. In certain work environments, many employees experience burnout due to stress and long hours. Over the past 10years, these trends have had an impact on productivity, as seen in increased absenteeism, workplace violence and rising workers' compensation claims.

Mental health professionals need work-life balance in order to be successful in addressing the needs of their clients.[12] When mental health professionals become unbalanced due to burnout, stress or other factors, their clinical/therapeutic relationships can suffer and result in harm to clients.[17,18,21,22] Such harm evolves from therapists' sense of disequilibrium between work and life, which can decrease their therapeutic awareness of clients' presenting clinical pathology.[23] As a result, clients' presenting problems may continue to manifest and may develop into more complex, challenging issues.

According to Pichler,[15] mental health professionals have failed to address the issues of work-life balance that have led to a decrease in performance standards. Specific problems that pertain to mental health professionals are over whelming case loads,[24] lack of support,[11] long hours,[25] intensity of counseling sessions[6] and limited access to feedback from colleagues.[10] These factors have resulted in a lack of organizational commitment and job satisfaction among mental health professionals.[18,21,22]

Human resource development

HRD is a professional field that focuses on addressing the expansion and growth of human expertise through acts of organizational development and personnel training.[26] Its goal is to improve performance and organizational production.[26] HRD is essential to all organizations, regardless of whether they are undergoing change. McGoldrick et al.,[27] described HRD as having diverse functions within an organization, including improving performance and production. Through a thorough analysis, HRD professionals assess, analyze, develop, implement and evaluate interventions aimed at improving organizational productivity.[28] As such, HRD is a complex and continually developing field whose principles may be applied to all aspects of organizational life.[29] HRD professionals have tools that are well suited to the exploration of work-life balance.[30]

Variables impacting work-life balance

By identifying predictors of work-life balance, HRD professionals may be able to identify ways for organizations to increase employees' sense of self-esteem.[31] Such research contributes to the development of what Atkinson[32] termed humane workplaces. Historically, consultants have understood job satisfaction to be the level of contentment that arises out of the interplay of employees' feelings toward their present state of employment.[33] Workers who do not have a sense of job satisfaction will be in disequilibrium in terms of their work-life balance. Multiple studies have identified consistency in the levels of work-life balance and individuals' job satisfaction.[34–37] Such

data indicated that further research into whether job satisfaction is a predictor of work-life balance for members of particular professions (e.g., mental health) would be beneficial.

Research also has indicated that a relationship exists between job satisfaction and organizational commitment.[38–40] Organizational commitment involves individual employees' psychological attachment to the organization for which they work and therefore is a strong indicator of performance in the workplace.[36] There are multiple components of organizational commitment, reflecting various theories and beliefs surrounding the construct, which are discussed later in this proposal. Although the literature contains a vast array of theories pertinent to organizational commitment, there is limited information on how it functions as a predictor of work-life balance among mental health professionals.

Theoretical framework

The theory of work adjustment concerns the actions that individuals and organizations take to regulate a balanced relationship based on an understanding of individual and organizational needs. Proponents of the theory acknowledge the importance of an open, interactive relationship between organizational members and the organization's needs.[41,42] Because the theory of work adjustment stresses the importance of communication between the individual and the organization, it served as part of the theoretical framework for this intervention. Specifically, performance issues specific to work-life balance at one local mental health services provider in Miami-Dade County were explored.

Methodology

This section outlines the research design, sample, data collection procedure, instrumentation and data analysis. The purpose of this Capstone intervention was to address performance issues at one organization that provides mental health services in Miami-Dade County. A causal analysis was used to collect data, analyze data and provide a high-level performance plan.

Research design

This Capstone intervention applied causal analysis design to determine performance issues pertinent to the work-life balance of personnel at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. This design included data collected from this consultant's personal observation, a survey and interviews of at least five organizational members to address a performance gap. The results of this intervention provide valuable information to the field of HRD with respect to enhancing mental health professionals' work performance through a high-level performance improvement plan.

Sample

The employees involved are mental health professionals employed at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. These employees responded to an anonymous, self-administered, web-based questionnaire. For the purposes of this intervention, a mental health professional is defined as an individual with a graduate university degree in social work, psychology, mental health counseling, guidance counseling and/or marriage and family therapy.[43] Due to the intervention taking place in Florida, the Florida Department of Health's (FDOH) definition of a mental health professional was used.

Organizational description and performance issues

Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami provides trauma-based interventions to children, adolescents and adults in a variety of therapeutic settings. This organization has been in existence since 1917 in the City of Miami.[44] Administrators of this mental health service provider have expressed a need to explore the work-life issues of personnel to effectively enhance performance and ensure retention. Increased turnover was reported as financially impacting the organization in a negative way (F. Mayer, personal communication, September 14, 2011). For the purposes of this intervention, the administration of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami requested guidance and support from this consultant regarding work-life balance issues among personnel. The agency's administrative staff agreed and expressed interest in exploring matters of personnel and work-life balance to address and develop an intervention specific to performance improvement.

Data collection procedures

The data were collected via the Quality of Life Inventory (QOLI) through web-based activity. This method was used due to its cost-effectiveness, confidentiality and potential response rate of 43%.[45] The anonymity of the participating members in the survey was respected and implemented as follows: The administrative staff at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami agreed to provide the surveys to personnel, in which they did not disclose names or any identifying information such as age, birth date and/or home location or job title.

Employees who volunteered to participate in the intervention spent about 10 minutes responding to the QOLI. Non responders were not identified; therefore, they did not receive additional requests to participate in the intervention. There was no contact between the consultant and the employees completing the questionnaire. Administrators of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami provided employees with the survey. This survey contained all of the questions in the QOLI. Further information on this inventory is provided in Chapter 3. Employees were free to stop participation with respect to the QOLI at any time. No identifying information was gathered from the employees, other than a statement indicating whether or not the participant is a mental health professional and how many years he or she has been practicing. All questions were completed anonymously.

Instrumentation

The QOLI was developed to provide a measure of quality of and satisfaction with life. The instrument uses 17 scales to measure health, self-esteem, goals and values, money, work, play, learning, creativity, helping, love, friends, children, relatives, home, neighborhood, community and overall quality of life.[46] Grounded in the theory of life satisfaction, the QOLI enables consultants to perform linear and additive measurements concerning what a person has and what a person desires in valued areas of his or her life.[47] The instrument has been identified as ideal for measuring job satisfaction and productivity and it has proved beneficial to employers who need to identify personal and professional equilibrium among personnel.[48] Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores for the QOLI range from .77 to .89.[49]

The instrument that was used in this intervention is brief yet comprehensive in scope and relates to a quality-of-life model that can be helpful in explaining scores. The QOLI was standardized on a national sample that roughly matches that of the U.S. Census.[46]

This instrument was used to identify a performance issue at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami and develop a high-level performance plan.

Data analysis

To design an effective intervention, data were collected from personal observation, surveys and interviews and used to influence a high-level performance improvement plan. This consultant provided information with respect to personal observations when administering a high-level performance improvement plan. The purpose of this plan was to provide effective interventions specific to the identified needs of the personnel. An intervention was presented, and Kilpatrick levels of evaluation were used to effectively evaluate the high-level performance improvement plan. Further information on such a method of evaluation is provided later in this manuscript.

Definitions of key terms

The consultant refers to the following terms throughout this document:

i. **Human resource development:** HRD is a field of study focusing on the expansion and growth of human expertise through acts of organizational development and personnel training to improve performance and organizational production.[26]

ii. **Mental health professional:** An individual who has obtained a graduate degree in mental health counseling, psychiatry, social work, marriage and family therapy and/or psychology.

iii. **Work-life balance:** Work-life balance involves the organizational ability to engage members of an organization in aligning their personal and professional expectations to enhance a sense of equilibrium in their lives as individuals.[50]

Summary

Research into mental health professionals' experiences has indicated a growing need to develop more supportive workplaces through the training and development of personnel who can understand and address the needs of their organizations.[7] Creating supportive workplaces requires addressing the needs of personnel and developing a more meaningful work environment, which in turn requires organizational leaders to foster a sense of balance in organizational members' perceptions of their personal and professional lives.[8] Individuals who experience work-life balance have the sense that their personal and professional lives are in stable equilibrium.[9] Identifying specific issues of work-life balance for mental health professionals will help HRD professionals identify factors that contribute to work performance.

Literature review

The purpose of this intervention was to design an intervention specific to performance improvement at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. The consultant engaged in preliminary research and a thorough review of the literature to develop the intervention. Throughout the course of the intervention, the consultant continually engaged in a critical review of literature, historical concepts and pertinent theories. Specifically, an ongoing review of peer-reviewed literature from a variety of sources was conducted continually, to address important gaps in the research, to add to the intervention's conceptual framework and to help focus and shape the intervention process.

The areas that are explored and discussed in this chapter are the background and significance of the field of HRD, the meaning and theories of work-life balance, the importance of work-life balance to performance, specific organizational issues regarding work-life balance and the background and significance of job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of work-life balance. To provide an understanding of the context and structure of the mental health field, the consultant described the professional training necessary to become a mental health professional, as well as other relevant issues within the profession.

Human resource development

Swanson and Holton[26] defined HRD as the practice of expanding and increasing human expertise through organizational development and personnel training. A relatively new field, HRD emerged in the United States during World War II. The War Manpower Commission Bureau had undertaken a massive developmental effort called Training With in Industry to address the lack of personnel in the U.S. workforce due to the war effort.[51] Since that time, HRD has emerged as a valuable resource for the success of organizations, partly due to the field's continual involvement in research and understanding of the factors contributing to work performance.[25]

HRD is essential to all organizations, regardless of whether they are experiencing development or change. McGoldrick et al.,[27] described HRD as having diverse functions within an organization, including improving performance and organizational production. Through a thorough analysis of organizations, HRD professionals access, analyze, develop, implement and evaluate interventions aimed at improving organizational productivity.[28] As such, HRD is complex and continually developing and may be applied to all aspects of organizational life.[29] HRD's continual evolution as a profession has placed it in a pivotal position to help consultants explore modern-day phenomena, particularly the achievement of work-life balance.[30]

HRD is vital not only to organizations, but also to professions. HRD professionals benefit all professions by sharing the results of research into phenomena such as work-life balance and how it affects work performance. HRD experts also perform critical analyses and provide interventions. By contributing to the understanding of work-life balance and its impact on work performance, HRD professionals identify ways for organizations to increase their employees' sense of self-esteem.[31] Such research contributes to the development of what Atkinson[32] termed humane workplaces. Thus, in their effort to address the needs of professions such as the mental health field, HRD professionals benefit from continual professional activity specific to performance improvement.

HRD professionals frequently promote collaborative efforts within organizations to effectively improve performance. Performance improvement involves the action of intervening at multiple levels within an organization to maximize members' overall job satisfaction and organizational commitment.[52] Such activity contributes to one of the primary ethical goals of HRD professionals, which involve a continual attempt to create a holistic balance among individuals, groups, organizations and communities through consulting, teaching and practice.[53]

Work-life balance: background and context

According to current literature, the concept of work-life balance is complex, broad and evolving. Many theoretical views and opinions exist. The following summary provides a brief background on the context of work-life balance. As early as 1915, consultants suggested that workplace support could be used as a tool to ensure organizational members' sense of overall equilibrium.[54] However, the concept of striking personal and professional balance did not emerge until the mid-20th century, after the end of World War II, when women steadily increased their presence in the workforce while maintaining their traditional roles in the family. Advertising campaigns like "Rosie the Riveter" helped validate the presence of women in the workplace, which caused a shift in traditional organizational paradigms.[55] This shift in family dynamics raised many concerns—and continues to do so today-regarding how men and women maintain a sense of balance between their personal and professional lives.[56]

Literature regarding factors related to work-life balance continues to emerge. The present state of world affairs has encouraged further research into the concept.[54] To further understand the mainstreaming of work-life balance in modern society, it is vital to explore the concepts that influenced its development. Work-family fit. Voyadanoff[57] explained that the concept of work-life balance evolved from the work-family fit model, which describes a form of interrole dependency in which one spectrum (work) complements the other (life). Similar to many models addressing the importance of maintaining equilibrium between work and life, the work-family fit model posits that work-life balance results from person-environment fit in both work and family domains.[58] Work-family fit contributes to the understanding of work-life balance because the former suggests that the consideration of personal life outside of work is vital for consistently high performance and job satisfaction.[59]

The work and family domains share characteristics that contribute to self-actualization.[60] Self-actualization is a construct that influenced the professional inquiries of Abraham Maslow, who theorized that it involves an individual's capacity to tolerate and welcome uncertainty in life, to accept self and others, to achieve a state of autonomy and to care for others while maintaining a sense of flexibility and spontaneity in life.[61] According to Edwards & Rothbard,[58] the following factors contribute to a sense of self-actualization in terms of work-life balance:

i. **Autonomy:** The individual feels a sense of self-governance within the family system and the organizational setting.

ii. **Relationships:** The individual is able to positively interact within and obtain support through family and work relationships.

iii. **Security:** The individual is able to feel a sense of trust in both work and family settings.

Work-family conflict: Work-family conflict originates from the pressures that exist within the roles individuals have in their families and work positions. Within the theoretical approach of work-family conflict, work roles and family roles are mutually incompatible,[62,63] which leads to a sense of conflict between the roles individuals have at work and within their families. According to Greenhaus and Beutell,[62] conflict is represented in three major forms:

i. **Time-based conflict:** The individual experiences incompatibility with respect to the amount of time balanced between work and family.

ii. **Strain-based conflict:** The individual experiences excessive strain, pressure, or stress from one spectrum of the work-family

conflict paradigm (either work or family) and is unable to achieve a sense of balance between work and personal life, leading to work interference with family or family interference with work.

iii. **Behavior-based conflict:** The individual identifies and exhibits incompatible behaviors between the two domains of work and family.

Several multinational studies have identified the importance of understanding the compatibility between work and private life, underscoring the increased need for understanding the impact of work-life balance within organizations.[64] Such studies produced results identifying themes prevalent in the phenomena of work-life balance. Lilly et al.,[63] and O'Shea & Kirrane[65] argued that the development of work-family conflict is due solely to personal or professional factors. This translates to work-related pressures being separate from personal pressures, with both contributing to the everyday functioning of an individual. Furthermore, work-family conflict theory holds that no factors outside one's personal and professional life contribute to the disequilibrium or equilibrium of one's daily functioning. This removes influences occurring in society, such as an environmental disaster, a recent political election or political reform, which may have an indirect impact on an individual. However, should the individual not be directly involved with such events through his or her personal or professional life, then these events do not impact work-family conflict.[63,65]

Santos & Cardoso[66] argued that work-family conflict is tied specifically to traditional societal gender roles. The expectations that women will assume full responsibility for maintaining the household and that men will assume full responsibility for economic issues are examples of traditional societal factors that contribute to the development of work-family conflict.[66] Disequilibrium due to role conflict occurs when organizations do not consider the evolving roles of men and women within and outside the workplace.

Consultants have identified such disequilibrium as work interference. Within the theory of work-family conflict exists the phenomenon of work interference, a central component of work-family conflict. Work interference involves an overall exploration of the daily professional functioning of an individual to explain the causal factors of conflict that contribute to disequilibrium in work-life balance.[65] Within work interference, there are three domains: achievement (feeling accomplished concerning the expectations of daily work activity), power (having a sense of control over one's work environment) and affiliation (having a sense of belonging to the organization). These domains are driving forces behind individuals' motivation. As common factors in motivation, these domains are interdependent.[63] Gaining an understanding of these driving forces, which vary among individuals, enhances the understanding of work-life balance. O'Shea & Kirrane[65] further emphasized that not establishing a sense of achievement, power and affiliation within the organizational setting inhibits individuals from achieving work-life balance.

Work-life integration: Work-life integration involves the ability to develop a sense of equilibrium between the personal and professional worlds.[67] The concept of work-life integration was developed prior to the notion of work-life balance and currently is used on an international level to stimulate theoretical development and empirical studies relevant to work-life balance.[68] According to MacDermid & Wittenborn,[69] work-life integration and the HRD profession share a

variety of goals, including creating high-quality environments, humane and supportive relationships and workplaces and continual empathy toward organizational members' past, present and future work-life balance issues.

Other consultants have stated that work-life integration and the HRD profession must assert individuals' role in influencing a healthy and effective organization.[70] Work-life integration theory has influenced the development of international recognition of organizations focused on research regarding work-life balance.[17] Such research is focused on encouraging exploration to understand how work-life balance is achieved rather than the work-life issues that one is experiencing. As such, work-life balance research may lead to potentially revolutionary interventions by HRD professionals.[67]

Work-family enrichment: Work-family enrichment represents a paradigm emphasizing an individual's ability to create a sense of satisfaction between work and personal experience and plays a role in increasing work performance.[71] The concept is used to delineate the existence of a correlation between the ability to achieve satisfaction in one's personal life and the ability to achieve a sense of satisfaction in one's professional life and vice versa.[67] It also involves understanding the resources within the family and work spectrums and how these supply individuals with a sense of psychological well-being, which promotes self-esteem and results in rewards and higher income.[72] Voyadanoff[57] explained that work-family enrichment influences work-life balance because it promotes a positive relationship between work and life outside of work. Thus, both work-family enrichment and work-life balance affect role performance in the organizational setting.[71]

Theories regarding work-family conflict, work-life integration and work-family enrichment have influenced the development of work-life balance due to an emphasis on maintaining equilibrium between one's personal and professional lives.[73] Approaches based on all three factors posit the existence of interrole dependency, in which the experiences affecting the work and family domains also affect work-life balance. These theoretical factors have influenced organizational change efforts since the economic recession of 2008, which prompted organizations to identify the achievement of work-life balance as a priority.[74]

Summary: The concept of work-family conflict involves the conflicts that create disequilibrium in work-life balance. Work-family fit and work-family conflict clarify the interdependency of phenomena leading to conflict inside and outside of the work environment. Work-life integration and enrichment theories emphasize the impact of work-life issues on work performance. Work-life integration emphasizes that effective performance leads to the achievement of work-life balance, whereas work-family enrichment defines work-life balance within workers' roles in an environmental setting.[69] Studies have been conducted on the factors that influence work-life balance, challenges to work-life balance, and the impact the phenomenon of work-life balance has on creating a humane workplace.[68,75] Results of such studies provide evidence that such a phenomenon is evolving in organizational settings.

Challenges to work-life balance

Consultants have begun to address factors related to work-life balance within the context of the organization. Such work has been initiated to help organizations create environments that fulfill the needs of personnel both personally and professionally. In presenting a comprehensive review of the literature, several challenges to work-

life balance will be outlined in this section. Exploring these challenges enabled the creation of a balanced approach to this intervention. It is vital to note that work-life balance is a continually evolving concept. Thus, exploring factors such as challenges was helpful in the creation of a general, holistic organizational approach to developing an intervention. Current research has identified the lack of definition of work-life balance policies and globalization as significant and has identified specific challenges to understanding work-life balance.[68,75]

Globalization

Since 1990, globalization has grown exponentially throughout all sectors of society, business and government, increasing awareness of other cultures, communities and belief systems. Globalization describes the merging of global economies that result in increased trade, international development and the internationalization of individuals and groups. Marquardt & Engel[76] explained that two primary outcomes of globalization have been (a) the loss of historically known identities of national organizations as they merged and established themselves in other nations and (b) the emergence of international standards and regulations for trade and commerce.

Globalization has provided opportunities for HRD professionals to act not only as advocates for organizational development and change, but also as enablers of societal and national transformation in which workers' aptitude is maximized.[77] By providing professionals with the opportunity for professional growth and by creating intercultural experiences through the development of international companies, globalization has proved a vital force in enhancing a more economically unified world. Globalization also has helped enhance opportunities for individuals in the developing world as well as the developed world, who yearn to have an increased sense of professional affiliation, achievement and power. Such opportunities are generated through the global practice of transplanting nationally based organizations to international locations, hiring employees from other countries to fill critical shortages in specific employment categories and encouraging a tolerant and diverse workforce to improve competitive advantage.[78,79]

However and Nilsen[80] warned that globalization poses a threat to work-life balance due to the contrasting economic policies of developed and developing nations. Issues of pay, job loss due to off-shoring and diverse, nation-specific expectations about professions have been identified as further threats. Turker[79] argued that the development of regressive policies, such as not establishing a minimum wage, work hours or employee benefits, displays limited corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility involves the moral conscience of an organization that ensures the well-being of its members. Widener[81] argued that the survival of the global economy depends on progressive work-life policies. Such policies entail implementing employee benefits and pay raises to further increase personnel motivation.[78] This raises a series of debatable topics, including whether organizations should be held accountable if they ignore global expectations of progressive work-life policies. National organizations in the developed world that evolve into multinational ones as a result of globalization are expected to adhere to policies that enhance personnel, as well as to ensure that productivity and the expectations of personnel are not abused by the regressive employment expectations set by the hosting nation.[81]

Undefined work-life balance policies

Organizations that develop policies related to work-life issues do so with the aim of increased retention.[80] Despite identifying these policies as beneficial, many organizations have not clearly defined work-life balance policies due to poor upper management.[82] Poor upper management describes a specific level of management or leadership that does not demonstrate a sense of empathy for employees' personal issues. The effect of poor upper management is a lack of awareness of the realities and challenges individual members of the organization face outside the work environment. This emphasizes the importance of creating meaningful interactive experiences within the work environment to ensure that organizational members feel a sense of acceptance within the organizational setting.[83]

Dex & Scheibl[84] argued that it is vital for upper management to identify themes such as burnout, stress and personal issues that contribute to work-life balance through in-depth research on individual perceptions respective of organizational realities. These themes need to be explored on an individual level to ensure that the individuality of personnel within an organization is acknowledged.[83] Such exploration involves interviewing individuals and exploring their perceptions of their roles within the organization. The meaning and significance of work expectations in an individual's life can help to increase managerial understanding of the way individuals perceive themselves within the organization. Establishing such an understanding can encourage management to implement policies that maintain employee satisfaction, thereby increasing employee retention.[80]

To better accommodate work-life balance, organizations have explored the option of allowing workers to change their schedules to accommodate their work and non work commitments.[81] However, accommodating employees and creating a flexible working environment are challenges for many organizations due to the variety of pressures and demands placed on them by their stakeholders. Nilsen[80] pointed out that continual implementation of work-life policies can enable manipulative behaviors between employees and management. One example is employees using informal flexibility options to take longer lunches or breaks, which can impair performance and decrease overall commitment to the organization. On the other hand, employees who have less unrestricted time with which to manage their schedule are disadvantaged with respect to flextime opportunities, which can contribute to a lack of motivation.[84] Moreover, because employees who take advantage of flextime options might not always perform effectively, management must ensure that their performance remains consistent.[85]

Building strong relationships in the recruitment, retention and part-time contracting process has proven beneficial in attaining work-life balance.[32] This involves continual interaction with individual employees and not just groups within an organization. It also involves upper management's understanding of individuals' thought processes within the context of their world and how they perceive and interpret life outside and within the work environment. Management achieves this understanding by surveying and exploring whether or not employees are satisfied on an organizational level and why. Because such interactions encourage collaborative contact and regular, reciprocal expression of the needs of management and personnel, they help provide a clearer understanding of work-life balance policies that will benefit the individual.[86]

Humane workplaces

According to Atkinson,[32] organizations undergoing change need to remain in healthy competition with other organizations to ensure their success and survival. They also must embrace the concept of the humane workplace. Humane workplaces promote individuals' needs and high performance by ensuring a balance between work and non

work activities.[87] Organizations aiming to create a humane workplace offer options such as flextime, onsite childcare and telecommuting, which increase opportunities for better performance and demonstrate a sense of organizational responsibility for the individual. By providing such options, organizations allow individuals to have a sense of control over their contributions to the organization while feeling cared for by the organization.[85]

Open communication among all members of the organization (upper and lower management and personnel) has proven effective in implementing work-life balance policies that contribute to a more humane workplace.[32] Effective communication involves sharing with all members of the organization the needs that influence individual employees on a personal and professional level. This communication may be achieved through one-on-one interviews or anonymous surveys. The key to achieving open communication is ensuring that the needs and wants of all individual members and the concerns of the organization are recognized and expressed.[32]

Conceptual framework

Like other professionals, mental health professionals must acquire their knowledge through academic coursework, enhance their skills and abilities through experience and maintain a sense of motivation within their work environment to perform effectively. Academic leaders within the mental health professional field and societies of mental health professionals have expressed interest in expanding research regarding the predictors of work-life balance to further increase understanding of job satisfaction and the overall organizational commitment of mental health workers.[87] Poor work performance can be attributed to dysfunction such as work dissatisfaction, personal turmoil and familial instability.[88]

Mental health professionals: background

Like the HRD profession, the mental health profession has long focused on understanding human behavior and maximizing individual ability and productivity.[89] Mental health providers in the continental United States consist of clinical social workers, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists.[90] Research regarding the professional experiences of master's- and doctoral-level mental health professionals has identified the need for further intervention concerning the predictors of work-life balance.[91] Difficulties identified in these studies have included varying definitions of mental health professionals from state to state.[22]

According to the FDOH,[43] the state of Florida requires that mental health professionals obtain a state-issued license to practice independently in the state. To obtain this license, professionals must have acquired a minimum of 2years' experience in the mental health field, a master's degree from an accredited university with an accredited master's program and a certain number of hours of postgraduate supervised clinical experience (depending on the master's degree). Due to the varying requirements of other states, this intervention only targeted mental health professionals practicing in Florida.

Issues in the mental health field

According to the FDOH,[43] the mental health professional field considers training and development to be an ongoing process throughout a professional's career. Mental health professionals are encouraged to examine best practices on a regular basis. As part of their continuous learning experience, professionals practicing in the

state of Florida are required to complete continuing education units (CEUs).[43] To earn CEUs, a professional must complete courses that are approved and accredited by the state and that address professional topics of interest and concern.[92] These courses cover topics such as medical errors in billing, ethics, mental health issues, intervention and prevention and issues relevant to populations that clinical social workers serve.[43] There are no courses specific to individual issues regarding the personal mental health of professionals who are actively involved in meeting the unmet mental health needs of individuals and groups.

Providing mental health professionals with information regarding predictors of work-life balance may help them to identify best practices and to have an increased sense of motivation. However, little research has been conducted on mental health professionals' overall needs.[93] It could be beneficial to specifically investigate predictors of work-life balance among mental health professionals in order to further solidify research specific to the needs of this group.

For several years, research has identified high stress and the lack of work-life balance policy in mental health organizations to be a significant cause of turnover.[22,94] Turnover, references the change regarding number of the employees (i.e., hired, fired and voluntary termination) in a given time at a respective organization.[95] In undergoing a continuous review of literature, research on organizational factors specific to mental health professionals influenced the development of this intervention. They are as follows:

i. Stress exacerbates retention.

ii. Organizational administration approach towards mental health professionals should make the individual feel valued, in which their work is recognized as meaningful.

iii. Administration not addressing a personnel's personal issues and/ or work performance (work-life balance issues) is a continual contributing factor to the shortage of mental health professionals in the United State.[19,94–96]

This research contributes to the expressed concern by the administration of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami in an effort to avoid turnover. Thus, it formulates an initial goal for the purposes of the intervention. Such a goal is to provide strategies, tools and experiential ideas that encourage mental health professional's retention at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. Furthermore, the costs disclosed by the administration at Family Counseling Services specific to turnover, prevent effective service delivery and organizational sustainability (Mayer, personal communication, November 3, 2011). Current factual data specific to turnover on a national scale warrants costs to be estimated at 1/2 of a skilled hourly workers annual wages plus benefits, while losing a member of upper management can cost 3 to 5 times of the individuals annual wages and benefits. These expenses are incurred by the organization itself.[19,97] Therefore such information warranted validation for this experiential intervention.

Implications for intervention

Understanding the professional preparatory efforts that mental health professionals participate in increases HRD professionals' overall awareness of the continuous and ongoing training required for retention in the mental health field. Increasing such awareness is important because of HRD professionals' responsibility for the constructs of training and development. Mental health professionals are immersed in work with vulnerable populations whose members

have been exposed to traumatic experiences.[98] Nuttman-Shwartz & Dekel[99] recommend further research into increased training efforts relevant to the shared realities of mental health professionals.

Summary

The literature presented in this chapter identifies the evolution of HRD, the influencing theoretical factors affecting the understanding of work-life balance and a brief background on the mental health field in Florida. Emphasis was placed on the theoretical factors affecting the understanding of work-life balance in order to identify commonalities that have affected this phenomenon. The literature review continued to develop throughout the evolution of this intervention. Although research has been conducted regarding the evolving theories that influence work-life balance, limited links have been established specific to interventions addressing work-life balance among mental health professionals in Florida. Establishing such a link, particularly within the field of mental health, which is so vital to the development of people in need, helps to enhance and validate the duties the HRD profession has to maximize individual abilities.

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology the consultant used to achieve the investigative goal of developing a high-level performance improvement plan for personnel at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. A description of the organization and performance issue, ideal situations and alternatives and the data collection process is presented. Further information on employees is also provided.

Description of organization and performance issue

As previously stated, Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami has been providing mental health services to the residents of Miami-Dade County since 1917.[44] In developing the approach, idea and method of service delivery for the purposes of this Capstone project, the administrative staff of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami requested a consultative service specifically addressing personnel's work-life issues. After the QOLI was administered, stress was the need identified for improvement specific to work performance. Personal stress and work-related stress were the specific issues contributing to the personnel's concern. Such information was identified through the results obtained from the QOLI. Results were hand scored in accordance with the procedural requirements of the instrument. Further details regarding the results of the QOLI are described in Chapter 4.

Ideal situations and alternatives

Prior to developing a high-level performance improvement plan, the consultant considered ideal situations and alternatives. The considered ones were as follows:

i. Teaching budgeting skills via bibliotherapy to address the area of dissatisfaction in the Money scale. Detail on this scale and all other subscales of the QOLI are described in the findings section of Chapter 4.

ii. Problem solving aimed at exploring financial arrangements and new budgets to address the area of dissatisfaction in the Money scale.

iii. In addressing the areas of dissatisfaction in the Work scale, providing graded tasks or assignments to help establish short- and long-term career goals.

iv. Problem solving for key issues that will provide a creative outlet to address the area of dissatisfaction in the Creativity scale.

v. Exploring the daily schedule to determine available time to discover creative self-expression to address the area of dissatisfaction in the Creativity scale. As previously mentioned, details on the QOLI subscales are described in Chapter 4.

vi. These alternatives are ideal in nature and can be carried out with time and sufficient

Funding

Due to constraints of time and money, these alternatives could not be implemented by the consultant. However, they were discussed with and disclosed to the administrative staff of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami to create opportunities for future exploration and research.

Performance gap: discussion

Initial reports by Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami identified stress as a considerable issue to address as a performance gap. Furthermore, continual concerns were expressed by administrators when requesting services via this consultant specific to work-life balance issues and employee performance. Administrators expressed concern that aspects of the growing fiscal budget crisis of the organization, including the increased enrollment of clients, would create a gap in performance (Mayer, personal communication, September 23, 2011). In an effort to efficiently identify specific numerical data in relation to matters influencing work performance, the QOLI was administered. Further information on this instrument is described later in this report, as are specific findings that influenced the development of a high-level performance plan. According to Dietz,[100] three phenomena that occurred in the late 1990s led to a call for increased HRD emphasis in the field of mental health:

i. Increased demand for program evaluation to demonstrate program effectiveness and accountability.

ii. Increased need for mental health professionals in private and clinical practice to obtain state licensure.

iii. New mandates by all 50 states that social workers must participate in continuing education programs.

Those in the mental health profession must possess an understanding of clients' unmet needs, an understanding of ways to intervene to prevent trauma and future conflict and an overall understanding of the self (practitioner) in the therapeutic partnership of client and professional.[99] Limited research provides evidence concerning supportive interventions specific to enhancing the practitioner's personal and professional needs. In an effort to enhance practitioners' work-life balance, it is vital to provide such interventions.

Data collection: approach

Background: Quantitative inquiry is a research approach that methodically measures and identifies knowledge using standardized tools.[100,101] This method influenced the consultant, as it allowed for engagement in objective activity with employees in order to obtain responses regarding the needed data.[102] Through the use of standardized tools to obtain precise measurements, analysis becomes possible and the consultant is able to count, classify and build statistical models to explain observed knowledge.[103] Therefore, the QOLI was used and identified as appropriate in determining specific issues, statistical

constructs and measurements in situations in which it is otherwise impossible to examine individual perceptions.

To identify the predictors of a particular phenomenon that occurs in a natural setting and to present them in numerical fashion, consultants should incorporate an approach that acknowledges the importance of objectivity. Quantitative inquiry follows activities related to objectivity in an effort to create procedures that can be systematically replicated.[101,104] Such inquiry suggests that individuals can agree on a communal and exacting way of seeing reality. In other words, quantitative inquiry helps to generate data that can be generalized for the purposes of interventions.

The design of this intervention followed a quantitative approach in order to determine specific issues of work-life balance that create performance gaps. This consultant identified quantitative designs as beneficial to conducting research such as this for several reasons. First, quantitative approaches allowed the consultant to objectively obtain numerical data that were specific to the identified areas in need of intervention. This helped to identify a performance gap through a standardized instrument. Second, the data helped the consultant to deduce and confirm information. Furthermore, applying a quantitative approach to research allowed this consultant to obtain numerical data via the QOLI and identify areas that warranted the development of the intervention.

Employees: To ensure the selection of individuals who can provide information that is detailed and relevant to the purpose of the intervention, quantitative consultants engage in various forms of sampling. For the purposes of this report specific to the developed intervention, convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling entails the selection of employees based on the needs of the intervention.[102,105,106] Convenience sampling also involves selecting employees who are available and accessible.[102] For the purposes of this intervention, mental health professionals were the identified employees needed to influence the development of the intervention.

Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami employs 58 individuals, 50 of whom are mental health professionals (Mayer, personal communication, September 23, 2011). Therefore, the employees who were incorporated into this intervention were readily accessible and available. A total of 46 individuals participated in the completion of the QOLI. No participant was asked to disclose his or her name. Sample size selection in quantitative inquiry depends on what the consultant wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry and what can be done in the available time and with the available resources.[101,102] Employees were provided with the survey by Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami's administrative staff to determine willingness to respond to the QOLI. Additionally, employees answered a series of non identifying questions to address work-life balance via the QOLI.

The informed consent form (Appendix 1) explained the purposes of this Capstone intervention. The following information was included: the employees could choose to withdraw from the research at any time and detailed explanation regarding the researcher's adherence to practices designed to ensure full anonymity and confidentiality. This process began after the consultant presented this information to his academic advisor at Barry University.

Instrumentation: The QOLI was developed to provide a measure of quality of and satisfaction with life. The instrument uses 17 scales to measure health, self-esteem, goals and values, money, work, play, learning, creativity, helping, love, friends, children, relatives, home,

neighborhood, community and overall quality of life.[46] Grounded in the theory of life satisfaction, the QOLI enables consultants to perform linear and additive measurements concerning what a person has and what a person desires in valued areas of his or her life.[47] The instrument has been identified as ideal for measuring job satisfaction and productivity and it has proven beneficial to employers who need to identify personal and professional equilibrium among personnel.[48] Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores for the QOLI range from .77 to .89.[49] The QOLI was standardized on a national sample that roughly matches that of the U.S. Census.[107] Of the 1,924 sets of materials distributed, 943 were returned, for a return rate of 49%.[47] The final standardization sample consisted of 798 individuals or 85% of the returned sets of data.[46]

The QOLI provides an outcome score, which reveals areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with respect to one's personal life.[47] Individuals who complete the scale are expected to have a minimum of a sixth-grade reading level. The above-mentioned scales are rated by the respondents in terms of the individual scale's importance and satisfaction. In other words, the respondents are asked to rate their level of satisfaction and importance with the mentioned scale.[46,47] These ratings then provide a QOLI raw score, which yields a T Score that is then translated into an overall quality of life classification. Having access to such an instrument helped the consultant determine work-life balance issues impacting work performance.

Research procedure: Permission to initiate this Capstone project was granted by the advisor of the HRD doctoral program of Barry University. Following the granted permission, the following chronological procedural explanation occurred following the agreement established by administrative staff of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami:

General pretest: To discuss the intent, purpose, and informed consent with employees, as well as obtain general interest in and awareness of issues of work-life balance (Appendix 6 for template).

Administration of the quality of life inventory: To obtain in-depth, specific data regarding areas of the work and personal lives of employees in a discreet, anonymous way.

High-level performance improvement plan: In response to the data acquired, a performance improvement plan was developed to address the areas of dissatisfaction and concern, as identified by employees in the Quality of Life Inventory and general pretest. This plan was later presented to administrative staff to consider for implementation in day-to-day work activity.

Evaluation: Influenced by Kirkpatrick's levels of evaluation; general evaluation of high-level performance improvement plan developed to obtain information and data with respect to the presented plan.

General posttest: Presented anonymously to staff members to obtain generalized information as to their experience with this Capstone project. The same questions asked in the initial pretest were asked in the posttest.

Data analysis and synthesis

As the consultant engaged in analysis of the collected data, he abided by the following guidelines recommended by Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger:[108]

i. The consultant continually maintained a sense of awareness and set aside any personal biases and assumptions by assuming an objective stance toward the research inquiry.

ii. In order to develop a high-level performance improvement plan, descriptive statistics were conducted and a needs assessment was used through the application of the QOLI and delivery of pre- and posttests.

iii. A high-level performance improvement plan was developed to address performance issue(s) and/or gap(s) as influenced by the QOLI.

iv. Only mental health professionals from Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami participated in the QOLI.

v. The consultant ensured compliance with Barry University's codes to respect human subjects by adhering to confidentiality procedures.

When conducting any type of research, it is imperative to remain aware of ethical issues and continuously strive to protect employees. According to Miles and Huberman,[106] in order to ensure that an intervention follows ethical guidelines, the consultant must clearly explain the concepts of informed consent and confidentiality to employees and identify any potential for harm and the risks involved before collecting data. This consultant was fully aware of this need and acknowledged that the employees in this intervention were to be informed of all their rights and responsibilities regarding their participation. Furthermore, the consultant endeavored to protect the rights and interests of the employees, as well as the information that they contributed, throughout the course of this intervention.

To ensure participant protection, the consultant adhered to all of the guidelines addressing respect for and dignity of human subjects and assured employees of their rights and responsibilities via the informed consent form. Furthermore, employees were advised of the following:

i. Their names and identifying characteristics would be kept completely confidential.

ii. They had the right to withhold participation or refuse to answer any question at any time throughout the intervention without experiencing any personal or professional repercussions.

iii. The intervention posed no serious physical threats to them.

iv. They had the right to end their participation at any time.

Summary

This chapter discussed the intervention methodology and approaches taken. It also described the research design, including the means of data collection and data analysis procedures. Furthermore, it described the means by which the consultant ensured that ethical approaches were followed throughout the course of the intervention.

Findings

This chapter contains a comprehensive description of the outcomes and results identified by the personnel of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami who completed the QOLI. An analysis of the results is provided, along with supporting evidence. The structure of this chapter is as follows:

i. Current realities of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami

ii. Findings

iii. Underlying causes/gaps

iv. Description and analysis of findings

The purpose of this chapter is to specifically formulate the findings in a professional and scholarly way and to then develop a high-level performance improvement plan.

Current realities

The current state of the economic crisis in the United States has challenged citizens in many ways. During the development of this intervention, this crisis was identified as negatively impacting not only the organization itself, but also employees on a personal level. Over the last 3years, Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami has lost a series of grants that funded a plethora of mental health prevention and intervention programs and has faced a nearly twofold increase in the number of clients requesting services. Since 2008, the number of employees has remained the same; however, salaries have been frozen due to limited funding sources (F. Mayer, personal communication, September 17, 2011).

Hence, the realities at the organization involve an increased need on behalf of personnel to meet the diverse needs of the client populations served. These populations vary in age, social class, gender, race and ethnic background. Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami has never had a formal assessment specific to the quality of life of its personnel with the goal of addressing work performance. It became an interest of organizational leadership to address such a need and gap to further improve organizational sustainability and reduce the possibility of employee turnover (F. Mayer, personal communication, September 18, 2011).

Findings

After a request for consultative service by the organizational administration, an agreement was reached as how to assess work-life balance issues among personnel. The QOLI was chosen to obtain anonymous results concerning employee work-life balance. Given the vast array of areas of life measured with respect to satisfaction, such an instrument was identified as beneficial in order for the organizational administration to effectively address any unmet environmental needs of personnel. A flowchart of procedural approaches is provided in (Appendix 2) to create a visual diagram of service for the reader.

A total of 50 inventories were provided to the administration of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami to distribute among personnel who fell under the category of mental health professionals. Please refer to the Definitions section in Chapter 1 for more information. Of the 50 inventories distributed, a total of 46 were returned. Information on non respondents was not obtained due to the consultant not interacting with non responders. Once questionnaires were returned, manual scoring in accordance with the QOLI was completed for each questionnaire. Overall quality of life classification scores obtained were as follows: Of the 46 respondents, 73.9% yielded a high overall quality of life classification, while 23.9% yielded an average overall quality of life classification and 2.2% yielded a low overall quality of life classification. A pie chart of score results can be found in (Appendix 3) to provide a visual for the reader. Employees responding in the high range are reported to be extremely happy and fulfilled, successful in getting what they want out of life and able to get their basic needs met and achieve their goals.[47] Those responding in the average range of the quality of life classification are reported to be well-functioning individuals who are able to achieve satisfaction and maintain a fairly balanced life.[47] Respondents who score in the low range of the quality of life classification are generally unable to

get their basic needs met or achieve their goals and are unfulfilled in their lives.[47] The QOLI developers report that consultants should observe scale response details in order to fully identify gaps specific to work-life balance.[109,110] Further information on the results of the QOLI scales can be found in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Underlying causes/gaps

In a review of the findings of the QOLI with the administration at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami, each scale of the inventory was reported and explained. Once this information was provided, a discussion with administrative staff was held to explore underlying causes and gaps. Such gaps were as follows. The deepening economic crisis in the United States was a reported underlying cause of a domino effect within the organization (F. Mayer, personal communication, October 3, 2011). National, state and local funding had been constrained by a weakened housing market that had produced decreased tax revenue for grant-funded programs. Furthermore, increased unemployment had decreased the opportunity for donors and sponsors to contribute to nonprofit organizations.[109]

Limited preparation for such states of crisis has produced increased levels of dissatisfaction among professionals.[20] After a review of the areas of dissatisfaction in the scales of the QOLI, it was concluded that the key component of intervention must be a supportive one. These conclusions were reached through face-to-face interviews with the organization's administration, careful and continual review of the literature and review of the standardized scores of the QOLI.

Description and analysis of findings

Pre- and posttest findings: Prior to a report of scores in response to the QOLI, general information on the results of the pretest and posttest will be detailed. A dichotomous survey was developed to help address the general interest and obtain general information for the purposes of this Capstone project. For the first question concerning whether work-life balance issues are important, a total of 46 respondents all answered "Yes" on the pretest and posttest. With respect to the second question concerning whether participating in a intervention on work-life balance would be beneficial, 34 (73.9%) answered "Yes" and 12 (26.1%) answered "No," whereas in the posttest responses, 37 (80.4%) answered "Yes," 7 (15.2%) answered "No," and 2 posttests (specific to these questions) were returned blank. Percentage and increase from pretest to posttest was as follows: 73.9% (pre-Yes) to 84.1% (post-Yes); thus, a 10.2% increase was noted from the pretest to posttest. In response to the final question concerning individual interest in activity specific to addressing work-life balance, a total of 37 (80.4%) respondents stated "Yes" and 9 (19.5%) stated "No." With respect to the posttest response to the final question, 40 (86.9%) answered "Yes," 2 (4.3%) answered "No," and 4 did not respond to the question. Percentage and increase from pretest to posttest was as follows 80.4% (pre-Yes) to 86.9% (post-Yes); thus, there was a 6.5% increase.

Quality of life inventory findings: With respect to the QOLI, the following synopsis is being reported to clarify the significance of each scale. The employees showed satisfaction on the following scales: health, self-esteem, goals and values, play, creativity, helping, love, friends, children, relatives, home, neighborhood and community. Employees showed dissatisfaction on the following scales: money, work and learning. The following description details the definition of each subscale:

i. **Health:** Specific to the respondent having a sense of being physically fit without any pain.

ii. **Self-esteem:** References respondents having a sense of respect for themselves in reference to day-to-day activity and past experiences.

iii. **Goals-and-values:** References present, past and future life goals, as well as meaningful life experiences (as perceived by the participant).

iv. **Money:** Defined as current financial earnings and what the respondent believes he or she should be making.

v. **Work:** Refers to the participant's current work duties, past work duties and ideal work duties.

vi. **Play:** Defined as individual time to relax or explore self-improvement.

vii. **Learning:** References self-interest of the participant.

viii. **Creativity:** References individual sense of imagination and availability to share ideas.

ix. **Helping:** Refers to the individual participant being able to help others in need who is not friends or relatives.

x. **Love:** The scale referencing romance and feelings of being cared for.

xi. **Friend:** References the feeling of having developed meaningful and sustainable friendships.

xii. **Children:** The scale identifying one's ability to get along with offspring or play with others' children.

xiii. **Relatives:** References not only family members, but also the participant's ability to get along with relatives.

xiv. **Home:** Refers to the individual feeling a sense of identification with his or her current residence.

xv. **Neighborhood:** References the individual sense of satisfaction with the general surroundings external to the home environment.

xvi. **Community:** Refers to macro levels of interaction (i.e., city, state, national levels with individuals, groups and/or state diplomatic entities).

All scales in the previously identified results were defined in adherence to the QOLI. Developers of this inventory identify the previously noted subscales as significant and encompassing of an individual's life.[111] Furthermore, this inventory is posited to incorporate items relative to determining components of satisfaction in one's personal and professional life. The QOLI is encouraged as a form of analysis to develop needed interventions to enhance individual work-life balance.[109,110,112]

Of the identified results, the observable areas of dissatisfaction lie in the scales of money, learning and creativity. These scales are obvious targets for interventions. This conclusion was reached upon analysis of the sample weighted satisfaction profiles and observing responses to each scale in the QOLI among employees. It should be noted that none of the employees omitted any of the items in the scales. It was with such information that recommendations for interventions were submitted to the administrative staff of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. When analyzing the data provided, it is important to note that areas that are rated positively can be used to formulate interventions.

Summary: In reviewing the data, the consultant identified issues that required a sensitive approach. Of the identified concerns, work, money, learning and creativity are areas that were identified as being in need of intervention. In response to the sensitivity of these issues, respect for the employees and the time constraints of this research project, a high-level performance improvement plan was developed and proposed to the administrative staff of the organization to provide a consultative and supportive time-sensitive service. The performance improvement plan is described in the next chapter.

High-level performance plan and evaluation

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the implemented high-level performance plan that was developed in response to the identified work-life balance concerns reported by personnel of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami through the QOLI. Furthermore, an evaluation of the performance plan was completed using Kirkpatrick's levels of evaluation. This model is used in the practice of interventions developed by HRD professionals.[113]

Influencing factors

The QOLI proposes a series of concise methods of intervention when addressing issues of work-life balance reported by employees completing the scale. Such interventions are described as general and are meant to influence consultants, interventionists and/or professionals in developing interventions for individuals and/or groups.[111] For the purposes of this Capstone project, the consultant was influenced by the suggested CASIO solutions, which are part of the QOLI, when developing the performance improvement plan. This method of intervention is explained as follows:

i.   **Circumstance:** Encourages self- and/or group reflection on areas influencing factors that are negatively impacting a particular aspect of work-life balance (as identified by the QOLI scales and subscales) and specifically identifying them.

ii. **Attitude:** Involves identifying current attitudes toward work-life balance issues (as identified in the QOLI scales) and envisioning ideal areas of resiliency. The individual and/or group must reflect on the problem and a positive way to view the problem.

iii. **Standards:** Upon the identification of circumstances (C) that negatively impact an area of work-life balance and an examination of attitudes (A), individual goals and standards (S) that are realistic but challenging must be developed. These goals must be specific to obtaining a sense of satisfaction with the identified problem.

iv. **Important:** A schematic identification of methods to maintain a sense of control during such a period of change must occur at this point. The individual and/or group must emphasize aspects of importance (I) that will influence positive change.

v.   **Other:** This strategic approach involves identifying areas of satisfaction that are influencing work-life balance and specifically working toward increasing satisfaction in these areas. For example, an individual who is working to improve creativity (as identified on the QOLI scale) because this area has increased dissatisfaction will further increase the aspect of play (a scale on the QOLI), which is identified as an area of satisfaction. The intended goal of such a strategy is to create balance by focusing on other areas of life in which care and satisfaction exist.

The identified strategies were developed by the QOLI and encouraged by its developers to be used by consultants when developing appropriate interventions.[109,110,112]

Development of the plan

For purposes of this assignment, this performance improvement plan will be referred to as the Quality of Life Support Plan. The plan consists of two parts. These parts come as a result of looking at the condition of the identified gap, reading the anonymous results of the QOLI and observing the identified scholarly literature and noting the need for more support for professionals in the mental health field. Therefore, the first part of the performance improvement plan will be referred to as the Gathering Phase. The following description details this point of intervention and is followed by the second point of intervention.

Gathering phase: During this period, the administrative staff is encouraged to gather data in a simplistic and efficient way. An online template (as found in (Appendix 4) has been developed and provided to the organization to inquire on a quarterly (i.e., 4 times a year) basis throughout the fiscal year as to the state of satisfaction among personnel with respect to their personal and professional lives. The questions asked in the template were developed by this consultant to help the administrative staff produce numerical visual data (through the use of Microsoft Excel) as to the state of satisfaction among personnel. Given that this intervention is to be administered via the use of online inquiry and this organization has computer technology in place at its facility, no expenses with respect to this point of intervention are expected. The online template for personnel to complete is expected to take only 5 minutes of the individual's time (five questions, with 1 minute per question to encourage reflection). The Microsoft Excel function ((Appendix 4) for sample) is expected to produce an estimated 10 to 15 minutes for administrative staff to input responses and pull numerical data on the responses (10 minutes inputting tallied responses and 5 minutes applying the analysis function in Microsoft Excel). All details of this intervention have been explained to the administrative staff of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. Trial periods with the online template and Microsoft Excel function were conducted by this consultant at random times throughout a month-long period to estimate times of completion.

Summary: gathering phase: The fact that motivation to complete the online template could create issues in individuals' outcomes in this implementation has been emphasized to administrative staff. Furthermore, it has been emphasized that personnel will have the opportunity to continually voice personal and professional concerns. Personnel completing the online template will be encouraged to identify themselves in order to receive a more individualized and supportive intervention. The online data template encourages a voluntary approach in which administrative staff will be encouraged to assure personnel that no professional repercussions will occur. After data are gathered, the "Buddy Phase" can then occur.

Buddy phase: As reported by administrative staff of Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami, a monthly staff meeting occurs to address caseloads, organizational issues of change and budgetary matters (F. Mayer, personal communication, December 22, 2011). During this time, the mental health professionals of this organization are asked to report on one specific client and the services provided. No personal

experience on behalf of the mental health professional is disclosed. It is during this period, on a quarterly basis (4 times a year), that the "Buddy Phase" of this performance improvement plan is suggested to occur. The purpose of this phase of intervention is to encourage mutuality of support among personnel led by administrative staff. The following steps were recommended to ensure that the implementation of this phase of the intervention occurs:

Reports of the Online Template: Administrative staff will respectively identify issues identified as being of concern from the online template. It is important to recall that this template will reflect matters of work-life balance. No individualized result will be reported. This will occur at the chosen staff meeting.

CASIO approach: Administrative staff will encourage a reflective discussion of the identified areas of concern among all personnel to effectively address the matters identified in the online template. Administrative staff will be asked to address these matters in an open-ended question/answer format, encouraging responses from as many staff members as possible in the meeting. Reflection of the areas of concern must address the QOLI CASIO approach. This approach involves responses to the following questions:

i. "What can be done to change the Circumstance?"

ii. "What can be done to change the Attitude of the circumstance?"

iii. "What can be done to change the Standard?"

iv. "What can be done to improve the Importance of the circumstance?"

v. "How can one boost satisfaction in other areas of life?"

These questions address strategies suggested by the developers of the QOLI. When asking such questions, administrative staff will be asked to personalize the purpose of this inquiry and inform staff that such an approach is being taken to address work-life balance issues.

The "question" box: This consultant developed a box in which staff interested in engaging in a direct one-to-one discussion with organizational leaders with respect to issues of work-life balance could place questions. Such an intervention was developed as part of the "Buddy Phase" to encourage personnel peer camaraderie and address self-reflection in practice. Administrative staff will be encouraged to provide a 15-minute consultation per concern on an individual basis to prevent loss of time in other areas of organizational activity.

Summary

Buddy phase: Research posits that guided, supportive, reflective activities are valuable in helping organizational members effectively establish goals specific to career and performance development. Furthermore, encouraging such activity over time in the form of discussion is recommended, as it helps enable personnel (organizational members) to seek support, guidance and assistance from their organizational leaders.[110,111,115] It is with such identified research that the "Buddy Phase" of this performance improvement plan was developed to encourage group and individual discussion on individual matters influencing work-life balance. This was delivered to the administrative staff of this organization to provide prompt, timely information to help address the issues at hand.

Evaluation

To address best practices, this consultant conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the performance improvement plan.

The purpose of this plan is to effectively address the development of the interventions. The levels of evaluation developed by Donald Kirkpatrick[116] with respect to HRD programs were used to guide the evaluation process. The levels and findings are as follows:

Level 1

This level of evaluation references the individual's opinion with respect to the intervention. With respect to the QOLI, 46 employees provided completed results. An anonymous survey of 7 out of 10 administrative staff experienced in this process reported that the interventions were worth implementing. (Appendix 5) for the anonymous survey template given to administrative staff.

Level 2

Employees in an intervention and/or training are expected to report the resulting increase in knowledge. Six out of the 10 administrative staff members anonymously disclosed that the Quality of Life Support Plan increased their knowledge base.

Level 3

This point of evaluation references the transfer of learning during the performance improvement plan implementation. Results of the anonymous survey given to administrative staff disclosed that 8 out of the 10 respondents will consider implementing the performance plan in the workplace.

Level 4

Results of the intervention(s) are measured at this level of evaluation. Seven out of the 10 members of the administrative staff reported that the performance improvement plan is an effective instrument for the work environment overall.[113,116] The minimal costs, support provided to staff and research presented to the organization on work-life balance was identified as effectively returning on the investment for this intervention.

Problems identified during the implementation of this performance improvement plan involved the following issues:

i. Although incentives were offered to encourage participation, only 46 of the 50 staff members responded.

ii. Time constraints and day-to-day work duties limited motivation in data collection.

iii. Administrative staff disclosed that although such a plan can be implemented, actually carrying out such a plan independently might at times prove difficult.

Return on Investment (ROI) with respects to this intervention references the gain from the investment in the intervention, compared and contrasted with, the costs from investment in the intervention. When considering ROI, some of the following data was noted by this consultant and administrative staff.

Increased productivity is recognized when the interventions at hand cost less: Such is the case with this intervention, in which the sole costs was inclusive to the QOLI (Quality of Life Inventory). Costs regarding this instrument were specifically detailed and provided to the administrative staff at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami. Furthermore, performance improvement plans that creatively made by professionals, tend to present with more cost effective opportunities for organizations, a critical issue of negotiation with non-profits, like Family Counseling Services.[117]

A positive approach towards intervention/development of change initiatives in the organization: Research on turnover identifies initiatives taken towards increasing commitment by addressing work-life balance, decreases turnover.[19] Implementing such a change initiative inclusive of employee's experience with work-life balance issues, presents an opportunity for personnel to feel acknowledged by administrative staff.

Organizational effectiveness: Although long term data collection (an estimated 5years) was stated by administrative staff, as a need to fully determine effectiveness of the intervention; certain points were identified as demonstrating the intervention being one that is effective (Mayer, personal communication, March 4, 2012). Such information is as follows: the information initially acquired for the purposes of this intervention was geared towards realizing business objectives. These objectives entailed decreasing turnover to prevent further financial impacts on the organization. Furthermore, the intervention was developed to address feedback obtained anonymously by the consultant with respects to work-life balance.

Ideas for the future

Upon completing this intervention and presenting it to the administrative staff at Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami, a follow up meeting was held to determine progress and continued interest in implementing the performance improvement plan. The purpose of the meeting was to also formulate change and identify long-term goals. Administrative staff disclosed the performance improvement plan will be an approach that will be and has been incorporated into the work setting. Moreover, the suggestions of incorporating the "phases" such as the "Buddy Phase" into the monthly staff meeting, was identified as already implemented. Time constraints however, were disclosed to be impacting certain components of the performance plan and therefore, adjustments have already been considered by administrative staff (Mayer, personal communication, March 11, 2012). When presenting the evaluation this consultant incorporated to assess effectiveness, administrative staff disclosed knowledge had been acquired and has begun to be transferred. Furthermore, the re-emphasized the need for increased time to determine overall long-term effectiveness.

Summary

It is important that Family Counseling Services of Greater Miami have access to tools to overcome obstacles to addressing employee issues of work-life balance in order to finally close the identified gaps. The introduction of such a plan can help create meaningful discussion for improved practices and employee-supervisor relations. It is to be noted that such an improvement plan can be effectively carried out via shared responsibility and a meaningful learning experience.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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