

NCWWI Student and Alumni Learning Exchanges: Spring 2023 Current Issues Series



Addressing Moral Distress and Building Protective Factors and Resilience During Times of Systems Change

Context

On February 22, 2023, NCWWI hosted a learning exchange for students and alumni. There was a brief interview of Rachel Imboden, PhD., examining the factors that are protective for child welfare workers and leaders who are working in systems that are stressed and in need of reform. Some examples of these factors include:

Positive work/organizational culture and psychological safety. Specifically, openness to discussions of ethics/morals in practice and translating talk into action

Levels of practice: micro, mezzo-institutional

Resources: [Moral Distress](#), [Holistic Framework](#), [Child Welfare Can Address Burnout](#)

Development of policies that are congruent with the realities of practice or that allow for flexibility and discretion (i.e., creative practice and 'workarounds')

Levels of practice: mezzo-institutional, macro

Supportive working conditions. Examples include adequate staffing, reasonable workloads, time off/away (including sabbatical), fair pay

Levels of practice: mezzo-institutional, macro

Resources: [Moral Distress](#), [Child Welfare Can Address Burnout](#), [Centering Worker Well-being](#)

Presence of a formal process for consultation and feedback

Level of practice: mezzo-institutional

Resources: [Understanding Moral Distress – Key Takeaways](#)

Supportive co-worker relationships and mentorships

Level of practice: micro-interpersonal



Resources: [How Peer Support Can Reduce Burnout and Improve Worker Well-being](#)

Access to other social workers and human service professionals outside of the work environment

Level of practice: micro-interpersonal

Resources: [How Peer Support Can Reduce Burnout and Improve Worker Well-being](#)

Engaging in paid or unpaid work that is value congruent including advocacy or activism

Levels of practice: mezzo, macro

Training opportunities

Levels of practice: micro, mezzo-institutional

Resources: [Moral Distress](#), [Centering Worker Well-being](#)

Self-care activities (including setting boundaries) particularly in the context of a supportive work environment

Levels of practice: micro, mezzo-institutional

Resources: [Supporting Self-Care at the System Level](#), [Most Popular Self-Care Resources of 2022](#), [Self-Care – Using Mindfulness to Improve Relationships](#)

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