

Abstract

Theoretical Background: Due to working with traumatized clients, mental health care workers in ambulant assisted care are in risk of secondary traumatization and burnout. The ability of self-care is represented as a potential protecting factor.

Objective: Investigating the questions what role the trauma of clients has in the everyday social-psychiatric work and to what extent stress response (such as secondary traumatization and burnout) presents a reaction on personalized and work-related predictors. Moreover, the influence of self-care on the development of stress responses is investigated.

Method: Via a questionnaire survey with a sample of mental health care workers in ambulant assisted care in Stuttgart area (N=36), it is examined which personalized and work-related factors show a significant linear relationship with secondary traumatization, burnout and self-care. Furthermore intervening effects of the ability of self-care on the development of secondary traumatization and burnout are examined.

Results: The multiple linear regression analysis showed a positive significant linear relationship between the duration of support ($r^2=.231$, $p=.021$) as well as a negative significant linear relationship between the age of the mental health care worker ($r^2=.231$, $p=.046$) and the intensity of secondary traumatization. In regard of the intensity of burnout, significant linear relationships were represented to the clients' age ($r^2=.207$, $p=.048$) and to the workers' feeling of being professionally stable ($r^2=.207$, $p=.034$). There were no moderating effect of self-care on the development of burnout and secondary traumatization.

Conclusion: Clients' traumas have an important role in the everyday-work in social-psychiatric institutions in Stuttgart area and contribute the development of secondary traumatic stress symptoms as well as burnout. A young worker's age and a long duration of support present risk factors to secondary traumatization. Low age of the client and low feelings of being professionally stable present risk factors to burnout. There has been no evidence for self-care as a protecting factor.