

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2018 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

POSTER SESSION 4

MGH 241, Easel 159

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

The Relationship Between Personality and Burnout in Community Mental Health Therapists

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Substantial research has examined the relationship between the Big Five personality traits (cynicism, neuroticism, openness, extraversion, and agreeableness) and burnout at the workplace, and has found that certain scores on each of these traits affect vulnerability to burnout. However, this research has not been duplicated in the population of community mental health therapists, a role that is particularly reliant upon skills that burnout can impair (e.g., reduction of empathy). Through this research, we seek to determine who is at increased risk of developing burnout by studying the relationship between Big Five personality traits and components of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement). In addition, we captured the common personality profiles of this population, which indicate the proportion of community mental health therapists who may be at increased risk for burnout due to personality traits. We conducted a quantitative study using a between-subjects design. Participants were community mental health therapists across Washington state, recruited as part of a larger study. Participants completed online self-report measures related to burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory) and personality traits (Big Five Inventory-10). We hypothesized that individuals who report high neuroticism would also report higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and lower levels of personal accomplishment. We also hypothesized that individuals who report high conscientiousness or high extraversion would report lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal accomplishment. Our results could lead to improved methods of individualizing interventions for community mental health therapists and reduce the effects of burnout. Additionally, by capturing the common personality profiles, we can determine the types of interventions that will be applicable to the largest percentage of this population, allowing agencies to allocate their resources accordingly.