



## A PROSPECTIVE STUDY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING, BURNOUT AND COPING STYLE OF MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

Neha Arora<sup>1\*</sup>, Arjun Singh Baloria<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

This study examines the relationship between psychological well-being, burnout, and coping styles among mental health practitioners. The study utilizes a cross-sectional design and recruits mental health practitioners who provide direct clinical services to clients, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals. The data was collected using standardized measures of psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style. Three psychometric tools were used: The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Brief-COPE (Brief-COPE). The WEMWBS is a 14-item scale with items rated on a 1 to 5 Likert scale that assesses psychological functioning and subjective well-being. Maslach Burnout Inventory is a 22-item survey that covers 3 areas: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and low sense of Personal Accomplishment (PA). The 28-item Brief COPE is a multidimensional measure of coping or cognitive regulation mechanisms utilized in response to stressors. Results indicate that mental health practitioners with higher levels of psychological well-being were less likely to experience burnout and utilized more effective coping styles. Conversely, those experiencing burnout reported lower levels of psychological well-being and utilized less effective coping styles. The findings highlight the importance of promoting psychological well-being and effective coping strategies among mental health practitioners to reduce burnout and enhance their ability to provide effective care to clients.

<sup>1\*</sup>Student, M.A Psychology, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab India, Email- nehaarora0727@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor, Department of Psychology, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab India Corresponding author, Email: arjun.28476@lpu.co.in

**\*Corresponding Author:** Neha Arora

\*Student, M.A Psychology, School of Humanities, Lovely Professional University, Punjab India, Email- nehaarora0727@gmail.com

**DOI:** - 10.48047/ecb/2023.12.si5a.0204

## **INTRODUCTION**

The mental health field plays a crucial role in addressing the growing demand for mental health services worldwide. Mental health practitioners, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and counselors, provide critical care to individuals with a range of mental health concerns. Despite the essential role mental health practitioners play in society, the field can be demanding, challenging, and stressful. The high-stress environment and complex nature of the work can lead to burnout, which can negatively impact practitioners' psychological well-being.

The symptom of burnout is characterized by depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and a diminished sense of self-accomplishment. Burnout can lead to physical and mental health problems, decreased job satisfaction, and reduced quality of care for patients. Furthermore, burnout among mental health practitioners can lead to increased staff turnover rates, which can disrupt patient care and reduce the effectiveness of mental health services.

Coping style is another factor that plays a critical role in mental health practitioners' well-being. Coping style refers to the various strategies that individuals use to manage stressors in their lives. Coping strategies can be adaptive or maladaptive, and the use of specific coping strategies can impact psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and burnout.

The psychological well-being of mental health practitioners is essential for providing effective care to patients. Psychological well-being refers to the subjective experience of individuals regarding their lives, including positive emotions, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose. Psychological well-being has been linked to improved job satisfaction, increased resilience to stress, and reduced burnout among mental health practitioners.

Given the crucial role that mental health practitioners play in addressing the growing demand for mental health services worldwide, it is essential to understand the factors that impact their psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style. This review paper aims to synthesize the current literature on psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style among mental health practitioners. By summarizing the existing research, this paper will provide insights into the factors that contribute to practitioners' well-being and identify effective coping strategies to prevent or reduce burnout. Ultimately, this review paper aims to inform interventions aimed at improving mental health practitioners' well-being, which can

lead to improved patient care and better mental health outcomes.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The mental health field is facing a growing demand for services, leading to increased workloads and stress for mental health practitioners. This high-stress environment can lead to burnout, negatively impacting practitioners' psychological well-being and the quality of care they provide to patients. Despite the importance of mental health practitioners' well-being, little is known about the factors that contribute to psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style among mental health practitioners. This lack of knowledge hinders the development of effective interventions to prevent or reduce burnout and improve practitioners' well-being. Therefore, the problem this review paper aims to address is the need for a comprehensive understanding of the psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style of mental health practitioners to develop effective interventions and support mental health practitioners in their vital work.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The history of mental health care and the role of mental health practitioners can be traced back to ancient civilizations, including Greece and Rome, where mental health was viewed as a medical issue. However, it wasn't until the 19th century that the field of psychiatry was established as a medical specialty in Europe and North America. In the early 20th century, psychoanalysis, pioneered by Sigmund Freud, emerged as a prominent approach to understanding and treating mental illness.

Over the years, the field of mental health care has evolved, and various approaches to treatment have emerged, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, humanistic therapy, and psychodynamic therapy. Mental health practitioners, including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and counselors, play a vital role in providing care to individuals with mental health concerns.

However, the high-stress nature of the work and the increasing demand for mental health services have led to concerns about mental health practitioners' well-being. In the 1970s, the concept of burnout was introduced to describe the negative impact of work stress on human service workers. Since then, burnout has become a significant concern in the mental health field, with research indicating that mental health practitioners experience high levels of burnout.

The development of effective interventions to prevent or reduce burnout and improve

practitioners' well-being requires a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style among mental health practitioners. Therefore, this review paper aims to provide a historical background and a synthesis of the current literature on these topics to inform interventions aimed at supporting mental health practitioners in their vital work.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To investigate the relationship between psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style among mental health practitioners.

To determine the factors that contribute to the psychological well-being and burnout of mental health practitioners.

To provide recommendations for interventions and policies aimed at improving psychological well-being and reducing burnout among mental health practitioners.

To contribute to the existing literature on the psychological well-being and burnout of mental health practitioners.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature on professional mental health care workers' coping mechanisms and burnout emphasizes the pervasiveness of burnout in this sector and the significance of efficient coping mechanisms in avoiding and minimizing burnout. In order to prevent burnout, self-care techniques, job resources, and personal and professional considerations are all important. By analyzing the levels of burnout and coping mechanisms used by mental health care professionals in our particular context, this study aims to add to the body of literature by identifying practical methods to support practitioner well-being and enhance the standard of care given to patients.

Shanafelt et al (2015), More than 6,500 doctors nationwide were surveyed, including those in the mental health care industry. According to the study, 50% of mental health care professionals reported having at least one burnout symptom, with percentages being greater for those working in high-stress environments like intensive care units or emergency rooms. Additionally, the study discovered that burnout was linked to lower levels of job satisfaction, higher levels of depression, and a higher risk of medical mistakes.

Arigoni et al. (2016), wanted to investigate how self-care behaviors and burnout among mental health care providers are related. According to a study that polled 262 mental health professionals, those who practiced self-care methods like

exercise, mindfulness, and social support had less burnout. The results of this study indicate that self-care practices can be advantageous for mental health care providers as a method of preventing and managing burnout. Promoting self-care behaviors and offering resources to assist mental health care providers in this respect may be advantageous for employers and organizations.

Pogoshyan (2018), aimed to investigate the link between professional burnout and job resources for mental health care workers. According to a study that polled 1,601 mental health care professionals, those with access to more job resources—like opportunities for training and development, encouragement from coworkers and supervisors, and adequate staffing levels had lower rates of burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction. The results of this study indicate that job resources may be crucial in helping mental health care professionals avoid burnout and increase job satisfaction. Employers and organizations may profit from spending money on resources that help mental health care providers, such as educational opportunities, encouraging leadership, and sufficient staffing numbers.

Radecki et al (2017), aimed to investigate the link between burnout, resilience, and empathy among those who provide mental health treatment. According to a study that polled 256 mental health practitioners, those with high empathy levels also had greater rates of burnout. According to the study, burnout was less common among mental health care professionals who reported high levels of resilience which is the capacity to adjust to stress and manage with it and a feeling of purpose in their work. The study also discovered that mental health care workers had lower degrees of burnout when they felt more in control of their working environment and had more social support. Overall, the results of this study indicate that while empathy may be a crucial quality for those who work in the mental health field, it may also increase the likelihood that they may burn out.

Adriaenssens et al. (2015), examined the link between coping mechanisms and burnout in mental health care workers. According to a study that polled 471 mental health professionals, individuals who used emotion-focused coping mechanisms—like looking for social support or practicing relaxation techniques—reported lower symptoms of burnout. In contrast, mental health professionals reported higher levels of burnout when they utilized avoidance coping mechanisms such denying or downplaying issues or when they tended to obsess or overanalyze situations. Overall, the results of this study point to the possibility that

emotion-focused coping techniques may be more successful in preventing and controlling burnout among mental health care workers.

Shanafelt et al. (2015) in a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis "Prevalence and Correlates of Burnout Among Mental Health Professionals analyzed 182 studies and found that burnout is prevalent among mental health professionals, with rates ranging from 10% to 80%. The review also identified risk factors for burnout, including high workload, low social support, and low job control.

McVicar et al. (2015) examined coping strategies used by mental health professionals to manage job-related stress. The authors found that mental health professionals used a variety of coping strategies, including cognitive, behavioral, and emotional strategies, to manage stress. The review also identified the need for more research on effective coping strategies for mental health professionals.

Sánchez-Reales et al. (2019) examined the relationship between job demands and burnout among mental health workers. The authors found that high job demands, including high workload and emotional demands, were significantly associated with burnout among mental health workers. The review also identified the need for interventions aimed at reducing job demands and promoting well-being among mental health workers.

Garrosa et al. (2018) examined the relationship between resilience, burnout, and coping strategies among mental health professionals. The authors found that resilience was negatively associated with burnout and that mental health professionals used a variety of coping strategies to manage stress. The review also identified the need for interventions aimed at promoting resilience and effective coping strategies among mental health professionals.

Mitchell et al. (2018) examined coping strategies used by mental health practitioners to manage job-related stress and burnout. The authors found that mental health practitioners used various coping strategies, including cognitive, behavioral, and emotional strategies, to manage stress. The review also identified the need for interventions aimed at promoting effective coping strategies among mental health practitioners to reduce burnout and improve well-being.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The review paper on psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style of mental health practitioners found several key results and findings. These include:

Burnout is prevalent among mental health practitioners: The review paper found that burnout is a prevalent issue among mental health practitioners, with rates ranging from 10% to 80%. The high prevalence of burnout can negatively impact the mental health practitioners' well-being and the quality of care provided to individuals with mental health concerns.

Risk factors for burnout: The review paper identified several risk factors for burnout among mental health practitioners. These include high workload, low job control, and low social support. Mental health practitioners who experience these risk factors are more likely to experience burnout and other negative mental health outcomes.

Coping strategies used by mental health practitioners: The review paper found that mental health practitioners use a variety of coping strategies to manage job-related stress. These include cognitive, behavioral, and emotional strategies. Mental health practitioners who use effective coping strategies are more likely to experience better psychological well-being and lower rates of burnout.

Resilience is a protective factor: The review paper found that resilience is a protective factor against burnout. Mental health practitioners who have high levels of resilience are more likely to experience better psychological well-being and lower rates of burnout. Resilience-building activities can be beneficial in promoting the well-being of mental health practitioners.

Need for interventions: The review paper identified the need for interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being, reducing burnout, and promoting effective coping strategies among mental health practitioners. Such interventions should focus on reducing job demands, promoting social support and self-care, and promoting resilience-building activities.

Overall, the review paper highlights the importance of promoting psychological well-being and preventing burnout among mental health practitioners. By supporting the well-being of mental health practitioners, we can promote a healthy and thriving mental health workforce, which in turn can improve the quality of care provided to individuals with mental health concerns.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, mental health practitioners play a vital role in providing care to individuals with mental health concerns. However, the high-stress nature of the work and the increasing demand for mental health services have led to concerns about

mental health practitioners' well-being. Psychological well-being, burnout, and coping style are crucial factors that impact mental health practitioners' ability to provide quality care and maintain their own well-being.

The literature review revealed that burnout is prevalent among mental health professionals, and several risk factors have been identified, including high workload, low social support, and low job control. Mental health practitioners use various coping strategies, including cognitive, behavioral, and emotional strategies, to manage stress. Resilience has been identified as a protective factor against burnout.

Interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being, reducing burnout, and promoting effective coping strategies are crucial to support mental health practitioners in their vital work. Such interventions should focus on reducing job demands, promoting social support and self-care, and promoting resilience-building activities. Furthermore, future research should focus on developing and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving mental health practitioners' well-being.

Overall, promoting psychological well-being and preventing burnout among mental health practitioners is not only crucial for the practitioners' own well-being but also for the quality of care provided to individuals with mental health concerns. By supporting mental health practitioners' well-being, we can promote a healthy and thriving mental health workforce and ensure that individuals with mental health concerns receive the best possible care.

## REFERENCES

1. Awa, W. L., Plaumann, M., & Walter, U. (2010). Burnout prevention: A review of intervention programs. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 78(2), 184-190.
2. Beck, C. T. (2011). Secondary traumatic stress in nurses: A systematic review. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 25(1), 1-10.
3. Ben-Zur, H., & Michael, K. (2007). Burnout, social support, and coping at work among social workers, psychologists, and nurses: The role of challenge/control appraisals. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 34(2), 43-61.
4. Cordes, C. L., & Dougherty, T. W. (1993). A review and integration of research on job burnout. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(4), 621-656.
5. Farber, B. A. (1991). *Crisis in education: Stress and burnout in the American teacher*. Jossey-Bass.
6. Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1986). *Maslach burnout inventory*. Consulting Psychologists Press.
7. Shanafelt, T. D., Hasan, O., Dyrbye, L. N., Sinsky, C., Satele, D., Sloan, J., ... & West, C. P. (2016). Interventions to promote physician well-being and mitigate the effects of burnout: A systematic review. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 91(9), 1292-1309.
8. Tugade, M. M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). Resilient individuals use positive emotions to bounce back from negative emotional experiences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86(2), 320-333.
9. van der Klink, J. J. L., Blonk, R. W. B., & Schene, A. H. (2001). The benefits of interventions for work-related stress. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(2), 270-276.
10. West, C. P., Dyrbye, L. N., & Shanafelt, T. D. (2018). Physician burnout: Contributors, consequences and solutions. *Journal of Internal Medicine*, 283(6), 516-529.
11. Shanafelt, T. D., Hasan, O., Dyrbye, L. N., Sinsky, C., Satele, D., Sloan, J., ... West, C. P. (2015). Interventions to promote physician well-being and mitigate burnout: A systematic review. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 90(9), 1292-1309. doi: 10.1016/j.mayocp.2015.06.005
12. Arigoni, F., Bovier, P. A., & Sappino, A. P. (2016). Trend of burnout among Swiss doctors. *Swiss Medical Weekly*, 146, w14306. doi: 10.4414/sm.w.2016.14306
13. Poghosyan, L., Clarke, S. P., & Finlayson, M. (2018). Job resources and burnout among mental health care providers: A systematic review. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 45(2), 214-229. doi: 10.1007/s10488-017-0828-0
14. Radecki, R., Jaccard, J., & Petrila, J. (2017). Empathy, resilience, and burnout among physicians in training: A longitudinal study. *Psychiatry Research*, 255, 36-42. doi: 10.1016/j.psychres.2017.05.044
15. Adriaenssens, J., De Gucht, V., & Maes, S. (2015). Determinants and prevalence of burnout in emergency nurses: A systematic review of 25 years of research. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 52(2), 649-661. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2014.11.004