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An Examination of Counselor Turnover and Its Impact on Quality Behavioral Health Services

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects, and
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Walden University
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Abstract

Behavioral health organizations often face the challenge of high employee turnover rates, which can critically affect their ability to treat mental illnesses successfully. High counselor turnover at one such organization, BHOX, threatens the provision of timely access to quality mental care. This qualitative case study examined counselor turnover and its impact on the quality of behavioral health services. The Baldrige Excellence Framework was used to guide this descriptive case study of a nonprofit behavioral health organization on the East Coast of the United States, which serves men and women struggling with mental health disorders and substance abuse addictions. The data sources include semi-structured interviews with two organization leaders, corporate websites, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration government websites, and academic literature. The finding indicated that effective communication between Leadership and counselors would create a healthy workforce environment that can reduce counselor turnover, which affects the quality of care. Recommendations based on findings include evidence-based practices and change management strategies that will help mitigate the impact of counselor turnover. This study may contribute to positive social change, inform criteria for performance, values, and concepts, and guidelines for designing organizational processes to build resilience and encourage innovation, all of which will help reduce counselor turnover within the organization.

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Dedication

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Anna Maddox, and my husband, Marcus Beale. This doctoral work would not have been possible without their continual support. Without their endless support and encouragement, I would never have been able to complete this doctoral study. I appreciate your encouragement and everything you have done for me when I felt overwhelmed.

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Section 1a: The Behavioral Health Organization

Introduction

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021), one in five persons in the United States (U.S.) experiences mental illness annually, while one in 25 of them lives with a severe mental disorder such as bipolar disorder, severe depression, or schizophrenia. These alarming numbers demonstrate the societal need for adequate and affordable care for those affected by mental health issues; these services are primarily provided in the United States by behavioral health organizations or behavioral health providers, which are institutions or individuals contracted by state governments or companies to promote mental health care (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

Behavioral Health Organization X (BHOX), the focus of this study, offers outpatient care on the East Coast of the United States for substance abuse and mental health services, including group and individual counseling sessions, support for co-occurring disorders, and psychological rehabilitation programs. This organization aims to assist communities by helping men and women regain stability as they recover from addiction or mental health crises and offers support services for the clients' families. To maintain confidentiality, the organization's name has been withheld; its website is not cited in text nor listed in the References section. It is a nonprofit organization serving women aged 18–65 who struggle with mental health disorders, substance abuse, and addiction. Its counselors and therapists (for this study, the terms counselor and therapist are equivalents) are responsible for addressing the needs of clients who are experiencing or have experienced a mental health crisis.

According to its mission statement, BHOX is a purpose-driven organization dedicated to developing, implementing, and integrating resources, programs, and policies to support the behavioral health of individuals, families, and communities. It describes itself as a "city" where individuals thrive in communities that support and promote their behavior and wellness. Its core values include integrity, equity, innovation, collaboration, and quality.

Practice Problem

Counselor turnover among healthcare providers, including counselors who provide behavioral health services, is frequent and has become a severe issue (Hatch-Maillette et al., 2019). The consequences of high turnover in mental and behavioral health care are detrimental to client progress. For example, a study by Babbar et al. (2018) stated that counselor workforce turnover negatively impacts care quality and predicts clients' engagement (non-attendance), particularly among the young. Moreover, these researchers demonstrated that counselor turnover has a negative impact on clients' continuity of care.

Despite its assertions, staff turnover has also affected the quality of the care BHOX provides. High provider turnover rates at BHOX were particularly noticeable between 2019 and 2021 when approximately 30% of its counselors leaving the organization affected its continuity of care. The agency recently reported, for instance, that more than 20% of its clients missed their sessions in 2020 (BHL Leader 1, personal communication, March 15, 2022).

Although reasons for high turnover may vary, Babbar et al. (2018) emphasized that burnout and stress influence counselors' decisions to leave work voluntarily. Concurring with the study by Babbar et al., Adams et al. (2019) found that high rates of counselor turnover threaten the consistency and quality of mental health services. High counselor turnover is also associated

with increased organizational costs since new personnel require training and decreased organizational productivity. Training costs are high, and new employees are not fully familiarized with new routines and procedures. In 2021, BHOX spent 5% of its budget on training new counselors (BHOX Leader 1, personal communication, March 15, 2022), thus increasing its annual expenditures.

This study examined all the relevant aspects of the problem described above. It addressed the prevalence of counselor turnover and its overall impact on the organization, including its effects on the organization's fiscal health. Equally important, it highlighted strategies to reduce high counselor turnover and described how training or intervention could minimize and prevent it.

Purpose

This qualitative case study examined counselor turnover and its impact on the quality of behavioral health services. The Baldrige Excellence Framework (BEF; 2021) guided this study's analysis of the various strategies that can be implemented to reduce counselor turnover and helped to assess it is contributing factors, such as burnout and stress.

The BEF also helps researchers find effective and practical interventions to address high counselor turnover. It offers a reliable model to examine the problem of persistent turnover because, throughout the years, it has been known for successfully assisting and enabling organizations to realize their missions, enhance their outcomes, and increase competitiveness.

BEF has achieved this goal by using a framework that includes aspects such as performance excellence, a scoring system to gauge the maturity of organizations, and interrelated core values and concepts (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2021). BEF has also established

eight criteria for excellence in healthcare performance: (a) leadership; (b) strategy; (c) customers; (d) measurement; (e) analysis; (f) knowledge; (g) workforce; (h) operation; and (i) results.

The primary source for this qualitative study was semi-structured interviews with leaders of BHOX. The secondary data were collected from transcripts of the meetings between the researcher and the interviewees. They included audio recordings created by the partner organization, training material, protocols, manuals, and BHOX's annual reports. The site leadership collected surveys, internal web posting, organization documents, materials from BHOX's social media, and a statement that reviewed the organization's turnover in the past year. Meeting transcripts that referred to counselor turnover were used as secondary data.

Significance

Counselor workforce turnover is a persistent public health problem that causes great concern to administrators and providers because, as stated above, research has established that turnover adversely and significantly affects the quality of behavioral healthcare services (Adams et al., 2019; Hatch-Maillette et al., 2019). In such context, this study was designed to be a valuable addition to the existing research and directly contribute to BHOX's efforts to address high turnover by providing up-to-date data on the prevalence of turnover among its counselors and helping the organization identify the financial implications of this problem. Therefore, the primary goal of this study is to contribute its findings to the BHOX so its leadership can use them to evaluate the root cause of the increasing turnover rate of its counselors and to consider appropriate corrective measures.

Further, although training of new personnel often drains the financial resources of institutions, Adams et al. (2019) have demonstrated that investing in regular training of existing employees is an effective strategy to reduce turnover because it facilitates the building of a stable workforce, particularly in behavioral health organizations (henceforth BHOXs). This study has singled out effective interventions leaders can use to establish policies that implement and maintain counselor training to promote retention.

This study also can contribute to positive social change by pointing out alternatives to improve counselors' retention and assure clients' engagement. As stated above, continuity of care yields positive outcomes, such as access to mental health services that reduce clients' financial burdens and improve individuals' lives, families, and communities. Moreover, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021), mental illnesses are among the most onerous health issues in the United States since their costs vary between $37.7 to $ 67.8 billion annually. Another purpose of this study is to demonstrate that seamlessly integrating medical and behavioral healthcare services can save the country billions of dollars which could be directed, for example, to education. This area benefits the community and the entire society. The following research questions are used for the case study:

1.How prevalent is counselor turnover in the organization?

2.How has counselor turnover financially affected the organization?

3.What strategies have been implemented to reduce counselor turnover?

4.What training or interventions have been introduced to combat counselor turnover?

Summary

The objective of this case study was to analyze retention in counseling services in behavioral health service organizations with a focus on BHOX to determine which strategies can be adopted to improve the quality of care provided to clients who experience substance abuse or mental health disorders. Research has indicated that reducing counselor turnover enhances the quality of care, consequently positively impacting social change. Information concerning BHOX's profile, critical aspects of its policies, and the organization's background and context are presented in the next section.

Section 1b: Organizational Profile

Introduction

Research has shown that mental health practitioners, including counselors and psychotherapists, are increasingly at risk of experiencing work-related stress and burnout, which may be caused by the negative behavior of many clients (Posluns and Gall, 2020). Turnover rates in the sector can be staggering. For example, Adams et al. (2019) estimated that 30–60% of counselors leave their organization yearly. As a result, high rates of counselor turnover have posed various challenges to most behavioral health organizations (Posluns and Gall, 2020).

In the case of BHOX, the organization recorded a 30% counselor turnover rate in 2021, an outcome that has negatively changed the quality of care it provides to clients. As a result, the organization was forced to allocate additional funds to train new counselors, which strained its budget. In this section, I examine aspects of the organization, such as its mission and challenges that motivated the researcher to examine the effects of high counselor turnover on the quality of its services.

Organizational Profile and Key Factors

BHOX, located on the U.S. East Coast, is a community-based behavioral health organization that supports men and women who suffer from alcohol and substance abuse disorders. The organization's mission, roles, and responsibilities support clients recovering from mental health disorders and substance abuse. BHOX prides itself on serving clients in a multicultural setting and providing daily care. Besides addressing mental health, addiction, and substance abuse issues, the organization assists clients with psychiatric rehabilitation, medication management, intensive outpatient sessions, and teletherapy.

Clients and Stakeholders

BHOX describes its mission, goals, and services to clients. For example, its services are available to individuals who live in the community where it is located. Its main stakeholders are the professionals whose work defines and support the organization, including its executive director of behavioral health services and adults' clinical services, a mental health director, a psychologist, licensed professional counselors, a team of personal social workers, and a financial director. Other stakeholders include essential personnel involved in the administration, such as the business director, the director of human resources, the payroll staff, the training development staff, the community-based services director, and a community outreach coordinator (BHL Participant 1, personal communication, March 15, 2022.) Most employees at BHOX are licensed professionals specializing in mental health care, substance abuse, and addiction. Counselors, therapists, and clinical social workers must have proven academic credentials and pass the national board examination related to their profession. They must, therefore, be appropriately licensed to qualify to work with the organization's leading clients. In addition to its carefully selected group of core professionals, BHOX welcomes interns who work to gain experience in their fields, counseling and clinical social work.

Suppliers and Partners

As with all modern organizations, BHOX requires optimum technical resources to be operational. High-quality software programs such as SMART and a fast internet connection are essential for its outreach program, fundraising, and teletherapy projects. Most of its service providers are counselors who rely on solution-focused therapeutic theories and practices and use strength-based approaches. Counselors also introduce self-awareness techniques and

coping skills to men and women with mental health or addiction issues. According to the Behavioral Health Leader (BHL), BHOX has partnered with community-based outreach programs that offer long-term living and medication management, such as the suboxone maintenance program, the 24-hour emergency crisis hotline, teletherapy, housing assistance, outpatient counseling therapy, jobs services, and an education program. It has also partnered with the health department emergency room.

Competitive Environment

BHOX has operated in an urban area where multiple facilities serve clients with cooccurring disorders. However, the organization has maintained a competitive edge because of the high demand for mental health and substance abuse care in urban settings, the flexibility it offers to clients, and, primarily, it is aggressive marketing, which is essential to secure the competitive advantage of organizations (Al Badi, 2018). Moreover/in addition, BHOX has remained competitive because, unlike many other agencies, it provides outpatient and shelter services. However, BHOX must also compete with organizations that offer similar benefits, such as outpatient and inpatient care, stabilization services, job placement services, and family (BHL Participant 1, personal communication March 15, 2022).

According to the literature, competition can increase the value of services and the impact of volatile external environments on healthcare organizations' strategic mission, goals, and internal environment, thus improving healthcare quality (Rivers and Glover, 2020; Rua and Santos, 2022). Maintaining and engaging in competition seems to be part of BHOX culture. For example, it has recruited and maintained a large number of staff to facilitate the delivery of high-quality care. It has also held a positive relationship with local law enforcement,

collaborated with other first responders in the area, and implemented a model of public safety that supports people in crisis and ensures their safety.

Moreover, BHOX has partnerships with the local hospital and emergency department, emergency medical services, and other organizations that work with clients suffering from substance abuse or mental health disorders. The National Alliance on Mental Illness and the city crisis services provider offer a 40-hour course on health crises to emergency workers. Its behavioral health experts provide information about psychiatric medications, substance use disorders, Alzheimer's, autism, and ongoing crisis intervention team training to the community officers, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and the city crisis providers (BHL Participant1, personal communication, March 15, 2022). As a result of its robust community outreach, BHOX has solidified its niche within the behavioral health sector.

Strategic Context and Performance Improvement System

BHOX seeks to align its mission and vision with its main competencies and has prioritized the well-being and safety of its therapists (BHL Participant 1, personal communication, June 2020). An organization's self-efficacy, r mission, and willingness to foster positive interpersonal relationships can protect therapists from burnout and secondary traumatic stress and promote job satisfaction (Lakioti et al., 2020). BHOX strives to enhance clients' health outcomes by offering its therapists and counselors a professional well-being model that involves positive emotional engagement, meaningful relationships, and a sense of accomplishment (Lakioti et al., 2020). Moreover, BHOX conducts a management quality assessment every 3 months using an anonymous survey to evaluate client satisfaction and

gauge the relationship between counselors and clients. It also uses annual performance reviews, including surveys, to obtain feedback from stakeholders and set new goals.

Every 6 months, the organization conducts employee performance appraisals and provides feedback regarding staff performance, including information about areas for improvement (BHL Participant1, personal communication, March 15, 2022). In the case of a low-quality evaluation, the manager activates a performance improvement plan which involves retraining staff to improve their ability to offer the needed service. Such initiatives align with research about the efficacy of training programs in facilitating performance improvement among healthcare providers (Costar and Hall, 2020).

Treatment Offerings and Services

BHOX's mental health, addiction, and substance abuse services are varied and flexible since the organization aims to reach out and positively affect its surrounding community. It offers the following types of care and services:

- Treatment for addiction, depression, detox, drug rehab, dual diagnosis, and substance use.

- A transitional independent living program.

- An intensive outpatient program.

- Therapy services include art therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), emotionally focused therapy, motivational interviewing, person-centered therapy, psychiatric medication management, reality therapy, solution-focused brief therapy, somatic therapy, strength-based therapy, and structural family and trauma-focused therapy.

Organizational Mission

BHOX's mission is "to lead the healthcare industry in mental health and addiction recovery services through comprehensive medical and therapeutic techniques and compassionate services." According to its vision statement, the organization is committed to delivering high quality and compassionate behavioral health services that benefit its clients. The organization sees itself at the forefront of creating change and improving the quality-of-service delivery in the behavioral health sector (BHL Participant1, personal communication, March 15, 2022).

The organization's mission regarding counselor turnover is to raise awareness of challenges in the workplace that may lead to distress, burnout, and mental and emotional disorders that can result in staff attrition (BHL Participant1, personal communication, March 15, 2022). Counselor turnover affects the well-being of therapists, the quality of their services, and the therapeutic outcomes of their clients (Lakioti et al., 2020). Therapeutic effectiveness and client outcomes are positively associated with client well-being. Positive relationships also improve counselors' well-being and resilience (Lakioti et al., 2020).

Organizational Core Values

BHOX promotes eight core values: caring, quality, accountability, teamwork, empowerment, integrity, value, and respect. The organization's core competencies are to offer on-site and off-site individual and group therapy sessions for clients who need mental health, addiction recovery, or psychiatric support (BHA Participant 2, personal communication, March 15, 2022). These values and core competencies support the

organization's mission to be a leader in providing mental health and addiction recovery services.

Based on an organizational analysis using the BEF (2021), the organization's strategic situation places challenges and offers advantages. An example of a challenge is BHOX's struggle with low retention of counselors and therapists because of burnout and anxiety. Determining ways to improve counselor retention through innovation and collaboration would enhance the quality of care and client outcomes and strengthen BHOX's competitive advantage.

Organizational Structure

The organization BHL's is responsible for managing the overall operations and resources. The BHL also acts as the primary point of communication, assures compliance with rigid ethical guidelines, and ensures quality of care. Moreover, the BHL ensures that counselors and therapists are accountable for safety and healthcare quality. The staff consists of 20 employees, five of whom are counselors. This group includes three clinical social workers, two mental health counselors, and one substance abuse counselor (BHL Participate 1 communication, April 2022). Not enough counselors serve the growing population of clients who experience mental health and substance abuse disorders. Thus, burnout and anxiety among counselors have decreased the quality of care (Proctor et al., 2019). Figure 1 represents BHOX's organizational structure.

Figure 1

Organization Structure

Organizational culture. SHRM. (2022, September 26). Retrieved February 9, 2023, from

https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/Pages/Organizational-Culture.aspx

Organizational Background and Context

It is clear from the information provided that BHOX is facing a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining qualified counselors to meet the increasing demand for mental health services. The high turnover rate of 30% is a cause for concern. It can negatively impact the quality of care provided to clients and increase the workload and stress on the remaining staff National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the high prevalence of mental illness in the United States and the increased demand for mental health services, which may exacerbate the counselor shortage and turnover issues faced by BHOX. The post-pandemic hiring crisis in the United States may also factor in the organization's struggles to recruit and retain qualified staff National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2022).

To address these challenges, BHOX may need to explore a range of strategies, including offering competitive compensation packages and benefits, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, and implementing targeted recruitment and retention programs. The organization may also need to consider partnering with academic institutions to offer internships and training programs to help build a pipeline of qualified counselors.

BHOX needs to address these challenges proactively to ensure that it can continue to provide high-quality care to its clients and meet the increasing demand for mental health services.

Regulatory Environment

BHOX operates in an environment regulated by federal, state, and local laws concerning behavioral health services. Such regulations include accreditation of rehabilitation facilities, counselor and therapist professional licensing laws, Medicaid and Medicare, health and safety privacy and information, and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA). The joint committee also regulates the organizational environment based on the American Counseling Association, the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics, and guidance from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (Sherman et al., 2017).

In the BEF (2021), the organization conducts critical assessments to determine how healthcare providers, such as counselors and therapists, engage and provide services. I applied the study design to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the organization's work systems and core competencies. BHOX identified new ways to build an action plan to address their ethical responsibility for their counselors' mental health and well-being in the workplace.

The action plan included training and seminars focused on the organization's employees' quality of care and mental well-being.

Governance

The BHOX's BHL evaluates the organization's performance, which involves senior leaders' accountability and strategic plans. The organization's client safety outcomes operate under the SAMHSA. BHOX has a flexible leadership style where all staff members can access the BHL whenever the CEO is unavailable. Staff members are encouraged to follow the chain of command, and when concerns arise, they are instructed to contact BHL. The BHL allows staff members to rate their leaders based on availability, professionalism, skills, knowledge, and performance. According to BHOX's bylaws, the organization adopts a collaborative leadership system where change supervisors communicate with change staff through email.

Strategic Vision

The BHL identifies critical assessments, including changing how health care providers, such as counselors and therapists, engage with and provide services by designing strategic changes by looking at the advantages and disadvantages in Section 4, "Work Systems and Core Competencies." The BHL learned new ways to build an action plan involving their ethical responsibility for their counselors' mental health and well-being in the workplace by attending training and seminars focused on the quality of care and the mental well-being of the employees in the organization.

Finances

The organization evaluates its financial performance through monthly reviews. In addition, BHOX's management and staff comply with behavioral health policy and law. Notably, state regulatory requirements guide BHOX operations; specifically, the organization is regulated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HRSA, 2011), an agency that licenses private and public behavioral health community services throughout the state. According to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA, 2011), to improve access to behavioral health services and to grow and diversify the workforce equipped and trained to deliver high quality, culturally appropriate mental health and substance use services, particularly in underserved areas, require investments. Therefore, its budget includes $397 million for behavioral health workforce development programs.

The HRSA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, prioritizes training paraprofessionals, increasing the overall number of behavioral health providers in the workforce, and promoting team-based care (HRSA, 2011). The HRSA has expanded services for the American public, recognizing that it is more critical now than ever to support our frontline health professionals, who have continued to provide high-quality care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the budget includes $50 million to prevent burnout in the health workforce; this investment supported health workforce retention and recruitment, which was essential for addressing current and future behavioral health workforce shortages (HRSA, 2011). The budget also includes $7.5 billion to improve Medicaid providers' capacity to address mental health treatment (HRSA, 2011).

Organization Terms of Operational Process

A BHO is an institution that treats mental health and substance use disorders. The term "counselor" refers to an individual trained to offer guidance on psychological issues involving substance abuse and mental health disorders that stem from past trauma or other conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or bipolar disorder. Clients know their illnesses and use the proper medication to stabilize their mental status.

BHOX offers psychoeducation and different approaches to mental health to help clients gain self-awareness and have a happy and stable lifestyle. The organization's treatment plan includes individual and group therapy, medication management, and humanitarian support services at the intensive outpatient level of care. The intensive outpatient program (IOP) was designed to support independence and continued treatment during the client's recovery process. It is an individual treatment plan that includes 2 to 3-hour outpatient therapy sessions 4 times a week. It requires client awareness and accountability during the early recovery process to promote present and future growth.

Regulatory Policies

The state regulatory requirements guide the BHOX's operations. Specifically, the organization is regulated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA, 2017). The agency licenses private and public providers of behavioral community services throughout the state. The organization must follow all guidelines under the federal and state regulations of the Affordable Care Act, which introduced a reform to Medicaid coverage for individuals who struggle with addiction treatment in 2010. The legislation established a set of essential Medicaid benefits that make health insurance more affordable for individuals, families, and people with

mental health challenges or substance use disorders, who often have health insurance problems (Andrew et al., 2018).

The ACA has prompted state Medicaid programs to expand addiction treatment benefits and reduce SAMHSA laws and regulations about substance abuse and mental health services. SAMHSA programs and related topics, such as the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that promotes Opioid Recovery Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6) that was introduced in 2018 (Sherman et al., 2017). The legislation includes a provision to strengthen the behavioral health workforce by increasing addiction medicine education, standardizing the delivery of addiction medicine, and expanding access to high-quality, evidence-based care and addiction medicine to facilitate the delivery of coordinated and comprehensive treatment. The SUPPORT Act followed the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and the 21st Century Cures Act of the previous Congress (Sherman et al., 2017).

Summary and Transition

BHOX, an organization that provides services to the community, was selected for analysis. It focuses on behavioral and mental health and offers help to individuals in the community struggling with alcohol, substance abuse disorders, and other mental health issues. The organization's primary stakeholders are professionals, including the executive director of behavioral services, licensed mental health practitioners, social workers, and the financial director. The services offered at the organization include therapy, treatment for addiction and mental health issues, independent transitional living, and outpatient programs.

Notably, the organization is regulated by federal, state, and local laws related to behavioral health services. BHOX is accredited by HIPAA, SAMHSA, counselors licensing laws, Medicaid and Medicare, and a joint committee that follows the American Counselling Association and the National Association of Social Workers code of ethics. High turnover became prevalent during and after the pandemic the organization is struggling to address it. Section 2 presents the background and the approach of this project that leads to the question of how leaders can address the practice problem.

Section 2: Background and Approach–Leadership Strategy and Assessment

Introduction

BHOX is a nonprofit organization in an urban community on the East Coast of the United States that addresses emotional health and well-being and provides services for individuals with substance abuse and mental health disorders. The organization partners with mobile crisis teams and community-based providers to reduce police interaction and overreliance on emergency departments. BHOX also partners with Beacon Health, which provides mental health services for individuals with subsidized health insurance through state benefits. Its other partners consist of emergency rooms and hospitals around the community. The organization focuses on individuals' emotional health and physical care and increasing awareness through resiliency, adapting to life's demands, coping with stressors, mental health, and substance abuse and addiction disorders.

30%–60% of counselors, therapists, and mental health professionals voluntarily leave their positions yearly, threatening the consistency and quality of mental health services (Adams et al., 2019). Accordingly, BHOX has been struggling with high turnover. The organization reported a counselor turnover rate of about 30% in 2021, a situation that made it challenging for the organization to deliver care.

Section 2 includes a review of the supporting literature, several sources of evidence, and a discussion of some aspects of the organization, such as its leadership strategy and assessment, the clients or population it serves, its workforce, and operations. It ends with a description of this study's analytical approach and a summary.

Supporting Literature

I conducted an in-depth literature search across various electronic databases, including Walden University Library ProQuest, Google Scholar, PubMed, Web of Science, Directory of Open Access Journals, EBSCOhost, and Scopus. Boolean operators were used as conjunctions to combine the keywords to create more focused and productive results. This search's date range was from (2018–2022). The list below includes the search terms used:

- Behavioral health organizations AND counselors' turnover.

- Behavioral health organizations AND counselor workforce turnover.

- Behavioral health organizations AND combating counselor turnover.

- Behavioral health organizations AND counselor turnover reduction.

- Behavioral health organizations AND counselor retention.

- Behavioral health organizations AND counselor training.

- Behavioral health organization AND counseling supervision.

- Counselors AND emotional well-being, compassion fatigue.

- Counselors AND spiritual well-being, self-care, community based.

- Counselor AND qualitative novice professional's counselor. • Counselor AND burnout content analysis conceptualization.

This study's research question will address the following topics: the prevalence of counselor turnover in BHOs, strategies to reduce counselor burnout, and the impact the high demand for mental health care services has had on the general well-being of counselors.

Staff Turnover and Retention in Behavioral Health Organizations

High staff turnover burdens behavioral health providers (Brabson et al., 2020). High turnover rates have negative implications for staff morale, negatively affecting the quality of services, causing poor clinical outcomes, and increasing care costs. Hatch-Maillette et al. (2019) demonstrated that staff turnover in behavioral health providers negatively affects the implementation of randomized clinical trials. Their study stated that organizations should treat counselor retention rates as seriously as they see client retention since both events are connected. In a pre-intervention demographic survey, Dreher et al. (2019) noted that education programs on self-care, compassion, and fatigue awareness effectively improve retention among mental healthcare providers.

Factors Contributing to Counselor Turnover

Johnson et al. (2018) proved that burnout and poor mental well-being among healthcare staff increased turnover rates and decreased the quality of care. Scanlan and Still (2019) examined the case of mental health care professionals and concluded that the emotionally demanding nature of their work increased the risk of burnout, which is associated with reduced employee satisfaction and higher turnover intention (desire to leave one's job). High levels of employee burnout and dissatisfaction are also associated with poorer client outcomes. Moreover, burnout can have a "contagion" effect on other staff, creating additional difficulties.

Scanlan and Still's (2019) views aligned with concepts presented in the job demand– resources (JD-R) model developed to address employee well-being. JD-R stated that burnout involved two primary elements: exhaustion and disengagement. According to the authors, the reduced energy caused by exhaustion and fatigue resulted from enduring physical, affective, or

cognitive strain. Disengagement (distancing oneself from one's work) was defined as experiencing negative attitudes towards the job, service recipients, or work (Scanlan & Still, 2019). The authors added to the JD-R model by demonstrating that high levels of turnover intention were associated with negative perceptions of management, lower levels of support from supervisors and colleagues, low levels of autonomy, perceptions of insufficient help from colleagues and supervisors, and lower workload pressure (Scanlan and Still, 2019).

In a recent systematic review of the literature on employee turnover, Brabson et al. (2020) identified several factors that cause high employee turnover and singled out two important ones. The first was individual-level factors such as burnout, lack of organizational support, and unavailability of professional growth. The second factor was low compensation (Brabson et al., 2020). The authors concluded their survey by recommending increasing staff salaries to improve Behavioral Health Organizations' (BHOX's) retention rates.

Symptoms of Burnout

In a study on burnout in novice professional counselors, cook et al. (2020) singled out their self-reported symptoms. The authors observed that counseling, which involves providing high-touch professional emotional services to clients, poses a high risk of burnout. Their study explored self-reported signs of burnout in a sample of 246 novice professional counselors and singled out emergent categories aligned with the existing conceptualization of burnout (Cook et al., 2020). Other categories the authors identified offered new insight into how burnout manifests in novice professional counselors. Thus, burnout was associated with negative emotional experiences, fatigue, and tiredness (Cook et al., 2020).

Burnout is an occupational risk that affects novice professional counselors (Cook et al., 2020). While engaged in supervision for licensure in their respective states, novice professional counselor encounter challenges such as managing large caseloads, working longer hours for low wages, and receiving limited financial support for client care (Cook et al., 2020). Moreover, their routine includes providing ongoing and intensive mental health services to clients with trauma histories and complex needs and working in highly demanding professional environments while lacking resources to serve their clients (Cook et al., 2020).

Potential impacts of burnout among novice counselors include a decline in self-care, strained personal relationships, and damage to their overall emotional health (Cook et al., 2020). Further, unaddressed burnout might lead to serious occupational hazards such as impairment due to substance use, mental illness, personal crisis, or chronic illnesses. Therefore, self-awareness of burnout symptoms is essential for counselors to ensure they provide ethical service to their clients while caring for themselves (Cook et al., 2020).

Interventions to Prevent Counselors' Burnout and Turnover

Sherman et al. (2017) posited that leaders of BHOs who implement effectiveness in the workforce could reduce counselor turnover by offering training. Self-care training, for example, has proved effective in preventing counselor burnout. Hence, continued training may help address experienced counselor retention challenges. Training helps to prevent emotional exhaustion, burnout, and turnover. Posluns and Gall (2020) underscored the significance of adopting a proactive approach to self-care by integrating training programs into behavioral health settings. Moreover, evidence has demonstrated that BHOs leaders can reduce counselor turnover by implementing continuous training.

Santana and Fouad (2017) demonstrated that practicing self-care or attending to one's holistic well-being can effectively prevent occupational hazards such as burnout. According to the author's self-care, training improves an individual's ability to refuel oneself in ways that maintain and promote physical and emotional well-being and lessen the stress of working with clients (Scanlan and Still 2019). Santana and Fouad added the concept of "self-care" by describing it as the ability to care for and about oneself. Other authors observed that self-care involves self-reflection, acting to know one's needs, and consciously seeking out resources that foster health and well-being.

They are using self-care, which the lifestyle industry often depicts as a kind of luxury, which is, in fact, a clinical and ethical imperative for the mental health professions. Therefore, it is vital to understand the importance of offering practitioners various self-care alternatives (Guy, 2000). Posluns and Gall (2020) demonstrated that one-way working relationships such as that of counselors and clients take substantial effort and energy and place practitioners at an increased risk of stress, burnout, and professional impairment. As counselors help clients achieve wellbeing, they risk compromising their well-being because they often overlook the process of helping people in distress (Posluns and Gall, 2020). The authors also noted that occupational health researchers recommend self-care as a preventative measure since it effectively avoids occupational hazards that may derive from the interactions between mental health practitioners and their clients (Posluns and Gall, 2020; Scanlan and Still, 2019). Still 1 shows self-care strategy that mental health practitioners can use.

Sources of Evidence

Primary data for this study were collected from semi-structured interviews. This mixed method, primarily used in the social sciences, is also, according to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), widely used in health-related research. Another benefit of using primary data obtained through semi-structured interviews is that researchers can access vital elements to understand participants' beliefs, thoughts, and experiences.

The secondary data used in this study research will be collected from reviews of employee exit interviews found on records of organizational turnover in the past year. As Kneale et al. (2019) noted, secondary data may be retrieved from peer-reviewed articles, documents, and social media and are essential primary research and baseline information sources. Interviewees for this study comprised BHOX leaders, including its BHL and three other senior personnel. The information gathered addressed BHOX's high counselor turnover and its strategies to reduce its rate.

Leadership Strategy and Assessment

Leadership assessment is essential to the management of organizations (Church et al., 2021). Accordingly, BHOX's leadership gives personnel a chance to constructively critique their seniors and give feedback during the end-of-year evaluations (BHL Participant1, personal communication, April 15, 2022). Their approach allows staff to share information and contribute opinions about the necessary improvements.

Table 1

Self-Care Strategies for Mental Health Practitioners

Self-care domains	Self-care strategies
Awareness	Acceptance and commitment to therapy Mindfulness and meditation training Self-reflection Creative writing Leisure activities Varied work activities Non-work activities passions Non-work-related relationships A holistic approach to health Professional and personal boundaries Time management Taking breaks Flexible work hours and location Realistic work goals
Flexibility	Effective coping strategies Attitude of openness Adaptability Realistic work goals Cognitive reappraisal Self-compassion and acceptance Setting and reappraisal Expressive writing and journaling Acceptance and commitment to therapy Professional development
Physical health	Sleep hygiene (self-monitoring sleep habits) Balanced diet and hydration Exercise
Social support	Personal: Family Friends Personal psychotherapy

Self-care domains	Self-care strategies
	Professional: Individual or group supervision Professional association and colleague association Assistance programs University faculty Mentors/advisors Peer consultation
Spiritual connection	Spiritual connection: Prayer Mindfulness Spending time in nature Practicing gratitude Meaning making: Positive reappraisal Engaging in meaningful work Setting goals with life purpose Spiritual belief and activities (ultimate meaning of work)

Note. Adapted from "Dear Mental Health Practitioners, Take Care of Yourselves: A Literature Review on Self-Care," by K. Posluns and T. L. Gall, 2020, *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, *42*(1), p. X https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-019-09382-w.

During the strategy implementation process, BHOX leaders must meet with senior staff to oversee and guide the team during the brainstorming to ensure that the best methods are followed. The organization's employees are also trained to enhance their ability to implement new strategies (BHL Participant 1, personal communication, April 20, 2022). However, despite its innovative approaches, BHOX faces various strategic challenges. BHOX lacks proper management and leadership training focused on team building. The organization's director must have solid team-building skills to lead a diverse group of people with various personalities, motivations, and abilities.

Clients/Population Served

BHOX is among the leading behavioral health organizations on the U.S. East Coast. The organization offers mental health services to men and women between 18 to 65 who struggle with substance abuse and mental health disorders. Therefore, the main clients are adults from different ethnic/racial backgrounds. The organization's systems record various data about each client, including gender, age, diagnosis, prescribed medication, and subsequent appointments. Clients are allowed access to their electronic health records. BHOX has maintained a healthy relationship with its clients by enabling them to contact the office whenever they need assistance or have queries. The reception staff must also regularly call clients to solicit feedback and identify potential concerns (BHL Participant1, personal communication, April 20, 2022).

Client Engagement: Client Service and Support

BHOX counselors interact with clients one-on-one or in a group setting. They conduct assessments of the client's past and present mental health disorders and substance or alcohol use, including when they first started using a drug and whether their use is related to a traumatic event, peer pressure, or pleasure. Services include individual therapy, group therapy, medication management, and humanitarian support services offered at an intensive and outpatient level of care. Its inpatient program (IOP) supplies three-hour meetings four times a week to assist clients in taking their first steps toward self-actualization and recovery. The outpatient program (OP) offers one-hour sessions 3 times weekly to help clients maintain accountability. It also maintains a connection with clients during their early recovery. According to the Baldrige Excellence

Framework (2021), understanding customer expectations is essential to develop programs and offering services that meet the client's needs. Client expectations can be accessed by listening, interacting, and observing clients to gather vital information.

Listening to Interact with and Observe Clients

According to the organization's mission statement, its leader should listen to, interact with, and see clients by asking indirect questions, getting feedback, and learning from their experiences. Moreover, organization leaders work with clients to set goals and develop a plan to track their progress by monitoring and commenting on social media. This practice is consistent with the Baldrige Excellence Framework (2021) approach to organization/client interaction. Determining the methods to listen to the clients and engage with them is essential and is based on the customer-practitioner relationship and the methods used to seek constructive feedback (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2021).

According to the Baldrige Excellence Framework (2021), an effective method to listen is by engaging staff with clients to build rapport and, subsequently, maintain a strategic follow-up to maintain consistent interaction with them. Typically, BHOX's leaders interact with clients through telehealth support and virtual experience family support services. Since these communications are conducted online, the organization takes cybersecurity precautions to ensure the safety of clients' data.

Potential Clients

A BHOX leader in the administration department explained how clients and counselors interact" (BHL Participant1, personal communication, April 20, 2022). Their interactions heavily rely on listening to the client, building rapport with them, being available, paying close attention

to the client's needs, and showing compassion and empathy. Since loyalty and confidence are essential for the success of therapies, clients should feel safe to open and share their feelings, including their fears and challenges. According to Baldrige Excellence Framework (2021), relationship and complaints management are essential in engaging the client.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2021) indicates that assessing client satisfaction with the organization and comparing the results with other institutions is essential. Therefore, attention should be paid to obtaining information from the client. To measure client satisfaction and dissatisfaction, an organization's leader uses surveys and questionnaires to rate the service clients received and their reactions. Surveys include a comment section where grievances and complaints about the services and suggestions for improvement.

Workforce and Operations

BHOX's healthcare workforce includes counselors, therapists, psychiatric nurses, clinical social workers, and mental health physicians. According to the organization's operational standards and policies, employees must adhere to the established procedures and guidelines to ensure effectiveness. The organization works closely with federal and local partners to ensure consistency in its behavioral health service. BHOX operations follow the ACA code of ethics, HIPAA, and SAMHSA.

Analytical Strategy

This study's interviewees included the executive director for behavioral services and the human resources administrator. The data was obtained from interviews with the participants and reviewing the organization's data records after receiving permission from its BHL. This study's secondary sources will be peer-reviewed articles, various documents, annual reports, and studies about qualitative research questions. This study's research questions will address the practice problem, counselor turnover, and how turnover affects the quality of care provided. After transcribing the interviews, the themes stated in the research questions will be identified, assessed, and analyzed to extract meaningful data from unrelated materials (Brough, 2019). Brough (2019) states that a thematic analysis involves six basic steps. The first is conducting a thematic analysis by reading the interview transcripts and identifying the content of potential interest. The second is to generate codes, that is, code each research question to assess the codes and identify themes; the third is to review the themes while filtering out content which will involve keeping the most relevant materials and discarding the less important ones. The fifth step involves naming and describing the selected themes; the sixth and last step will be writing a detailed report to link the findings to the existing literature (Brough, 2019). This final step, comparing the research results with findings and discussions presented in the existing literature, will help to probe the results' reliability and applicability.

Leadership Strategy Questions

1. How does the BHL address the issue of high counselor turnover at the organization?

2. What should be the BHL's primary concern if the turnover problem persists and causes financial constraints?

3. What is the goal of addressing retention? Has the BHL considered revisiting the organization's strategic plan?

Workforce Questions

1. What workshops have the organization provided to help reduce counselors' stress?

2. Have the counselors' shown signs of experiencing stress? What are they?

3. What steps has the organization taken to ensure counselors express their concerns about burnout to the leadership?

Business Operation Questions

1. How has the organization addressed the limitations of service caused by high turnover?

2. How has working with fewer counselors affected the organization?

3. What client barriers due to dissatisfaction with services has the organization addressed?

Methodological Triangulation

Between-method triangulation is a data collection technique that allows for different ways to gather data, including combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Triangulation allows researchers to use one method, such as interviews and strategies and various techniques

(Cohen et al., 2018) that may include other comparison groups in the interview process

(Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Ravitch and Carl (2021) observed that the triangulation method is more

robust because it uses different approaches, such as observational field notes and in-depth

interviews, and is generative concerning the overall data set. Using the triangulation technique

will be particularly effective in this study because of the various methods that will be utilized to

provide additional sources of data to validate the perspective of counselors and to establish the

impact of counselor turnover on the standard of care provided by behavioral health services.

Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework of triangulation and this study's data collection

technique.

Figure 2

Between-Method Triangulation
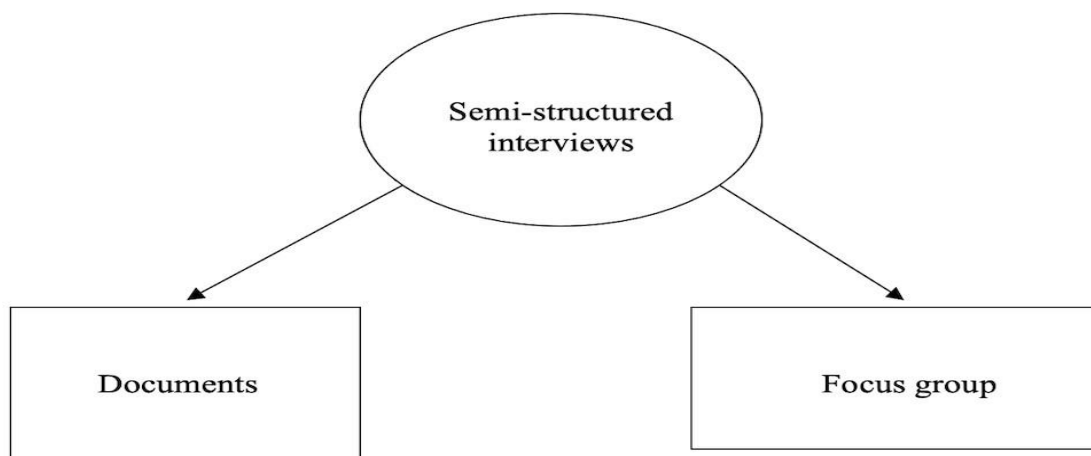
Paul, J. (1996, January 1). Between-method triangulation in organizational diagnosis: Semantic scholar. International Journal of

Organizational Analysis. Retrieved February 9, 2023, from https://www.semanticscholar.org

Participants

All the participants in this study were active in the organization. Interviewees included:

1. Participant 1: The executive director of behavioral health services (ED) is accountable for supplying leadership and ensuring that all programs fulfill the organization's mission. The ED oversees all on-site behavioral health directors and human resources, information technology, compliance, finance, service, and community-based service sectors.

2. Participant 2: The Behavioral health administrator oversees the organization's finances the also maintains the patient's billing and fees and improves the facility's efficiency and quality of care, ensures that the facility complies with all laws and regulations, and training and workshops, and communicates to the CEO and BHLs

   (Participate 1 Leader, communication, April 2022).

The Researcher Role

Qualitative studies require that the researcher has credibility, ensures transferability, monitors their behavior to reduce bias, develops competence in the chosen method, collects and analyzes the data, and presents the finding (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The researcher's integrity entails using verifiable data and avoiding making errors that threaten their study's validity, reliability, and utility. Moreover, researchers who choose the qualitative approach know that validity, reliability, and dependability are vital components (Cohen et al., 2018). Validity helps to determine the quality of the data and indicates that the results are accurate and dependable,

while reliability ensures that the methods used in the research are appropriate (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I interviewed one BHOX BHL and one other senior personnel for this study. Before they agreed to participate, an explanation regarding the study was detailed and names were kept confidential to prevent bias in the potential participants. The interviews for this study were conducted according to the research design, and materials for the interviews will include images and peer-review journals. Data will be handled according to the research design. After data analysis, the result will be stored in a password-protected folder awaiting transcription and analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Data Collection Procedures

I will rely on semi-structured interviews and focus groups for the data collection. I will also complete the document analysis of written materials, including personal and non-personal documents belonging to the participants and the organization, such as archives, annual reports, guidelines, policy documents, and letters (Busetto et al., 2020). The focus group session will explore the participants' expertise and experience and include questions about how and why people behave in a particular way and notes of nonverbal interaction recorded by audio or video after observation. The focus group will consist of the BHL, the executive director for behavioral sciences, the human resource administrator, therapists, and social workers.

Data Analysis

As the primary researcher for the non-structured interview, I will strive to follow Merriam's (2014) concept of "bracketing." As Merriam (2014) put it, "bracketing" requires that researchers set aside all personal biases or preconceived thoughts about their study. In conducting data analysis, I will systematically examine and arrange the data in the interview transcripts by coding to understand better the phenomenon investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to protocol, I will also reduce the volume of raw information, identify significant patterns, and organize the information.

The ATLAS. ti 6.0 computer-based qualitative software was used to organize and manage the transcripts. Data analysis was used for coding, which includes reading the interview transcripts continuously in search of patterns, described as open coding (Merriam, 2014). While reading the transcripts, highlighted words, phrases, and sentences in search of categories. This process was repeated and compared with other coded passages in the other interviews to identify and label all relevant similarities and critical themes.

Summary and Transition

As reported by BHOX, high counselor turnover is still a severe concern in the behavioral health services sector. Evidence shows that anxiety and burnout contribute to counselors leaving their positions or disconnecting from providing quality care and collaborating with clients who struggle with mental health and substance abuse disorders. Training is considered an effective strategy for reducing counselor turnover. In this context, effective leadership can offer various solutions to engage and prepare staff and promote retention.

The BEF (2021) helped to empower the organization to reach its goals, improve results, and address the issues its workforce face, particularly its counselors' capability and capacity to work in a demanding environment where behavioral problems are addressed.

Section 3 assesses how the BHOX's workforces, operations, measurement, analysis, and knowledge management components build organizational effectiveness and supportive workforce environments. The organization's present and future needs were evaluated based on the strategic objective of delivering quality care for professional staff and clients (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2021).

Section 3: Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management Components of the

Organization

Introduction

For over a decade, mental health disorders have been widespread among Americans.

Their significant incidence has strained personal and professional lives, hindering productivity,

performance at work, and the ability of individuals to fulfill their responsibilities and develop

meaningful relationships. Naturally, this crisis has affected the work, life, and health of the

mental professionals who serve vulnerable Americans with mental health issues. The increased

demand for mental health care has also caused a shortage of counselors, therapists, psychiatrists,

and psychologists, thus affecting the quality of care (Søvold et al., 2021). Between 2003 and

2013, for example, the United States recorded a 10.3% decrease in practicing psychiatrists

(Satiani et al., 2018). Moreover, 77% of U.S. counties reported a severe shortage of healthcare

providers, while 96% reported an unmet need for prescribers and psychiatrists (Satiani et al.,

2018).

Analysis of the Organization

Workforce Environment

The organization's workforce environment has focused on the factors that have caused a

high turnover among its counselors and affected the quality of its behavioral health services.

Thus, BHOX has tried to encourage organizational change by educating its staff about the

numerous ways to change the organization to lessen the adverse effects of burnout on its

counselors' mental health. However, implementing new business strategies, structures,

procedures, and technologies to handle internal and external changes requires using knowledge,

tools, and resources methodically (Sherman et al., 2017). state that effective change management needs more than everyday project management tasks. These managerial tasks entail leading and educating the staff to affect significant organizational changes, implementing new methods for handling complex events, and learning new approaches for dealing with counselors' compassion fatigue since anxiety and burnout cause counselors to feel professionally worthless.

BHOX adopted a positive strategy and supportive structure to build a successful and dynamic organization by recruiting and maintaining qualified leaders and internal staff stakeholders (BHL Participant 1, personal communication, March 15, 2022). These leaders and stakeholders included (a) an executive director of behavioral health services; (b) an adult clinical services director; (c) a financial director; (d) an information technology and human resource director; (e) a community-based director; and (f) a director of regulatory and compliances. These leaders are role models accountable for guiding and educating the staff. Their goal is to ensure that all programs offered to fulfill the organization's mission to provide excellent quality of care consistent with SAMHSA's principle of behavioral health and wellness. Leaders also manage the staff directly involved with client care, such as psychologists, addiction counselors, mental health counselors, clinical social workers, peer support specialists, and community-based workers. These employees rely on a solid cultural foundation where communication, mission, values, and vision are clearly stated and consistently shared to implement quality care of staff themselves and the organization's clients.

Organization Recruitment

Participant 2 (BHA Personal communication, March 15, 2022) reported and elaborated on BHOX's recruitment process. Before posting a job announcement on sites such as Indeed, Monster Jobs, and Job Referrals, the organization assesses its opening according to SAMHSA's guidelines for managing behavioral health organizations (Sherman et al., 2017). BHOX also follows the Society for Human Resource Management (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.) recommendation about using job analysis and descriptions to assist the employer in setting expectations during meetings to ensure everyone agrees on the position opened. The duties and skills required for the position should also be described. Recruiting managers conduct hiring interviews with candidates utilizing a checklist of queries and themes pertaining to the candidate's work history and short and long-term objectives. The hiring managers and the organization's ED decide on the candidate's background and stakeholders' interests.

Participant 2 reported that an additional in-person, phone, or Zoom interview might also be conducted (personal communication). Moreover, BHOX leaders invite the candidates to their offices to share the day's work with their peers so they can decide whether they are a good fit for the agency. Before and after a candidate accepts an offer of employment, the organization conducts background checks, drug tests, fingerprinting, and license checks. Evaluation reviews and counseling are used to review the work performance of the new hire every three and six months. These precautions are taken because the BHOX's leaders want to foster a culture of resilience to lessen the detrimental effects of counselor turnover and protect counselors from burnout, anxiety, and compassion fatigue hazards.

Management of Operations

The manager of behavioral health for Participant 1 discussed the duties involved in running the organization's services from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday through Friday. According to Participant 1 (personal communication, March 15, 2022), managers offer telehealth services and a 24-hour crisis line to assist clients who cannot physically come to the facility for personal reasons or because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Telehealth services can be accessed via Zoom or teleconferences.

BHL Participant 1 also elaborated on the organization's requirements and rules for staff, including its dress code (personal communication, March 15, 2022). Employees should wear business clothes from Monday through Thursday, but they can wear dress shirts and jeans on Fridays. The health care administrator and Participant 2 explained the pay scale, perks, paid time off, and sick leave but added that the organization does not provide 401k benefits (personal communication).

Changing Capability and Capacity Needs

BHOX's BHL, Participant 1, stated that the organization's longest-serving employee had been there for three years and that during the previous 2 years, they had witnessed a gradual shift in the quality and quantity of staff because of the turnover impact. Participant 1 discussed recent modifications that effectively decreased the organization's counselor turnover (personal communication, March 15, 2022). Weekly open forums and talks are held to discuss staff work performance and assess their complaints. If an employee's performance falls short of expectations and the BHL notices a change in that employee's work behavior, counseling is provided. Participant 2, the BHL, talked about the various benefits offered to staff, including a

4hour mental health break that gives therapists and counselors more time for self-care than is often provided during a workday (personal communication, March 15, 2022). The BHOX leader also started implementing activities such as offering bowling and providing an "escape room" for staff to relax after a long stressful day.

However, it is crucial to notice that when leaders bring about a change in any organization, they must engage the company's change agents to reflect and be capable of effecting the change. Organizational capacity for change is conceptualized as the overall capability of an organization to either effectively prepare for or respond to increasingly unpredictable and volatile environmental contexts (Heckman et al., 2016). As Heckman et al. (2016) indicated, an overall capability is multidimensional and comprises three elements:

1. Human resources skills.

2. Formal system and procedures.

3. Organizational culture, values, and norms.

Wassem et al. (2019) defined capacity building as improving the workforce's knowledge, attitude, and skills. General capacity building increases effectiveness at the organizational level by enhancing the capacities to achieve short- and long-term goals on the organizational and personal levels, including positively changing the employee's performance and external circumstances (Wassem et al., 2019). In line with the existing literature, Wassem et al. observed that training employees is necessary to promote effectiveness and efficiency since companies need change to enhance performance. The authors added that training should include various components such as monetary and intangible benefits retention, supporting initiatives, and career development offices to improve employee performance and boost business profitability.

Ensuring Workplace Health, Security, and Accessibility

Participant 1 (personal communication, March 15, 2022) asserted that workplace safety, health, and accessibility are crucial for counselors who serve clients with mental health and substance abuse disorders. The organization requires that its staff and clients wear masks and have their temperatures taken before entering the premises according to the COVID-19 prevention protocols. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, BHOX started to offer virtual services so clients could continue accessing SAMHSA's required services. However, the necessary shift to online care to prevent the spread of the coronavirus among staff and clients of BHOX restricted the choice and use of best practices, such as giving clients the choice of using effective evidence-based services to address mental and substance abuse disorders.

It should be noted, however, that Sherman et al. (2017) encouraged using telehealth and telecommunication for client evaluation and treatment. The mental health practitioners in the organization who participated in the focus group provided insight into the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on their professional duties, especially regarding the use of technology and telehealth. For example, they experienced burnout symptoms due to the great responsibility for managing the care of clients who needed support to cope with the stress caused by the loss of loved ones. At the same time, they also needed to address their difficulties (USA Today, n.d.).

Moreover, many of BHOX's counselors reported having lost their identity during the height of the pandemic. During that period, counselors' caseloads increased since more clients expressed suicidal thoughts and enduring trauma. In contrast, and perhaps as an unknown type of fringe benefit, the move from traditional counseling to telemedicine made therapy available

throughout the pandemic. In many cases, it reduces the intimacy between counselor and client, which often makes the work of counselors more effective and meaningful.

Another problem contributing to turnover in the behavioral health sector is that the industry needs to ensure employees' security in the workplace. Participant 2 (personal communication, March 15, 2022), the BHL, discussed the uneasiness of counselors and other staff members who must interact with clients threatening their safety. Further, a lack of physical safety and job security accelerates counselor turnover by compelling counselors to leave their positions to look for better opportunities.

However, BHOX has attempted to be proactive in terms of providing safety. Participant 1 (personal communication, March 15, 2022) listed various methods the organization uses to implement workplace safety, such as monthly fire drills, encouraging a culture of safety and security, offering protected workspaces, and preparing staff to defuse a hostile scenario. Staff are also trained to identify escape and entrance points quickly, among other safety strategies.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (n.d.), federal laws do not mandate that all employees be offered uniformly health benefits. For example, paid sick leave is governed by state legislation and is available to all employees. According to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, companies with 50 or more workers must provide health insurance to their staff or pay a fine. However, the law does not guarantee coverage for part-time employees. According to Participant 1 (personal communication, March 15, 2022), the company offers employees sick days, mental health days, and health insurance so counselors and other staff can take them for themselves. To inform new hires of its human resources and other policies, Participant 1 explained that the organization provides its new hires with a copy of its manual of

policies and procedures for them to review and familiarize themselves with all organizational aspects of BHOX's policies (personal communication, March 15, 2022).

Workforce Engagement

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (n.d.), leaders must understand and share information about the organization's principles and values with staff to create an influential organizational culture to become productive. In the case of the BHOX mental health director, the participant discussed her experience as a counselor and how poor communication had caused counselors to join the organization and leave soon after the past 6 years. However, Participant 1 (personal communication, March 15, 2022) noted that turnover had improved in the past 2 years because the leader implemented strategies to restore resilience to the company and create a shared culture, including improving employee satisfaction, fostering greater management employee trust, and enhancing worker competency through training programs that promote change. According to Participant 1 (personal communication, March 15, 2022), by establishing various informal "rap sections" with staff where they could express their thoughts and worries, the administration could observe whether the wellbeing of the counselors was being jeopardized while leaders could protect them from stress and other issues. However, it is challenging for any organization to take a total system approach while addressing specific aspects of rebalancing employee mental health and well-being at the organizational, team, and individual levels (McKinsey Health Institute, 2022).

Workforce Performance Management

According to the BEF (2021), performance measurement, analysis, and knowledge management entail assessing how the organization chooses, collects, analyzes, and manages information. It also involves developing ways to enhance the organization's performance based on the knowledge obtained from the analysis. Participant 2 (personal communication, March 15, 2022) stated that the counselors, therapists, and other professional performances were evaluated every three months. The BHOX leader designed a strategic plan to ensure that leaders monitor employee wellness. When there is a decline in work productivity, the leader has one-on-one counseling with the employee to address their problems. The organization's approach aligns with Clear Review's (n.d.):

The first stage of Armstrong's performance management cycle is the planning phase of the forthcoming period. Planning should involve:

- Agreeing on the SMART objective.

- Personal development plans.

- Actions in the coming months.

- A review of the employee's job requirements, updating the role profile where necessary. (Para. 3)

According to Clear Review (n.d.), effective employee performance management has all the performance management cycle elements, including setting goals, transparent communication and collaboration, employee recognition, and employee development. Additionally, the BEF (2021) shows that knowledge management entails incorporating the findings into the system by combining information from various sources and transferring the

critical aspects to stakeholders. Performance and knowledge management also includes using the newly acquired information for strategic planning (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2021).

Irabor and Okolie (2019) noted that learning about factors that influence staff retention and ways to improve it can help the organization avoid the inconvenience of high attrition. Employee job satisfaction and retention are the main factors for the success and survival of a firm. No one can measure the level of satisfaction an individual gets while they perform their work.

However, some factors directly or indirectly affect the satisfaction level of employees in workplaces. Cao et al. (2022) reported that an employee's satisfaction is directly associated with their mental health. Satisfied employees exude positive emotions that reduce the risk of mental health issues such as stress and increase retention (Cao et al., 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is directly associated with employee retention or turnover rate.

Knowledge Management

According to the HRSA (2011), measuring an organization's performance is essential to establish whether the system initiated in the institution is functioning. Measuring the organization's performance can also improve decision-making, comparisons of performances, monitoring changes implemented to ascertain if they are practical and sustained, identifying enhanced performance, and differentiating between what is happening from what seems to be occurring (HRSA, 2011).

Moreover, performance measurement is based on the desired outcome. In this study, the performance measurement of BHOX had the desired outcome of reducing the high turnover rate of counselors while assessing its impact on quality care to continue to provide quality behavioral health services. The organization's performance measurement was based on factors that increase turnover rates, such as the prevalence of burnout and stress among counselors.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework (2021) shows that performance measures entail how data is collected and progress tracked. The data collected included the performance rating of healthcare behaviors, burnout levels, and the number of counselors who resigned in three months. Data were obtained from the organization's information system. Notably, the performance measures included employee productivity. Thus, data collected daily were based on a set target for healthcare providers and compared with the achieved target. Client satisfaction data were also collected to determine the quality of care provided to individuals.

In the BHOX process of measuring performance, the rate of counselor turnover and satisfaction scores were compared before and after the change initiation to determine improvements. Further, the BHL also compared the healthcare provider's set target and the achieved performance to establish a difference. The organization's action plan development was based on the Healthcare Research and Quality (2018) (2018) Team STEPPS.

The action plan entailed ten steps:

1.   Creating a change team comprising counselors and the BHL.

2.   Identifying the problem, high counselor turnover rate.

3.   Establish the action plan's aim, reduce counselor turnover, reduce burnout and stress, and introduce training or interventions to address these problems.

4.   We were designing a change initiation based on the problem identified. BHOX aimed at encouraging organizational change by educating its staff about how making changes can lessen the adverse effects of burnout and improve counselor wellbeing.

5.   created a plan to evaluate the change initiation's effectiveness.

6.   Develop a plan to start the changes.

7.   We are generating a sustainable plan for continuous enhancement.

8.   Curating a communication plan.

9.   Creating an action plan write-up.

10.   Appraising the action plan with stakeholders (Healthcare Research and Quality (2018), 2018)

Comparative data were obtained from the organization's system and confirmed by BHOX leaders while supporting information was collected from competing or similar organizations. The endline data were obtained from the organization after three months. To ensure agility, monthly assessments were conducted to identify internal and external factors that could impede the measurement analysis and provide timely data collection. To review the organizational performance, a statistician will analyze the baseline and the endline data to determine whether the difference between the information obtained is significant. Thus, a paired sample t-test will be computed at a .05 significance level to determine the significant difference between the information (Cohen et al., 2018). After the analysis, the findings will be compared with similar organizations to ascertain the validity of the outcome.

The board review will evaluate the action plan, outcome, comparison, and performance improvements such as reduced attrition and increased client satisfaction. Future projections on

performance and progress will be used to evaluate the impact of the changes initiated and the outcome obtained, which is instrumental in determining whether the change system is effective. Continuous improvement will be ascertained by conducting regular educational programs and enforcing the benefits such as a four-hour counseling break during working hours and increasing the budget for recruitment and retention of health care providers.

BHOX manages its knowledge by applying the changes necessary to improve its performance. The organization's educational session and the four-hour break during workdays are essential to reducing stress and burnout and fostering effective communication. The organization's knowledge management system enables data sharing among staff through a one-step verification code and inputting the reason for viewing the data.

<div align="center">

Summary and Transition

</div>

Performance management is essential in the organization's decision-making. It includes comparing performances, monitoring changes implemented to verify their effectiveness and sustainability, showing enhanced performance, and differentiating between what is happening and what seems to be occurring. BHOX's performance measurement assesses counselor turnover rate, burnout, stress levels among healthcare providers, and client satisfaction. The rate of counselor turnover and client satisfaction scores are compared before and after the change initiation to determine whether improvements were made to track progress. The organization's BHL also compares the health care providers' set target and the achieved performance to evaluate differences.

Section 4: Results–Analysis, Implications, and Preparation of Findings

Introduction

At the time of the study, BHOX was a nonprofit organization on the east coast of the United States that served men and women struggling with mental health problems or substance abuse. The CEO started this organization in 2015 to compete with other organizations servicing the same rural community. BHOX's mission and vision were to improve customers' well-being concerning mental health disorders and substance abuse. The only problem was that counselors had become overwhelmed, hindering the quality of service provided. High turnover in a workplace can cause a strain on services because of a lack of communication in the workplace environment. Babbar et al. (2018) noted that counselor workforce turnover negatively impacts care quality and continuity of care. According to Hatch-Maillette et al. (2019), the problem of high turnover rate among healthcare providers (the primary organization practice-focused problem considered in my study) has been growing in severity. Due to a lack of board members who could advise the organization to change its approach and foster better communication between the BHL and staff, as well as the BHL's neglect of staff needs associated with mental distress, overlooked counselors have been leaving their positions to work for other organizations with healthier work environments. After analyzing the organization's interactions by conducting a semi-structured interview, I found that the BHL could oversee the day-to-day interaction between clients and counselors to maintain the vision and mission of the organization and ensure the delivery of quality services. The BHA conducted quality assurance within the organization so that the implementation of training and other duties complied with SAMHSA guidelines for outpatient services for clients seeking treatment.

The organization's leadership has stressed the importance of counselors remaining in their positions because of the high demand for mental health and substance abuse services, affecting millions worldwide. Counselors have been leaving their duties because leaders have overlooked the counselors' mental health and well-being, which has caused tremendous pressure in their work environments. Lack of communication in the work environment has caused a strain on the working relationship between BHL and staff members. By collecting and coding data from interviews and existing literature, I developed themes to support this qualitative case study. Two members of the organization participated by answering primary questions and follow-up questions. The thematic Analysis produced themes: performance, staff, clients, training, organization, feedback, strategy, leader, and counselor.

The four research questions that were developed to address the practice problem that involves counselor turnover, and the impact of Behavioral Health Services are as follows found in section 2:

RQ 1: How prevalent is counselor turnover in the organization?

RQ 2: How has counselor turnover financially affected the organization?

RQ 3: What strategies have been implemented to reduce counselor turnover?

RQ 4: What training or intervention have been introduced to combat Counselor turnover?

Analysis, Results, and Implications

The transcribed interview was uploaded to Thematic Analysis coding software with the assistance of Gradcoach.com., which permitted transcribing manuals that included an Excel transcript of structural coding with research and interview questions found in the descriptive coding in (Appendix A). The wordcloud.com designs and phases were identified as emergent themes and related to transcripts and interview questions coded using the Thematic Analysis to help analyze repeated words.

Using wordcloud.com created a frequency of words and themes (Figure 3, shown on the next page in the box figure). The larger-size words represent more frequently used words. The words most used included performance, staff, clients, training, organization, Feedback, strategic, leader, and counselors. On the other hand, the less frequent words are smaller, not highlighted in bold, and were mentioned less in the interview.

Themes

Figure 3

Frequency Word Cloud Used http://www.worldcloud.com/

Research Question and Themes

RQ1: How prevalent is counselor turnover in the organization?

(Theme: Factors Contributing to Counselor Turnover) The prevalence of counselor turnover within the organization is related to accountability. The CEO and BHL had to make sure that counselors were considered and that they provided the organization with high-quality services. The BHL must commit to the five C's: a shared purpose, an organizational vision, quality services, coaching and collaboration, and consequences and results. Turnover and counselor turnover are the outcomes. The key to preventing burnout-related turnover in the organization is for the leader to establish a relationship with a counselor, commit to weekly open forums, and have conversations with staff members about how they are feeling and how to deal with stressful situations that affect daily operations. Participant 2 stated, "By paying close attention to the organization's mission, vision, and outcome, leaders acknowledge accountability."

Low production and high counselor turnover are the outcomes of insufficient accountability. To mitigate burnout-related turnover, leaders must establish a connection with counselors, Participant 1 open forums, and engage in conversations about feelings and strategies for handling stressful situations affecting daily operations." Participant 2 stated, "Evaluating, performance involves a BHL accountability and strategic planning."

RQ2: How has counselor turnover financially affected the organization?

(Theme: Financial Impacts) Counselor turnover has significant financial implications for an organization in various ways. Firstly, the loss of experienced and skilled counselors who have

built strong relationships with clients over time can lead to a decline in the quality of care provided to clients, ultimately resulting in decreased demand for services from the organization.

Secondly, recruiting, hiring, and training new counselors can result in increased costs, especially if the organization experiences high levels of turnover. The organization may also need to invest additional resources in marketing and advertising to attract new counselors and clients, further adding to its financial burden. Participant 2 stated, 'The organization is supposed to have five full-time counselors on staff, and if one counselor resigns and leaves one vacancy, there needs to be more coverage to services clients. Therefore, services will be insufficient due to the stage of the professional counselor in the organization.

Thirdly, counselor turnover can negatively impact employee morale and job satisfaction, leading to decreased productivity and increased absenteeism, which can affect the organization's bottom line. Participant 1 stated," making sure counselors' vision, mission, and goals align with the organization goals for the clients.

Addressing counselor turnover is crucial for financial stability and the well-being of counselors and clients. The well-being of counselors is essential to delivering quality client services, as burnout and poor mental health can affect the quality and safety of services. The BHL stated the "importance of addressing counselor well-being, as staff members have reported feeling unsafe due to the lack of security for clients who become agitated or combative due to their instability." Participant 1 "Addressing concerns is crucial to improving counselor retention and the quality and safety of client services."

In conclusion, reducing counselor turnover and prioritizing staff well-being are crucial for an organization's continued success. Failure to address these issues can result in decreased

revenue, increased costs, and decreased employee morale and job satisfaction, ultimately affecting the quality of care provided to clients. Therefore, implementing strategies to reduce counselor turnover and prioritizing staff well-being should be top priorities for any organization providing mental health services.

RQ 3: What strategies have been implemented to reduce counselor turnover?

(Theme Engagement) The BHL and CEO have implemented various strategies to reduce counselor turnovers, such as adhering to the five C's, connecting with counselors, carrying out follow-ups and one-on-one counseling, setting up various informal sessions, monthly check-ins, quarterly cycles of work performance, feedback systems, appropriate training, and interventions to improve workplace culture, which is a contributing factor to burnout. Effective organizational changes made by the BHL have also improved job satisfaction, decreased emotional expression role conflict, and decreased employee turnover.

In addition to reducing counselor turnover, counselors' well-being is crucial to delivering quality client services. The BHOX has a clinical supervisor, a social worker, and a therapist, and the participant is a board-approved supervisor who ensures professional counselor board intern supervision. The BHL stated, "Rising levels of burnout and poor well-being remain concerns, as they impact the quality and safety of services and contribute to high turnover rates." The BHL also stated that "staff members feel unsafe due to the lack of security for clients who become agitated or combative because of their instability." Therefore, addressing well-being concerns is crucial to improving counselor retention and the quality and safety of client services.

(Themes Workplace Safety) To reduce counselor turnover and prioritize the well-being of its staff, the BHL, and CEO of the organization have implemented various strategies. These include

connecting with counselors, providing informal sessions, implementing feedback systems, providing appropriate training, and improving organizational culture. Additionally, workplace safety is safeguarded through monthly check-ins to ensure all employees feel safe in their workplace environment, such as security and building safety, to monitor clients for violent intent. Participant 2 stated, "the uneasiness of counselors and other staff members interacting with clients who may threaten their safety and takes steps to address these concerns." By implementing these strategies and prioritizing workplace safety, the organization aims to reduce counselor turnover, improve staff well-being, and ensure the organization's continued success.

 (Theme Workforce Performance) The organization's BHL have implemented various workforce performance strategies to reduce counselor turnover. These include during quarterly cycles of work performance, connecting with counselors through follow-ups and one-on-one counseling sessions, providing various informal sessions such as monthly check-ins and rap sessions, implementing feedback systems to monitor the success of ongoing interventions, providing appropriate training every three months or once a year to help counselors deal with stress, interpersonal issues, and self-awareness, and improving organizational culture by addressing concerns related to workplace safety, security, and culture.

To reduce counselor turnover and prioritize staff well-being, the BHL have implemented various strategies related to workforce performance. Participant 1 stated, "Every six months, there is a performance evaluation of job performance and rap session to review counselor job progress, assist counselors in overcoming obstacles, and improve organization and team performance by addressing workload, casework, paperwork, job requirements, and updating role profiles" (personal communication, March 5, 2022). By implementing these strategies, the

organization aims to create a supportive and positive work environment that encourages staff retention and ensures the organization's continued success.

RQ 4: What training or intervention have been introduced to combat Counselor turnover? (Themes: Training and Intervention) Counselor turnover in an organization can result from various factors such as performance, staff, clients, training, organization, feedback, strategy, leader, and counselors. At the time of the study, BHOX had a staff of five or more counselors offering services in six therapy areas to help with self-awareness of unhealthy behavior in men and women struggling with mental health disorders and addiction. However, counselor turnover can arise due to burnout, stress, and anxiety, affecting the quality and safety of client services.

While the exact prevalence of counselor turnover in the organization is not mentioned, the BHL stated, "recognizes the importance of addressing counselor well-being and reducing turnover to ensure the organization's continued success." The BHL aims to provide mental stability and awareness to contribute to healthier and happier lives. Therefore, addressing the issue of counselor turnover and prioritizing counselor well-being should be a top priority for any organization providing mental health services.

Implementing evidence-based practice interventions can help reduce counselor turnover and improve counselor well-being. Participant 2 stated, "I think we review policies regularly, and we want to address any concerns or behaviors that come up." The three types of interventions to address the BHOX turnover include multi-component evidence-based practice addressing issues such as leadership and cultural change, small-scale interventions designed to improve one component of burnout, and practice change interventions to enhance components of burnout such

as workplace culture. These interventions focus on reducing burnout and improving overall outcomes related to burnout in the behavioral health workforce.

In conclusion, addressing counselor turnover and prioritizing counselor well-being is essential for the continued success of any organization providing mental health services. Implementing evidence-based practice interventions can help reduce burnout and improve outcomes related to burnout in the behavioral health workforce, ultimately contributing to healthier and happier lives for counselors and clients.

Clients, Programs, and Services

"BHOX's services follow SAMHSA and NMAI guidelines. The organization provides outpatient services for men and women with mental health problems and substance abuse disorders. According to its website, these services include mental health care, addiction recovery, psychiatric rehabilitation, medication management, teletherapy, individual and group therapy, and shelter housing for those receiving services from the organization. Given the evaluation results regarding counselor turnover, the organization's leaders must respond to the needs of the counselors and build a healthy work environment within the organization. They should ensure that there are enough counselors to service each program, promote a healthy workforce by identifying existing workloads and increasing appropriate staffing, improve efficiency and outreach resources to provide quality care through ongoing workshops, and provide safe and effective counselor supervision for decision-making with flexibility."

Client-Focused Results

The results show a connection between interview questions and counselor turnover, which is related to service quality problems. The findings shed light on the factors contributing to the organization's counselor turnover and service quality issues by revealing common themes that surfaced during the interviews. One such theme is accountability, which stresses ensuring that all team members are responsible for meeting the organization's mission and vision to avoid increased output and counselor attrition. The focus on satisfaction underlines the importance of counselors' mental health in addressing staff turnover and service quality issues. When counselors' mental health suffers, it ultimately leads to burnout, declining service quality, and staff turnover. Reducing burnout and turnover can be accomplished by creating an upbeat work environment and mutual trust between managers and their staff, both of which are central to job satisfaction and employee loyalty. Employees who have a sense of belonging and confidence in what they do are more likely to stay with the company.

Safety in the workplace is emphasized because of the sensitivity required when dealing with clients experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues. Workers worrying about their safety can increase their stress and burnout, contributing to turnover. The workforce performance theme stresses the significance of giving workers the tools, resources, and education they need to do their jobs well. Staff members who believe they are valued and given opportunities to grow in their roles are more likely to provide excellent service to customers and remain in customer service.

BHOX is an outpatient behavioral health organization focusing on men and women suffering from mental health and substance abuse disorders. The organization aims to promote mental stability and awareness, contributing to healthier and happier lives. This involves working and functioning in daily activities while learning to cope with mental health issues without turning to substances that can result in relapse. The impact of counselor turnover interferes with the organization's goal. It affects the quality of care between counselors and clients due to distressed counselors experiencing mental health setbacks that cause burnout and anxiety, disrupting care. Counselors lose the positive relationship with clients, which interferes with working as a health counselor and understanding the present issue of counselors feeling burnout and compassion fatigue that leads to anxiety, which results in turnover within the organization.

This section includes an analysis and interpretation of data collected by interviewing the leaders of BHOX and reviewing organization documents and peer-reviewed literature. The results show a connection between interview questions and counselor turnover related to problems with service quality."

Workforce-Focused Results

The information collected regarding the BHOX workforce indicates that setting goals that involve building better communication systems could improve counselors' well-being while delivering services. The BHL learned from personal experience working in the organization as a counselor that it is essential to reduce counselor workload and continue monthly checks of staff mental well-being, including one-on-one counseling services, leadership interaction workshops, and job training for continued self-care. Long-term effective solutions require social support, improvement of staff communication, redesign of workflows, and improvement of quality that

addresses counselors' concerns. These solutions involve scheduling formal meetings, hiring additional staff to help with burnout, and providing counselors more time for self-care.

By implementing these solutions, BHOX can improve the work environment for counselors, reduce counselor turnover, and provide better quality care to clients. Building better communication systems can help ensure that all team members are on the same page. In contrast, monthly check-ins can help identify and address potential problems before they become more severe. Leadership interaction workshops and job training for self-care can also help counselors manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

In summary, addressing the issue of counselor turnover requires a multifaceted approach that involves addressing workload concerns, providing social support, improving communication systems, and prioritizing counselors' mental health and well-being. By taking these steps, BHOX can create a healthier, more sustainable work environment that promotes counselor retention and provides high-quality care to clients."

Leadership and Strategy

Leadership and strategy are essential for organizational change, involving leadership, employees, and structures, as a good system can adapt to environmental change. Leadership should reflect the organization's needs and address the counselor turnover that has impacted the organization's service quality. Making services accessible to counselors can reduce their burnout and anxiety through engagement with different measures by using best practices to implement change within the organization that improves the health of the work environment.

Goal setting should also be transparent, aiding collaboration to enhance the organization's relationships. By setting clear goals and objectives, leadership can promote a shared vision and

provide a sense of direction for the organization. This can help foster collaboration among team members and encourage them to work towards a common goal. Additionally, implementing effective communication strategies can help ensure that all team members are on the same page and can help prevent misunderstandings or conflicts that may arise.

Effective leadership and strategy are crucial for addressing counselor turnover and improving the organization's services. Making services accessible to counselors, setting transparent goals, and promoting collaboration can help create a healthy and sustainable work environment that promotes counselor retention and provides high-quality care to clients."

Financial and Marketplace Result

The organization did not share any financial reports; however, information about how finances impact services was provided. Participant 2 discussed how "keeping the quality of services within the organization is essential because counselors serve clients. Revenue is lost if the organization falls below set standards." Participant 1 stated, "BHOX's strategy relied on marketing to connect with consumers, such as hospitals and local emergency medical services, through advertising on the website and word of mouth." Participant 2 also noted that "BHOX did not offer many benefits to staff, such as 401(k) retirement savings."

Organizations need to consider the financial impact of their decisions on service quality and staff retention. By maintaining high-quality services, organizations can attract and retain clients, which can help generate revenue. However, it is also crucial to provide benefits and support to staff members to ensure their job satisfaction and reduce turnover. Marketing strategies can also help organizations connect with potential clients and expand their reach.

Financial considerations are an essential aspect of organizational management, and organizations must balance their financial goals with the need to provide high-quality services and support to staff members. Organizations can create a sustainable and successful business model by implementing effective marketing strategies, offering employee benefits, and prioritizing service quality."

Individual, Organizational, and Community Impact

BHL Participant 1 stated that 'leadership strength affected individuals, organizations, and communities.' Participant 2 noted that 'the organization is supposed to have five full-time counselors on staff, and if one counselor resigns and leaves a vacancy, there is not enough coverage to service clients.' BHOX's leaders have demonstrated a commitment to staff wellbeing and have evaluated leaders to build more robust, supportive, and decisive leadership that reduces counselor turnover. A more vital workforce can benefit everyone, allowing revenue to grow and the community and individuals to receive quality care that helps everyone in the community and the organization (Sherman et al., 2017).

Positive Social Change

"The implications for positive social change concerning counselor turnover in behavioral health services are significant. To address this issue, organizations should conduct a best-practice evaluation that involves a continued analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that affect service quality. Additionally, organizations should follow guidelines to support selfcare in the workplace, such as having leaders attend training to ensure they understand cultural differences and are aware of the signs and symptoms of burnout.

By implementing these practices, organizations can create a healthier, more supportive work environment that benefits counselors and clients. This can lead to reduced counselor turnover and improved service quality, ultimately resulting in positive social change through improved mental health outcomes for individuals and communities."

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strength of this qualitative study is that the BHL of the organization was open to sharing information relevant to the study on how stress and anxiety in the workplace affected counselors. Qualitative research methods, including triangulation, were used to analyze and compare the research findings concerning the original transcripts (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

However, a limitation of this study is that the organization's leaders were unwilling to share documents related to finances or meeting minutes. Additionally, due to the leaders' work schedules, interviews had to be recorded to allow for their participation in the study.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the factors contributing to counselor turnover in behavioral health services. It offers recommendations for improving the work environment to reduce burnout and improve service quality. Future research can build on these findings by examining the effectiveness of the recommended strategies and exploring additional factors that contribute to counselor turnover in similar organizations.

Summary

This study examined the processes of counselor turnover and the impact of behavioral health services using thematic analysis results that included coding and creating themes that supported words that stood out in the analysis process, as well as the implications of the findings from the case study's semi-structured interviews.

The study's findings revealed the strengths and weaknesses of BHOX's leadership involvement with counselors' mental health well-being. They highlighted the need for a healthier work environment between leadership and staff to reduce high turnover rates. Social change is crucial to improving the behavioral health organization's high turnover.

However, a limitation of this study was the lack of proper access to information, such as finances and minutes, which hindered some aspects of the research.

Organizations can use the Baldrige Excellence Framework to address these issues to improve their workforce, leadership, and communication through measurement analysis and knowledge management.

Section 5 provides recommendations to help create a strategy for positive social change in the organization. These recommendations can build on the study's findings and offer practical solutions for addressing counselor turnover in behavioral health services."

Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

I created these recommendations to help improve the well-being of counselors and communication between the BHL and counselors (Sherman et al., 2017). BHOX currently lacks board members to help with strategic governance and oversight, serving the organization, managing the budget, and setting policies to help achieve goals that will address the problems within the organization. The BHL makes all decisions, resulting in a lack of interaction between the BHL and staff members, causing conflict and high turnover.

- Improving communication and workflows and addressing concerns.

- Improving BHL availability, responsiveness, and continuity.

- Implementing evidence-based practices.

- Implementing workplace interventions; and

- Improving work-life balance and well-being

Implementing these recommendations requires a time frame to improve the organization's interaction with counselors, which can enhance relationships in the workplace. Evidence-based practice can help improve how an organization's leaders develop and implement reasonable strategies to change the organization to address problems related to "counselor turnover that impacts the quality of care in the behavioral service."

The critical change necessary in BHOX is developing a healthy and prosperous workplace environment. Implementing the recommendation to use change management will

help top managers discuss the issues of disagreement, dissatisfaction, and poor communication within the organization. For example, counselors have felt overwhelmed, anxious, and burned out. This has disturbed the organization because counselors have left their positions without notice, affecting the quality of care and ability to meet the needs of clients and the well-being needs of counselors.

According to McNamara (2006), refraining from pushing the BHL to accept the recommendation is essential. Instead, the BHL should be asked about a particular issue associated with the recommendation. Having board members can help take a heavy burden off the BHL and the BHA, so leaders need to comprehend the importance of having a board that would benefit the organization.

Figure 4: *Strategic Plan Groups*
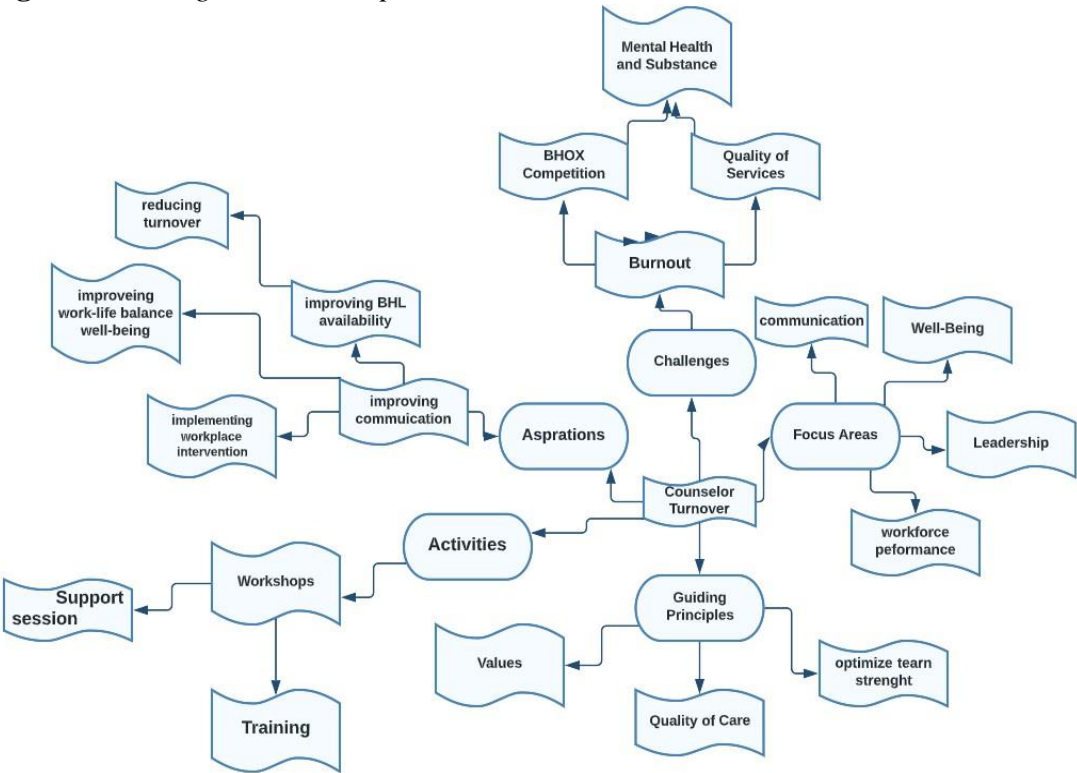
Strategy & KPI Software - Spider Strategies. (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2023, from https://www.spiderstrategies.com

The recommendation and strategy plan are grouped into sections to help implement change management that will benefit and work on reducing counselor turnover in the BHOX. This should be done in different phases to help ensure efficiency and effectiveness among the leaders and managers. This will help improve the organization's communication, supportive role, and interactions between counselors and leaders. The Phases can be changed or rearranged by looking at the change behavior model to ensure that the map can help guide the team according to the organization's needs. The Kotter Change Management Model (n.d.) helps with the BHOX to help implement the changes that focus on the factors that enhance the success of the change process in the eight steps of the process, including:

Table 2

The phase of Kotter's Change Management Model

Phases	Description	Goals
Phase 1	Creating Urgency	the need to start making sense of urgency to drive the need for an earnest response
Phase 2	Build a Guiding Coalition	A guiding coalition comprises individuals with an organization whom you believe could be instrumental in leading effective change.
Phase 3	Set A Clear Vision	Form a considerate and inclusive vision of all the origination's stakeholders.

Phase 4	Communicating Change	Engage with people about the changes to be implemented and their importance.
Phase 5	Remove Barriers to Action	Collectively get things moving and remove any barriers/hindrances.
Phase 6	Accomplish-shortterm wins	Apart from long-term goals, set small goals and recognize even the most minor achievements to motivate your employees.
Phase 7	Consolidating Gain	Continuously analyze all success stories and individual experiences.
Phase 8	Anchor the Changes	Include changes in the organizational culture. This will require that you proactively support the changes coalition and the leaders undertaking change strategies that are created.

Kotter's Change Management Model. MindTools. (n.d.). Retrieved February 4, 2023, from
https://www.mindtools.com/a8nu5v5/kotters-8-step-change-model

Recommendation Implementation

The recommended process for improving the organization's growth and breaking down barriers would extend beyond the time allotted for me to work with BHOX. Therefore, the organization would benefit from appointing board members to make decisions supporting the implementation of changes. One recommendation is to improve communication between leaders and staff members regarding hiring an independent consultant with experience in

change management. This will help foster an understanding of why the changes are essential for the organization and how they relate to internal and external stakeholders (McNamara, 2006).

The independent consultant will facilitate sharing necessary changes based on the information collected during interviews and documents depicting communications between leaders and staff members. The Baldrige Excellence Framework and criteria can help improve an organization's processes, capabilities, and results involving leadership, strategy, workforce, and operations. The recommendations incorporate development goals for positive social change (Baldrige Excellence Framework, 2021).

It is recommended to use a change framework to effectively implement the changes, reflecting the need for change. Figure 5 illustrates the conceptualization of the need to change associated with a six-step change management strategic framework process. The process prepares an organization for the critical phase in which managers assess the nature and direction of change. By following the framework, the organization can ensure a successful implementation of the recommended changes.

To address the issues of counselor turnover, workload, stress, and burnout, as well as improve communication and the well-being of counselors and clients, an action plan will be implemented in phases over one year.

The Action Plan

Phase 1 (Months 1-3): Develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the root causes of counselor turnover, workload, and burnout. This will include assessing current practices, identifying areas for improvement, and developing strategies to address them.

Phase 2 (Months 4-6): Implement the strategies developed in Phase 1, including changes to workload distribution, staff communication protocols, and support systems for counselors. This phase will also include training sessions for leaders and staff on the importance of communication and well-being in the workplace.

Phase 3 (Months 7-9): Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies through feedback from counselors, clients, and leaders. This feedback will be used to make necessary adjustments to the plan and identify areas for further improvement.

Phase 4 (Months 10-12): Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the action plan and identify opportunities for ongoing improvements. Develop a sustainability plan to ensure that the changes made are maintained over the long term.

By implementing this action plan, we aim to improve the quality of care provided to clients by ensuring that counselors are supported and able to provide their best work. This will result in a more positive and productive workplace for all staff members, ultimately leading to better outcomes for clients.

Recommendation 1: Supportive Role

To effectively address the issue of counselor turnover and improve the well-being of counselors, Recommendation 1 suggests implementing a supportive role within the organization. This involves creating a supportive work environment that promotes understanding and caring for counselors' emotional stress factors. The BHL must raise awareness of the issue and change beliefs by holding group meetings and support groups to establish a vision of cultural change. Workshops focused on critical change management can be

used to help implement the changes necessary to support counselor well-being. By providing a supportive work environment, the organization can reduce the likelihood of counselor burnout, anxiety, and compassion fatigue, ultimately decreasing counselor turnover.

Figure 5

Conceptualization of the Need for Strategy
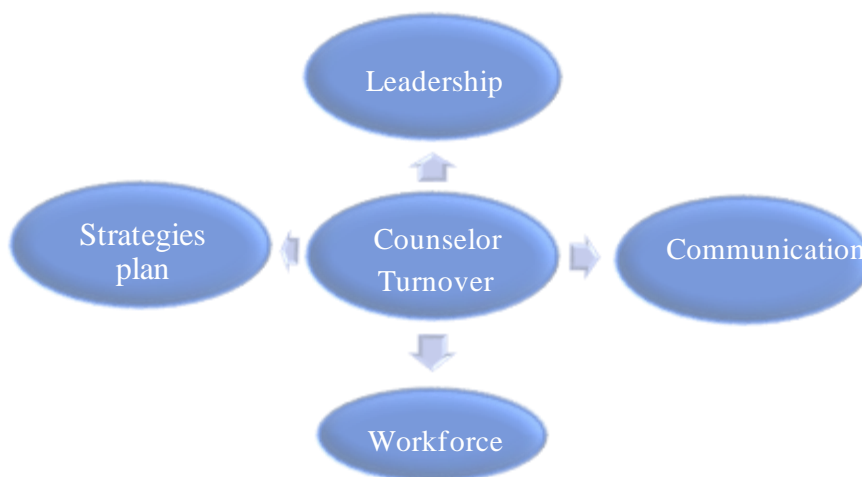
Price, A. D., & Chahal, K. (2006). A strategic framework for change management. *Construction Management and Economics*, *24*(3), 237–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/01446190500227011

Recommendation 2: Using Evidence-Based Practices

The second recommendation is to use evidence-based practices, which involve improving the organization's cultural understanding and aligning with clinician values and goals. Focusing on improvement and protecting the culture of the counselors will help buffer them against potential negative perceptions of the system-wide implementation of evidence-based practices. This will improve counselor satisfaction and reduce turnover as a response to efforts to implement such practices (Williams & Beidas, 2018).

Recommendation 3: Turnover

Implement a strategic plan to reduce turnover in the organization. This recommendation includes creating a better work environment, including better communication, a supportive work environment, and solid leadership development focusing on communication protocols, training, and workshops to help cope with stress and anxiety. Have a monthly session to gather feedback on working relationships to improve well-being and reduce caseload by dividing support where management assists when counselors are limited. The recommendation results can help improve the quality of care in counseling services, benefiting the well-being of service providers. It is also recommended to increase recognition for hard work, maximize job autonomy, decentralize the work environment, and offer self-care options for staff and opportunities for advancement within the organization (Brabson et al., 2020).

Recommendation 4: Improving Well-Being

To address the practice problem of examining counselor turnover and its impact on behavioral health services, each leader in the organization should consider adopting various leadership styles to reduce the possibility of burnout and support counselors' well-being (Kelly & Herald, 2020). The lack of communication among the organization's leaders leads to strains in day-to-day operations, exacerbated by the BHL's lack of communication with each department leader. The BHL would benefit from adopting a strategic leadership style that focuses on the well-being of its counselors, including managing care, providing self-care workshops, and promoting interpersonal well-being.

Recommendations for Future Study

In relation to my practice problem regarding counselor turnover and its impact on the quality of services, I found limited information about counselor service when reviewing peerreviewed literature. Extant research related more to healthcare workers in the hospital setting, such as doctors and nurses. Counselor turnover is a massive issue, and organizations are suffering due to the high turnover of counselors in the mental health and substance abuse areas. Studies have shown that awareness of counselor turnover is a massive issue in behavioral health organizations. Counselors must focus more on mental health and well-being when researching the practice problem. Researchers should address counselor turnover in behavioral health organizations with future research. The issue is broad, and existing literature indicates that researchers need to focus more on the mental health and well-being of counselors who experience burnout. Future research should address the mental health and interpersonal challenges that contribute to burnout and turnover among counselors in the mental health and substance abuse professions, as this is an area where limited literature currently exists.

Plan for Dissemination

The communication and dissemination plan for my research findings and recommendations, which focuses on counselor turnover and its impact on the quality of care,

will be achieved through a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation will include a summary of the research problem, methodology, key findings, and detailed information about the recommendations for the BHOX. A question-and-answer session will also be allotted to provide further clarification or comments. The presentation will be delivered to the BHOX leadership team and stakeholders, including board members, counselors, and clients. In addition, the presentation will be recorded and shared with other behavioral health organizations and professional associations to promote awareness and understanding of the issue and the potential solutions. Finally, a manuscript will be developed and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication to contribute to the body of knowledge on counselor turnover and its impact on the quality of care in behavioral health services.

Summary

In summary, the recommended process for improving the organization's growth and breaking down barriers involves appointing board members to make decisions that support implementing changes. Improved communication between leaders and staff members is recommended to help foster an understanding of the need to hire an independent consultant with experience in change management. The consultant will facilitate sharing necessary changes based on the collected information.

The Baldrige Excellence Framework and criteria can improve an organization's processes, capabilities, and results. A change framework, such as the six-step change management strategic framework process, can ensure a successful implementation of recommended changes.

To address the issues of counselor turnover, workload, stress, and burnout, as well as improve communication and the well-being of counselors and clients, an action plan will be implemented in phases over one year. This plan includes developing a comprehensive strategy, implementing developed strategies, evaluating effectiveness, and monitoring and improving the plan. The aim is to improve the quality of care provided to clients and to create a positive and productive workplace for staff members**.**

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Appendix A: Interview Question

1. What are the primary services that the organization offers?

2. What are the organization's key strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?

3. What is critical workforce plans to support short- and longer-term achievement of strategic objectives and action plans?

4. How does the organization recruit, hire, place, and retain new staff members?

5. How does the organization prepare its staff for changing capability/capacity needs?

6. How does the organization manage its staff?

7. How does the organization ensure workplace health, security, and accessibility for its workforce?

8. How does the organization support its staff via benefits and policies?

9. How does the organization foster a culture characterized by open communication, high performance, and an engaged workforce?

10. How does the organization determine key drivers of staff engagement?

11. How does the organization assess staff engagement?

12. How does the organization's workforce performance management system support high performance/engagement?

13. How does the learning and development system support the organization's needs and the personal development of workforce members, managers, and leaders?

14. How does the organization use data/information to track daily operations and overall performance?

15. How can the organization ensure its performance-measurement system responds to rapid/unexpected change?

16. How does the organization use findings from performance reviews to develop priorities for improvement and innovation?

17. How does the organization build and manage organizational knowledge?

18. How does the organization use knowledge and resources to embed learning in operations?

19. How do senior leaders' actions demonstrate their commitment to legal and ethical behavior?

20. How do senior leaders communicate with and engage the workforce, clients, and key customers?

21. How do senior leaders create an environment for success now and in the future?

22. How do senior leaders create a focus on activities that will achieve the organization's mission?

23. How does the organization's leadership ensure responsible governance?

24. How does the organization evaluate the performance of senior leaders and the governance board?

25. How does the organization's leadership promote ethical behavior in all interactions?

26. How does the organization consider societal well-being and social change as part of its strategy and daily operations?

27. How does the organization support and strengthen its community partners and stakeholders?

28. How does an organization conduct strategic planning?

29. How does the organization's strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation?

30. How does the organization collect/analyze relevant data and develop information for the strategic planning process?