9-1-1 CALL-TAKER & DISPATCHER STRESS:

A study in the state of California
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“Health epidemic of the 21st century.”

World Health Organization
2012 - San José State University

87 respondents

10th largest city in the US

3rd largest city in California
Key Results

1. Work – life balance
2. Satisfaction with life
3. High priority events
4. Workplace fairness
State of California

9-1-1 Dispatchers

- Largest state by population (39M) in US
- 454 Primary Public Safety Answering Points
- Total dispatcher population of 7k
State of California

9-1-1 Dispatchers

- 800+ respondents in 7-day period
- Dr. Michelle Lilly – Northern Illinois University
- Dr. Ana Gamez & Ms. Kassandra Kessler - California Baptist University
Instrument

- Online survey
- 9-1-1 Call-takers, dispatchers and supervisors
- Perceived Stress Scale
- Depression & Anxiety Stress Scale
- Mental Health
Instrument

- Physical health
- Workplace attitudes
- Work conditions
- Nature of calls received
- Burnout questions
- Demographics
690 W
143 M
BURNOUT most impactful in predicting poor health-related outcomes such as depression and anxiety, quality of life, and physical health problems.
1. low support
2. poor management
3. and/or poor work morale
prevention and/or intervention
Preliminary Findings

**Burnout**

*Emotional exhaustion*

*Cynicism*

*Diminished feelings of personal accomplishment*  

(Maslach)
WHAT DOES burnout LOOK LIKE IN THE CONTROL ROOM?

- Lack of empathy
- Exhaustion
- Skepticism toward the caller
- Feelings of dissatisfaction related to job goals
Results of *burnout*
Organizational Response

- Critical incident debriefing
- Transparency in operations
- Problem solving workgroups
- Training
- Agency resources
Critical Incident Debriefing

Prioritize dispatcher staff participation.

Partner with agency clinicians or trained chaplaincy to facilitate debriefings.

Consistent practice
Transparency in Operations

✓ Top-down information
✓ Explanation of operational decisions
✓ Feedback loop
✓ Equity in policies & application of policies
Problem Solving Workgroups

- Interest Based
- Organizational and/or Operational Issues
- Peer Based
- Partnership with staff and management
Training

- Wellness
- Resiliency
- Critical Thinking
- Stress Management
Agency Resources

• Employee Assistance Programs
• Crisis Intervention Teams
• Peer Support
• Time off procedures
• Awareness
2018 SURVEY

APRIL 1-30, 2018

✓ FIRE dispatchers at public safety agencies will be included

✓ Survey will be open the entire month of April
Contact Information

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