

JOB STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION:
AN ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS
FOR COUNSELLORS IN A COURT-MANDATED
FAMILY CONCILIATION SERVICE

BY

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IN A COURT-MANDATED FAMILY CONCILIATION SERVICE

BY

SANDRA F. DEAN

A practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

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ABSTRACT

Family Conciliation is the social service component of the Court of Queen's Bench, Family Division established in 1984 in Manitoba. The agency provides services to families of divorce where there is a dispute over the on-going care of the children. Interventions also include helping the families to restructure and reduce conflict. Services offered are mediation, court ordered assessment reports, conciliation counselling, children's groups and an access assistance program. Family Conciliation is a province wide service with units in Winnipeg, Brandon, Flin Flon, The Pas, and Thompson.

The objectives of the practicum were to:

- (a) Conduct an analysis of the stresses and sources of satisfaction with the work and work environment. Data and information were obtained through use of standardized questionnaires and meetings with the direct service staff.
- (b) Develop a proposal for the agency which addresses ways to alleviate the salient job stresses and enhance areas of job satisfaction. Staff input was a major influence on this proposal that was intended to be based on their needs and experience as well as be a practical and realistic guide.

Conclusions include that intervention with families in conflict and working within an interdisciplinary but primarily legal milieu pose special issues for the agency staff. The practicum report identifies such issues and provides recommendations to Family Conciliation.

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INTRODUCTION

There are two primary purposes for this practicum. One purpose is to provide an analysis of job stress factors that impact upon the employees providing direct service in a Court mandated Family Conciliation program. This program is legislated by the Federal Queen's Bench Act, 1985. It provides a wide range of services to families in dispute over the care and custody of children following a marital separation or divorce.

The second purpose of this practicum is to furnish an analysis of the contributors to job satisfaction for these same employees of the program, to give a more complete view of the issues pertaining to the work that impacts positively as well as negatively on the counselling staff. What helps to retain professionals in the highly emotional field of family dispute resolution is equally as important as identifying what is most stressful.

As a supervisor within this program, this analysis of both job stress and job satisfaction components will provide me with an opportunity to refine, enhance, and increase my supervisory skills in relation to counsellors increased effectiveness in their work.

The information obtained through this research will furnish the means to develop an agency plan of strategies and interventions aimed at decreasing job stresses and maintaining job satisfaction for counsellors, allowing them to feel

supported and valued as employees. The practicum research will involve feedback from employees through their responses to questionnaires and through their input as a group. Their involvement is a key factor in devising recommendations for agency implementation as they will be sensitive and appropriate to employee needs.

The analysis will also add a dimension of more objective information for the Family Conciliation service when considering the counsellors needs in future program planning.

I initially began my career development in the field of family conflict resolution in 1979 when three unified family Court projects in Canada began. The projects involved a joint effort by the Court and a social service component (mandated by the legislation) to assist families of divorce and separation settle their disputes. I worked with the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan project with four other counselling staff and a Director. We provided various services to divorcing families initiated by referral (or Court Order) from the Court, lawyers, social agencies, and family members. In 1984, I was hired by Family Conciliation in Winnipeg, a new Court mandated service, and became Supervisor of the Winnipeg unit in 1989.

Due to the developing nature of these publicly funded agencies providing assistance to families of divorce, research was conducted into the viability and effectiveness of these programs for clients (Sloan and Greenaway, 1988).

However, what has been missing from the research is an analysis of the job stress contributors and job satisfaction contributors for employees of such a high profile Court mandated service.

The Family Conciliation Program in Winnipeg has been established now for seven years and includes thirteen direct service staff. Family Conciliation has expanded to other provincial cities including Brandon (three direct service staff), The Pas, Flin Flon, and Thompson (each having one direct service staff). It lays out the opportunity and context for conducting this practicum.

Studies of work related stress have more focused on quantitative aspects. My practicum is intended to be more qualitative in order to capture the richness and complexity of the experience of Family Conciliation Counsellors.

To conclude, it is hoped that this practicum will serve to meet the following objectives:

- (a) To determine what counsellors find to be stressful components of their work in family conflict resolution and in their work environment generally.
- (b) To determine what contributes to conciliation counsellors satisfaction with their work and work environment.
- (c) To examine both of the above objectives in order to increase my knowledge base and understanding about such factors that then can be incorporated into supervision planning and program planning.

- (d) To develop recommendations based on the analysis regarding possible interventions to reduce stress and enhance satisfaction that can be implemented by the agency.

Proposed Practicum Outcome

The purpose of this practicum is to gain an increased understanding of job stress and job satisfaction variables for conciliation counsellors. The aggregate data analysis, as well as the responses to open ended questions and the group feedback sessions, are the sources of information that will provide a picture for this writer of the attitudes and perceptions of the work environment at Family Conciliation. Many research studies end solely with the analysis of data, supporting or not supporting the hypothesis. This practicum research intends to go a step beyond analysis and provide realistic, applicable, and obtainable recommendations to agency management and staff which will address ways, strategies, and interventions that could help alleviate job stress and increase satisfaction. Such recommendations seem appropriate in view of the employees input and interest in knowing not only what exists but what can be done about it. It would also be reaffirming for employees to have feedback about their coping strategies already in place to deal with stress issues. For instance, recently a supervisory decision was made to break a larger

peer supervision group into smaller, more intense working groups. The literature review from this proposal suggests that such a measure is a highly effective means to increasing feelings of autonomy and productivity. The data analysis from this research may show a high satisfaction level around colleague support suggesting that continued means of strengthening peer group supervision is a helpful intervention.

The conclusion and recommendations from this practicum can be viewed as a working document for management which has been sensitive to employee needs. Considering the intense type of client work and extensive organizational and systems influences, the proposal is intended to address specific ways to alleviate the stress associated with this. For instance, a recommendation to management that counsellor's working in teams of two should be acceptable in a percentage of cases may address the stress associated with working with highly volatile clients.

Should it be determined that there is interference or influence from outside systems, a recommendation may be that management take a more active role in education and dealing with these outside systems. This action would protect employees time and allow them to focus on the client system solely.

The recommendations derived from this practicum research will provide an opportunity for management and

counsellors to work together in making the agency a healthier and supportive place of work.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

A national United States study conducted by S. Jayaratne and W. Chess (1984) into levels of job satisfaction, burnout and turn-over among child welfare, community mental health, and family service workers suggest that a universal approach aimed at increasing job satisfaction and reducing stress is likely to be of minimal value. It suggests that interventions must be conducted within each setting and must attend to the idiosyncrasies of each group. Family Conciliation, with a service guideline most similar to Child and Family Services, is still very unique in its role and relationship with the Court and legal disciplines, and this further warrants an assessment of the special forces that impact on the work and environment for the employees.

As indicated by the literature review I conducted, information on job stress and job satisfaction for human service providers is extensive and often focused on child welfare workers. Studies related specifically to family conflict resolution services is limited. However, considering the mandate of Child and Family Services in Manitoba and the mandate of Family Conciliation, it could be concluded that parallels exist.

Both services share the guiding principle in the legislation of "protecting the best interests of the child" and the workers are mandated to "investigate matters of the family to determine if the needs of the children are being

adequately met (Child and Family Services Act, 1985; Queen's Bench Act, 1985). How each service carries out its mandate and the extent of authority is different, with Family Conciliation's program providing a wide range of services to divorcing and separating parents and their children, whereas Child and Family Services have a greater active authority in protecting children, and offer a wide range of services to families in assurance of this.

As a result of their similar objectives, i.e. the best interest of the child and their work with troubled families, it is this writer's opinion that the stressors and indicators of job satisfaction would be similar. As such, I feel the literature review, as relates to other human service fields, particularly child welfare, offers information on job stress and job satisfaction that is hypothesized to be transferable to employees of Family Conciliation and its conflict resolution work.

The following literature review has been divided into four areas of examination. It begins by providing an overview of job stress in the helping profession. The next category is that of job satisfaction. The review then examines some special issues related to work in the area of conflict resolution with families and lastly, strategies for prevention and intervention of job stress are addressed.

JOB STRESS IN THE HELPING PROFESSION

Job related stress factors and their consequences for employees is not a newly examined issue. Hans Selye (1956) introduced the stress syndrome and its three stages of development: the alarm reaction, the stage of resistance and the stage of exhaustion. He describes stress generally as not a tangible entity but an abstraction, and that it exists insofar as the changes it produces can be measured. He also identifies that stress can be positive "eustress" and harmful stress is referred to as "distress" (Selye, 1956).

Therefore, stress can be viewed by an individual to be a challenge or a threat. It can contribute to personal growth and achievement as well as productivity if it is channelled appropriately (Maples, 1980).

Many authors and researchers have examined stress in various types of work environments. Caplan (1975) described stress in the work setting as any characteristic or feature of the job environment which poses a threat to the individual.

Christina Maslach (1982) has contributed a significant amount of research on burnout which is seen to be the end consequence of extreme stress. She views involvement with people as a major source of stress for professional helpers suggesting that the very structure of the helping relationship promotes and maintains a negative view of people. Added to this, major contributors to stress for helpers are:

- (1) A tendency to focus on problems of clients rather than clients' health.
- (2) A lack of positive feedback accompanied by frequent blame if errors are made.
- (3) The levels of emotional stress of clients who are in crisis or perhaps are physically or verbally abusive toward the professional cause feelings of helplessness and vulnerability in the helper.
- (4) The limited possibility of change or improvement and the limited responsiveness to the professional's attempts at encouraging change.
- (5) The "likableness" of the client and how this might intrude on the helping relationship.
- (6) The implicit and explicit rules that govern the contact between people often change and are difficult to clarify.
- (7) The personal relevance of the problem to the professional.
- (8) The professional helper getting involved at a personal level with the emotions and these feelings becoming stressful.

Emotional exhaustion (the depletion of emotional resources), reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization are symptomatic of extreme stress and occur primarily among employees who do people-work of some kind. Research in the area of burnout and stress focus on people oriented occupations, as it is these groups (eg. social

services, medicine, criminal justice) that express most concern about it (Maslach, Florian, 1988).

In the job setting, Maslach (1982) found that caseload size and demand are stress factors. Professional helpers can feel out of control and overwhelmed by their caseloads along with feeling trapped by their jobs. She found that emotional support from colleagues was a major subscriber to job satisfaction amongst helpers.

External stimuli including the organizations rigid rules (Maslach, 1982), change and technical progress and workplace evaluations (McLean's, 1979) add to the environmental conditions that place stress on individuals.

External factors are viewed in the literature as precipitators of job stress and are pervasive. What is of greater significance is the susceptibility and vulnerability of the worker. This determines the extent to which job stress is felt (McLean, 1979).

Personality characteristics of helping professionals play a major role in how professionals view the events that happen to them. Stress has been viewed as a reaction to conflict between an individual's internal world and reality (P. Evans, 1986). Cherness and Krantz (1963) argue that providing an answer to "why," that is, having a belief system that is based on reality and provides meaning to this reality, can be preventative to experiences of stress. They suggest that ideology alleviates burnout by reducing the ambiguity and

internal conflict inherent in human service work and provides a buffer against stress.

Maslach (1982) also does not overlook personality characteristics that people bring with them to the jobs, sighting unresolved past issues as one potential predictor of vulnerability to stress. Studies have found that helping professionals generally have unhappier-than-usual childhoods, and although their experience adds to their capacity to help others it also renders the helpers vulnerable to the stress of work (Evans, 1986). McLean (1979) adds to this list regarding worker's susceptibility by considering the helper's age, i.e. young with limited experience; personal situation (e.g. an unhappy marriage or poor health); and perceptions of the work stress. During difficult economic times when high unemployment and cost of living prevail, the worker can experience even greater feelings of being trapped and overwhelmed by their jobs. How the individual views the events of his work situation is the key to whether the event produces stress for the individual (Meichenbaum, 1983).

All too often however, people are blamed for their dispositional qualities leading to stress, and the social and physical environment are not equally viewed as causal factors. Effects of chronic stress or burnout is reflected in the employee's negative attitude, boredom, apathy, etc. and preventative measures aim at altering the emotional state of the individual. A social learning theory perspective would

equate employee behaviour as a direct function of the work environment that contributes to and maintains stress for the employee (Sowers-Hoag, Thyer B., 1987).

Some confusion does exist as to whether stress and burnout are the same or if they are even related. Both are symptoms of excesses and deficiencies in work tasks as well as in the expectations and ambiguity of the work environment (Walsh, 1987).

In reviewing other stress factors inherent in the helping profession it became clear that it is a commonly understood notion that stress in general can lead to burnout if adaptation to the stress is not achieved. Burnout is described as the breakdown of the psychological defenses that workers used to adapt and cope with intense job related stressors (Raider, 1989). Hence, most of the literature reviewed referred to burnout frequently as the end result of too much stress for the helper. It is to be noted for the purpose of this literature review that stress and burnout are viewed as conditions along the same continuum.

The most common identified stressors leading to burnout include role ambiguity, role conflict and workload. These are defined as follows:

Role ambiguity stems from the worker having poorly defined tasks or tasks that are defined in such broad terms that they are subject to interpretation and lack of clarity (Greenberg, 1980). Clear information regarding expectations

of the worker's role as well as how to carry out these expectations contribute to role clarity, therefore good communication from management is a necessary ingredient (Boyd and Pasley, 1989).

Role conflict occurs for workers when there is a discrepancy between their expectations regarding their role and the agency's expectations. Workers can be expected to conform to a number of expectations simultaneously that are inconsistent, contradictory, and mutually exclusive (Greenberg, 1980). Conflicting goals of the organization verses workers objectives and resource restraints produce an alienating work environment (MacKenzie, 1989).

The concepts of role ambiguity and role conflict suggests that role stress results from ambiguous expectations by co-workers and management. It can decrease job satisfaction and ineffective coping mechanisms (Boyd and Pasley, 1989).

Workload overload is common to many professions. It refers to working excessive hours, having too many tasks, and making hurried decisions. Irregularity of workload is also stress producing (Greenberg, 1980). The caseload size and the nature of its demands can be overwhelming and contribute to unpredictable expectations and demands (Maslach, 1982). It has been theoretically argued that increased workload and related job stress limits front line workers discretion and control over work, and this coupled with a lack of

bureaucratic supports, including inadequate resources and conflicting goals, leads to increased feelings of job alienation. In an effort to maintain a consistent level of job spirit, staff tend to adopt lower expectations for themselves and incorporate time-saving stereotypic behaviours towards clients (MacKenzie, 1989).

Emotional drain is a result of working with intense client populations where interaction with clientele is characterized by repeated arousal. Symptoms such as intense stimulation, anxiety, and irritability become necessary for the worker to manage (Raider, 1989). Constant interaction with clients, peers, and others involved in the human service profession is a natural consequence of the work, and results in workers dealing with their own values and biases and consciously being aware of how these affect one's decisions and the quality of service (Greenberg, 1980). Conclusions drawn in some research suggest that extreme stress affects clinical practice with practitioners having more negative impressions of their clients both interpersonally and intellectually (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980) (Corcoran, 1986).

Another common dilemma facing social agencies and is a strong contributor to stress is a lack of measurement for outcome of the service provided (Raider, 1989). In the absence of objective measurements for success, workers face unrealistic goals and criteria for client treatment outcomes.

Workers in social agencies also face pressures to

comply with excessive rules, regulations, and bureaucratic procedures (Raider, 1989). Policies, procedures, and standards directly affect the day to day functioning of workers, yet these workers are often only minimally involved in their planning and development (Greenberg, 1980).

In a study on job stress conducted by Gibson et al (1989) involving 176 social workers, seventy percent of these professionals found their career to be satisfying or very satisfying. The most commonly cited stressors included lack of time to fulfill duties, scarcity of resources, and meeting deadlines. The major consequence of these stressors were feelings of lack of personal accomplishment of professional objectives. Although these social workers reported a high level of job satisfaction they were also experiencing considerable stress (Gibson et al, 1989). This would indicate that job stress and job satisfaction are not synonymous.

Not overlooked by the literature is the impact of home and family life on employees. Often employees must balance their professional dedication with dedication to their family (Greenberg, 1980). The impact of the employee's job on family life and the impact of family life on the employee's job is considered to be complex. Studies have investigated whether working outside the home has a positive or negative effect on a woman's self-esteem, marital satisfaction and parenting role. Alternately, research has examined whether the stress of family life has an impact on job satisfaction

and performance (Kline and Cowan, 1988). There is some speculation that high divorce rates and dysfunctional families are symptomatic of job stress (Jayaratne, Chess and Kunkel, 1986) but the authors Kline and Cowan (1988) suggest that the combined factors of employment and home life and how they influence feelings of stress and satisfaction (at work or home) is an under-researched area.

It is hypothesized that these preceding stress factors identified in the literature review will be factors also identified by the counsellors providing conflict resolution services to families of divorce. Due to the unique nature of the Family Conciliation Counsellors work it is also hypothesized that there will be other stressors identified that are unique to this field of human service.

JOB SATISFACTION IN THE HELPING PROFESSION

Along with an analysis of job stress for workers in the human service field it is equally as important to examine the sources of satisfaction for these employees in relation to their work. It has been concluded that job satisfaction is a major influence for employees remaining in the field (Smith, 1976).

It is generally recognized that job stress and job satisfaction are not synonymous factors, but correlations exist. For example, job stress is negatively associated with job satisfaction as identified by B. McKenzie (1989) in his

study of the impact a large organizational restructuring had upon child welfare workers in Manitoba.

Job satisfaction can be defined as an affective response of the worker to his or her job (Smith, 1976). It is considered to be determined by externally-controlled factors including promotion, pay, supervision, working conditions, and personal growth factors that are an intrinsic function of the work itself. Intrinsic factors can include autonomy, sense of learning and accomplishment, and utilization of skills. Some research suggests that the extrinsic aspects of the work more highly effect family life. However, the reverse of this could also be possible in that the family (or spouse's) view of and reaction to the employee's work could also effect the employee's perception of satisfaction with their jobs (Zedeck et al, 1988). The dissatisfied or troubled worker can lead to increases in absenteeism, tardiness, the inability to complete tasks, low morale and more illness. Results of a study done by M. Maynard (1986) show that support networks such as family, friends, and professional support interrelates with job satisfaction and facilitate the overall adjustment and well-being of the worker.

The review of the literature concerning research on job stress found that child welfare workers were often a source of study suggesting that child welfare workers work under extreme stress and suffer from its consequences. In contrast there is less information on conditions experienced

by other mental health practitioners and whether the stresses and job satisfaction influences are dissimilar to child welfare work (Jayaratne and Chess, 1984)

However, D. Vinokur-Kaplan (1991), in a national survey of social workers who had been in child welfare practice for one year, found that the majority (66%) were quite satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. This author emphasized the need to examine factors that attract and retain workers in order for agencies to be more effective in recruiting and retaining professionals. She acknowledges how research that focuses on the high levels of stress and turnover among social workers in child welfare practice can diminish the ability to attract new professionals. Factors examined in terms of the influence on the workers' satisfaction with their work environment included salary, work with clients, work conditions, feelings of accomplishment, and work with colleagues. Work with clients and colleagues were factors found to contribute most frequently to job satisfaction. Associated more frequently with job dissatisfaction were dissatisfaction with salary and with feelings of accomplishment.

Jayaratne and Chess (1984) studied job satisfaction and burnout among three groups involving workers in the family service field, community mental health field and child welfare. They found that the best predictor of job satisfaction for all three settings was promotional

opportunities. The other indicators of job satisfaction varied in the three settings suggesting that each field of practice differs. A universal approach aimed at reducing job stress or increasing job satisfaction would therefore be inefficient because each area of practice has its own idiosyncrasies to consider.

In assessing the job satisfaction influences for conciliation counsellors, literature suggests that a sense of accomplishment and promotional opportunities are major contributors to satisfaction for other human service providers.

P. Smith (1976) maintains that the study of job satisfaction in an organization can be viewed as an end in itself as it can be indicative of the success of management as well as a desirable goal of management. The Cornell Studies of Job Satisfaction (Appendix B) initiated in 1959 were developed to study job satisfaction among a representative cross section of workers in the United States. The goal of the study was to relate job satisfaction to measurable company and community characteristics and to the characteristics of the individual worker (Smith, 1976).

Satisfaction, particularly with the communication and relationships within an organization, are seen to bond the individual's commitment to the organization. Commitment involves a belief in an acceptance of the goals of the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the

organization, and contributes to decreased turnover (Kydd et al, 1990).

Employee satisfaction with their work and employee morale should help gauge selection, training and supervisory programs in organizations (Brayfield and Roth, 1951). These authors relate job satisfaction to an individual's attitude towards his or her work and this definition helped create the Index of Job Satisfaction (Appendix A) that measures employees' attitudes about their work and will be used as a piece of analysis in this practicum.

SPECIAL ISSUES FOR CONCILIATION COUNSELLORS

The field of family conflict resolution is proposed to face challenges and stressors associated with the management of inter-human conflict that is permeated with dealing with other people's emotions and anger.

It is concluded that the reduction of inter-parental strife is most fair for the child in the long run in light of the parents divorce. Fairness and feasibility of plans must exist for the family system rather than one individual (Saposnek, 1985). The conciliation counsellors role and function exists to assist in reducing the conflict and strife between parents. A highly visible and utilized service they offer as a means to reduce conflict is mediation.

Mediation is defined as a dispute resolution procedure where a third party attempts to assist two or more

disputants in reaching agreement (Ross, Conclon and Lind, 1990). It has also been defined more simply as the management of the people's negotiations (Haynes, 1986).

Stress is seen as a necessary component in mediation as it is a high motivator for the parties to settle. For those providing the mediation the atmosphere of stress also creates certain stresses for the worker to deal with. These include:

- (1) Being confounded by issues presented by the parties.
- (2) Being challenged on credibility and threats to it.
- (3) Dealing with the potential of breakdown in negotiations.
- (4) Receiving blame for unsuccessful mediation or being unable to keep the parties away from expressing hostilities.
- (5) Dealing with the potential for violence (directed at the worker or between the parties).
- (6) Being unable to provide order to the controversy.
- (7) Dealing with deadlocks or impasses that stall negotiations.

(Kirkpatrick, 1984)

Mandated family dispute services face additional challenges and stressors associated with the fact that their clients are often less voluntary and more seriously entrenched in bitter conflict as a result of legal and Court action having taken place. Mediation clients can be more volatile

even though the mediation is still considered a voluntary method of settlement. However, another major component of the conciliation counsellors work is Court ordered family assessments where the parties are expected to participate. Since the Court must make a decision on the on-going custodial arrangement for the children involved, they often require the comprehensive family assessment. The mandated service therefore, deals with serious problems as identified by Baker-Jackson, Hovsepian and Terrick (1984) including:

- (1) Dealing with hostile, angry clients.
- (2) Dealing with parent's unresolved marital conflict and negative intimacy.
- (3) Needing to appear neutral and not taking sides.
- (4) Dealing with extreme values, religious, and parenting differences.
- (5) Dealing with allegations of sexual and physical abuse of children as well as allegations of alcohol and drug abuse by one or both parties.
- (6) Deciding when supervision might be indicated to ensure children's safety.
- (7) Dealing with confidentiality (in mediation) and sensitive issues in a milieu of other systems being involved, i.e. lawyers and the Court.

Long hours of dealing with intense conflict situations is an inherent stress of the job for conciliation

counsellors which has not been readily addressed (Baker, Jackson, Hovsepian and Terrick, 1984). The literature generally acknowledges the types of situations these counsellors must deal with and then focuses on the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to intervene effectively (Saposnek, 1985).

Many levels of skill are seen as essential to providing good service, and success depends as much on the counsellor's ability to be sensitive to and deal appropriately with emotional dynamics of the parties than in their technical competency (Brown, E., 1987).

The practitioners must deal with a complexity of tasks encountered daily including work with all age groups (eg. adolescence, children and adults), various special needs, and clients coming from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. A study conducted by D. Vinokur-Kaplan and A. Hartman (1986) of service providers in child welfare practice identify a similar range of activities that child welfare workers must provide. They suggest that the work demands that practitioners have a broad background of education and experience in order for practitioners to deal with the high stress involved in the work (Vinokur-Kaplan, Hartman, 1986). Since the tasks of Family Conciliation counsellors demand similar knowledge, their on-going education and skill-development could be viewed as important to coping with job stress.

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Stress management has been a widely covered topic for over a decade now, with the research spanning primarily psychology and psychiatry disciplines that addresses clinical issues facing individuals and groups under stress (Meichenbaum and Jaremko, 1983). These authors provide a thorough survey of the literature that speaks to how complex and multi-faceted interventions for stress can be, including training programs and group work on cognitive reorganization.

On the less complex side of formulas for stress reduction are coping mechanisms that emphasize personal awareness and personal strategies including physical activity, relaxation techniques, changing attitudes or changing elements of the situation that are causing stress (Meichenbaum, 1983).

In their study of the necessary attributes for child welfare workers, D. Vinokur-Kaplan and A. Hartman (1986) postulate that certain routine job tasks and unpredictable emergencies detract from the workers being able to develop resources for clients and their own professional development. These functions would contribute to more organized, time saving work, better service, improved skills and consequent possible reduction of job stress. Their findings point to the importance of the organization reviewing the time and task allocations of workers, i.e. ways to restructure jobs, reallocate some tasks (eg. administrative paperwork) and facilitate the completion of routine tasks (eg. computerized

information systems).

The literature regarding the alleviation of stress for human service workers primarily addresses how social support is the buffer to stress. It is hypothesized that support from others may be related to how effectively individuals cope with stress (Caplan, 1974; Cobb, 1976).

Interventions aimed towards facilitating the development of social support systems could represent an important direction within the human service field for promoting physical and mental health with implications for both prevention and treatment (Schradel and Dougher, 1985).

In attempting to find a definition for social support there seem to be no complete, precise, and consensually agreed upon definition. Caplan (1974) emphasizes emotional support is when the significant others help the individual mobilize his psychological resources and master his emotional burdens; they share his tasks, and they supply him with extra supplies of money, materials, tools, skill, and cognitive guidance to improve his handling of his situation.

Other essential features of emotional support are in providing informational feedback and the provision of social relationships which supply attachment, social integration, opportunity for nurturing others, reassurances of worth, a sense of reliable alliance, and the obtaining of guidance (Schradel and Dougher, 1985).

Studies have shown that work stress is related to

high levels of psychological strain and limited social support from co-workers. Methods suggested to deal with work stress include emotional support, supervisor feedback, and organizational clarification (Himle, Jayaratne and Thyness, 1989). Although research has shown that excessive workload is significantly related to high levels of stress for workers and consequently leads to burnout, some researchers argue that social workers who experience emotional and practical support are more able to endure demanding workloads (Koeske and Koeske, 1989). These researchers hypothesize that social support and personal accomplishment act as buffers against stress. Their study evaluates the notion that stress is postulated to be the mechanism by which work demands place unsupported and ineffectual social workers at risk for burnout.

In a three year demonstration project conducted by T. Carrilio and D. Eisenberg (1984) involving the use of peer support to deal with social worker morale problems, it was found that the use of teams benefited morale and positively affected service delivery to elderly clients. Team workers were responsible for their own organizational autonomy and it was found that team staff felt more in control of their caseloads, had more peer support, felt less isolated and alienated as they could rely on help from co-workers to deal with difficult issues and cases. Team members showed enhanced morale compared to the control group, who worked individually

and were less in control of their workload. Team strengths included a quicker response to crisis, fewer institutionalized clients, individual members were utilized more wisely, and there was a sense of autonomy and auxiliary staff were more involved.

Findings in other studies suggest that contact with people is an important element in the employee's experience of satisfaction with the job and commitment to it. People can be a major source of distress, frustration, and conflict in direct-service professions, and negative interpersonal experiences have an equal although reverse impact on workers as opposed to satisfying and rewarding contact (Gaines & Jermier, 1983; Leiter and Maslach, 1986).

Social support is derived from both colleagues and supervisors, two different types of job contacts. For instance, negative contact with supervisors is associated with organizational stress and role conflict. Contacts with supervisors that are stressful increase the workers feelings of emotional exhaustion. However, with frequent positive and supportive contact with peers this emotional exhaustion can be decelerated (but not necessarily eliminated) (Leiter and Maslach, 1986).

The nature of peer support, as well, effects workers. The availability of a confidant and the opportunity for positive evaluation are important attributes of a peer relationship. This may therefore show that job related stress

is affected by social support but, it varies as to whether the strongest effect is derived from colleagues or supervisors (Henderson & Argyle, 1984).

An hypothesis that can be taken from the studies on social support and its effect on human service providers is that support from peers and supervisors has a major impact on lowering the negative effect of stress on workers, allowing them to be more effective and find their work more satisfying.

When a work environment emphasizes relationship dimensions, people working in the setting are more satisfied (Moos, 1987). This author promotes that positive relationships foster commitment and motivation, reduce absenteeism and staff leaving, and generally make the work setting more stable.

The Work Environment Scale (WES) measures how the social climate of an organization influences the employees. The scales, developed by R. Moos (1985), can identify settings that need improvement, pinpoint the problem areas, helping to make and evaluate changes. A process which is seen to be successful in doing this include assessing the social climate, giving feedback to the participants, planning and implementing change, then reassessing the setting. This approach to planning and monitoring change is seen to have the benefits of helping employees express their views in a comfortable way, and helps them understand their environment better. It also assists supervisors and managers to create a supportive

environment, emphasizing both personal growth and an organized work setting. Such a process also increases involvement of employees, encouraging working together to improve the work environment.

CONCLUSION OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this practicum is to provide an assessment of what contributes to job satisfaction and job stress for conciliation counsellors to enhance the framework of supervision and agency planning. The literature review has focused on key elements that cause job stress in human service practitioners, and then more specifically those involved in conflict resolution. The theme in the literature review suggests that all human service providers must deal with client's emotions and contend with role conflict, role ambiguity, and other work environment stresses. It was assumed that conciliation counsellors will address many of the same issues and identify other stressors more uniquely associated with the conflict resolution work.

Job satisfaction, according to the literature is found by practitioners to be primarily in their work with clients, and in promotional opportunities within their agency setting. However, the literature tends to focus more on stressors and stress management. It might be concluded that if certain stresses were dealt with that practitioners would be more satisfied with their work.

CHAPTER TWO

INTERVENTION

THE SETTING

The setting for this practicum is Family Conciliation. It is the social service component of the Family Division, Court of Queen's Bench, Manitoba but operates under the auspices of the Manitoba Department of Family Services. The legislation that enables conciliation counsellors to act on behalf of the Court in their role of mediator and family evaluator is the Court of Queen's Bench Act of 1984 concerning the jurisdiction of the Family Division:

"Referral to Mediator:

47(1) Where a Judge or Master is of the opinion that an effort should be made to resolve an issue otherwise than at a formal trial, the Judge or Master may, at any stage of the proceeding, refer the issue to a mediator.

47(2) A mediator to whom an issue is referred under subsection (1) shall attempt to resolve the issue."

"Family Evaluator:

49(1) Where a Judge or Master is of the opinion that a report of a family evaluator is required at a hearing with respect to custody, access, or a related family matter, the Judge or Master may by order or appoint a family evaluator."

"Duty of Family Evaluator:

49(2) A family evaluator appointed under (1) shall interview the parties and such other persons as may be

appropriate and shall provide to the Court a report containing information and opinion relevant to custody, access, or a related family matter that is an issue in the proceeding..."

(Court of Queen's Bench S.M., 1988-89, C4-Chap. C280)

Since Family Conciliation operates within the Department of Family Services it also provides a public service to families of divorce. These services include:

- (1) Mediation: This service consumes approximately 45% of the conciliation counsellor's caseload. It has been the service primarily addressed in the literature. It's more broad definition is that it is a structured process within which an objective third party (the mediator) acts as a facilitator with parents, to assist them in identifying the on-going parenting issues in dispute, to negotiate and to arrive at an effective agreement which is in the best interests of the family.
- (2) Conciliation Counselling: This is a short term, goal oriented counselling service for individuals, couples and families that is aimed at helping people make decisions about the marital separation and the resulting reorganization of the family.
- (3) Information and Referral: This service is provided on a daily rotation basis by each counsellor and is a means to screen for potential family conciliation clients or to

discuss with the client alternate methods or services which may be appropriate.

Conciliation counselling and intake (information and referral) duties consist of 20% of the conciliation counsellors workload.

- (4) Court Ordered Assessments: This is a service provided only on order from the Court. It is a process of gathering information and formulating a professional opinion regarding what is in the best interests of the children in terms of their on-going care after a separation or divorce.

Referrals to Family Conciliation are made by lawyers (39%), the Court (21%), self (36%) and others (including external agencies) (4%). (Based on the 1988-89 statistical annual review of the agency.)

As indicated in the introduction there are 13 direct service staff in the Winnipeg Family Conciliation unit and one staff position in each of Flin Flon, Thompson, and The Pas (however, currently only Thompson has a staff person while the other two were vacant positions), and three direct service staff in Brandon. This provided a total of seventeen counsellors to contribute to the analysis. Of this seventeen, there were five males and twelve females, ranging in ages from

26 years to 53 years. Their experience in the social service field ranged from five to 26 years.

SUPERVISION:

Professor Ruth Rachlis, my practicum advisor, was available for consultations in relation to the procedure and progress of the practicum. This practicum has been approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister and the agency Director. Members of my practicum committee are Ruth Rachlis, M.S.W. Faculty of Social Work, Dr. Harvy Frankel, Faculty of Social Work and Dale MacKenzie, M.S.W.

PROCEDURE:

The procedure involved in this practicum included the following:

- (a) An introduction to the practicum, its objectives and goals, was done by means of an individual interview with each direct service staff. The purpose of this interview was not only in providing information but addressing any questions the staff had in how the information would be utilized. The cooperation of staff in completing questionnaires about their perceptions of their work environment was viewed by this writer as being contingent upon the trust and openness in regards to the use of the information. Following this initial interview the questionnaire package was provided with a stamped

addressed envelope.

- (b) There was five scales administered (described under methodology). These scales include the Brayfield and Roth (1951) Index of Job Satisfaction (Appendix A); the Cornell Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Appendix B (Smith, 1976); the Work Environment Scale both the Real Form (Form R) and the Ideal Form (Form I) (Appendix C) (Moos, 1987) and the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (Crowne, Marlowe, 1964) (Appendix D).

In addition to the scales a list of open ended questions were provided that were intended to capture any special issues counsellors had in relation to perceptions of job stress and job satisfaction (Appendix E).

- (c) Upon completion of the analysis of the above scales feedback meetings were held with the staff as a group to not only provide information about the analysis, but to focus on group participation in developing ideas pertaining to strategies that could be utilized to enhance and reinforce job satisfaction as well as tools for decreasing areas of stress.

In concluding the practicum I planned to develop directions that are feasible for supervisory and agency planning based on the analysis, in addition to employee participation and my own interpretation of both of these sources of information.

METHODOLOGY:

The quantitative Index of Job Satisfaction (Brayfield and Roth, 1951) is one measurement of job satisfaction used (Appendix A). This index refers to "overall" job satisfaction rather than specific aspects which the other measurements should address.

The Index of Job Satisfaction is sensitive to variations in attitude permitting quantification of expression about the job in general. The index was developed by the authors based on a working approach to it that assumed job satisfaction could be inferred from the individual's attitude towards his or her work.

Other attitude scaling techniques widely used were those of Thurstone (1929) and Likert (1934). The Index of Job Satisfaction borrows from both. Thurstone eliminated items referring to specific aspects of the job since an "overall" attitudinal factor was desired; thus items regarding pay, working conditions, etc. were eliminated. (However, for the purpose of this practicum, I believe an overall attitude about the job needed to be accompanied by other measurements that can address the specific reasons that relate to the general level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.)

The Index of Job Satisfaction uses the Likert method of scoring consisting of five categories of agreement to disagreement (Likert, 1934).

The 18 items were selected so that the satisfied end

of the scale is indicated by strongly agree and agree and the other half of the items is indicated by strongly disagree and disagree. Undecided is a neutral response.

The scoring weights for each item range from 1 to 5 and the range of possible total scores is between 18 to 90, with the undecided or neutral point at 54. Therefore, a low total score would represent the dissatisfied end of the scale and a high total score the satisfied end. The odd-even product moment reliability computed for a sample administered this scale was .77 which was corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula to .87.

The scale administered to conciliation counsellors yielded a range of job satisfaction scores from which the mean and standard deviation were obtained.

Following an analysis of the general level of job satisfaction of the employees, the subsequent scales were expected to show what contributes to the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction as demonstrated by the Index of Job Satisfaction.

The Cornell Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed through the Cornell studies of job satisfaction initiated in 1959, had a goal of relating job satisfaction to measurable organization and community characteristics and to characteristics of the individual worker. The measurement was created on the rationale that job satisfaction is a desirable goal of management and a standard by which to judge good

management practices and policies (Appendix B).

As well, the measures are considered to be a precondition for the testing of various general theories of attitude, i.e. those specifically concerned with factors that produce satisfaction and the factors correlated with it such as community, organization and individual characteristics.

The measure takes into account indiscriminately different aspects of the work situation (e.g. the work itself, supervision, pay, co-workers and so forth) which aims at identifying the relationships between different aspects of the job situation and the individual and organizational characteristics.

The measure has demonstrated reliability both internal consistency and stability over time with the same individual. The internal consistency reliabilities of the five JDI sub-scales range from .80 to .88. The scale is also considered valid.

The JDI measures five areas of job satisfaction:

- (1) Satisfaction with work.
- (2) Satisfaction with pay.
- (3) Satisfaction with opportunities for promotion.
- (4) Satisfaction with supervision.
- (5) Satisfaction with co-workers.

The pay and promotion scales include nine items each and the work, supervision and co-workers scales include eighteen items each.

Adjectives or short phrases accompany each area with a blank to be used for the answer Y(yes) or N(no). The participant is asked to indicate how well the phrase describes his job. If he cannot decide a "?" can be used.

The JDI yields five scores, one for each scale.

These scores are obtained by adding up the number of responses within each scale. About half the items chosen for each scale are positive, so that a "Y" response would indicate satisfaction, and about half are negative so that an "N" response would indicate dissatisfaction. [Thus a person who put a "Y" before every item would not have a high (satisfied) score].

The JDI, from its use in other studies, yields measures of satisfaction with five different aspects of jobs which are discriminately different from each other; the average correlation between the different scales is approximately .37 which is low enough to indicate a great deal of discrimination among the five areas (Smith, 1976).

The environment scales developed by Paul M. Insel and Moos (1987) help understand the basic dimensions of social settings, how people are influenced by them, and how people adapt to them. With this knowledge better consultation and intervention programs can be planned.

The work environment scale (WES) (Appendix C) assesses the social climate or "personality" of the work setting. It is based on a principle that each employee in the work setting has an image or perception of it, and this impression has a strong influence on the employee. The WES has ten subscales which are divided into the following sets:

- (1) The Relationship Dimension is measured by the Involvement, Peer Cohesion and Supervisor Support subscales which assess the extent to which employees are friendly and support each other and the extent to which management encourages this.
- (2) The Personal Growth Dimension is measured by Autonomy, Task Orientation and Work Pressure subscales. They assess the extent to which employees are encouraged to make their own decisions and if work and time pressures are prevalent.
- (3) The System Maintenance and System Change Dimensions are measured by Clarity, Control, Innovation and Physical Comfort subscales. These assess the extent to which employees know what to expect in their daily routines and how clear policies are communicated. It also assesses the extent to which management uses rules and pressures to keep employees under control as well as the emphasis there is on change, variety, and new ideas. The

employee's perception of the comfort and pleasantness of the physical surroundings is also assessed.

The 90-item WES, to which employees indicate a true or false to each statement, were given to each conciliation counsellor for completion.

The development of the WES, according to its author, was based on several methods including constructing items through structured interviews with employees in different work settings. Other social climate scales had items which were also adapted.

Each item on the scale has a focus on an aspect of the work setting that identifies an emphasis on interpersonal relationships, areas of personal growth, and on the organizational structure. For example, an emphasis on work pressure is determined by items such as "there always seems to be an urgency about everything" or "there is constant pressure to keep working."

Both the Real Form and the Ideal Form (Appendix C) were provided to participants to allow there to be a comparison between how the employees view their current environment and what they consider to be a preferred environment. From this comparison an index can be obtained on how well the current environment matches the preferred environment, providing a more complete picture of the setting and better insight into problem areas.

Scoring of the WES forms involves counting the number of true responses for each subscale. The subscales are I (Involvement); PC (Peer Cohesion); SS (Supervisory Support); A (Autonomy); TO (Task Orientation); WP (Work Pressure); C (Clarity); CTL (Control); INN (Innovation); COM (Physical Comfort).

An average score was calculated for all employees for each subscale, providing a basis for achieving standard scores and a means for comparison of the WES Real and Ideal Scales.

The WES Interpretive Report Form allows for comparison of the scores to work groups generally (Appendix J), e.g. on WP (Work Pressure) scores between 0-2 indicate below average degree of work pressure and time urgency in the job milieu, whereas scores between 7-9 indicate a considerably above average degree of work pressure and urgency about everything.

The WES was a more specific means to assess both the negative and positive aspects of the work environment for Family Conciliation counsellors. This formed the rationale for their indications of level of general satisfaction with their work.

The authors of the scale have used both conceptual and empirical methods to develop them. The empirical criteria met include the following:

- "(a) To have a reasonable response distribution, that is, not to be answered true or false by more than 80 percent of the respondents.
- (b) To discriminate significantly among settings.
- (c) To be relatively free of social desirability response set.
- (d) To be positively correlated with other items on its dimension.
- (e) To correlate more highly with its dimension than with any other dimension.
(Moos, 1987, pp.27)"

The Work Environment Scale test-retest reliabilities are all in an acceptable range, varying from a low of .69 for Clarity to a high of .83 for Involvement.

A measure of response distortion due to social desirability influences was utilized. The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability scale has had considerable use in research and is considered to be a reliable measure of whether or not a respondent's responses are being influenced by their belief of what a "good answer" is (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) (Crowne-Marlowe, 1964) (Appendix D).

To determine the reliability of the MCSDS, internal consistency and test-retest coefficients were obtained by it's authors on a group of fifty-seven subjects, who took the scale on two occasions separated by one month intervals. The internal consistency coefficient (Kuder-Richardson) for the form was .88. The test-retest correlation was .88, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability.

The open ended structure questions of the additional

comments section of the questionnaire package (Appendix E) is designed to allow conciliation counsellors to address their perceptions of the speciality of their work as a Court mandated family service agency. The questions are designed to direct comments about the experience with stress related to conflict resolution work. The assessment of the responses will be a qualitative means of capturing special themes and experiences of the counsellors. These themes will be addressed also in the group meeting for feedback, and will be utilized generally in the concluding proposal for agency directions.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the factors contributing to job stress as well as job satisfaction includes essentially two sources of data; the responses to the questionnaires and group meetings with conciliation counsellors. As described in the methodology, the questionnaires were distributed to seventeen conciliation counsellors once the individual interviews for the purpose of introducing the practicum had occurred. The interviews with staff prior to them receiving the questionnaires took approximately one half hour to complete. A preview of the purpose and intended outcome was discussed with them as well as a brief description of the questionnaires. Questions or concerns from staff were fielded with only one concern expressed by an individual. It related to the confidentiality of the "additional comments" questionnaire. A suggestion arose which was accepted pertaining to how individual respondent's handwriting styles could not be identified. It was specifically suggested that comments be typed.

The primary responses received from staff were positive in that they felt that a better understanding of stress factors on their job, as well as identifying areas of satisfaction, would be a useful process for them. Interest and commitment to the process was evident by the high response rate. Of the seventeen questionnaires distributed, fifteen were returned completed.

The analysis which follows includes the findings of each questionnaire, the Job Questionnaire, The Cornell Job Descriptive Index, the Work Environment Scale (Real and Ideal Forms), the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, and a summary of comments derived from the structured questionnaire.

The analysis of the questionnaires and the resulting recommendations would not have been complete without the group meetings held with staff. At these meetings the findings were discussed. The analysis then provided the forum and opportunity to begin a problem-solving process, the outcome being some feasible recommendations that the agency could utilize.

There were two one and one half hour meetings, one week apart, held with the Winnipeg unit staff and one three hour meeting held with the Brandon unit. (The one other regional staff provided with a questionnaire package was on leave of absence during the time frame the group meetings were being held.)

In between these meetings and prior to the meeting with Brandon, a written summary of questions and ideas arising from the initial Winnipeg meeting was provided to staff, along with some additional ideas of my own for their discussion. For instance, the emotional drain of client work was identified as a major source of stress. Some suggestions included:

- (a) That providing clients feedback on the outcome of Court Ordered Assessments need not be done with particularly angry, abusive clients, and that if interviews are scheduled with potentially angry, volatile clients, that a supervisor be present.
- (b) That on a more regular or routine basis, conciliation counsellors work in teams of two for mediation as well as for Court Ordered Assessments.

There was strong attendance at the group meetings with ten employees present at each Winnipeg unit meeting, and three conciliation counsellors and their supervisor present at the Brandon unit meeting. The higher level of interest, as indicated by the participation and generation of ideas, may have also been influenced by recent stressful experiences of the staff. For instance, within the previous eight months there had been a change in personnel at the director and supervisor levels; staff or program cutbacks were possible in a time of reduced government spending; there was also a shortage of staff and vacant positions existed due to a staffing "freeze."

The agenda for these meetings was designed basically as follows:

- (1) Objectives of the Practicum (Review)
- (2) Job Stress and Job Satisfaction Defined
- (3) Questionnaire Results and Interpretation of Results

- (4) Contributors to Job Satisfaction
- (5) Contributors to Job Stress
- (6) Brainstorming and Discussion

The group sessions with staff members greatly enhanced the analysis and outcome of the practicum. The comments, suggestions, and issues discussed regarding the findings will be addressed within the analysis of each questionnaire, as the staff feedback provided important detail as to the clinical validity of the findings in addition to overall results and recommendations.

Once the proposal was developed a meeting was held with employees in Winnipeg for their further input. (The other units were asked for their written comments). This concluded the analysis for the purpose of the practicum. However, the ground work for changes was established.

THE JOB QUESTIONNAIRE (JQ)

Total possible scores for the JQ range from 18-90. (The higher the score the greater the satisfaction.) The Mean of 58.2 suggests that Family Conciliation employees are moderately satisfied with their jobs. The Mean scores of a comparative group of forty-nine males and forty-two females in a range of occupations was 70.4 with a Standard Deviation of 13.2 (Brayfield & Roth, 1951). T-tests were conducted to compare the Means of Brayfield & Roth's group of ninety-one

individuals from various occupations and the Family Conciliation group. The test revealed a T value of 3.674 with $P < .05$, indicating a significant difference between the smaller group and the larger group. However, another smaller comparative sample group which involved forty individuals employed in occupations more appropriate to their interests. The Mean of this group was 76.9 with a Standard Deviation of 8.6. There was no significant difference between the Family Conciliation group and the comparative group ($T = 1.542$, $P > .05$).

Table 1 presents the Frequencies, Mode, Standard Deviation, and Range of the Family Conciliation groups' responses to the JQ.

The Range of scores (54 to 64) and the Standard Deviation of 2.256 suggests there is little variance in the responses to the questionnaire. Post-questionnaire discussions with the employees indicated that limited variance would be an accurate reflection of the group's homogenous nature and that their attitudes towards their job is similar. For instance, although no one agrees their job is like a hobby to them and they enjoy their leisure time more than their work, they also would generally agree they were not bored with their jobs and liked the work.

Table 1

Job Questionnaire Findings
For Family Conciliation Counsellors
N = 15

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 54 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 56 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 57 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 58 | 5 | 33.3 |
| 59 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 60 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 61 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 64 | 1 | 6.7 |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 58.2 | Standard Deviation 2.256 |
| Mode | 58 | Range 10 |
| Median | 59 | |

Job satisfaction was perceived by several members of the staff who had worked in other social service agencies as being more pronounced at Family Conciliation. In order for job satisfaction to exist the work must be rewarding. It is important for the practitioners to think their intervention is having a positive impact on families.

At this stage of group discussion it was clarified by the group that job satisfaction and job stress are two distinct components of their work. In other words, job stress could be great and there could still be high job satisfaction, a situation that conciliation counsellors feel does apply to them. In other circumstances, job stress could be low but satisfaction high which is likely a more ideal situation for most employees. As well, job satisfaction could be low and

job stress high which would be characteristic of an undesirable work situation.

As addressed in the literature review, the measurement of job satisfaction for employees is an important end in itself, as it is also an indication of whether or not the organization is achieving its goals (Smith, 1976). An assumption that could be made is that highly satisfied employees are more productive, committed, and innovative. In a large bureaucratic structure such as government, the issue of employee job satisfaction would be a difficult focus due to public demands and expectations. Therefore the task of ensuring a work environment produces employee satisfaction becomes that of the program administrators as well as the employees themselves.

THE CORNELL JOB DESCRIPTIVE INDEX (JDI)

This questionnaire is intended to more specifically measure the factors which produce satisfaction including promotion, supervision, and co-workers (Appendix B). High scores on these subscales indicate high job satisfaction. Table 2 identifies the maximum total score that could be obtained on each subscale, the actual Mean score, the associated Standards Deviation, and the percentage of the maximum score that the Mean score represents.

Table 2

Cornell JDI

N=14

| <u>Subscale</u> | <u>Maximum Possible Score</u> | <u>Mean</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>Mode</u> | <u>Range</u> |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| Work | 18 | 12.571 | 1.505 | 70 | 13 | 5(10-15) |
| Pay | 9 | 4.857 | 1.834 | 54 | 6 | 7 (0-7) |
| Promotions | 9 | 2.856 | 1.994 | 21 | 2 | 7 (1-8) |
| Supervision | 18 | 16.286 | 1.816 | 90 | 17 | 7(11-18) |
| People | 18 | 15.643 | 1.737 | 87 | 16 | 6(12-18) |

(Comparative group studies were not found to determine differences between the Family Conciliation groups scores and other work groups. For the purpose of this exploratory research, of greater interest is what the subscale scores indicate about the nature of the group under study.)

Correlations were done between the Job Questionnaire and each of the five subscales of the Cornell JDI. Several measures were obtained including Kendall's Tau C., Gama and Pearson's R. Only Pearson's R. showed values approaching significance between the JQ and Cornell JDI work and supervision subscales. The more conservative measures of correlation were not close to significance.

The scores for the JDI suggest that Family Conciliation counsellors are more satisfied with supervision and their co-workers, moderately satisfied with the work and pay level, and not satisfied with the potential for promotion in their workplace. There is a greater variance in individual scores for the pay and promotion subscales, showing some

diversity within the group on their feelings of satisfaction with these. Group discussion identified that the level of satisfaction with pay could be based on the economic realities of personal situations. As well there was general agreement that direct-service practitioner's salaries within government are believed to be consistently lower than other professionals working with the same client population (eg. lawyers and clinical psychologists).

The variance in satisfaction with promotion was addressed by the counsellors as well. Although overall satisfaction with opportunities for promotion is low, staff identified that a small program such as Family Conciliation would have fewer opportunities than larger organizations. It was also agreed that promotion may not be a desirable goal of some staff who prefer developing their career in direct service work. This was considered to be a highly legitimate goal, however increases in salaries or promotions do not reflect the skills and knowledge of individual workers, but delineate between direct-service and management skills.

The variance of individual scores pertaining to level of satisfaction with work, co-workers, and supervision shows little difference among the counsellors in terms of their views of these areas. As with the results of the JQ, this smaller variance could be another indication of the homogenous characteristics of the group, and their general satisfaction with the type of work they do and with the people

they work with.

THE WORK ENVIRONMENT SCALE (WES)

The Real and Ideal form responses were analyzed for the ten subscales within the three domains of Relationship (includes the three subscales Involvement, Peer Cohesion and Supervisor Support); Personal Growth (includes the three subscales Autonomy, Task Orientation and Work Pressure) and System Maintenance and System Change (includes four subscales; Clarity, Control, Innovation and Physical Comfort).

The possible range of scores for each of the subscales is 0-9. High subscale scores on the WES Real form indicate the workplace maintains a high emphasis on the domain they represent. Low scores on the subscales would indicate that there is little emphasis on the domain.

High WES Ideal scores on subscales would indicate that in an ideal environment a high emphasis would be placed on the domain they represent. Conversely, low subscale scores indicate that a low emphasis would be placed on the domain in question.

The Real and Ideal Form profiles (Appendix G) use raw score averages for staff rather than standard scores. This is done because staff usually want to compare their perceptions of an ideal work environment with their current environment (Moos, 1975).

High scores on the subscales do not necessarily

indicate a positive experience for respondents. It would be desirable, for instance, that the workplace be characterized by low emphasis on the subscales of Control and Work Pressure. This difference in subscale score preference means that numerical comparison between subscale scores would be insignificant. Numerical comparisons between the Real and Ideal subscale scores have been done because they reflect the difference between how employees perceive their present work environment and what an ideal work environment would look like. The findings of the WES Real and Ideal scales, as well as the comparison between the scaled scores, are included in the analysis. As well, normative data is reported on the WES Real scores which were collected for 1,607 employees in a variety of health care work groups (Moos, 1986).

Examples of subscale test questions are shown in Appendix C, and the interpretation of scale scores is provided in Appendix F. This indicates how Family Conciliation's employees scores compare to other work groups.

1. The Relationship Dimension

The subscale involvement refers to the "extent of which employees are concerned and committed to their jobs" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 3

N=15

| <u>WES Real Involvement</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Involvement</u> | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 6 | 1 | 6.7 | 8 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 7 | 4 | 26.7 | 9 | 13 | 86.7 |
| 8 | 6 | 40.0 | | | |
| 9 | 4 | 26.7 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 7.867 | | Mean | 8.867 | |
| Mode | 8.000 | | Mode | 9.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | .915 | | Standard Deviation | .352 | |
| Range | 3 | | Range | 1 | |
| Median | 8 | | Median | 9 | |

T-Test analysis was completed to examine the relationship between the Real and Ideal Involvement scores. $T=3.87$, $P=.002$.

Overall, there is a fairly high degree of commitment from staff to their work as indicated by the interpretive report form (Appendix F). The average score when compared to the normative sample Mean of 5.56 (and Standard Deviation of 1.54) confirms a high level of commitment within the Family Conciliation staff group. Although there is a statistical difference between the Means of the Real and Ideal scales (i.e. Mean of 7.867 and Mean of 8.867) there is still considerable satisfaction with the level of Involvement. Therefore maintaining it could be a possible goal rather than executing major changes in this area.

The Peer Cohesion subscale measures the "extent to which employees are friendly and supportive of one another" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 4
N=15

| <u>WES Real Peer Cohesion</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Peer Cohesion</u> | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 2 | 1 | 6.7 | 7 | 4 | 26.7 |
| 5 | 2 | 13.3 | 8 | 3 | 20.0 |
| 6 | 3 | 20.0 | 9 | 8 | 53.3 |
| 7 | 4 | 26.7 | | | |
| 8 | 2 | 13.3 | | | |
| 9 | 3 | 20.0 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 6.733 | | Mean | 8.267 | |
| Mode | 7.000 | | Mode | 9.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.870 | | Standard Deviation | .884 | |
| Range | 7 | | Range | 2 | |
| Median | 7 | | Median | 9 | |

T-test analysis of the Real and Ideal Peer Cohesion scales show $T=3.94$ and $P=.001$.

The Peer Cohesion scores demonstrate that employees experience an above average degree of support from each other (Appendix F). There is a statistically significant difference between the Ideal and Real scores, however the Mean Real score of the counsellors is high compared to the normative data from the sample population of health care workers who had a Mean of 5.22 and Standard Deviation of 1.40.

The Supervisor Support subscale indicates the

"extent to which management is supportive of employees and encourages employees to be supportive of one another" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 5

N=15

| <u>WES Real Supervisor Support</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Supervisor Support</u> | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 5 | 1 | 6.7 | 8 | 6 | 40.0 |
| 6 | 3 | 20.0 | 9 | 9 | 60.0 |
| 7 | 5 | 33.3 | | | |
| 8 | 6 | 40.0 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 7.067 | | Mean | 8.600 | |
| Mode | 8.000 | | Mode | 9.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | .961 | | Standard Deviation | .507 | |
| Range | 3 | | Range | 1 | |
| Median | 7 | | Median | 9 | |

The T-test analysis of the Real and Ideal scores were $T=6.49$, $P=.000$. The Mean of the normative sample group was 4.99 with a Standard Deviation of 1.4.

This analysis indicates that the third subscale of the Relationship Dimension is considered to have a high emphasis in the workplace and is well above average according to R. Moos' interpretation of other work environments (Moos, 1986) (Appendix F). Although there is a statistical difference in the Means of the Ideal and Real scores, the Real scores reflect a higher degree of satisfaction compared to the normative sample.

When the findings of the Relationship Dimension were

presented to employees, their feedback emphasized their own feelings that there was strong support among colleagues, and that developing a higher degree of openness would amplify the cohesiveness of the group. "Degree of openness" was defined as a process whereby employees could learn to manage conflict better between themselves. It was felt that the underlying motivation to do this would be in establishing greater trust among group members. Such openness and ability to deal with group conflict was seen to be a management initiative, whereby management would provide the role model and encouragement to deal with differences or challenges amongst employees in a healthy, more positive manner.

It was identified that although counsellors' work involves conflict resolution with clients, there is less of a desire to raise conflicting issues between members of the staff group. This was partly due to the reality that energy is needed to do client work and it is important for employees to be consistently supportive towards each other. Internal issues were seen as energy drainers, however it was felt they should be dealt with and that management needed to assume the leadership for this development through role modeling and providing opportunities for staff to participate in team building based seminars.

Conciliation counsellors in Brandon suggested that

a way to maintain the present level of "Involvement" and "Peer Cohesion" is to have more regular staff gatherings around "staff development" issues, and hold these sessions outside of the workplace.

Scores on the supervision subscales for both the Cornell JDI and the WES subscale were high. Employees identified that both quality and availability of supervision were existing factors that were important to their ability to do their work well and with the support they required. Strengths of supervision as perceived by counsellors, included the clinical knowledge that the supervisors had and their encouragement for counsellors to work independently, such as allowing them to make their own decisions about interventive strategies.

According to R. Moos (1987) employees are generally more satisfied when there is an emphasis on the Relationship Dimension in the work setting. Commitment and motivation are healthy symptoms of such a setting, thereby reducing absenteeism and turnover. The strength of Cohesion also positively influences the Personal Growth Dimensions, in that with strong supervisor support, employees tend to be more productive than those employees in an organization where supervisors are not helpful and supportive. The strength of support generally makes it easier for people to deal with demanding and stressful work.

2. The Personal Growth Dimension

The autonomy subscale measures "the extent to which employees are encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 6
N=15

| <u>WES Real Autonomy</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Autonomy</u> | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 4 | 1 | 6.7 | 6 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 6 | 4 | 26.7 | 7 | 3 | 20.0 |
| 7 | 4 | 26.7 | 8 | 5 | 33.3 |
| 8 | 6 | 40.0 | 9 | 5 | 33.3 |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 6.933 | | Mean | 7.867 | |
| Mode | 8.000 | | Mode | 8.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.163 | | Standard Deviation | 1.060 | |
| Range | 4 | | Range | 3 | |
| Median | 7 | | Median | 8 | |

The T-test between the Mean of the Real Autonomy scores and the Mean of the Ideal Autonomy scores showed that $T=3.29$ $P=.005$, indicating a statistical difference between the two scores.

The comparative scores of the sample health care group showed a Mean of 4.98 and Standard Deviation of 1.46. The Real Mean of the conciliation counsellor group shows they experience a higher than average level of autonomy in their work place when compared to other work groups (Moos, 1986) (Appendix F).

The Task Orientation subscale measures "the degree

of emphasis on good planning, efficiency and getting the job done" (Moos, 1986, pp. 2).

Table 7

N=15

| <u>WES Real Task Orientation</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Task Orientation</u> | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 4 | 1 | 6.7 | 8 | 5 | 33.3 |
| 5 | 3 | 20.0 | 9 | 10 | 66.7 |
| 6 | 1 | 6.7 | | | |
| 7 | 4 | 26.7 | | | |
| 9 | 6 | 40.0 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 7.133 | | Mean | 8.667 | |
| Mode | 9.000 | | Mode | 9.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.27 | | Standard Deviation | .488 | |
| Range | 5 | | Range | 1 | |
| Median | 7 | | Median | 9 | |

The T-test comparison provided a $T=-3.36$, $P=.005$. The normative sample showed a Mean of 5.63 and Standard Deviation of 1.31.

The conciliation counsellors experience a high degree of Task Orientation. Even though there is some feeling the emphasis on this should be greater, this could reflect a desire to maintain and enhance the emphasis on planning and efficiency rather than a major change in this area, as the Mean is well above average according to scores of work groups in general (Appendix F).

The Work Pressure subscale identifies "the degree to

which the press of work and time urgency dominate the job milieu" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 8
N=15

| <u>WES Real Work Pressure</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Work Pressure</u> | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 3 | 1 | 6.7 | 0 | 3 | 20.0 |
| 4 | 1 | 6.7 | 1 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 5 | 2 | 13.3 | 2 | 5 | 33.3 |
| 6 | 2 | 13.3 | 3 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 7 | 1 | 6.7 | 4 | 3 | 20.0 |
| 8 | 5 | 33.3 | 5 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 9 | 3 | 20.0 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 6.867 | | Mean | 2.133 | |
| Mode | 8.000 | | Mode | 2.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.922 | | Standard Deviation | 1.598 | |
| Range | 6 | | Range | 5 | |
| Median | 8 | | Median | 2 | |

The T-test of the Means of the Real and Ideal Work Pressure scores showed $T=6.63$, $P=.000$. The Real Work Pressure Mean of the normative sample was 4.87 and Standard Deviation of 1.57.

In the area of Work Pressure the Ideal scores are significantly lower than the Real scores suggesting that in an ideal environment counsellors would prefer there to be less emphasis on work pressure. Normative data shows a Mean score that is lower than the Real Mean score of the counsellor group, suggesting that other work environments experience less work pressure (Appendix F).

In general the Personal Growth Dimension was discussed in terms of the counsellors' satisfaction with the support and encouragement from management to do their work fairly autonomously. Counsellors would find that if management were controlling and overly involved in the work of the counsellor that this would be a highly unsatisfactory management style. Autonomy suggests trust in professionals to do their work with guidance as they need it. Counsellors at Family Conciliation are chosen on the basis of a combination of appropriate educational background and experience in mediation and assessments. Therefore, supervision is viewed as a tool of guidance and support as well as improving present skill level.

In relation to the Task Orientation subscale, the perception of counsellors is that the workplace balances the emphasis placed on productivity versus concern for the well-being of the worker. In other words, the work place is not dominated by task orientation, but neither is it dominated by ensuring individuals are taken care of. The assumption being that a satisfying work environment has a blend of both.

The subscale Work Pressure was primarily focused on because of the high Mean score associated with it, and the indication by the Ideal Mean score that counsellors would expect it would be much lower in an ideal setting. Work pressure, to some degree, was seen as a helpful

motivator to get work done, especially the time lines around completing assessments. Internally, there is seen to be flexibility around the standards set by the agency. However, external pressures such as lawyers wanting work done by specific times, or clients not following through with appointments when deadlines are approaching, have significant impact. Suggestions were made in respect to alleviating these pressures:

- Have contact occur between counsellor and the family or their lawyers as soon as an Order for assessment or referral for mediation is made by the Court. At this stage it is seen as crucial to clarify expectations, provide education about the services the agency offers, and address any questions, concerns, or resistance of the clients or their lawyers.
- There needs to be a forum devised where there is opportunity for conciliation counsellors and lawyers to discuss general issues concerning work with families in dispute and allow a greater interdisciplinary rapport to develop.
- Have complaints dealt with directly by management.

Other work pressures discussed were the agency standards and expectations that counsellors had to complete a certain number of assessments (12-15) and

mediation cases (55-65) on an annual basis. Although this may have been a reasonable expectation when the standards were initially developed in 1988, the nature and complexity of present family problems demands more intensive and longer term intervention. A review of these standards and the flexibility of management were seen as important in dealing with some of the work pressure. As well, it has been a practice of management to provide each counsellor with monthly statistics on output of all counsellors in the agency. This was viewed as a means of comparison and encouraged internal competitiveness which in turn creates more work pressure.

3. The System Maintenance and Change Dimensions

The subscale Clarity measures "the extent to which employees know what to expect in their daily routine and how explicitly rules and policies are communicated" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 9

N=15

| <u>WES Real Clarity</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Clarity</u> | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 3 | 1 | 6.7 | 5 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 4 | 3 | 20.0 | 6 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 5 | 2 | 13.3 | 7 | 9 | 60.0 |
| 6 | 3 | 20.0 | 8 | 4 | 26.7 |
| 7 | 3 | 20.0 | | | |
| 8 | 3 | 20.0 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 5.867 | | Mean | 7.067 | |
| Mode | 4.000 | | Mode | 7.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 1.642 | | Standard Deviation | .799 | |
| Range | 5 | | Range | 3 | |
| Median | 6 | | Median | 7 | |

The T-test of difference between the Means of these two scales showed $T=-2.74$, $P=.016$ showing a statistical difference. The Real Mean score of the normative sample was 4.44 with a Standard Deviation of 1.41. The Mean of the conciliation counsellor is higher but still considered to be in the average range (Appendix F). In general, the counsellors feel there is a moderate amount of clarity and they would expect in an ideal setting somewhat more clarity.

The Control subscale examines "the extent to which management uses rules and pressures to keep employees under control" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 10

N=15

| <u>WES Real Control</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Control</u> | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 13.3 | 0 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 3 | 3 | 20.0 | 1 | 4 | 26.7 |
| 5 | 1 | 6.7 | 2 | 4 | 26.7 |
| 6 | 4 | 26.7 | 3 | 4 | 26.7 |
| 7 | 3 | 20.0 | 4 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 8 | 1 | 6.7 | | | |
| 9 | 1 | 6.7 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 5.200 | | Mean | 2.133 | |
| Mode | 6.000 | | Mode | 1.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 2.455 | | Standard Deviation | 1.187 | |
| Range | 8 | | Range | 4 | |
| Median | 6 | | Median | 2 | |

The T-test value for Real and Ideal Control scales shows $T=1.47$, $P=.164$.

The Mean of the normative sample was 5.43 and Standard Deviation was 1.42.

Scores of the conciliation group indicate there is a moderate emphasis on control and no significant difference in how they would prefer an ideal work environment to be. These scores also reflect a similarity in the Mean of the normative sample and are average when compared to other work groups (Appendix F).

The Innovation subscale measures "the degree of emphasis on variety, change and new approaches" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 11

N=15

| <u>WES Real Innovation</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Innovation</u> | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 1 | 2 | 13.3 | 6 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 3 | 3 | 20.0 | 7 | 3 | 20.0 |
| 5 | 1 | 6.7 | 8 | 9 | 60.0 |
| 6 | 4 | 26.7 | 9 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 7 | 3 | 20.0 | | | |
| 8 | 1 | 6.7 | | | |
| 9 | 1 | 6.7 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 5.200 | | Mean | 7.800 | |
| Mode | 6.000 | | Mode | 8.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 2.455 | | Standard Deviation | .775 | |
| Range | 8 | | Range | 3 | |
| Median | 6 | | Median | 8 | |

The T-test value for the statistical difference between the Real and Ideal scales was $T=3.70$, $P=.002$ demonstrating a significant difference.

The Mean of the normative sample was 4.37 with the Standard Deviation of 1.82 showing that conciliation counsellor's Mean score is close to the Mean of the comparative health care group. When compared to other work groups the counsellors' Mean score is average (Appendix F).

Counsellors believe that a greater emphasis on change and variety would exist in an ideal environment.

The subscale Physical Comfort identifies "the extent to which the physical surroundings contribute to a pleasant work environment" (Moos, 1986, pp.2).

Table 12
N=15

| <u>WES Real Physical Comfort</u> | | | <u>WES Ideal Physical Comfort</u> | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Scores | Frequency | Percent | Scores | Frequency | Percent |
| 1 | 1 | 6.7 | 4 | 1 | 6.7 |
| 2 | 3 | 20.0 | 7 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 3 | 4 | 26.7 | 8 | 10 | 66.7 |
| 4 | 2 | 13.3 | 9 | 2 | 13.3 |
| 5 | 1 | 6.7 | | | |
| 6 | 2 | 13.3 | | | |
| 8 | 2 | 13.3 | | | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Mean | 4.000 | | Mean | 7.733 | |
| Mode | 3.000 | | Mode | 8.000 | |
| Standard Deviation | 2.171 | | Standard Deviation | 1.163 | |
| Range | 7 | | Range | 5 | |
| Median | 3 | | Median | 8 | |

The T-value of the difference between the Real and Ideal Physical Comfort Means shows $T=-5.80$, $P=.000$ showing a more substantial difference between what the counsellors experience in their work environment and how they would like it to be.

The Physical Comfort Mean of the normative sample was 3.72 and a Standard Deviation of 1.28 showing little variation between the two groups. When scores are compared to other work group environments they are below average (Appendix F).

The area of Physical Comfort is one that identifies a need for improvement.

The primary emphasis of discussion and ideas in relation to the System Maintenance and Change Dimension

was the subscale Physical Comfort. The scores on the subscales of Clarity and Control were viewed as an accurate reflection of staff perceptions. Moderate scores in the subscale Clarity was viewed as a possible function of how long an employee had been doing the work, as well as how long the program has been operational. In Brandon and other regions for instance, the programs are at a newer stage of developing with roles, expectations, and policies still being examined and clarified. However, counsellors in the regions believe the score on Clarity is much higher now than it would have been two years ago, when Family Conciliation there, expanded in staff size and service delivery.

Moderate scores on Clarity could be a function of the "newness" of the Family Conciliation program. In addition, it could also be contributed to the increased demands of work related to client needs. For instance, family violence is a common characteristic of many couples and families that counsellors work with, a reality of a growing social problem (MacLeod, 1987). The role and expectation of the conciliation counsellor is presently being examined as well as existing agency policy. For example, current policies do not allow for mediation to take place if violence between a couple occurred within less than a year prior to mediation. However, it has become evident that abuse does not

necessarily end with separation (Yellott, 1990). Therefore, the agency may need to examine ways to provide mediation that does not jeopardize safety of the attending parents.

As indicated by their reaction to the Relationship Dimensions (specifically subscales "Autonomy" and "Involvement") an important feature of the work environment is that management continue to be flexible, i.e. allowing flexible working hours and supporting and trusting staff to function independently.

In terms of innovativeness, there is a desire among employees to branch into other activities such as doing external training and supervision of students and new staff. There is also a strong desire to continue developing knowledge and expertise in client work. The recognition exists, however, that day to day work demands and pressure related to the mandated programs involves sufficient time and energy so that other activities or changes take a back seat. This area needs to be examined further by management and staff (either in a group or on a counsellor-supervisor basis) to determine how innovativeness can be increased to allow for a greater sense of accomplishment, increased interest, and skill development.

Physical comfort of the work environment, as indicated by the scores on this subscale, is a major

issue and concern of employees. They confirm that extreme temperatures and poor air quality effect their ability to be productive at times. Extreme temperatures are also a source of concern in relation to client comfort, which is an important factor in conflict resolution work. The atmosphere, including the physical setting, plays a calming role in mediation and assessments, where clients are under a great deal of emotional distress.

It is believed by employees that illnesses are more common and serious likely due to the poor air quality and circulation of illness related bacteria.

There is a history of efforts made by some Family Conciliation staff and other employees working in the building to try and achieve more satisfactory air quality but it continues to be inferior. The groups' suggestions are that a possible change of space is warranted, and management needs to place more emphasis and take leadership in resolving this major issue. In the interim, a suggestion arose that fans for each office would help to alleviate some of the discomfort.

In concluding, the Work Environment Scale helped to identify the following characteristics of the Family Conciliation work setting, as perceived by the direct service employees:

- Employees feel there is a strong emphasis in the

workplace on Involvement, Peer Cohesion, Supervisor Support, Autonomy and Task Orientation.

- In the area of Work Pressure, employees believe the emphasis is greater than it would be in an ideal environment, and finding ways to decrease it would be desirable.
- There is a moderate emphasis in the work place on Clarity and Innovation with a general feeling among employees that there would be greater emphasis in an ideal work environment.
- Employees feel there is a low emphasis on Control in the work environment. They would not expect it to be greater in an ideal environment which indicates a reasonable degree of satisfaction with this area in the existing environment.
- In the area of Physical Comfort there is a strong feeling that more emphasis on this area would exist in an ideal work environment. In other words, employees are not satisfied with the area of physical comfort in their existing environment, and change is viewed as very important in this area.

THE MARLOWE-CROWNE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALE (MCSDS)

This scale was utilized to measure the response-bias of the respondents. A major weakness of response-bias tests is the difficulty in drawing viable conclusions about the

personality characteristics of people who display a social desirability tendency, since such a measure may also be effected by the tendency of respondents to give socially desirable responses (Crowne, Marlowe, 1964). The MCSDS is a measure which during its development, eliminated items with a psychopathological or abnormal content, and focused on criterion of cultural approval and yet be found to be untrue of virtually all people. The MCSDS is a balanced scale with half the statements being culturally acceptable but likely untrue of most people. The other half of the scale are true statements but undesirable. Individuals who depict themselves in favourable terms are considered to be demonstrating socially desirable responses.

The total possible score for the MCSDS is 10, indicating five items should be scored true and five scored false. This is to allow for the differentiation between acquiescence response set and a positive or negative halo response set (Appendix D). The Mean of the Family Conciliation group was 4.4 with a Mode of 4 (Table 13). A larger sample for comparison is that of sixty-eight university students (Strahan, Gerbasi, 1972) whose Mean of 4.5 was close to that of the present study.

A T-test revealed a T value of .0139 and $P > .05$, indicating that there is no significant difference between the two groups' Means.

Table 13

Social Desirability Scale Profile
for Family Conciliation Counsellors
N=15

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Frequency</u> | <u>Percent</u> | |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| 2 | 2 | 18.3 | |
| 3 | 2 | 13.3 | |
| 4 | 6 | 40.0 | |
| 5 | 2 | 13.3 | |
| 6 | 1 | 6.7 | |
| 8 | 2 | 13.3 | |
| Total | 15 | 100.0 | |
| Mean | 4.400 | Median | 4.000 |
| Mode | 4 | Variance | 3.25 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.805 | | |
| Range | 6(2-8) | | |

When examining individual scores for the MCSDS there is a large range in the scores. A high score (of a possible 10) indicates a high need for approval, whereas a low score would indicate a low need for approval. In other words, the respondent is not easily influenced by others. Of the conciliation counsellors there were five individual scores above the Mean of the group and of the comparative sample group, indicating that these individuals displayed a greater social desirability response set.

Another four respondents scored below an acceptable level of desirability response set. An interpretation of low scores could be that respondents are less committed to answering according to their own feelings and beliefs.

One could also speculate that lower scores reflect lower morale of staff members. The existence of nine scores above or below the Mean of a social desirability response set is an expected occurrence of this group, given the context under which this study was conducted whereby the researcher was also in an authority position.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS SUMMARY

As a way to address the ideosyncracies of the specific factors that effect either positively or negatively the work that conciliation counsellors do, the structured questions in the form of an additional comments section were provided with the package of questionnaires (Appendix E). All fifteen forms were completed with several responses often given by respondents to each question.

For the purpose of summarizing the "additional comments" responses there have been general categories created that groups of responses directly relate to. For example, for Question 1, "Please indicate what in your view are the most stressful components of conflict resolution work with families," most responses related to the emotional atmosphere of the work with clients. The category titled Work With Clients was provided, and the kinds and numbers of responses applicable to this specific category are addressed.

In relation to Question 1 (the most stressful components of conflict resolution work with families of

divorce), a total of thirty-seven factors were identified. This is an average of 2.46 responses for each counsellor. Work With Clients, Court Ordered Assessment Reports, Workload and Other categories were developed from the types of responses given. Seventy percent of the thirty-seven responses addressed specifically the difficulties and stressors of Work With Clients, ten or 27% discussed dealing with the anger, conflict, and negative emotions of the clients. Another five responses (14%) addressed the stress involved in working with clients who are resistant or entrenched in their positions or negative relationship with their former partner.

Counsellors referred to other factors that create stress including:

- Maintaining neutrality and impartiality while trying to protect the "best interest" of the children involved in the dispute. (Eight percent of the responses for this category "Work With Clients.")
- Needing a high level of energy for the conflict resolution work which results in emotional drain (8%).
- Observing the negative impact the parental conflict has had upon the children (6%).
- Lack of feedback on the outcome of intervention; working with similarity of issues; working with clients who the counsellor personally dislikes (8%).

Twenty-two percent of responses addressed what was difficult in relation to Court Ordered Assessment Reports. Counsellors particularly find that developing conclusions and recommendations that can assist families is often stressful. Although the Court must be provided with a thorough social assessment that reports on and draws conclusions about the functioning of the family, it is a concern that these reports also leave the family with a sense of dignity and helpful direction. In most situations, one or both parents are disappointed or angry at the counsellors's recommendations, so presenting the outcome to them can be difficult for everyone involved.

Other aspects of assessment work that some counsellors find stressful is the element of being a witness in Court and subject to cross examination by both parent's lawyers due to the counsellor's charge as Officer of the Court.

Five percent of the responses dealt with workload as being a pressure, specifically the long hours sometimes necessary to work due to long distance travelling and only being able to see families in the evenings.

Three percent of responses referred to external pressure or interference from the legal profession into client work was a stressful component.

The primary sources of stress for counsellors in relation to client work is the nature of the intense emotions

that exist for clients and are exhibited in a variety of ways. As well, the Court Ordered Assessments require the counsellors to make recommendations that impact tremendously on the family's life, and clients often react negatively towards the counsellor.

The conciliation counsellors, in group discussion, examined ways to deal more effectively with these areas of stress related to their work with clients. It is generally agreed that there is an emotional drain associated with work with clients that impacts on other aspects of the counsellors' life, such as their relationship with family and peers. Some possible ideas for assisting in this area were:

- Doing more co-mediation and co-evaluating (on assessments) with colleagues.
- Have more information in the form of seminars or guest speakers at regularly held meeting times, that address transference and counter transference issues; that address how to appropriately distance from client problems so as not to allow oneself to become personally involved or take on greater responsibility for the client.
- Provide assessment recommendations and feedback to potentially volatile clients in the presence of a supervisor in order to intercede if the counsellor is being verbally attacked.

There were forty responses (or an average of 2.6 responses per counsellor) for Question 2 that referred to what they felt would contribute to their continued career in the field of conflict resolution work.

Over 25% of the responses related to a supportive environment as a major contributing factor. Their relationship with colleagues, support from management, the support for being able to work flexible hours, the autonomy encouraged and commitment to their work as well as having effective stress management were identified as important aspects of a supportive environment.

Twenty-three percent of the responses emphasized that continuing to expand knowledge and skills in relation to work with divorcing families, and keeping up to date on current issues and research would also contribute to continued work in the field. Another 25% of responses focused on the need for continued challenge and innovativeness in service delivery as desirable features of remaining in the career.

Other responses referred to a sense of accomplishment and personal growth as important (8%); that opportunities for advancement or training opportunities would be contributors (8%); that the pay is an important feature (8%) as well as a reasonable workload (5%).

Primary sources of commitment to the field of conflict resolution are a supportive environment as well as learning new skills and understanding of working with families

in conflict.

As previously discussed, the counsellors confirmed in the group meeting that maintaining and enhancing peer and supervisor support is important, with more work needing to be done within the group of colleagues to manage their own interactions effectively.

Increased skills and knowledge are partly perceived as an individual endeavour with support and encouragement from management. Inviting guest speakers from other agencies who have a special skill or creating an opportunity for individual conciliation counsellors to disseminate their knowledge and expertise to their peers were suggested ways of focusing on learning.

Question 3 asked the counsellors if they believed their jobs were more stressful than other kinds of direct service work. Fifty-three percent said yes, that the work was more stressful due to such factors as the time and work pressures; dealing with severe loss that the clients have experienced; seeing the negative impact of parental conflict on children; experiencing the intense emotional climate of the client work as well as needing a high degree of energy, concentration, and effective analytical skills necessary to do the work.

Forty percent of the counsellors said that their work was not necessarily more stressful but is a different kind of stress than many other direct service practitioners

experience. One response was neutral indicating that it depends on which type of direct service work the conflict resolution work is being compared to. Several counsellors referred to the work of Child and Family Service workers (child protection) as being likely more stressful.

The reaction to this question during the post questionnaire group discussion was that all counsellors have had other work experiences, but it would be difficult to compare conflict resolution work to work settings that they have not experienced. It would seem likely then that their answers reflect what their experience has been like in other areas of direct service.

Question 4 asked counsellors what they find to be most stressful as well as most rewarding about working within an interdisciplinary system.

A total of twenty-seven responses referred to what was most stressful about this or an average of 1.8 responses per counsellor. Three primary areas were addressed. The competing interests of the different disciplines was seen as a major difficulty. Forty-one percent of the responses referred to how a strong adversarial approach by a client's legal counsel can entrench the client a position. This position may not be what the counsellor believes is in the best interest of the child or children involved.

Comments of frustration also arose concerning other child care agencies refusal to share pertinent information

about mutual clients, even with the clients consent. This is yet another factor which could negatively impact on the best interest of the children, particularly if there are or have been child protection issues that the conciliation counsellor is not aware of. Policies or legislation of child care agencies do not allow release of information regardless of permission being granted by the family (Child and Family Services Act, 1985).

Twenty-three percent of the responses addressed the negative impact that a lack of regular connection with the Court Justices (Family Division) has upon their work. Without opportunities to have dialogue with the Justices, who are a major referral source for clients to Family Conciliation, there is no forum to discuss expectations upon counsellors regarding assessments; there is limited feedback on the utility of the assessments; and there is no opportunity to clarify and discuss services of the program that could assist with particular client issues.

Pressure from external professionals to provide client service within a particular time frame, or to influence how the intervention is done by the counsellor is also found to be a stressful feature of working within the multidisciplinary system (31%). Some responses addressed that other professionals can misinterpret the service mandate of the program or be unfamiliar with services offered.

A few responses (6%) referred to the position of

being a witness for the Court as adding to stress in dealing with other professionals.

A total of twenty-two responses, or average of 1.4 for each counsellor, addressed what counsellors found to be rewarding about work in a multidisciplinary system.

Forty-five percent referred to seeing positive change in families as a result of interventions or witnessing conflicts being settled as a result of mutual effort, as important rewarding components. In relation to this, the positive feedback that other professionals provide is helpful.

Twenty-three percent of the responses referred to the satisfaction of learning different perspectives from other professionals and sharing knowledge that assists with the intense work.

Thirty-two percent of the responses referred to the positive aspects of the variety in the work, completing assessments for the Court, and having sufficient autonomy and flexibility to work as a professional.

In general, the group feedback on the topic of interdisciplinary influences seemed to focus on a need to build rapport with other professionals. Initiating a meeting with the lawyers of The Family Law Subsection to address common issues and exchange information was seen as important in clarifying roles and expectations of each profession.

Some counsellors view feedback from other professionals (primarily lawyers and the Justices who are

primary referral sources) as important. It is seen as equally important to provide feedback to other professionals in terms of what is working to enhance clients ability to resolve their conflict. At present, monthly "breakfast" meetings occur which provides a forum for this exchange. These meetings include representatives of the Family Division Court Justices, Child and Family Services lawyers, Family Law Subsection lawyers and Family Conciliation.

Counsellors believe that more initiative needs to occur in connecting with Family Division Justices to enhance mutual learning and service delivery. Support exists to have regular meetings with the Associate Chief Justice to identify issues and become updated on Court procedures that effect the mutual client population. Other suggestions regarding enhancing rapport with the Court is for counsellors to periodically provide informational presentations to colleagues and the Justices. Some examples of topics likely of interest to both are:

- (a) What are the long term effects that witnessing abuse between parents has upon children?
- (b) What are the long term effects upon children of disrupted access to one parent?

Review of the current research in certain areas related to the divorcing families and the presentation and discussion of these topics could be an acceptable forum for meeting.

The fifth question asked counsellors what contributes to their satisfaction with their work. Thirty responses were provided. Of these, 37% saw peer support as an important contributor to satisfaction. Phrases used to characterize the meaning of peer support were trust, experienced and skilled, friendly and helpful, mutually supportive, as well as efficient, particularly in relation to the output of the clerical staff.

Management and supervisor support were also seen as primary contributors with 33% of the responses referring to features of this such as flexible, encourages autonomy, caseloads are manageable, standards realistic, roles are clear, and there is a balance between concern for workers and work output.

Another factor that contributes to the counsellors job satisfaction is the quality of supervision. It is considered to be competent, knowledgeable, non-controlling, and constructively critical (20%).

Other comments (10%) related to pay being a contributing factor as well as the respectful work environment, and that Family Conciliation's work continues to be valued by the community.

In respect to what contributes to counsellors' satisfaction with their work, peer and management support were emphasized once more. Group discussion addressed these areas as a result of the findings of other measurements. Their

comments on paper as well as in the group accentuates the general attitude that group cohesion, and a management style that respects and reinforces professionalism among staff, is most desirable in the work place and in view of the intense client work that is achieved.

The final question addresses what counsellors would find in their work environment that would contribute to job dissatisfaction. Thirty-one percent of responses stressed that if management style was rigid, inflexible, focused only on work output, had ambiguous policies and enforced time pressures, that this would be a major source of dissatisfaction.

Seventeen percent of the responses address how a poor physical environment would contribute to dissatisfaction including poor air quality of the office space, lack of adequate parking, and extreme temperatures in the office.

Another 17% of responses cited that lack of management and peer support would contribute to dissatisfaction.

Also a lack of rapport and relationship with Court Justices, as well as other professionals who refer clients to Family Conciliation, were seen as being contributors to dissatisfaction.

This question inspired a variety of responses (24%) which were not categorized because of their uniqueness but are mentioned as follows: Client dissatisfaction with the

service; insufficient pay; unprofessionalism on the part of colleagues; lack of opportunities to improve skills; low morale; and long working hours, would all be factors leading to job dissatisfaction.

The group's response to this question has been addressed through other questions and measures. Essentially the counsellors value an autonomous work setting and strong peer relationships. They also would find their work environment more satisfying if some of the previous concerns identified were dealt with, such as improving rapport and relationships with other professionals and increasing opportunities to gain knowledge and expertise. Although work with clients is considered to be a major source of stress it was not identified as contributing to job dissatisfaction, confirming that job stress and job satisfaction are not always related entities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

It is necessary to consider that this study is exploratory and designed as an initiative in developing a structure for group problem-solving around issues of job stress. There were influences in the work environment that could have effected the employees' responses to questionnaires such as the researcher being in a position of authority. As well, the political environment at the time of the study was unpredictable. Staff lay-offs and threats to job security was

a paramount concern to employees. The general climate of a government service or large bureaucratic structure brings with it its own limitations for employees providing the direct service. A sense of control, autonomy, and trust are precarious.

Other limitations of this research include that there was a significant range of ages and experience of respondents. The limited variance of the responses to some of the questionnaires, considering the demographic differences of the group, brings into question the validity of the data. The small sample limits the degree of analysis that could be done. As well, comparisons to a group of similar nature in a different setting was not possible due to the various idiosyncracities of work groups. The work environment and external influences were in many ways unique to Family Conciliation.

CONCLUSION OF THE FINDINGS

The combined sources of data, the questionnaires and post questionnaire meetings with employees offered a more comprehensive understanding of the contributors to job stress and job satisfaction. The meetings with employees were productive processes, emphasizing that employee involvement is imperative in developing recommendations for change that directly effect them. The results of the analysis provided an affirming, non-threatening entry into engaging conciliation counsellors in a planning process.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following recommendations are for Family Conciliation, a program offered by the Province of Manitoba, Department of Family Services.

This section summarizes the contents of the preceding report including the purpose of the research, the review of the literature pertaining to job stress and job satisfaction, and the findings. The recommendations are based on factors previously identified and discussed in the report but are delineated more completely in this chapter.

Family Conciliation provides a variety of services to families experiencing separation or divorce and are in dispute over the ongoing care of their children. The service is mandated by the Court of Queen's Bench Act and interfaces with the Family Division Court as well as legal and social services in the community and throughout the Province.

The Family Conciliation counsellors must deal with clients in conflict as well as an ecological system whose functions and professional values differ. The job stress and job satisfaction contributors have been a focus of analysis for the current research study. The result has been the creation of suggestions that are viewed as ways to assist in alleviating job stress and enhancing job satisfaction for the direct service employees. The following document which identifies sources of stress and satisfaction and possible resolutions, has been developed with and highly influenced by

the strong participation of the Family Conciliation counsellors. Their cooperation and willingness to become involved in the group process of planning and problem solving, as well as their interest and expressed thoughts, demonstrates the degree of cohesiveness that is strongly evident in the descriptive analysis.

The recommendations for Family Conciliation have been designed and developed not only with a high degree of employee participation, but with a view towards practicality of implementation.

Most of the recommendations are possible within the authority of Family Conciliation program management primarily as decisions the program director can employ. The support and possible suggestions from the Assistant Deputy Minister (ultimately responsible for the program) would be a valuable resource. Some recommendations that pertain to the program's relationship with external groups or agencies must of course be implemented, only with the understanding that mutual benefit will prevail along with improved client service in order for there to be a cooperative effort.

**JOB STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION:
RECOMMENDATIONS TO FAMILY CONCILIATION**

Purpose

As a result of a study done for the purpose of my practicum report for a Masters of Social Work degree, I am offering these recommendations to the agency and its employees

for consideration. This research area was chosen because of my interest in aspects of the work and work environment that impact upon professionals providing mandated services to divorcing families in conflict. It was also a specific area of practice unexplored in other studies of job stress and job satisfaction.

The recommendations are intended to be an operative guide that are viewed as feasible but will require commitment, planning, and support from the Family Conciliation Director and employees as well as guidance and support from the Assistant Deputy Minister.

Increasing employee job satisfaction and reducing job stress is viewed as contributing to a better working environment that in turn protects against high turnover, absenteeism and burn-out, important considerations for organizations particularly where direct service to employees can be affected. Turnover and absenteeism create additional economic costs to the employer. The literature review conducted also emphasizes that employee stress can negatively impact on client service in that the outcome of severe stress is that the practitioner takes a negative view of the client and the helping relationship suffers. Employees who are under extreme stress may leave the organization causing gaps in service or reduced service to clients as new personnel are being hired and trained. These and other possible drawbacks to worker stress including the possibility of decreased

productivity make an investment in improving working conditions, reducing job stress, and increasing employee satisfaction desirable goals of management.

The Meaning of Job Satisfaction and Job Stress

The definitions of job stress and job satisfaction are offered in the literature review. Job satisfaction is primarily seen as being the extent to which an employee is positively affected by his or her work situation. Job stress, on the other hand, are characteristics of the work environment that create a threat to the employee. If stress is too great or continues over a prolonged period it can lead to job dissatisfaction and possible burnout. Many authors and researchers have contributed to the present day understanding of job stress particularly focusing on the helping professions. A most noted researcher in the field, Christina Maslach, views involvement with people as a major source of stress for practitioners. For instance, the structure of the helping relationship promotes and maintains a negative view of the client system as there is a tendency to focus on problems rather than strengths. As well, high levels of emotional stress exist for clients in crisis who in turn may wish to blame or be abusive towards the professional.

Job satisfaction and job stress can impact upon each other but they are distinct entities of the work environment. For instance an employee can have a high degree of job

satisfaction and high degree of job stress at the same time. The alternate could also be true.

What is of significance to either component is that individual employees perceptions and views primarily determine the extent and intensity of either job stress or job satisfaction. The conciliation counsellors tended to view many aspects of their work environment similarly. As shown by a measure of job satisfaction there was little difference in the moderate level of satisfaction among employees. An interpretation of this limited difference points to the counsellors being a relatively homogeneous group and share similar perceptions of their work and work environment.

Contributors to Job Satisfaction and Job Stress and Practical Related Interventions

The following are identified aspects of the work environment that conciliation counsellors responded to in terms of what is positive about the environment, thereby contributing to their satisfaction with their job. Aspects are also identified that require change or improvement as they contribute to job stress.

1. Nature of the Work With Clients

In the general category of the work itself conciliation counsellors indicate they are moderately satisfied. However, the work with families in conflict also contributes to their job stress because of the

following characteristics:

- (a) The emotional atmosphere involves the client's anger and negative emotional relationship with their ex-spouse. Conflict, resistance, extreme sadness, and entrenched positions are often encountered by counsellors.
- (b) The counsellor's role is to maintain neutrality and impartiality in dealing with client disputes while trying to protect the best interest of the children. Neutrality, and preserving a sense of fairness and balance towards each parent, is particularly difficult when the clients' behaviour or conflict is having a negative impact upon the children.
- (c) Recommendations from family assessments as to possible arrangements for custody and access of children need to be fair, appropriate, and leave the family members with a sense of dignity. These recommendations and explanations for them lead to a stressful situation, most often provided in meetings with the client. In general, counsellors believe that providing feedback to clients regarding the major points of the family assessment is a helpful and respectful process. The potential for anger and hostile reactions towards the counsellor exists in some situations.

- (d) The sensitive and complex issues that face families of divorce often create anger and bitterness that can be directed towards counsellors. For instance, highly critical and often verbally abusive telephone calls from clients are common. Counsellors find this difficult to deal with in that there is uncertainty about what is expected by the administration in such situations. Questions arose as to whether allowing the client to vent hostility is a form of rehearsing anger and therefore is unproductive. Another question that arises is in what situations or under what circumstances can service to clients be refused.

The nature of client work and types of issues to deal with is not an area in itself that can be changed or altered. In fact, a sense of accomplishment of work with clients, such as the conflict being resolved, provides a source of job satisfaction.

In order to reduce the stress or assist the counsellors in dealing more effectively with stressful situations, these suggestions have developed:

- (a) More routine co-mediation and "co-assessing" with colleagues as an option for counsellors when working with resistance, potentially abusive clients or where other special client needs exist.

- (b) Provide information for counsellors in the form of seminars on topics related to the dynamics of the "helping" relationship with clients. For example, transference and counter-transference; disengaging appropriately from client problems and from becoming "overly responsible."
- (c) When recommendations from assessments are to be provided to potentially volatile clients, the supervisor could attend to intercede if problems arise, but also to support the information the counsellor is sharing.
- (d) More clarity and direction from the administration (e.g. assistant deputy minister and program director) on the extent to which counsellors should try to work with abusive clients and when service can be refused. Counsellors would particularly benefit from knowing what is expected of them when they face potentially abusive and unsafe involvement with clients.

2. Relationships With Colleagues and Supervisor Support
(Supervisor Support includes both Supervisor and Director in the agency.)

Family Conciliation counsellors believe that a major strength of their work environment is the emotional support they receive from the people they work with. They also agree that this element of a work environment

is an important aspect in dealing with other demands and work stresses, and contributes to their continuing to work in their career.

Support within the work place is characterized by:

- (a) Employees being concerned and committed to their work.
- (b) The friendliness, helpfulness, and respect that exists among employees.
- (c) The support of management towards employees and encouraging an atmosphere of support and cooperation among employees.
- (d) The professionalism and high quality skills that is encouraged in the environment.

The degree of support within Family Conciliation among peers and from management is considered to be strong. Suggestions follow that could enhance the quality of support:

- (a) Management needs to continue its policies that positively effect the worker. These include supporting flexible working hours; encouraging autonomy in that counsellors are supported in making their own professional decisions; remaining available but non-intrusive regarding counsellor needs and client work; balancing concern for individual worker needs and organizational needs.
- (b) More regular "staff development" activities should

occur where learning and socializing both have emphasis. "Staff development" could involve work on client-work issues (as previously suggested) or group dynamic issues pertaining specifically to the Family Conciliation employees. It is important that clerical staff are involved, as good working relationships between themselves and the counsellors are imperative to both concerned.

- (c) Emphasis by management and counsellors is needed on fostering more openness among staff, and learning to more effectively deal with conflict between themselves. There is significant energy required for direct service work, and employees need to remain consistently supportive of each other. However, this may be diverting any focus away from internal issues such as interpersonal dynamics and dealing with differences in professional opinions. Such interpersonal work amongst colleagues are energy drainers and involve risk. The analysis indicates that client work is particularly emotionally exhausting and workers value colleague support which helps to alleviate such stress. Management needs to assume the initiative and leadership in team building and strengthening group dynamics by modelling and providing an atmosphere that contributes to this. Challenging and positive

confrontation can be a healthy dynamic for a work group to establish, on the other hand non-confrontation and avoiding conflict can also be a good choice. It would be beneficial for staff to more clearly define what "openness" means to each of them and how this can be accomplished for them individually if the need exists.

3. Work Pressure

The counsellors have identified that work pressure, the general press of work and deadlines, is much greater than they believe it should be. Although a certain degree of work pressure is viewed as a motivator (i.e. the agency policy of 10-12 weeks for an assessment to be completed) there are particular aspects of this area that need improvement.

The Family Conciliation group's work pressure has an internal and external source. Internally, work pressure is characterized by:

- (a) The policy of assignments of assessments to counsellors at the beginning of each month, which may not take into account the delay of other assessments the counsellor has. These delays could be for various reasons, but contribute to a potential overwhelming case load if the assignment of new assessments cannot be flexible.

- (b) Each counsellor receiving monthly output statistics on all counsellors, which creates the potential for competitiveness and a sense of lack of accomplishment if their own statistics of output are low.
- (c) Output standards developed in 1988 that do not reflect the present complexity of cases and greater time involved for all areas of service delivery.

External work pressure takes the form of:

- (a) Outside referral sources (e.g. lawyers and the Court) wanting work done in an unrealistic time period.
- (b) Deadlines for reports approaching with clients not following through with their appointments and counsellor is blamed for delay.
- (c) Other professionals prescribing methods of intervention with little knowledge or understanding of the service offered or the client problem.
- (d) Complaints to counsellors about time frames or other issues by clients or referring agents.

The recommendations that could assist in alleviating internal and external work pressure include the following:

Internal:

- (a) Standards developed in 1988 regarding annual

workload need to be reviewed and revised to reflect the needs of the current client population that Family Conciliation serves. The complexity and intensity of conflict between family members seems now to be a common situation requiring more of the worker's time. For instance mediation or assessments may often involve step-parents, step-children and grandparents or other guardians. Issues of spousal violence and or allegations of child sexual abuse are characteristic of many families referred for service. The changing nature of the families served at this point is based on the experience and observation of the practitioners. More quantitative and empirical research could be done to more thoroughly guide the appropriate selection of standards for the agency. Management may also find it beneficial to compare Family Conciliation caseloads with other court-based social services or other agencies offering family assessments and working with a wide variety of family issues. Such comparisons could assist in determining general caseload expectations and intervention time frames.

In addition to revising the standards of the agency the additional time required for intervention and the complexity of family situations may also

require that counsellors review their role in providing public services and whether such increased intervention is a realistic and economic utilization of their time and effort. A supervisory function could include assisting individual employees with decisions regarding when intervention should be terminated, i.e. when contract with clients is completed and when further intervention is warranted.

An area that could also be explored is the development of more group focused intervention such as "parenting issues for divorced parents" that may decrease the need for individual intervention.

- (b) Management could establish clearly what circumstances would be applicable for a Court Ordered Assessment not to be assigned or for there to be delay in assigning. (Areas of flexibility and consultation with staff should be components of any newly developed policies.) Due to the extent of emotional drain from assessments, management could consider "break" periods for individual counsellors from doing assessments. "Updates" on assessments that are requested by the Court should be carefully reviewed with the counsellor who did the initial assessment, to ensure that it is appropriate for the same counsellor to do the

assessment or assign to someone uninvolved previously.

- (c) Individual counsellor monthly case load output and the meeting of agency requirements could be an issue of supervision solely and not be distributed monthly to all counsellors.
- (d) Complaints could be directed to and dealt with by management.

External:

- (e) Providing information about the services of Family Conciliation and clarifying client, Court and lawyer expectations could occur at the time of or shortly after a referral is made, or through other general means. For instance, a fairly immediate contact between counsellor and client, even if actual service is subject to a waiting period, would be helpful in ensuring the client (or lawyer) understands the process and questions of clarification can be addressed.

Another forum for achieving the goal of providing clarifying information to clients and counsel could be a revised "acknowledgement of referral" letter from the director.

- (f) A forum for meetings between Family Conciliation employees and The Bar Association, particularly the Family Law Subsection, would provide an opportunity

for the disciplines to exchange information and clarify what a helpful role of each would be in respect to mutual clients.

Regular meetings (e.g. twice annually) would help to establish better rapport between the two groups, enabling improved consultation on a case by case basis.

- (g) Because at times client resistance or the unavailability of clients prevent service delivery (assessments or mediation) or when these factors exist and a time deadline has been established (e.g. by the Court), the agency could develop a clear guideline for counsellors in establishing limits to attempts to engage the client. As well, involvement from the lawyer of resistant or unavailable clients is considered essential to help reduce the time spent and stress involved in trying to secure client cooperation.

Contracts with clients at the beginning of assessments and mediation would clearly delineate expectations of time needed to complete the process and the procedure if interview schedules could not be kept.

4. Physical Comfort Level of Office Environment

Family Conciliation moved into their present office

building in 1984. There have been on-going problems and concerns regarding the physical comfort of the space which effect employees and clients of the service. The quality of the physical surroundings plays an important role in creating an agreeable and pleasant work environment, that could ultimately aid or impede productivity.

There has been a history of efforts made by building employees, including Family Conciliation staff, to urge those responsible to take action to alleviate the problems.

The problems identified include:

- (a) Extreme temperatures.
- (b) Air is stale and air circulation is poor.
- (c) Ill health, circular spread of viruses, allergies, tiredness, are all deemed to be symptoms of the poor air quality.
- (d) Evening or weekend work in the office is impeded because of decreased air circulation.

The low level of air quality, particularly extreme temperatures, also bring up concerns for clients and their comfort level during interviews. It is commonly acknowledged that clients involved in a marital separation are under significant emotional distress. An important component of mediation, as recognized by

theorists, is "setting the stage" whereby an atmosphere that is calming and comfortable for the clients is established. This is seen to promote communication and negotiation. The physical atmosphere in the existing office space of Family Conciliation does not always aid mediation. Counsellors have indicated that clients have had to leave interviews due to room temperature.

Suggestions arising from counsellors include the following:

- (a) That management make this a more prioritized issue to initiate resolution or improvements.
- (b) That fans be purchased for each office for short term relief.
- (c) That more information be obtained as to the purpose and need of the agency remaining in the office space.
- (d) That serious consideration and planning be done by the administration to move Family Conciliation into improved facilities if the present space cannot be made adequate.

5. Role Clarity and Clarity of Expectations

The role of the conciliation counsellor is considered by counsellors to be reasonably clear. There is recognition, however, that expectations are increasing and evolving, partly due to external demands (e.g. more

detail in assessments) and due to the increasing skill development of counsellors, and their readiness to do more intense intervention work.

Family Conciliation is a relatively young program. The evolution of the counsellors' roles and the increasing complexity of client issues to work with is a natural development of a public service.

Although role clarity is not a large concern at present and counsellors are satisfied with the level of clarity, it is important that the agency acknowledge and make decisions about whether increasing expectations are realistic and appropriate to the counsellors role. For instance, an emerging reality of family violence, being common to many divorcing couples, demands that Family Conciliation develop guidelines that keep up to date with this increasing social problem. Mediation where there is or recently has been abuse, is determined as inappropriate for many reasons, especially in consideration of the power imbalance between the spouses. Family Conciliation could research what pre-conditions must be met before mediation could be possible (an example is successful treatment of the perpetrator and therapy for the abused spouse). It is also within this agency's role to determine how the spouses' abusive relationship effects children and take leadership in advocating for the children's needs. For instance,

children's continued access with the abusive spouse could be detrimental for them.

6. Variety of Work, Change and New Approaches

There is reasonable satisfaction with the emphasis on innovativeness in the work place. Family Conciliation counsellors experience such significant demands from their existing workloads that the focus on changes, or assuming different responsibilities for variety, is restricted. The charge of providing mandated services also restricts variety. However, within the scope of what the agency can do, the following recommendations are made:

- (a) On a regular basis, guest presenters (either from within the agency or from other organizations) could provide updated information on interventions or issues pertaining to work with the client population. Family Conciliation has done this periodically and found it to be useful.
- (b) As opportunities arise for employees to train others, for example developing workshops for external organizations or supervising social work students within, that management encourage and support taking on these responsibilities. If training others in skill development is considered to be a function of the agency, then workload

adjustment of counsellors providing the training needs to occur. For instance, if the training involves more than a day, then a temporary decrease in client case load to allow for preparation and planning would be one suggestion to alleviate the work pressure involved.

- (c) Professional development, obtaining more knowledge and learning new skills, is considered to be a motivator in trying new approaches and in making the work more rewarding. Limits exist for the public service in terms of financial support for staff development. As previously indicated the agency can place a greater emphasis on using local resources for in-service training.

7. Autonomy Versus Control

Conciliation counsellors view autonomy as being an important feature of a work environment. Autonomy refers to counsellors being encouraged to be self-sufficient and make decisions themselves that are in turn supported by management. At Family Conciliation there is satisfaction with the level of emphasis on autonomy. Autonomy is reflective of trust and respect for employees. It is important for the agency to reinforce professionalism and the philosophy that supervision is for support and personal growth rather than control and setting limits.

8. Involvement in an Interdisciplinary System
and With Other Child Care Agencies

There are a combination of stresses and rewards in working with outside agencies and professionals in other disciplines.

Rewards are considered to be:

- (a) Seeing positive change and conflict resolved in families due to combined and cooperative effort of all systems.
- (b) Learning what different perspectives exist regarding client issues and learning what other skills are being used.
- (c) Receiving positive feedback from outside professionals.

Stresses involved are considered to be:

- (a) The competing interests of the different systems or players that impede successful work with clients. For instance, clients who are encouraged to be adversarial by their lawyers often become entrenched in a position that may not be in the best interests of the children involved.
- (b) The policies of other child care agencies that do not allow sharing of information regarding mutual clients, even with client consent. Child protection issues especially is important information for counsellors to have when assessing

a family, however information cannot be released.

- (c) Pressure from external professionals to complete work within a certain time frame, and pressure to provide certain kinds of service or intervention that is not appropriate. (For example, when counsel for clients suggest the counsellor only meet with the children to determine a child care arrangement because the parents are unwilling to become involved in mediation themselves.)

The primary recommendation to enhance the rewards of working within a multi-disciplinary system and alleviate the stress is the continuing effort of management and employees to build rapport with others. Suggested ways to do this include:

- (a) More frequent meetings with lawyers involved in Family Law to update them on the services of Family Conciliation and the role each discipline can assume. Such review is likely to be an on-going task as new lawyers enter Family Law.
- (b) Family Conciliation has representation at monthly meetings that are focused on the operation of the Family Division Court. Representatives of the Court as well as the Family Law subsection are present at these meetings providing a context for Family Conciliation to inform the others about new

developments or issues of the service. This could be an opportunity to engage the representatives in making feasible plans to bring lawyers and conciliation counsellors together to focus on areas of mutual concern and build rapport.

9. Family Conciliation and the Family Division Court

A present area of dissatisfaction for counsellors is the lack of involvement or interaction with the Family Court Justices. There is a belief that means of interaction can enhance mutual learning and service delivery that relate to the mutual client population of divorcing families.

Suggestions for ways to meet the above need are as follows:

- (a) Invite the Associate Chief Justice of the Family Division to regular meetings (e.g. once monthly) with counsellors to identify and discuss issues. As well it will provide the opportunity for counsellors to become updated on Court rules and procedures that clients can be informed about, and that assist counsellors in being knowledgeable about a system that directly effects clients.
- (b) Conduct periodic (e.g. twice annually) seminars on topic areas of interest to both counsellors and Justices. Presentations could be by conciliation

counsellors on current issues and research effecting families of divorce.

Examples of topic areas include:

- The long term effects that witnessing abuse between their parents has upon children.
- Long term effects of disrupted access on children.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Areas of job stress and job satisfaction have been identified for the conciliation counsellors of Family Conciliation. In addition, suggestions have been made in relation to these job components with a view to improving the work environment.

These suggestions are considered to be feasible goals of the public service. If they become agency goals, some can be put into place within a reasonable time frame and require only the commitment of the staff and agency director. These shorter term goals might involve increasing in-service training; setting up a forum for meetings with the Family Law subsection; establishing areas of flexibility in relation to the monthly assignments of Court Ordered Assessments; restrict the review of monthly output statistics to management and administration requirements only; revising the initial acknowledgement of referral letter from the director to provide better information to the clients and their lawyers on

the services of Family Conciliation and what is expected from them; purchase fans for offices.

Other goals may require more time and research as well as administrative input. These might include revising the annual output standards to reflect the more time consuming intervention or complex client situations that have evolved since the standards were first developed; advocating for an improved physical environment or making a decision to move from the existing space; increasing the use of co-mediation and co-assessing with colleagues.

Some recommendations will involve the input and joint planning with other groups, such as developing educational seminars with topics of mutual concern to the conciliation counsellors and Family Division Justices.

The recommendations for reducing job stress and increasing job satisfaction is not exhaustive. They are intended to be a structured beginning to improving the quality of the work environment for Family Conciliation employees.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

This practicum's objective was an opportunity for me to increase my knowledge about stress in the workplace and develop a process of interaction among the staff that would help me learn skills to assist staff in my capacity as supervisor. The most significant development for me is an appreciation for the importance and benefits of providing a

structured forum for employee groups to discuss issues of stress in their jobs. The process of the staff's input, their openness and willingness to talk about it, as well as their problem solving around making positive changes, confirmed the information found in the literature review.

I gained confidence as a supervisor in approaching sensitive issues with staff and know that I am capable of continuing to identify where stress exists for employees and how to engage them as a team in focusing on short term, task-oriented discussion and problem-solving.

The experience of the practicum has made me realize that the process of learning to identify areas of job stress and satisfaction, as well as engaging employees in the work around these issues, is an on-going function of the unit. It is not sufficient that we assume what the issues are and what to do about them. The strength and appropriateness of employees providing direction is very clear. However, managers should take leadership and highly support the process.

There were also advantages for the conciliation counsellors as a result of participating in this research. Primarily, the process of identifying and addressing areas of job stress created group cohesion and an opportunity to begin the process of team building. There was a risk and challenge for them in identifying where growth and changes are needed but the process was supportive and non-threatening. In

addition, the employee group obtained some re-affirming information about the strengths of the group which were many and very significant to them. The recognition of their strengths would have also created a less threatening path to examining areas the work environment needs improvement.

There were some handicaps for me during this practicum. I was appointed Acting Program Director for Family Conciliation during the practicum. This change, as well as other staff changes contributed to a period of adjustment for employees. I was concerned that as a manager, I would be unsuccessful at achieving staff input on sensitive issues, some of which directly involved their feelings towards management. I wondered if my new position would have a negative influence on staff involvement. The confidentiality of the questionnaires was very important. I also provided employees with information about the group profile and their identified issues prior to the meetings. Written comments and questions derived from this meeting were given to staff prior to the second meeting as a further attempt to emphasize how their involvement shapes direction of planning.

Another frustration I experienced was limited time frames that exist for the employees in concentrating on issues of the work environment. Work pressure demands regarding client work make it difficult for employees and management to legitimize the time needed to explore the concerns and strengths of the work environment. As a result of what I have

learned from this practicum I believe that an investment of time and effort on improving the work environment is an organizational investment in encouraging employees to remain committed to their work. Ultimately such commitment and involvement on the part of employees leads to benefits for clients as well. As a manager, this practicum has strengthened my commitment to make the work environment a healthy and positive experience for employees. There were also drawbacks for the conciliation counsellors in the conducting of this research. The time and effort required from them during their busy schedules likely produced a greater workload for them. It is quite likely that their commitment and participation was due to the fact that the researcher was not only a staff member but their director. Whether or not all issues concerning management were raised is undetermined, whereas if an outside researcher worked with the group, more issues may have been addressed. As the researcher neutrality in many instances was difficult to maintain because of the impact issues had upon myself.

An additional drawback is that the recommendations made need to be instituted in order for counsellors to feel their work on them has been productive and ultimately for them to experience more value as employees. Management and employees not following through with their plans is a risk since time and effort are required.

In conclusion, I have found this practicum to be a

rewarding experience in the knowledge I have gained from it and the direction it has provided for the agency to work with. The opportunity and challenges of interacting with counsellors around issues of mutual concern and identifying their strengths was particularly gratifying. My desire is that the practicum has been a positive initiative for growth and change in the agency.

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An Index of Job Satisfaction
(Brayfield & Roth, 1951)

JOB QUESTIONNAIRE

Some jobs are more interesting and satisfying than others. This blank contains eighteen statements about jobs. You are to cross out the phrase below each statement which best describes how you feel about your present job. There are no right or wrong answers. I should like your honest opinion on each one of the statements. Work out the sample item numbered (0).

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 0. | There are some conditions concerning my job that could be improved. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 1. | My job is like a hobby to me. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 2. | My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 3. | It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 4. | I consider my job rather unpleasant. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 5. | I enjoy my work more than my leisure time. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 6. | I am often bored with my job. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 7. | I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 8. | Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 9. | I am satisfied with my job for the time being. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 10. | I feel that my job is no more interesting than others I could get. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 11. | I definitely dislike my work. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 12. | I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people. | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |

APPENDIX A (Cont'd)

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-------|-----------|----------|--|-------------------|
| 13. | Most days I am enthusiastic about my work. | | | | | |
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 14. | Each day of work seems like it will never end. | | | | | |
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 15. | I like my job better than the average worker does. | | | | | |
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 16. | My job is pretty uninteresting. | | | | | |
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 17. | I find real enjoyment in my work. | | | | | |
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
| 18. | I am disappointed that I ever took this job. | | | | | |
| | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | UNDECIDED | DISAGREE | | STRONGLY DISAGREE |

The Cornell Job Descriptive Index (P. Smith, 1976)

The following scale asks that you put a "Y" beside an item if the item describes the particular aspect of your job (work, pay and so forth). Put an "N" if the item does not describe that aspect, or "?" if you cannot decide.

| WORK | PAY | PROMOTIONS |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fascinating | <input type="checkbox"/> Income adequate for | <input type="checkbox"/> Good opportunity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Routine | <input type="checkbox"/> normal expenses | <input type="checkbox"/> for advancement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfying | <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory profit | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity some- |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boring | <input type="checkbox"/> sharing | <input type="checkbox"/> what limited |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Barely live on income | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion on |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad | <input type="checkbox"/> ability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respected | <input type="checkbox"/> Income provides | <input type="checkbox"/> Dead-end job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hot | <input type="checkbox"/> luxuries | <input type="checkbox"/> Good chance for |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant | <input type="checkbox"/> Insecure | <input type="checkbox"/> promotion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Useful | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than I deserve | <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair promotion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tiresome | <input type="checkbox"/> Highly paid | <input type="checkbox"/> policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthful | <input type="checkbox"/> Underpaid | <input type="checkbox"/> Infrequent promotions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging | | <input type="checkbox"/> Regular promotions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On your feet | | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairly good chance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrating | | <input type="checkbox"/> for promotion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simple | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Endless | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gives sense of | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> accomplishment | | |
| | | |
| SUPERVISION | PEOPLE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asks my advice | <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulating | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to please | <input type="checkbox"/> Boring | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Impolite | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praises good work | <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tactful | <input type="checkbox"/> Stupid | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Influential | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up-to-date | <input type="checkbox"/> Fast | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't supervise | <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligent | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to make | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quick-tempered | <input type="checkbox"/> enemies | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tells me where I | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk too much | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stand | <input type="checkbox"/> Smart | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annoying | <input type="checkbox"/> Lazy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stubborn | <input type="checkbox"/> Unpleasant | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knows job well | <input type="checkbox"/> No privacy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad | <input type="checkbox"/> Active | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligent | <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow interests | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaves me on my | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyal | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> own | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to meet | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Around when needed | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lazy | | |

Sample Items for the
Work Environment Scale Real Form
by Paul M. Insel and Rudolf H. Moos

Directions: These statements are about the place in which you work. The statements are intended to apply to all work environments. However, some words may not be quite suitable for your work environment. For example, the term "supervisor" is meant to refer to the boss, manager, department head, or the person or persons to whom an employee reports. You are to decide which statements are true of your work environment and which are false.

Involvement Scale

1. The work is really challenging.

Peer Cohesion

2. People go out of their way to help a new employee feel comfortable.

Task Orientation

5. People pay a lot of attention to getting work done.

Work Pressure

6. There is constant pressure to keep working.

Control

8. There's a strict emphasis on following policies and regulations.

Innovation

9. Doing things in a different way is valued.

Supervisor Support

13. Supervisors usually compliment an employee who does something well.

Autonomy

14. Employees have a great deal of freedom to do as they like.

Clarity

17. Activities are well-planned.

Physical Comfort

20. The lighting is extremely good.

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Sample Items for the
Work Environment Scale Ideal Form
by Paul M. Insel and Rudolf H. Moos

Directions: These statements are about work environments. They ask you what you think an ideal work environment would be like. You are to decide which statements are true of an ideal work environment and which are false.

The statements are intended to apply to all work environments. However, some words may not be quite suitable for your work environment. For example, the term "supervisor" is meant to refer to the boss, manager, department head, or the person or persons to whom an employee reports.

Involvement Scale

1. The work will be really challenging.

Peer Cohesion

2. People will go out of their way to help a new employee feel comfortable.

Task Orientation

5. People will pay a lot of attention to getting work done.

Work Pressure

6. There will be constant pressure to keep working.

Control

8. There will be a strict emphasis on following policies and regulations.

Innovation

9. Doing things in a different way will be valued.

Supervisor Support

13. Supervisors will usually compliment an employee who does something well.

Autonomy

14. Employees will have a great deal of freedom to do as they like.

Clarity

17. Activities will be well-planned.

Physical Comfort

20. The lighting will be extremely good.

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APPENDIX D

The Crown Marlowe Social Desirability Inventory
(Crowne, Marlowe 1964)

SDI

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally and circle either T or F.

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----|---|
| T | F | 1. | I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake. |
| T | F | 2. | I always try to practice what I preach. |
| T | F | 3. | I never resent being asked to return a favour. |
| T | F | 4. | I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own. |
| T | F | 5. | I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings. |
| T | F | 6. | I like to gossip at times. |
| T | F | 7. | There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone. |
| T | F | 8. | I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget. |
| T | F | 9. | At times I have really insisted on having things my own way. |
| T | F | 10. | There have been occasions when I have felt like smashing things. |

Additional Comments Section

Please indicate what in your view are the most stressful components of conflict resolution work with families of divorce?

What do you feel would contribute most to your continued career in this field? (Eg. speciality of the work, pay, the people you work with, opportunity etc.)

Do you believe that conflict resolution work is more stressful than other areas of direct service with clients? (Please indicate your reasons why or why not.)

Conciliation Counsellors must work in the context of an interdisciplinary environment involving lawyers, judges and community social service agencies.

(a) What do you experience to be most stressful in relation to this?

APPENDIX E (cont'd)

(b) What do you experience to be most rewarding?

What do you feel contributes most to your satisfaction with your work environment?

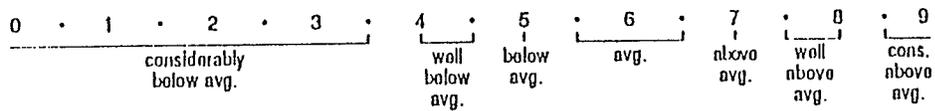
What would contribute most to your dissatisfaction with the work environment?

Interpretive Report Form (WES) Form R
(Moos, 1986)

Relationship Dimensions

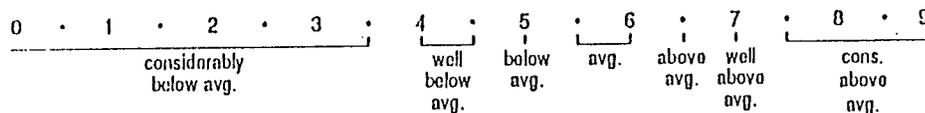
The first three dimensions measured by the WES are the Relationship Dimensions, which assess how committed employees are to their jobs, how friendly the employees are, and how supportive they are of each other, and how supportive managers are of employees.

Involvement (I)



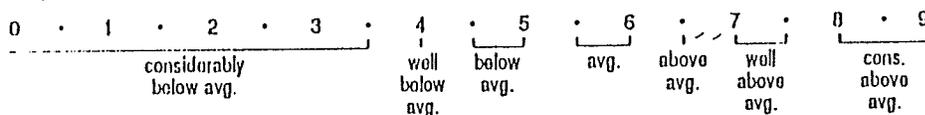
The Involvement subscale measures the extent to which employees are concerned about and committed to their jobs, for example: how challenging the work is, the pride people have in the organization, and the effort they put into what they do.

Peer Cohesion (PC)



The Peer Cohesion subscale taps the extent to which employees are friendly and supportive of one another, for example: the effort people make to help a new employee feel comfortable, the interest they have in each other, and how frank they are about their feelings.

Supervisor Support (SS)

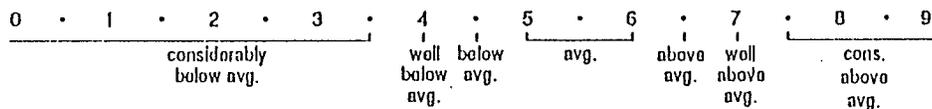


The Supervisor Support subscale assesses the extent to which management is supportive of employees and encourages them to be supportive of one another, for example: how often supervisors compliment an employee who does something well, how often they give full credit to the ideas contributed by employees, and whether employees feel free to ask for a raise.

Personal Growth or Goal Orientation Dimensions

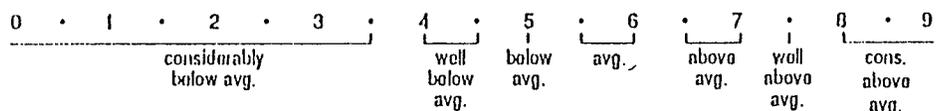
The Personal Growth, or Goal Orientation, subscales make up another set of WES dimensions. This set focuses on the emphasis on independence, getting the job done, and job demands. These dimensions include the Autonomy, Task Orientation, and Work Pressure subscales. All three subscales contribute to a description of the work setting's goal orientation; Autonomy and Task Orientation tap personal growth dimensions as well.

Autonomy (A)



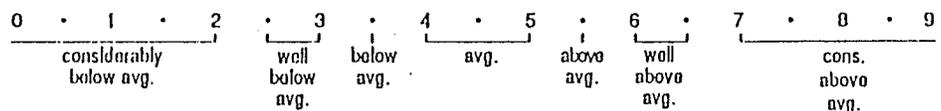
The Autonomy subscale measures the extent to which employees are encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions, for example: how much freedom employees have to do as they like, how much they are encouraged to make their own decisions, and whether people can use their own initiative to do things.

Task Orientation (TO)



The Task Orientation subscale taps the degree of emphasis on good planning, efficiency, and getting the job done, for example: how much attention people pay to getting work done, how often things get "put off until tomorrow," and how efficient and task-oriented the workplace is.

Work Pressure (WP)

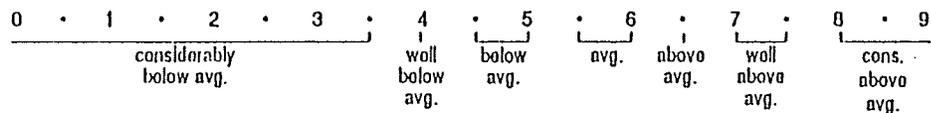


The Work Pressure subscale assesses the degree to which the pressure of work and time urgency dominate the job milieu, for example: how much pressure there is to keep working, how often there seems to be an urgency about everything, and whether people can afford to relax.

System Maintenance and System Change Dimensions

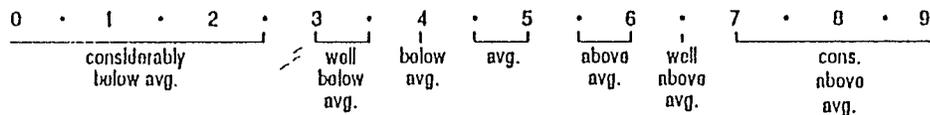
The System Maintenance and System Change Dimensions, the last set of dimensions measured by the WES, assess the work setting's emphasis on rules and policies and on variety and innovation; it also taps the pleasantness of the physical setting. The four subscales in this domain are Clarity, Control, Innovation, and Physical Comfort.

Clarity (C)



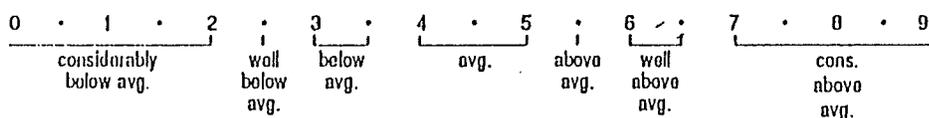
The Clarity subscale taps the extent to which employees know what to expect in their daily routine and how explicitly rules and policies are communicated, for example: how well activities are planned, how clearly the responsibilities of supervisors are defined, and how well the details of assigned jobs are explained to employees.

Control (CII)



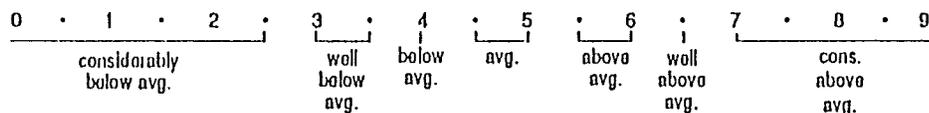
The Control subscale assesses the extent to which management uses rules and pressures to keep employees under control, for example: how much following policies and regulations is emphasized, whether people are expected to follow set rules in doing their work, and how closely supervisors watch employees.

Innovation (Inn)



The Innovation subscale measures the degree of emphasis on variety, change, and new approaches, for example: whether doing things in a different way is valued, whether new and different ideas are tried out, and whether the place is one of the first to try out a new idea.

Physical Comfort (Com)



The Physical Comfort subscale measures the extent to which the physical surroundings contribute to a pleasant work environment, for example: how good the lighting is, how stylish and modern the place appears, and whether the colors and decorations make the place warm and cheerful to work in.



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APPENDIX H

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