



REDUCED SERVICE YEARS FOR RETIREMENT FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS: MYTH OR POSSIBLE REALITY?

BENEFICIRANI RADNI STAŽ PROFESIONALNIH POMAGAČA: MIT ILI MOGUĆA REALNOST?

Erna Lučić¹, Arnela Osmanović¹

¹Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Original Scientific Article

Received: 07/10/2024

Revised: 27/10/2024

Accepted: 04/12/2024

ABSTRACT

The study titled “Reduced Service Years for Retirement for Helping Professionals: Myth or Possible Reality?” was conducted as part of broader research on professional stress and burnout among helping professionals, integrating both theoretical and empirical approaches. During the theoretical phase, scientific and professional literature was utilized to explore the topics of professional stress and burnout among social workers and other helping professionals in social work. The empirical study sample comprised social workers and other helping professionals (social pedagogues, psychologists, legal professionals, pedagogues-psychologists, a neuropsychiatrist, and a graduate nurse) employed in social welfare centers, other public institutions (mental health centers and the Educational Center), and non-governmental organizations (Safe House). The survey was conducted on a reference sample of 63 respondents (15 male and 48 female participants) from helping professions in the Tuzla Canton area (Banovići, Kalesija, Lukavac, Srebrenik, Tuzla, and Živinice). The study aimed to provide insight into the problems and challenges faced daily by social workers and other helping professionals, with a focus on gaining a more comprehensive understanding of professional stress and burnout in the social work field. The onset and development of professional stress result in burnout, which adversely affects the mental and physical health of social workers and other helping professionals, as well as their personal and professional lives during the execution of work activities.

Keywords: social work, social workers, social welfare centers, professional stress, professional burnout, helping professionals, institutional/organizational protection, reduced service years for retirement.

¹Correspondence to:

Erna Lučić, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Tuzla, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina
E-mail: erna.lucic@untz.ba

SAŽETAK

Istraživanje teme “Beneficirani radni staž profesionalnih pomagača: Mit ili moguća realnost?” u okviru istraživanja o profesionalnom stresu i sagorijevanju profesionalnih pomagača, realiziralo se kao teorijsko i empirijsko. Tijekom teorijskog istraživanja korištena je naučna i stručna literatura koja percipira tematiku profesionalnog stresa i sagorijevanja socijalnih radnika i ostalih profesionalnih pomagača u djelatnosti socijalnog rada. Uzorak za istraživanje u empirijskom dijelu istraživanja činili su socijalni radnici i ostali profesionalni pomagači (socijalni pedagozi, psiholozi, pravnici, pedagozi - psiholozi, neuropsihijatar i diplomirana medicinska sestra) zaposleni u centrima za socijalni rad, drugim javnim ustanovama (centri za mentalno zdravlje i Odgojni centar) i nevladinim organizacijama (Sigurna kuća). Ispitivanje se realiziralo na referentnom uzorku od 63 ispitanika (15 ispitanika muškog spola i 48 ispitanika ženskog spola) pomažućih profesija na području Tuzlanskog kantona (Banovići, Kalesija, Lukavac, Srebrenik, Tuzla i Živinice). Istraživanje je imalo za cilj da osigura uvid u probleme i izazove s kojima se svakodnevno susreću socijalni radnici i ostali profesionalni pomagači. Cilj je usmjeren i na spoznavanje i sveobuhvatnije percipiranje profesionalnog stresa i sagorijevanja u djelatnosti socijalnog rada. Nastanak i razvoj profesionalnog stresa rezultira profesionalnim sagorijevanjem koje se negativno odražava na psihičko i fizičko zdravlje, ali i na lični i profesionalni život socijalnih radnika i ostalih profesionalnih pomagača tijekom realizacije radnih aktivnosti.

Ključne riječi: socijalni rad, socijalni radnici, centri za socijalni rad, profesionalni stres, profesionalno sagorijevanje, profesionalni pomagači, institucionalna/organizaciona zaštita, beneficirani radni staž.

INTRODUCTION

Research on professional stress worldwide has consistently identified stress as a persistent phenomenon in the work of social workers (Jones, 2001). Findings have shown that the profession of social work is among the most stressful occupations (Travers and Cooper, 1993; Kahn, 1993) and that it continues to climb the stress scale (Coffey, Dugdill, and Tattersall, 2004).

Helping professions are characterized by a high potential for stress due to the direct communication with individuals in states of social need and the demanding nature of such interactions, which often require identifying with the emotional state of the person seeking assistance.

Exposure to the negative experiences of others and working with traumatized individuals can have a destructive impact on a helper's ability to maintain control over their own life. Consequently, helpers themselves may become traumatized and experience crisis situations.

In recent decades, professional stress, particularly its sources and consequences on psychological and physical well-being, professional capacities, and work efficiency across various professions, has been the subject of continuous research.

Studies indicate that, compared to other helping professionals, social workers tend to experience higher levels of stress and burnout while performing their duties. Workplace

stress results in both physical and mental health consequences for social workers (Coffey, Dugdill, and Tattersall, 2009).

The life expectancy of social workers is significantly lower compared to other helping professionals. High levels of professional stress and workplace burnout often lead to changes in the work environment (Curtis, Moriarty, and Netten, 2010).

In addition to professional challenges and an ever-growing workload, social workers face other difficulties that must not be overlooked. These include a lack of workplace safety, inadequate working conditions, insufficient resources, dysfunctional organization of work activities, and excessive workload due to insufficient professional capacities (Družić-Ljubotina and Friščić, 2014).

REDUCED SERVICE YEARS FOR ENTIREMENT BENEFITED WORK EXPERIENCE FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS: MYTH OR POSSIBLE REALITY?

Institutional protection for social workers against professional stress and burnout is defined as a mechanism aimed at safeguarding social workers and other helping professionals from these issues. Its purpose is to prevent the causes of professional stress and resolve obstacles encountered or anticipated during work activities. By addressing and mitigating stressors manifesting as challenges in the field of social work, the development and escalation of professional burnout can be avoided. To prevent professional burnout, professional stress must first be addressed.

Institutional protection for social workers against professional stress and burnout includes:

1. Improvement of working conditions,
2. Identification of stress-inducing aspects of the job,
3. Application of existing strategies and development of new ones to reduce or eliminate identified stressors.

In addition to these measures, institutional protection for social workers also promotes:

1. Benefited work experience,
2. Transformation of the institutional environment.

According to Article 33, Paragraph (1) of the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance ("Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH", No. 13/18), the Federal Minister of Labor and Social Policy issues the *Rulebook on Workplaces Eligible for Calculating Insurance Service with Extended Duration, the Procedure for Determining Such Workplaces, and the Procedure for Reviewing These Workplaces*. It is evident that helping professionals in the domain of support services are not included in this register. Workplaces eligible for calculating insurance service with extended duration are those that meet the conditions outlined in Article 2 of the aforementioned rulebook, particularly in the following sectors:

1. Mining,
2. Transportation,
3. Healthcare,

4. Forestry,
5. Construction.
6. Graphic Industry,
7. Textile Industry,
8. Foundries and Forging Workshops,
9. Defense Industry,
10. Artistic Occupations,
11. Pharmaceutical Industry,
12. Black Metallurgy (Steelworks),
13. Electricity Production,
14. Leather Processing Industry, and so on.

Social work, as a dynamically oriented profession, is continuously exposed to a multitude of problems and challenges that social workers strive to address. While carrying out their duties, social workers often face unforeseen obstacles, and there is no universal formula they can rely on. The profession inherently demands time, dedication, and commitment. Devotion to a role constrained by insufficient resources, which fosters stress, can lead to lasting negative consequences. The dynamic nature of the job underscores the need for holism, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinarity. However, the lack of cross-sectoral and inter-institutional collaboration and support often leaves social workers to fend for themselves.

Limited resources, inadequate working conditions, job overload, inter-collegial hostility, an overemphasis on form over substance, insufficient professional capacity, and work with clients exhibiting aggression, frustration, violent communication tendencies, or symptoms of mental disorders significantly hinder social workers' effectiveness.

Prolonged exposure to stress inflicts lasting negative effects on the psychological and physical health of social workers, as well as their personal and professional lives. The near absence of discussions regarding the mental health of helping professionals and the stress-inducing nature of social work in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society highlights the ongoing struggle for the recognition of this profession. The lack of institutional protection against professional stress and burnout in the execution of social work tasks emphasizes the urgent need for societal acknowledgment of the profession.

No social system can function without an adequate social protection system. An inefficient and deficient social protection system not only fails to protect helping professionals, but it also does not serve users or the community at large. An inadequate response to the needs and problems of social protection users increasingly deepens the agony of social workers, who see themselves as responsible for their limited ability to act. Continuous exposure to professional stress leads to burnout among social workers. Helping professionals lack the necessary professional capacities to perform social work when they are experiencing the effects of burnout.

Currently, our social system does not have clearly defined institutional frameworks for protecting helping professionals from professional stress and burnout, which should include:

1. Reduced service years for retirement,
2. Improving working conditions,
3. Changing the institutional environment,

4. Identifying stress-inducing aspects of the job,
5. Applying existing and developing new strategies to reduce or eliminate identified stressors.

Theoretically, we still do not have protection models such as supervision, consultations, psychological counseling, self-care concepts, and mindfulness techniques, which are discussed globally and should be available to helping professionals throughout their careers.

Given the consistently present professional stress during work with clients in social work, a shorter number of working days throughout one's career would result in reduced exposure to professional stress. Protective concepts such as supervision, consultations, psychological counseling, self-care, and mindfulness techniques would continuously verify the mental health of helping professionals and address any consequences of professional stress, ultimately resulting in more effective, efficient, and successful professional engagement. These measures would also enhance personal life satisfaction, preserve the psychosomatic health of helping professionals, and prevent the possibility of professional burnout.

A shorter working life in helping professions implies controlling exposure to professional stress, thus preventing burnout.

Change in institutional environment: Changing the workplace or institutional environment, in addition to reduced service years for retirement, can be an excellent tool for preventing professional stress and burnout. Organizational limitations such as insufficient resources, inadequate working conditions, lack of work capacity, absence of professional help and support, collegial rivalry, preoccupation with work tasks, excessive exposure to professional stress, and the inability to engage in professional and personal prevention of stress directly and gradually lead to the onset of professional burnout.

Working in complex, demanding, and sometimes seemingly unsolvable problem situations, dealing with violent, aggressive, and frustrated clients, and working on cases that are unwilling to be resolved, leaves consequences on the psychosomatic health of helping professionals. The daily consequences on the overall well-being of helping professionals negatively affect their personal and professional lives, with the possibility of far-reaching and irreparable implications.

While it is crucial to elevate services in social protection institutions to a higher level, it is equally vital to enable helping professionals to work in an unhindered and supportive environment, where they have access to all the necessary resources, enabling them to utilize their knowledge, skills, and capacities to the fullest. It is impossible to build an effective social protection system without efficient and professional human resources. An efficient and effective social protection system must be based on foundations such as institutional resources and professional capacities.

The principle of circular social work would guarantee social workers, as well as other helping professionals, a change in the working environment. This would manifest in such a way that social workers would remain in one position and one job for a certain period, and after experiencing job saturation, they would have the opportunity to move to a new job and a new working environment. This new environment would be considerably different from the previous one, and the very possibility of changing the institutional environment could be seen as a concrete mechanism for the prevention and defense against professional burnout.

Circulating between at least two to three job positions throughout one's career would result in changes in the work and collegial environment, work conditions, and a different work dynamic, which would significantly reduce stress compared to the previous work environment. The goal of circular social work is to transition from the most stressful areas of social work to those that are less stressful or even to a field that is not directly related to social work but is certainly within the domain of social sciences.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The aim of the research was to provide insight into the problems and challenges faced daily by social workers and other helping professionals. The objective was also focused on understanding and more comprehensively perceiving professional stress and burnout in the field of social work.

The sample for the research in the empirical part consisted of social workers and other helping professionals (social pedagogues, psychologists, lawyers, pedagogues-psychologists, neuropsychiatrists, and registered nurses) employed in social work centers, other public institutions (mental health centers and the Juvenile Center), and non-governmental organizations (Safe House).

Research subject: Examination of the factors that influence the onset and development of professional stress and their impact on the burnout of social workers and other helping professionals.

The research was conducted during the period of November - December 2023.

Research Hypotheses:

General Hypothesis: Professional stress and burnout among social workers and other helping professionals in social work centers, other public institutions, and non-governmental organizations negatively affect their mental and physical health, as well as their personal and professional lives.

Specific Hypothesis:

H/1: We hypothesize that the problems and challenges in the field of social work faced by social workers and other helping professionals are the causes of professional stress and burnout in social work centers, other public institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

Methods and Research Techniques

General Scientific Methods

Modeling Method: This method was used to gather the theoretical foundations currently available on the topic of professional stress and burnout in the field of social work.

Statistical Method: The second part of the research was conducted empirically and relied on the use of statistical methods to determine if there are problems and challenges in the field of social work that social workers and other helping professionals face daily. The situation was presented using quantitative indicators. The results of the analysis were presented numerically through numerical sequences, mean values, rankings, tables, and graphically through various charts. Statistical data processing involved the quantification of the following

statistical values: percentages (%), frequency (f), arithmetic mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and t-test (t). SPSS software was used to calculate the statistical data.

Methods of Data Collection

Survey Method: In the empirical part of the research, the field survey method was used. A questionnaire was the technique employed for data collection from social workers and other helping professionals. The questionnaire was designed with both open and closed-ended questions. The survey was conducted anonymously to contribute to the objectivity of the research.

Content Analysis Method: This method was used to gather data and analyze scientific and professional literature, legal regulations and policies, reports, and other credible documentation related to professional stress and burnout in the field of social work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering that the research was conducted in the Tuzla Canton and based on the representation of social workers and other helping professionals, the results should not be generalized or perceived from the perspective of the entire Tuzla Canton. The findings cannot be equated with the overall population of helping professionals employed at the time of the research. It is also important to note that the results are always relative to time and place.

The survey was conducted on a reference sample of 63 respondents (15 male and 48 female participants) from helping professions in the Tuzla Canton (Banovići, Kalesija, Lukavac, Srebrenik, Tuzla, and Živinice). Regarding the education level of the helping professionals who participated in the study, it is important to highlight that **37** respondents (58.6%) completed the first cycle of studies, **18** respondents (28.6%) completed the second cycle of studies, **3** respondents (4.8%) completed the third cycle of studies, and **5** respondents (8%) completed higher education (VSS).

61 (96.8%) respondents selected the answer "*Never*" for the given statements "*I am afraid of my superiors*" and "*I am afraid of losing my job*," with an arithmetic mean of 1.03 and a standard deviation of 0.177.

For the statement "*I perform several tasks simultaneously*," **27** respondents (42.9%) selected the answer "*Sometimes*," with an arithmetic mean of 2.06 and a standard deviation of 0.759.

23 respondents (36.5%) selected the answer "*Always*" for the statement "*I have too much administrative work*," with an arithmetic mean of 2.10 and a standard deviation of 0.797.

Table 1. Assessment of Problems and Challenges Causing Professional Stress and Burnout in the Field of Social Work: 1 - Never, 2 - Sometimes, 3 - Always

STATEMENT	N	SD	M	f	1	2	3
				%			
I perform several tasks simultaneously	63	0.759	2.06	f 16 % 25.4	27	20	31.7
I have too much administrative work	63	0.797	2.10	f 17 % 27.0	23	23	36.5
I am afraid of my superiors	63	0.177	1.03	f 61 % 96.8	2	0	0.0
I am afraid of losing my job	63	0.177	1.03	f 61 % 96.8	2	0	0.0

For the statement "*Work tasks are too complex and create pressure for me,*" **33** respondents (52.4%) selected the answer "*Never,*" **25** respondents (39.7%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **5** respondents (7.9%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 0.642 and a standard deviation of 1.56.

For the statement "*I do not have adequate working conditions at my job,*" **37** respondents (58.7%) selected the answer "*Never,*" **21** respondents (33.3%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **5** respondents (7.9%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.49 and a standard deviation of 0.644.

For the statement "*I do not receive enough information to perform my job successfully,*" **33** respondents (52.4%) selected the answer "*Never,*" **24** respondents (38.1%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **6** respondents (9.5%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.57 and a standard deviation of 0.665.

For the statement "*It is undesirable to take sick leave,*" **35** respondents (55.6%) selected "*Never,*" **20** respondents (31.7%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **8** respondents (12.7%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.57 and a standard deviation of 0.712.

For the statement "*The fast pace of work burdens me,*" **31** respondents (49.2%) selected "*Never,*" **21** respondents (33.3%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **11** respondents (17.5%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.68 and a standard deviation of 0.578.

For the statement "*I feel discomfort when performing work tasks against the rules and knowledge,*" **35** respondents (55.6%) selected "*Never,*" **13** respondents (20.6%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **15** respondents (23.8%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.68 and a standard deviation of 0.839.

For the statement "*I do not have enough breaks for meals and rest,*" **39** respondents (61.9%) selected "*Never,*" **15** respondents (23.8%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **9** respondents (14.3%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.52 and a standard deviation of 0.737.

For the statement "*I am frustrated by the lack of opportunities for advancement and professional development,*" **32** respondents (50.8%) selected "*Never,*" **17** respondents (27.0%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **14** respondents (22.2%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.71 and a standard deviation of 0.812.

For the statement "*I am burdened by discrimination at work,*" **41** respondents (65.1%) selected "*Never,*" **15** respondents (23.8%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **7** respondents (11.1%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.46 and a standard deviation of 0.692.

For the statement "*I think about going abroad,*" **41** respondents (65.1%) selected "*Never,*" **18** respondents (28.6%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **4** respondents (6.3%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.41 and a standard deviation of 0.613.

For the statement "*Too many clients negatively affect my physical and mental health,*" **32** respondents (50.8%) selected "*Never,*" **21** respondents (33.3%) selected "*Sometimes,*" and **10** respondents (15.9%) selected "*Always,*" with an arithmetic mean of 1.65 and a standard deviation of 0.744.

Table 2. Assessment of Problems and Challenges Causing Professional Stress and Burnout in the Field of Social Work: 1 - Never, 2 - Sometimes, 3 – Always

STATEMENT	N	SD	M	f %	1	2	3
Work tasks are too complex and create pressure for me	63	1.56	0.642	f 33 % 52.4	25	5	7.9
I do not have adequate working conditions at my job	63	0.644	1.49	f 37 % 58.7	21	5	7.9
I do not receive enough information to perform my job successfully	63	0.665	1.57	f 33 % 52.4	24	6	9.5
It is undesirable to take sick leave	63	0.712	1.57	f 35 % 55.6	20	8	12.7
The fast pace of work burdens me	63	0.578	1.68	f 31 % 49.2	21	11	17.5
I feel discomfort when performing work tasks against the rules and knowledge	63	0.839	1.68	f 35 % 55.6	13	15	23.8
I do not have enough breaks for meals and rest	63	0.737	1.52	f 39 % 61.9	15	9	14.3
I am frustrated by the lack of opportunities for advancement and professional development	63	0.812	1.71	f 32 % 50.8	17	14	22.2
I am burdened by discrimination at work	63	0.692	1.46	f 41 % 65.1	15	7	11.1
I think about going abroad	63	0.613	1.41	f 41 % 65.1	18	4	6.3
Too many clients negatively affect my physical and mental health,	63	0.744	1.65	f 32 % 50.8	21	10	15.9

Table 3 presents the t-test and the significance of variance equality by level. The value (Sig. or p-value) is Sig. = 0.086. The "t" column shows the observed or calculated "t" value. Assuming equal variance, the t-value = 0.875 has a positive direction. The "df" column displays the degrees of freedom associated with the t-test. The "Sig. (2-tailed)" column shows the two-tailed *p*-values associated with the tests, where the *p*-value is 0.385. If the (Sig. or p-value) Sig. > 0.05, the first value in the "Sig. (2-tailed)" column is used; otherwise, the second value is taken.

In our example, Sig. = 0.086 > 0.05, so the first value is used, where Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.385. As this value is also greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3. t-test of Equality of Independent Samples

STATEMENTS	Test of Equality by Level		t-test of Equality of Arithmetic Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error of Difference
Equal Assumed Variances	3.048	.086	.875	61	.385	.046	.052
Unequal Assumed Variances			.656	16.820	.521	.046	.070

The specific hypothesis upon which the data analysis was based reads as follows:

- ❖ H0/1: We assume that the problems and challenges in the field of social work among social workers and other helping professionals are the causes of professional stress and burnout in social work centers, other public institutions, and non-governmental organizations.
- ❖ Ha/1: We assume that the problems and challenges in the field of social work among social workers and other helping professionals are not the causes of professional stress and burnout in social work centers, other public institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

Based on the obtained statistical results, the specific hypothesis H0/1 can be accepted, which states: "We assume that the problems and challenges in the field of social work among social workers and other helping professionals are the causes of professional stress and burnout in social work centers, other public institutions, and non-governmental organizations."

Based on the obtained statistical results, the specific hypothesis H0/1 can be accepted, which states: "We assume that the problems and challenges in the field of social work among social workers and other helping professionals are the causes of professional stress and burnout in

social work centers, other public institutions, and non-governmental organizations." According to the test of equality of variances by Level, it is evident that the variances are assumed to be equal since the Sig value is greater than 0.05. Based on the testing of the specific hypothesis, the t-test value is 0.086, allowing us to conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups.

CONCLUSION

The most dominant problems and challenges (triggers) causing professional stress and burnout in the field of social work are:

- ❖ excessively fast work pace,
- ❖ overload with administrative tasks at work,
- ❖ simultaneous handling of multiple tasks
- ❖ the absence of career advancement and professional development.

When discussing the field of social work, the concept of workplace stress cannot be separated from helping professions. The stressfulness of helping professions is their central characteristic. In light of new approaches and perspectives for analyzing and interpreting professional stress and burnout in social work, the idea of preferential working years for helping professionals emerged.

Preferential working years within the helping professions exist as part of a concept for institutional protection of helping professionals from professional stress and burnout in the field of social work. It is essential to protect helping professionals from stress and burnout, primarily at the institutional level.

Furthermore, helpers need to independently find ways and strategies to prevent and combat professional stress, to avoid burnout. Various problems and challenges in the field of social work that helpers face daily become triggers for professional stress.

Constant exposure to the triggers of professional stress leads to the accumulation of stress, which ultimately causes it to escalate into professional burnout. A helper who has burned out no longer serves their professional purpose and, as such, is not useful to clients, families, the community, or society as a whole. Professional stress gradually and spontaneously damages the mental and physical health of helping professionals, leaving negative impacts on both their personal and professional lives.

The essence of a helping professional's career is reflected in their professional functionality and usefulness. A helper who has exhausted their professional capacities can no longer perform their job effectively and successfully. A helper who does not perform their professional activities functionally not only cannot contribute to the progress of the institution or organization they represent, but also causes regression within it.

Helping professionals, in addition to their professional role, also have several other life roles such as marital, parental, neighborly, or friendly roles. A helper should be a functional individual in all these roles, being mentally and physically healthy enough to perform them. When the professional capacities of a helper are exhausted and professional burnout occurs, the consequences manifest not only at the psychosomatic level, but are also interpreted on both a professional and personal level. A helper who has burned out cannot positively fulfill

the social roles assigned to them by birth simply by being a member of a society or community.

The principle of preferential working years essentially seeks to prevent all of this. By introducing preferential working years as a valid approach within the institutional protection of helping professionals from professional stress and burnout in the field of social work, it would reduce the number of working days during the career of a helping professional. This would help prevent professional stress and avoid professional burnout, as helpers would be exposed to the triggers of stress and burnout for a shorter period. These triggers manifest through various challenges and problems that are encountered daily during the performance of professional activities.

REFERENCES

1. Ajduković, D. i Ajduković, M. (ur.) (1996). *Zašto je ugroženo mentalno zdravlje pomagača? Pomoć i samopomoć u skrbi za mentalno zdravlje pomagača*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć, 3-10.
2. Ajduković, D., Bakić, H. i Ajduković, M. (2022). *Psihosocijalna podrška u kriznim situacijama velikih razmjera*. Zagreb: Hrvatski Crveni križ, drugo dopunjeno izdanje.
3. Ajduković, D. (1996). *Izvori profesionalnog stresa i sagorijevanja pomagača*. U: Ajduković, D. i Ajduković, M. (ur.), *Pomoć i samopomoć u skrbi za mentalno zdravlje pomagača*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć, 29-37.
4. Ajduković, M. (1996/a). *Sindrom sagorijevanja na poslu*. U: Ajduković, D. i Ajduković, M. (ur.), *Pomoć i samopomoć u skrbi za mentalno zdravlje pomagača*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć, 21-27.
5. Ajduković, M. (1996/b). *Profesionalna pomoć pomagačima*. U: Ajduković, D. i Ajduković, M. (ur.), *Pomoć i samopomoć u skrbi za mentalno zdravlje pomagača*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć, 77-99.
6. Ajduković, M. i Cajvert, L. (2004). *Supervizija u psihosocijalnom radu*. U: Ajduković, M. i Cajvert, L. (ur.), *Supervizija u psihosocijalnom radu*. Zagreb: Društvo za psihološku pomoć, 13-38.
7. Ajduković, M. (2008). *Socijalni problemi, socijalni rizici i suvremeni socijalni rad*. Zagreb: Studijski centar socijalnog rada, Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.
8. Baugerud, G. A., Vangbaek S. and Melinder, A. (2017). *Secondary traumatic stress, burnout and compassion satisfaction among Norwegian child protection workers: Protective and risk factors*. United Kingdom: The British Journal of Social Work, 48 (1), 215-235.
9. Bakker, A., Demerouti, E. i Sanz-Vergel, A. I. (2014). *Burnout and work engagement*. JD- R approach: California: Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 389-411.
10. Balentić, J. (2021). *Metakognicija i mindfulness*. (Osijek: doktorska disertacija, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku. Filozofski fakultet: Odsjek za psihologiju).
11. Bell, H., Kulkarni, S. and Dalton, L. (2003). *Organizational prevention of vicarious trauma*. Mississippi: Families in Society, 84 (49), 463-470.
12. Ben-Porat A., Shemesh S., Reuven Even Zahav R., Gottlieb S. and Refaeli T. (2021). *Secondary Traumatization Among Social Work Students: The Contribution of Personal,*

- Professional and Environmental Factors*. United Kingdom: Br. J. Soc. Work, 51 (3), 982- 998.
13. Berc, G., Šadić, S. i Kobić, O. (2021). *Kako pomagači mogu sačuvati sebe da bi pomagali drugima i sebi - izazovi primjene self-care koncepta*. Tuzla: DHS, 1 (14), 375-388.
 14. Berc, G., Kobić, O. i Šadić, S. (2021). *Strategije samopomaganja za profesionalne pomagače u savjetovanju*. Sarajevo: Časopis za društvena pitanja, Fakultet političkih nauka Univerziteta u Sarajevu.
 15. Coffey, M., Dugdill, I. and Tattersall, A. (2004). *Stress in social services: Mental well-being, constraints and job satisfaction*. United Kingdom: British Journal of Social Work, 34 (5), 735-747.
 16. Coffey, M., Dugdill, L. and Tattersall, A. (2009). *Working in the public sector: A case study of social services*. United Kingdom: Journal of Social Work, 9 (4), 420-442.
 17. Cooper, C. L., Dewe, P. J. and O'Driscoll, M. P. (2001). *Organizational stress: A review and critique of theory. Research and applications*. USA (Thousand Oaks California): Sage Publications.
 18. Curtis, L., Moriarty, J. and Netten, A. (2010). *The expected working life of a social worker*. United Kingdom: British Journal of Social Work, 40 (5), 1628-1643.
 19. Davison, G. C. i Neale, J. M. (1999). *Psihologija abnormalnog doživljavanja i ponašanja*. Zagreb: Naklada Slap.
 20. Dervišbegović, M. (2003). *Socijalni rad: Teorija i praksa*. Sarajevo: Zonex ex libris.
 21. Družić-Ljubotina, O. i Friščić Lj. (2014). *Profesionalni stres kod socijalnih radnika: Izvori stresa i sagorijevanja na poslu*. Zagreb: Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 6-12.
 22. Freudenberger, H. J. (1974). *Staff burnout*. Omaha: Journal of Social Issues, 30, 159-165.
 23. Friščić, Lj. (2006). *Čimbenici profesionalnog stresa u radu socijalnih radnika u Centru za socijalnu skrb Zagreb*. Zagreb: Ljetopis Studijskog centra socijalnog rada, 13 (2), 347-370.
 24. Fučkar, G. (1995). *Izgaranje na poslu: Psihološka i duhovna pomoć pomagačima*. Zagreb: Dobrobit.
 25. Goliszek, A. (1993). *Stress management*. London: Bantam Books.
 26. Hayes, M. W. (2013). *The challenge of burnout: An ethical perspective*. Annals of Psychotherapy and Integrative Health, 16, 20-5.
 27. Havelka, M. (1998). *Stres i tjelesno zdravlje*. Zdravstvena psihologija. Zagreb (Jastrebarsko): Naklada Slap, 53-88.
 28. Havelka, M. (2002). *Zdravstvena psihologija*. Zagreb (Jastrebarsko): Naklada Slap.
 29. Hudek-Knežević, J. i Kardum, I. (2006). *Stres i tjelesno zdravlje*. Zagreb (Jastrebarsko): Naklada Slap.
 30. Ilijaš, A., Štengl, M. i Podobnik, M. (2020). *Izvori profesionalnog stresa i potrebe u zaštiti od profesionalnog stresa stručnih radnika Centra za socijalnu skrb Zagreb*. Zagreb: Ljetopis socijalnog rada, 28 (1), 7-36.
 31. Jones, C. (2001). *Voices From the Front Line: State Social Workers and New Labour*. United Kingdom: British Journal of Social Work, 31 (4), 547-63.
 32. Ogresta, J. i Rusac, S. (2007). *Izvori profesionalnog stresa socijalnih radnika zaposlenih u psihijatriji*. Zagreb: Socijalna psihijatrija, 15 (1), 3-12.
 33. Rakovec-Felser, Z. (2011). *Professional Burnout as the State and Process: What to Do?* Croatia: Collegium antropologicum, 35 (2), 577-585.

34. Službene novine FBiH, broj 26/19. *Pravilnik o radnim mjestima na kojima se staž osiguranja računa s uvećanim trajanjem, postupku utvrđivanja i postupku revizije radnih mjesta na kojima se staž osiguranja računa s uvećanim trajanjem*. Objavljeno: 19. 4. 2019. godine u Sarajevu.
35. Službene novine FBiH, broj 01-02-1-96-01/23. *Zakon o osnovama socijalne zaštite, zaštite civilnih žrtava rata i zaštite porodice s djecom*. Objavljeno: 28. 2. 2023. godine u Sarajevu.
36. Topić, B. (2016). *Mentalno zdravlje profesionalnih pomagača*. Zagreb: Edukacijsko-rehabilitacijski fakultet, diplomski rad.
37. Travers, C. J. and Cooper, C. L. (1993). *Mental health, job satisfaction and occupational stress among UK teachers*. London: Work and Stress, 7 (3), 203-219.