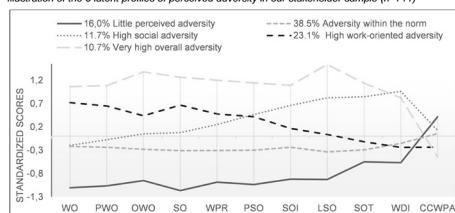


An empirical characterization of the profiles of resilient child welfare workers and of the factors that promote their resilience

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Child welfare workers play a role in the safety and health of the most vulnerable young people and their families. This work has its share of potential adversities, stemming from both client relationships (exposure to the traumatic experiences of young people and their families, exposure to violence, aggression and dangerous situations) and organizational conditions (pressure to make the right decisions in interventions, work overload, turnover and staff shortages, lack of services to meet complex client needs and lack of organizational policies focused on worker well-being). These adversities faced by caregivers have been linked to stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, post-traumatic stress, and retention of these workers, which can negatively affect the well-being of the clients they serve. In this context, the purpose of this study is to identify and quantify the proportion of caregivers presenting a profile of resilience, and to identify the resilience factors and mechanisms that distinguish them from others. Using measures collected from 711 child welfare workers in Quebec, Canada, two latent profile analyses classified participants into five perceived adversity profiles and two outcome profiles (positive or negative). A cross-tabulation of adversity and outcome profiles identified individuals presenting a profile of resilience. A comparison of means identified the resource and coping factors that differentiated individuals presenting a profile of resilience from those who don't. According to the results, 45% of the child welfare workers participating to the study perceived significant adversity above the norm: high social or work adversities, or very high overall adversity. Of these individuals, 58.2% present a profile of resilience. They appear to have: better emotional regulation, better work-life fit, and work that is more meaningful to them; fewer symptoms of post-traumatic stress and less empathic distress; a better ability to adapt to the client and appear to use more problem-solving strategies. Highlighting these factors points the way to promoting resilience in child welfare workers.

Figure 1
Illustration of the 5 latent profiles of perceived adversity in our stakeholder sample (n=711)



Note: Work overload (WO), performance pressure at work (PWO), overextended hours at work (OWO), social overload (SO), worry propensity (WPR), performance pressure in social interactions (PSO), social isolation (SOI), lack of social recognition (LSO), social tension (SOT), work discontent (WDI), feeling of confidence in the face of aggressive customers (CCWPA).

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Biography

Sophie Massé holds a master's degree in criminology and is a doctoral student in psychoeducation. Her thesis subject focuses on the phenomenon of resilience of youth protection workers. In her field experience, she was a worker in a youth center from 1990 to 2009 with various clienteles in various contexts (young people aged 6 to 20, in rehabilitation centers, group homes or followed in their community). She has also been a trainer supporting different teams with the integration and implementation of various programs and approaches. Since 2009, as a project coordinator, she has participated in the development and evaluation of programs, supporting the improvement of practices and the transfer of knowledge intended for teams (managers and stakeholders) of the CISSS and CIUSSS of Quebec working with young people in difficulty. She is also a provincial master trainer for the "ISO-stress: Collective well-being" approach.