

## SAFETY CULTURE SURVEY

The following scales are included in each survey as the standard group of scales we employ. Specifically, Mindful Organizing, Emotional Exhaustion and Psychological Safety serve as the core group of scales from which we generate the most meaningful discussion and language among organizational stakeholders.

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### Background

*Note: Background questions can be added to ask about demographics such as age, race, or gender or anything else that you may want captured within your organization.*

In your current role, do you ever make home visits and/or work alone with children and families? (Y/N)

How long have you worked for DCS?

What is your current role?

How long have you worked in your current role?

Typically, how many hours per week do you work?

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### Organizational Culture and Climate

*Note: The response option for all Org Culture and Climate questions is a 7 point Likert scale. 1 = Very Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree, 7 = Very Strongly Agree*

*Language of the item stems can be manipulated to reflect more closely the language used within your specific organization.*

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### Mindful Organizing

When giving a report to another employee, we usually discuss what to look out for.

My team spends time identifying activities we do not want to go wrong.

My team discusses alternatives to improve how we go about our normal work activities.

My team has a good understanding of each other's skills and talents.

We discuss our unique skills with each other so we know who has relevant specialized skills and knowledge.

My team talks about mistakes and ways to learn from them.

When errors happen, my team discusses how we could have prevented them.

When we attempt to solve a problem in my team, we take advantage of the unique skills of our colleagues.

When a child and/or family related problem occurs in my team, we all get together to figure out the solution.

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## **Emotional Exhaustion**

I feel burned out from my work.

I dread getting up in the morning and having to face another day on the job.

I feel emotionally drained from my work.

I feel used up at the end of the work day.

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## **Psychological Safety**

If you make a mistake in our team, is it often held against you?

The people on my team value each other's unique skills and talents.

Members of my team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.

It is safe to take an interpersonal risk in our team.

On this team, people are sometimes rejected for having different ideas.

It is difficult to ask other members of this team for help.

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## **Stress Recognition**

Fatigue impairs my performance during emergency situations.

I am less effective at work when I am fatigued.

I am more likely to make mistakes in tense or hostile situations.

When my workload becomes excessive my performance is impaired.

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## **Safety Climate**

Compared to other supervisors in my work setting, my supervisor pays greater attention to the safety of children and families.

My supervisor says a good word whenever a job is done with attention to the practices that keep children and families safe.

My supervisor seriously considers staff suggestions for improving safety for children and families.

My supervisor approaches employees during work to discuss safety issues that affect our children and families.

As long as there is no harm to children and families, my supervisor does not care how the work is done.

Whenever the pressure builds up, my supervisor wants us to work faster, rather than by the rules.

My supervisor only keeps track of major safety problems that affect our children and families and overlooks routine problems.

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### **Personal Safety**

*Note: Personal Safety questions are typically only seen by those that respond to the first background questions which asks if an individual ever makes home visits or works alone with children and families.*

I feel safe in the field.

I feel safe working alone in the field.

I have left before entering a home because I felt unsafe.

There have been times I wanted to decline an assignment because I felt unsafe.

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### **Comments**

Please share any comments you have about safety in your work setting.

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## **SAFETY CULTURE SURVEY ADD-ONS**

The following scales are not included in every survey that we administer. Below are additional scales that can be added in addition to the scales listed above.

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### **Personal Safety Decision Scale**

*Note: This scale is importantly different from the personal safety scale above. The scale above measures how individuals feel about their personal safety overall, while this scale measures the frequency by which they engage in specific behaviors because of how they feel about their personal safety. This scale is measured on a 5-point Likert Scale. 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely (1-2 times), 3 = Occasionally (monthly), 4 = Frequently (weekly), 5 = Very Frequently (almost daily).*

In the past 12 months, how often do you -

Leave before entering a home because you felt uncomfortable.

End a visit early because you felt uncomfortable.

Do a telephone "check-in" to avoid a visit due to concerns about safety.

Meet a client in a public place instead of the home.

Are there times when you would want to decline an assignment based on client history of prior violence?

Are there times when you would want to decline an assignment based on dangerousness of location/neighborhood?

Recommend closing a case because of risk of violence.

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## Workplace Connectedness

*Note: This scale is measured on a 7-point Likert Scale. 1 = Very Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree, 7 = Very Strongly Agree.*

I am able to work with my co-workers without sacrificing my principles.

I use “we/us” rather than “they/them” when I talk about my co-workers to others.

My co-workers inspire me to do more than is expected.

When I face challenges my co-workers provide the help and support I need.

I have things in common with my co-workers.

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## Workplace Safety

*Note: This scale is intended to measure perceptions of personal safety in an individual's office environment, it is measured on a 7-point Likert Scale. 1 = Very Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree, 7 = Very Strongly Agree.*

I feel safe going to and from my workplace on a daily basis.

I feel safe in my office environment.

Office safety is important in my organization.

I feel that I am protected in my work setting.

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## Intent to Remain Employed in Child Welfare

*Note: This scale is measures an individual's intent to remain employed in the child welfare field and is used as a proxy for turnover. This scale is measured on a 4-point Likert Scale. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree.*

I intend to remain in child welfare as my long-term professional career.

I will remain in child welfare even though I might be offered a position outside of child welfare with a higher salary.

I would leave child welfare work tomorrow if I was offered a job for the same salary but with less stress.

The personal and professional benefits outweigh the difficulties and frustrations of working in child welfare.

I am actively seeking other employment.

I feel the personal and professional gratification of working in child welfare to be greater than those in other professions.

I frequently think about quitting my job.

I am committed to working in child welfare even though it can be quite stressful at times.

My intention to remain employed in child welfare is strong than that of most of my colleagues.

## Safety Culture Survey Guidelines for Implementation

The following is a general set of guidelines that we recommend jurisdictions follow for proper implementation and follow-up discussion of the safety culture survey. Adjustments in language or processes can be made for any jurisdiction to fit their needs.

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### Sample Framing and organization mapping

1. Determine, with state partnership guidance, the group(s) of people (workers, supervisors, support staff, etc.) to be surveyed.
  2. Communicate with state partners to request full database of employees to be surveyed including but not limited to email addresses, employee ID numbers, all demographic information available, region, site, field, county, supervisor, team, team coordinator ID.
  3. Collaborate with state HR to cross reference data sets to ensure worker ID and team coordinator ID match appropriately. This allows for worker-level data analysis to be aggregated to the team or unit level.
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### Communicating the survey with staff

1. Coordinate with state partnership leaders to draft communications to be sent to all staff, making them aware of the rollout of the survey (See Appendix A for sample script).
  2. Send follow-up email/system announcement communications announcing the survey to regional leaders across the state (See Appendix A for sample script).
  3. Send email/system announcement reminders to frontline staff (case managers & team coordinators) approximately one week prior to the survey launch, encouraging all staff to participate (See Appendix A for sample script).
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### Driving response rates

1. Once the survey is open, by close of business on the Friday of each week that the survey remains open, download survey responses and match them with appropriate regions via the database established by organization mapping.
  2. Calculate response rates per region in table form and share with regional leadership at the start of business on the Monday of each week the survey is open.
  3. Drive competition between regions to achieve response rate of 75% each.
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### Preparing the data

1. Download raw data file and match responses to worker ID numbers.
2. Convert raw Likert scores (1-7) to percent positive scores (See Appendix B for conversion example).

3. Calculate mean percent positive scores for all variables, then for all regions, then for all teams.

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### **Using the check-up tool**

1. Develop safety culture check-up tools for each region and for each team within each region (See Appendix C for example data slides).
2. Check-up tools include the region/team's percent positive data per scale, per survey item. The tools should be disseminated to regional leadership prior to sharing team-level data with their teams.
3. Schedule individual, roundtable safety culture debriefings with each region to discuss their data. Use results to drive team culture conversations with regional and team members around how to interpret results, and what can be gleaned from the results of each scale (See Appendix D for culture conversation tool and scale definitions to guide debriefings).

## APPENDIX: A

### Announcement – Commissioner to staff and RAs

Beginning Monday, XX/XX/XXXX, the Department of Children’s Services will survey Case Managers, Team Coordinators and Team Leaders. The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of the department’s safety culture. Specifically, the survey will seek to understand how DCS infrastructures and processes support safety. It will also serve as an important source of information that will guide DCS practices in its pursuit to improve safety and the quality of services for children and families of Tennessee. It is vitally important that each of you complete the survey. DCS has the opportunity to be a leader among child welfare agencies in the area of safety and everyone’s participation is needed to achieve this.

The survey was developed in collaboration with researchers at Vanderbilt University and Chapin Hall. The survey should only require 15 minutes or less to complete.

Individual survey submissions will be kept completely confidential. The submitted surveys will be solely handled by Chapin Hall staff. Only aggregate results from the survey will be shared with DCS.

Results from the survey tool will be utilized in the following ways:

- As a diagnostic tool to assess the status of the safety culture
- As an intervention to raise staff awareness about safety issues
- As a mechanism to evaluate the impact of safety improvement initiatives
- As a way to track changes in safety culture over time
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We will send you a link to the web-based survey on Monday and the survey will remain open for four weeks. Following data analysis, our commitment is that the survey data be made available to all respondents. Again, your individual survey responses will be kept completely confidential. XXXXX from Chapin Hall will be administering the survey on our behalf. If you have questions about the survey, contact XXXXXX or (555) 111-0000.

Thank you

### Note to RAs– To RA from Commissioner

We sent announcement of our XX/XX/XXXX rollout of the **safety culture survey** under a separate email. I am now asking you, the leaders in our department, for your support in garnering maximum participation rates. Our goal is a minimum response rate of 75% for all Case Managers, Team Coordinators and Team Leaders. Our commitment to you is that we will review the data for opportunities and work with you to improve our processes.

Please help us promote the survey. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to assess the perceived culture of our department.

Thank you

**Announcement** – To all Case Managers, Team Coordinators and Team Leaders from Commissioner

As promised, we have opened the Safety Culture Survey link. We ask that each of you complete this survey within seven days of this email. You may be assured that your answers are anonymous. You may take the survey at:

[\(Insert link here\)](#)

As previously mentioned, the survey is a wonderful opportunity for us to better understand your perception of our safety culture. Our goal is that a minimum of 75% of our targeted staff to participate in the survey.

The survey will be closed on XX/XX/XXXX. Once consolidated and reviewed, we will make the data available for review and together explore our opportunities for improvement.

Considerable effort has been made to ensure that your responses are anonymous. Should you have concerns, please contact XXXXX or (555) 111-0000.

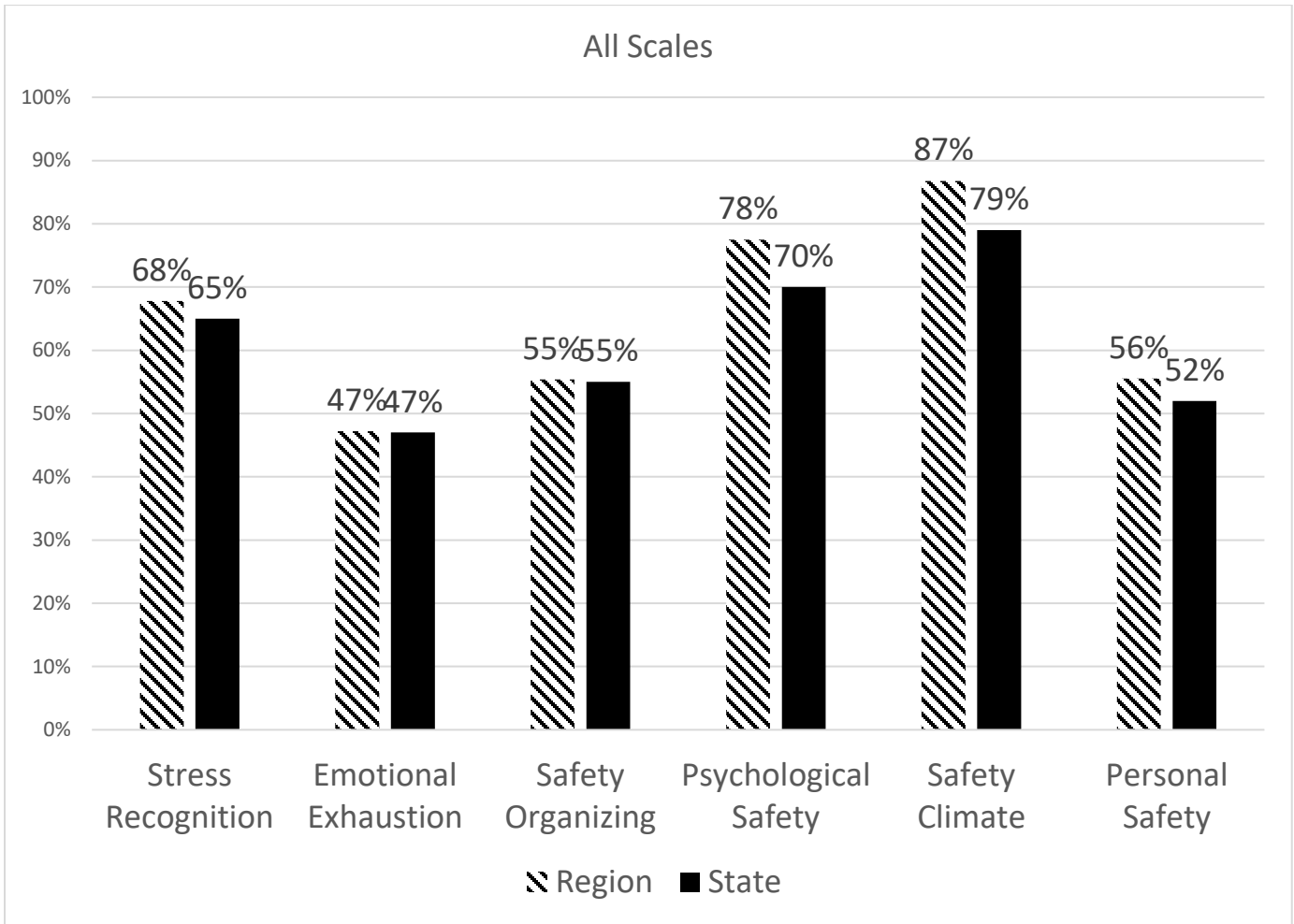
Thank you

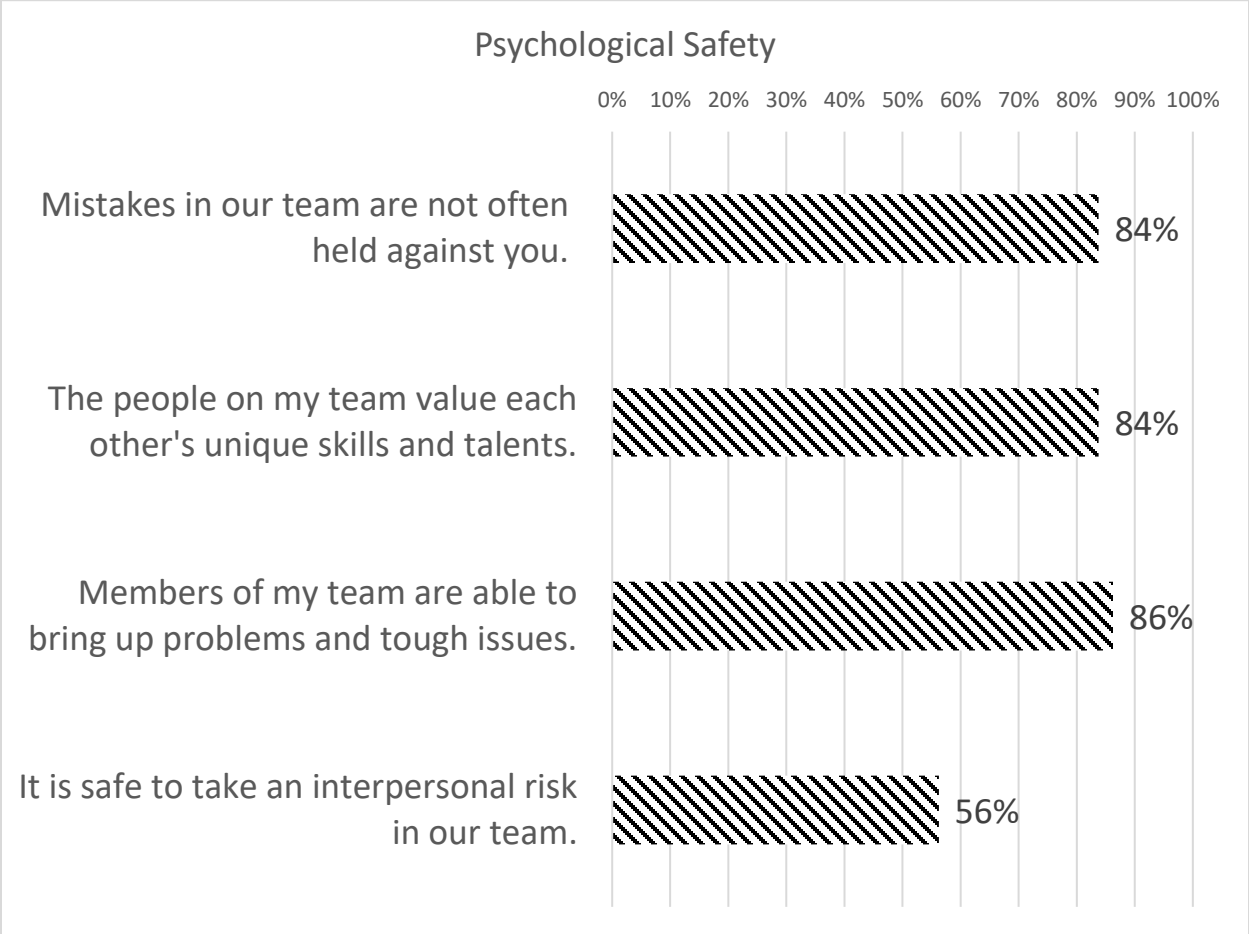


## APPENDIX: B

- Survey responses are given on a 1-7 Likert Scale (1= Very Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree, 7 = Very Strongly Agree).
- To convert all responses to percent positive where 1 = Positive and 0 = Negative:
  - Recode all variables with responses 1-4 as 0.
  - Recode all variables with responses 5-7 as 1.
  - Some variables will need to be reverse coded. In this case,
    - 1-4 = 1
    - 5-7 = 0

**APPENDIX: C**





## APPENDIX: D

<b>Team Culture Conversations</b>
<b>1. Gather Your Team</b>
a. Make it as safe and welcoming as possible. Your goal is create an atmosphere that promotes conversation.
<b>2. Share the data</b>
a. Give your team a few minutes to look over it
b. Define each measure and explain its importance in teams
c. Let them know which scale will be the focus of today's discussion

<b>Use the following prompts to guide your discussion</b>
1. How do these descriptions compare to your experience?
2. What does _____ mean to you?
3. How would it look on our team if our score on _____ was 100%?
4. What one thing can we change?

## **Standard Survey Definitions**

### **Emotional Exhaustion**

Burnout is a measure of your team's emotional reserves. Do your team members feel depleted, drained, and used up at the end of the day?

### **Mindful Organizing**

Safety Organizing is measure of teamwork and team resilience. It's about how teams monitor, plan, innovate, learn, and support one another.

### **Psychological Safety**

Psychological safety measures whether or not team members feel accepted, respected, part of a team and free to speak up and take interpersonal risks.

### **Stress Recognition**

Measures how well individuals identify stress and acknowledge its impact on decision-making.

### **Safety Climate**

Safety Climate describes the relationship team members have with their supervisor. Specifically, how well do team members' interactions with their supervisor support safe, reliable care of children and families?

### **Perceived Personal Safety**

Perceived Personal Safety describes how safe team members feel they are while working in the field.

## **Safety Culture Scales Expanded Definitions**

*(All higher level definitions besides Personal Safety retrieved from Vogus, Cull, & Epstein, 2016)*

### **Emotional Exhaustion (p. 97)**

Comprised of 4 items from Maslach Burnout Inventory. Items in this scale refer to respondents' state of emotional depletion from work including the extent to which an employee felt emotionally drained from work and the extent they felt used up at the end of the day.

### **Mindful Organizing (p. 96)**

Effectively protecting children and increasing service quality in child welfare depends upon the work of front line staff assessing and managing risk. Safety culture is, in part, enacted through a set of frontline behaviors known as safety organizing. Specifically, safety organizing entails detecting and correcting errors and unexpected events by attending to “near miss” events and other leading indicators of harm, considering alternative, safer ways of carrying out work, continuous learning from errors, and deferring to frontline expertise to solve pressing problems. Prior research in health care delivery has demonstrated the benefits of safety organizing to reducing harm. Safety organizing is evident when child protection investigators correct for oversimplifications frequently identified in cases of serious injury or death. Specifically, they may extend an investigation beyond the expected time until closure to revisit facts that appear to be of questionable credibility, more fully considering multiple risks gathered on a family (e.g., presence of domestic violence or parental mental health issues), or talking with additional sources. At a state level the Illinois Error Reduction Initiative reexamines child death investigations over the prior 10 years to identify organizational weaknesses and more effective prevention strategies. Front line child welfare workers also engage in safety organizing when they consult coworkers, the child protection team, or professionals with special expertise on the problem at hand when working a difficult case. In working to reduce errors and unexpected events, safety organizing also helps resolve specific threats that may be especially exhausting to frontline child welfare employees. When engaging in safety organizing and reducing dangerous conditions employees are more likely to experience challenging conditions in their work as energizing rather than exhausting. Collective attention on unsafe conditions and prior adverse events through safety organizing helps frontline employees feel supported less likely to experience emotional exhaustion.

### **Psychological Safety (p. 96)**

Psychological safety is the shared belief that members of an organization are accepted, respected, and safe to take interpersonal risks. In other words, interpersonal consequences of well-intentioned risk will not be negative. In child welfare, the psychological safety of frontline workers is rooted in their perceptions of how leaders enable a safety culture by providing support and attend to the concerns of their employees. Psychologically safe teams are better able to access the expertise of their members leading to better decisions, safer outcomes, and greater involvement in improvement activities. The provision of psychological safety from frontline child welfare workers to the children and families they serve is also essential as it allows them to heal, especially from experiences of abuse and violence. Thus, when child welfare workers experience psychological safety it can enhance the safety of those they serve. In creating the conditions for safer practice (i.e., enabling a safety culture), psychological safety allows front line child welfare workers to “do the right thing” and otherwise engage in good child protection practice, which helps coping with the difficult conditions in their work. A psychologically safe organization also provides a forum for acknowledging the difficulties faced by staff daily. Correspondingly, psychological safety has been link to correlates of emotional exhaustion, namely lower levels of burnout, intentions to leave, and staff turnover in child welfare organizations.

### **Stress Recognition (p. 96)**

Long work hours, on-call duties, crisis management responsibilities, repeated exposures to families in crisis and abuse and neglect of children may place child welfare workers at risk for both personal emotional exhaustion and stress- and fatigue-related adverse events. Stress recognition entails understanding how such stress and fatigue affects work activities, including decision-making, especially when engaging in critical thinking under difficult conditions. Enacting a safety culture relies upon a well-developed capacity for detecting early signs of personal and organizational stress and in turn facilitating swifter corrective action. For example, in hospital intensive care units, earlier recognition of how stress was degrading work performance led their members to request additional resources (i.e., staffing) to restore performance and reduce exhaustion. In child welfare there has been a corresponding push toward “trauma-informed care” that prioritizes recognizing and understanding the effect that trauma exposure has on children, families, and workers. Stress recognition and trauma-informed self-care helps mitigate emotional exhaustion through a combination of enhancing awareness of one's own emotional experience in response to exposure to traumatized clients and responding with positive coping strategies such as seeking assistance from a supervisor or peer, attending trainings on secondary trauma and work-life balance.

#### **Safety Climate (p. 95)**

Safety culture is enabled through safety climate or a specific set of leader actions including implementing safety-related procedures, giving safety highest priority (relative to other goals), broadly disseminating safety information, and otherwise working to assure safety. These leader actions both serve as guides for employees regarding what the organization values and create a sense of efficacy that front line employees can cope with difficult circumstances. In other words, safety climate can help reduce emotional exhaustion by serving as a coping resource. Safety climate provides cognitive resources in the form of leader advice, guidance, and information to employees coping with difficult work conditions and adverse events like child deaths. Additionally, a strong safety climate's focus on preventing adverse events and redressing difficult work conditions helps frontline workers feel supported and reappraise their work as a set of challenges to be overcome rather than sources of exhaustion. The value of safety climate for employees and patients is evident in research from health care delivery linking safety climate to greater employee well-being and reduced patient harm.

#### **Personal Safety (paper currently under peer-review)**

The threat of “on-the-job” violence for child welfare professionals is quite real. Attacks resulting in injury and even death have been documented and violence from clients does not just impact a child welfare professional's sense of personal safety, it also impacts a child welfare professional's stress level, ability to carry out work, and efficiency. By specifically addressing perceptions of personal safety among key stakeholders such as frontline professionals, staff may be more likely to feel as though their safety is being taken seriously by the organization and at the same time, the organization may have strong information to support the implementation of training and policies to improve safety conditions for staff. While child welfare agencies are charged with the responsibility of keeping children safe, they also bear the responsibility of keeping their staff safe. With a staff that is prepared for potentially hostile environments, trained in response techniques for entering homes that present dangerous environments, organizations may observe less adverse events among their vulnerable children and an increased sense of safety organizing among their workforce.