

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology

ANNA DANUTA WOJNARSKA

ORCID: 0000-0003-4096-8940, anna.wojnarska@gmail.com

*Professional Burnout Among Correctional Officers –
Risk and Protective Factors*

Wypalenie zawodowe personelu zakładów karnych – czynniki ryzyka i czynniki chroniące

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ABSTRACT

Professional burnout is experienced by professionals helping people in difficult emotional circumstances (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers). Correctional officers are also at high risk of this disorder. Factors affecting the development of burnout include organisational stressors (autocratic management style, formal hierarchy, lack of professional autonomy) and individual predispositions (coping style, external locus of control, high neuroticism, lack of assertiveness, low self-esteem, too high involvement in work). Risk factors are modified by socioeconomic variables (sex, age, family status, education, work experience). Protective factors include personal resources which are stimulated in two ways: by reaching emotional maturity and resilience, as well as by improving professional competencies. Systemic changes in the management of correctional institutions and changes in the work position of correctional officers may also protect against burnout. Future directions of investigation should consist of research based on new diagnostic methods and advanced data analysis.

Key words: professional burnout; correctional officers in prison; organisational stress; risk factors; protective factors

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 40 years, professional burnout has often been discussed in interdisciplinary scientific studies – primarily psychological, but also medical, sociological, and economic. These investigations are mainly devoted to people in professions that engage them in emotionally intense interpersonal relationships. Thus, researchers most often focused on nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, teachers, social workers

(Sęk, 2000; Zbyrad, 2008), while research into prison staff was relatively rare, although a gradual increase in publications devoted to this group is also observed. It is justified to devote scientific attention to this numerous professional group counting about 27,000 people in Poland (Weber-Rajek, Sygit-Kowalkowska, Radzimińska, Ossowski, 2017), also since it is included in the group of the most stressful professions in the European Union (Madej, Makara-Studzińska, 2019).

Work in the age of market economy is an important factor shaping personality, at the same time, often associated with excessive effort, low gratification and a sense of danger. In the European Union 30% of employees complain about the negative impact of professional work on their psychophysical condition (Tucholska, 2008). Time devoted to work is also constantly increasing due to the change in the formula of official duties which now take the form of online communication. This results in the lack of balance in implementing life roles, constant readiness for professional activities, and a sense of constant control. Perski (2002) notes that regardless of the type of work, the impression of temporariness, time pressure, duties, and, at the same time, loneliness, lack of trust in people and social institutions is characteristic for the modern society.

Risk factors and protective factors, although in psychological and pedagogical literature discussed as separate groups, are in fact linked together. The effects of protective factors are particularly visible and needed when risk factors intensify. Of course, the same factor may act as a risk factor and in different context as a protective factor. The complexity of the impact of risk factors is further complicated by the characteristics of their impact which is modified by the situation and circumstances (contextuality), duration of action (temporal aspect), time of occurrence, age of the person affected by the factor (dynamics) and the strength of the factor (intensity) (Gierowski, 2005). Pines (2000) emphasises that occupational burnout syndrome is dynamic and complex, therefore the configuration of risk and protective factors is always diverse, and, in addition to external organisational and interpersonal factors, personality predispositions are important mediating and moderating variables.

The concept and symptoms of burnout

The term professional burnout was introduced in 1974 by Freudenberger (Piortowski, 2010; Tucholska, 2001; Tucholska, 2008) to define the state of exhaustion due to excessive professional requirements, which are not accompanied by an expected reward. It was defined by Freudenberger and North in 2002 as “a state that crystallises slowly over a longer period of experiencing constant stress and engaging all life energy, which ultimately has a negative effect on motivation, beliefs, and behaviour” (Litzke, Schuh, 2007, p. 167). Although it often appears in the context of stress, occupational burnout is not the same. Stress in the clas-

sic approach of Selye (Łosiak, 2008) consists of three stages: fight against stress, adaptation, and exhaustion. Moderate stress is a necessary adaptation mechanism, while chronic, frequent and intense stress leading to burnout is harmful (Carlson, Thomas, 2006). Experiencing stress and improving coping strategies is adaptation mechanism, while burnout is specific destructive experience.

The most significant contribution to the description and study of burnout was made by Maslach (2000), who created a three-factor model of burnout. It includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced sense of personal competence. Over the time, this model has evolved, and the symptom of exhaustion was extended to include physical exhaustion, the symptom of depersonalisation was replaced by the term cynicism, while the sense of reduced competence was defined as inefficiency (Tucholska, 2001; Piotrowski, 2010). Initially, there was no coherent theory of burnout and it was only through extensive psychometric research that the General Theory of Burnout was created (Tucholska, 2001). A similar theory is offered by Pines (Pines, Maslach, 1978; Schaufeli, Maslach, Marek, 2017) who indicates that people overly focused on work and neglecting other areas of personal development are susceptible to this disorder. However, according to Cherniss (1993 in: Piotrowski, 2010), burnout is the consequence of reduced sense of professional effectiveness and most often affects people with less work seniority. In this perspective of burnout, symptoms include decreased energy, lower aspirations, emotional distance, and alienation. Sęk (2000) places her concept of burnout in the context of stress theory and resource conservation created by Lazarus and Folkmann, and in cognitive theory where the perception of control and social support, as well as the primary and secondary assessment of the situation, are of key importance. According to Demerouti et al. (Baka, Basińska, 2016), every profession is associated with the risk of burnout in the event of employee's insufficient resources and remedial activity. Symptoms of occupational burnout appear sequentially – most researchers (including Maslach) claim that it begins with emotional exhaustion, then a reduced sense of competence, finally leading to depersonalisation. Some, however, believe that this sequence characterises burnout in caregiving professions, while in managerial professions depersonalisation is the first symptom (Korczyńska, 2010).

Professional burnout also affects the physical sphere taking the form of pains, which initially have an emotional basis and over time change to somatic diseases such as hypertension, peptic ulcer disease, or allergy. The emotionality of exhausted people is characterised by lability, low mood, and low motivation to act. In the behavioural sphere, on the other hand, they tend to behave aggressively, escalate conflicts (also in the family), and become indifferent towards life (Finney et al., 2013). In the USA, losses related to burnout are estimated at approximately \$ 200 billion a year, including the costs of absenteeism, medical treatment, reduced productivity, high staff liquidity and the need to retrain. Mental costs are difficult to

estimate because they relate to reduced quality of life, disturbance in intimate relationships, and general discomfort (Bilska, 2004; Tucholska, 2008).

The mental and somatic consequences of burnout are particularly evident in the professional group of correctional officers. As it was researched by Machel in years 1990–1991 and Nawój in 1996, most of them complain of chronic ailments: 59% of officers are disabled, 76% have disability associated with their service, 48% drink coffee, 53.1% smoke cigarettes, 97.7% sporadically or regularly use alcohol, 94.9% take sedatives, 84% think about changing jobs, 83.3% feel lonely, 85.5% feel misunderstood, 90% complain of various types of psychosomatic and neurotic disorders (Barczykowska, Muskała, 2010). In this group, alcohol abuse often acts as a mechanism for releasing suppressed negative emotions and leads to 20% of dismissals from service and 60% warnings about insufficient aptitude for service (Weber-Rajek, et al., 2017, p. 43). This group is characterised by high levels of sick leaves, quick retirement for disability benefits, high staff turnover and frequent absenteeism (Korczyńska, 2010; Piotrowski, 2018; Useche, et al. 2019), which lowers the level of the service they provide.

Reduced work efficiency is particularly important in conditions of prison resocialisation, where it is the main barrier in corrective actions because of the officers' chronic fatigue, their difficulties in focusing on the needs of the prisoners, and a tendency to avoid contact with them. In addition, behaviours such as the abuse of psychoactive substances to relieve tension, withdrawal, outbreaks of aggressive behaviour, and even suicide attempts impede contact with prisoners and other staff members. The efficiency of corrective actions is affected by absenteeism and high employee turnover causing staffing problems. Too few officers compared to the needs contributes to overwork and excess of duties, while frequent absenteeism breaks up educational relations with the convicts (Castiglione, Rampkin, Giovino, 2017; Garland, 2002).

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN STUDYING BURNOUT IN CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

Despite the popularity of burnout in psychological, sociological, medical and economic research, correctional officers are rarely a group studied by researchers. To seek organisational sources of stress for prison employees, meta-analysis method was used (Finney et al., 2013). The researchers reviewed Medline, PsychINFO, Criminal Justice Abstracts, and Sociological Abstracts databases for years 1999–2012 selecting 313 articles. Next, using methodological quality criteria such as model, method, measures, and data analysis as well as presentation, they found only 8 reports meeting formal admission criteria. Their review indicates the existence of many methodological difficulties in exploring burnout and comparing research results. Additionally, the results of Pol-

ish and foreign research may not always be compatible because of cultural and legal differences.

A review of Polish research conducted over the last over 30 years indicates several characteristic features of methodological foundations. One of the basic difficulties is the large diversity of the group, not only due to demographic variables, but also to professional seniority, job position and the frequency of direct contact with inmates. Also, the organisation of the prison facility can be significant for the risk of occupational burnout, because the level of support is related to the degree of openness of the facility, therefore, the least supportive and the most dangerous are prisons with the most stringent rigor for multiple offenders.

Taking into account the diversity of the group due to the organisation of the facility (closed, semi-open, open), the department (penitentiary, security, quartermaster, records, etc.), the position and the related rights of the employee, studies are carried out on large groups so as to reproduce, where possible, relationships existing in the general population. Schmidt (2010) studied 600 employees from 20 penitentiary institutions (9 closed detention centres, 6 semi-open prisons, and 5 detention centres), Korczyńska (2010) examined 672 prison employees, Linowski (2010) 150 detention officers, and Nawój (1996) 392 educators, wards and nurses in 17 penitentiary facilities. Despite such large numbers of respondents, not all positions could be represented, because of the organisational structure of penitentiary institutions. The use of targeted selection is also a limitation dictated by the egalitarian nature of this group and related difficulties with accessing employees. The motivation of the respondents may also raise some doubts. The basic rules for conducting this type of research assume voluntary consent to participate in the study, however, in totalitarian institutions, this is not always observed.

The most often used instrument measuring occupational burnout in Polish studies is the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson. MBI comes in two versions. The first and older one consists of 25 items evaluated on a 6-point scale reflecting the frequency of feelings and their intensity. It is used to assess the level of occupational burnout in four areas: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, personal achievements, and personal involvement (Tucholska, 2001; Kanonowicz, 2010). The second, newer version contains 22 items and only one 7-point frequency scale (Chirkowska-Smolak, Kleka, 2011). Both versions are used in Polish research which may lead to conflicting results, all the more so as there are no reliable standards. Critics of this instrument point out that it was constructed for testing mainly medical personnel and the direction of statements may affect the results since all items on the exhaustion scale are negative (Baka, Basińska, 2016).

Another measure that is not used in occupational burnout studies of correctional officers is the Burnout Measure (BM) constructed by Pines and Aronson. It was designed to measure three components: physical exhaustion, emotional ex-

haustion and mental exhaustion. Research verifying the accuracy of this instrument suggests that its factor structure is limited to two psychophysical and existential dimensions (Santinello, 2014; Kanonowicz, 2010).

The solution to the problem of reliable measurement of occupational burnout may be the LINK Occupational Burnout Questionnaire (LBQ) available for the Polish researchers. It consists of 14 items rated on a 6-point frequency scale and measures physical exhaustion, lack of commitment to customer relationships, a sense of inefficiency, and disappointment. Standards were calculated for teachers, nurses, doctors, therapists, and representatives of uniformed services such as police officers and prison service officers (Santinello, 2014).

There is also a Polish version of the Oldenburg Burnout Questionnaire (OLBI) based on the concept of burnout by Demerouti et al. (Baka, Basińska, 2016). In their model of Requirements at work – Resources, they distinguish two dimensions of burnout: 1) emotional, physical, and cognitive exhaustion, 2) lack of commitment to work. The questionnaire consists of 16 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (from agree to disagree) forming 2 subscales. Statements are both positive and negative. The assessment of psychometric properties of the measure on a group of 1804 people representing various professions gave satisfactory indicators. In addition, stanine norms were calculated for both subscales (Baka, Basińska, 2016).

In American studies with penitentiary employees the CBI questionnaire (Counsellor Burnout Inventory) was used. It consists of five subscales: exhaustion, incompetence, customer devaluation, negative work environment, and deterioration of personal life. In this case 20 items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 – I totally disagree to 5 – I totally agree. This questionnaire has satisfactory psychometric parameters and, according to many researchers, allows more accurate analysis of burnout symptoms than MBI (Lee, et al., 2007 after Carroll, Olivarez, Karcher, 2016).

In addition to measuring occupational burnout, researchers very often use questionnaires to collect demographic, socioeconomic and psychosocial data, personality tests, projection techniques (Schaufeli, Enzmann, Girault, 2000) and document analysis regarding the organisational structure of workplace (Schmidt, 2010). Some researchers focus on investigating personal resources (self-esteem, sense of effectiveness, job satisfaction, mental resilience) that protect employees against the effects of organisational stress; most often these are studies on coping strategies used in the workplace or generally in life situations (Pomiankiewicz, 2010; Piotrowski, 2014; Olejniczak, Dołęgowska, 2015). The Polish version of the instrument measuring stress at work was designed to assess stressful effect of harmful factors on the psychosomatic health of employees and to act as an important element in the prevention of professional burnout. There is a paper version of the measure (the Assessment of Job Features and Subjective Job Assessment Questionnaire) and a computer version consisting of 55 items evaluated on a 5-point scale (Dudek, Kolasa, 2002).

An interesting proposition to study the specifics of the human-work relationship is the AVEM questionnaire, i.e., Work-Related Behaviour and Experience Pattern *Scale* created by Schaarchmidt and Fisher. It is used to diagnose three areas of personality: professional commitment, mental resilience, strategies for solving problem situations and emotional attitude to work in the area of perceived success at work. This method is used to classify personality in relation to work in the following types: healthy – G, unambitious – S, overexerted – A, and burnout – B. It can also predict the probability of occupational burnout (Czekaj, 2015).

RISK FACTORS FOR PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT OF PRISON EMPLOYEES

The causes and risk factors of professional burnout result from a dysfunctional person-work relationship. Maslach (2000) claims that this maladjustment is present in such areas as: workload, lack of control and ability to co-decide, insufficient pay, disintegration of the community, injustice, and conflict of values. Cherniss (Cherniss, Rutger, 1993 in: Piotrowski, 2010) distinguished three types of competencies necessary in social professions – specific to a given profession, interpersonal, and organisational which can determine areas at risk. This concept, as Pines' theory, underestimates the role of factors related to the environment which are included in the theories of Maslach and Şek. Based on the analysis of theory and research results, I propose a division of risk factors according to 2 intersecting criteria. The first category includes factors universal and specific for professional groups, while the second, individual (personality, demographic), interpersonal, and organisational factors. Sources of stress can also be classified according to the type of stressor into the following types: physical, biological, psychological, and organisational (Terelak, 2001). Attempts to classify professional burnout risk factors are only descriptive because their impact is conditioned by the simultaneous appearance of several factors with a specific intensity. For these reasons, determinants of occupational burnout should be analysed with consideration given to the interaction of factors and usage of correlation and regression methods.

Individual universal factors that occur in all risk groups are related to personality traits/individual predispositions. These variables do not lead to burnout directly, however, they can play a mediating role between the individual and their work environment. In various types of studies on social professions, the above-mentioned characteristics were found to be positively correlated with the occurrence of symptoms of occupational burnout. Due to the nature of the analyses, it is difficult to determine the direction of the relationship: work may well stimulate the development of such features. Individual factors that are specific to the conditions of the corrective facility are primarily the perception of one's own

professional role, which often, especially in the case of penitentiary educators, is in conflict with their previous knowledge and life attitudes. Work-related stress triggers maladaptive defence mechanisms such as aggression. These relationships are moderated by the sense of power and control over the inmates – a factor that increases job satisfaction and reduces the impact of stress (Korczyńska, 2010).

Table 1. List of occupational burnout risk factors – variables positively correlated with occupational burnout

Individual universal
Low self-esteem, dependence, passivity, uncertainty, defensiveness
High sense of external control, avoidance of difficult situations, irrational beliefs about the professional role
Lack of assertiveness, patience, and tolerance; high hostility and the need for approval
High reactivity, high motivation to work, perfectionism
A-type personality: focus on achievements, competitiveness, rush, aggressiveness, hostility in interpersonal relations
Coping styles: confrontation, avoidance
High neuroticism, low extraversion
Temperamental features: high emotional reactivity, endurance, perseverance, low activity and briskness
Excessive involvement in work, altruistic motivation
Individual specific
Role conflict, lack of professional training, lack of autonomy in taking action
Perceived lack of emotional and substantive support
Mobbing
Feeling of danger and/or helplessness
Interpersonal universal
Negative contacts with staff and clients, conflicts, social isolation, lack of professional community
Superiors are mainly critical and strict in their assessment, protectionism, and the inability to realize oneself professionally
Mobbing
Interpersonal specific
Formal relationships, no sense of community
Hierarchical organisation based on one-way communication
Situations threatening health and life (traumatic), contact with addicts, aggressive people, people with HIV
Organisational universal
High level of bureaucracy, excessive workload, no stimulation to develop, no support from management
Time pressure, the need to make decisions in the absence of information

Table 1. cont.

Organisational specific
Low occupational prestige
Deprivational and totalitarian character of the institution
Paramilitarism, hierarchical subordination, autocratic management
Type of institution (closed), category of prisoners (detained on remand, repeat offenders), working hours (shifts, night shifts, unregulated work time)
Inadequate allocation of duties, high demands compared to relatively low wages
Disintegration of the environment, no sense of community
Overcrowded facilities, too many prisoners per officer
The need to use direct coercion
Difficult housing conditions, outdated infrastructure

Source: author's own list prepared on the basis of Castiglione, Rampullo, Giovinco, 2017; Ciosek, 1996; Garland, 2002; Machel, 1990-1991; Madej, Makara-Studzińska, 2019; Olejniczak, Dołęgowska, 2015; Perski, 2002; Pomiankiewicz, 2010; Piotrowski, 2010, 2014; Schmidt, 1999, 2010; Sęk, 2000; Strickland, 2006; Becker-Pestka, 2014; Weber-Rajek, et al., 2017; Wieczorek, 2017.

Universal interpersonal factors are related to modern work organisation and the nature of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. Problems in this area often result from poor communication between employees in both horizontal and vertical relationships. The lack of agreement and the accompanying lack of emotional and substantive support often ensue when the team is too large or too small and the relationships become superficial (Fenger, 2000). Vertical communication problems between facility management and employees are also caused by the autocratic management style and a very rigid hierarchy. These problems create sense of helplessness and lack of influence on important decisions as well as growing lack of satisfaction in the employees, which is even more intensified in conditions of penitentiary isolation. Authoritarian institutions such as prisons do not promote creative people who could innovate the system (especially junior corrective officers), which makes them feel disappointed and isolated. It was found that occupational burnout more often affects officers with less seniority, which may indicate that senior staff develop mechanisms to protect their personality (Garland, 2002).

Universal organisational factors that affect the development of burnout result from the general underinvestment of facilities providing services to a large number of clients. Disastrous housing conditions and continuous evaluation of work by superiors and service recipients intensify the adverse impact of individual and interpersonal factors. Due to their isolation, penitentiary institutions cause sensory and emotional deprivation (Pomiankiewicz, 2010; Schmidt, 2010). The social atmosphere of the facility and the philosophy of imprisonment are important for the social rehabilitation process. The most desirable for effective social rehabilitation

is the educational and therapeutic atmosphere, while most often Polish and American institutions are characterised by control and restrictions consisting of compliance with discipline and compliance with statutory regulations (Pytko, 2000). Such conditions limit the autonomy of the employees in making professional decisions. In addition, implementing the system of permanent control over the functioning of the facility is often associated with negative job assessments, which further increase the employees' sense of inefficiency (Garland, 2002). A specific interpersonal factor is the hierarchical organisation of penitentiary institutions, which makes junior staff feel helpless and unable to influence decisions regarding their professional role.

Finney et al. (2013) emphasise that in the case of the analysed group, organisational stressors are most significant for the development of occupational burnout – this affects about 37% of American prison officers (compared to 19–30% in the general population). Burnout results from individual risk factors and organisational stressors that lead to imbalance between environmental requirements and capabilities of the individuals. Cooper and Marshall (1976 in: Finney, et al., 2013, p. 3) conceptualised these factors by distinguishing five categories of stressors specific to the work environment. The first group consists of factors naturally related to performing official duties, such as increasing difficulty and complexity of tasks as well as their excess. The second group concerns the definition of the professional role in the organisation, which in prisons often conflicts with moral principles and the expected effects. For example, excessive bureaucracy hampers the implementation of educational tasks, while order and security are kept by using informal relationships rather than by following the official regulations. The third group deals with career development – promoting employees, ensuring safe working conditions, and giving them opportunities to realise their ambitions. The last two groups of stressors concern the structure of organisation and the social atmosphere, which encompass organisational policy, social rehabilitation philosophy, communication style of the staff and superiors as well as historical traditions and economic conditions (Piotrowski, 2018).

These factors are cumulative i.e., they have negative effects when many of them co-occur. It may be assumed that their impact is also interactive since negative organisational and interpersonal factors are significant only for individuals with appropriate predispositions (Beisert, 2000). In addition, the variables that modify the impact of risk factors are demographic (gender, age, work seniority) and socioeconomic (education, salary, prestige, and family).

Many studies indicate that women are more likely to experience burnout symptoms, because they approach their duties far more emotionally than men. An additional burden for them is family life and the need to reconcile work with raising children and running household. In studies with penitentiary officers, women either suffered the same level of occupational burnout (Kanonowicz, 2010; Stoy-

anova, Harizanova, 2016) or lower (Carrola, Olivarez, Karcher, 2016). Of course, the number of women employed in positions involving direct contact with inmates is much lower than men in the same positions, therefore, those who work may have atypical features. Interestingly women manifest a higher level of stress only when they witness human suffering (Linowski, 2010).

Having a family is most often treated as a protective factor against professional burnout (Fenger, 2000). However, fulfilling absorbing professional roles and family roles can cause additional stress, especially for people with characteristics of perfectionists. At the same time, the family can be a very important source of emotional and, sometimes, substantive support for its members. In addition, fulfilling various life roles helps form a mature and diverse personality, which guarantees greater resistance in coping with stress (Lachowska, 2008 in: Barczykowska, Muskała, 2010). A sense of success in family life should protect employees in social professions against burnout (Barczykowska, Muskała, 2010), but in professions related to penitentiary resocialisation (characterised by a special type of work and working conditions) conflicts between family and professional roles are very likely (Piotrowski, 2014).

Linowski (2010) examining the stress level of 150 penitentiary employees stated that it is not associated with a specific department, but more with excess work, and especially the excess bureaucracy. Employees have problems with tasks whose sensibility in their perception is debatable. Working shifts were rarely seen as a stressor, although Schmidt (2010) found that employees pointed to the negative impact of the shift system, night work and unregulated working time. The most unfavourable trends occurred in the staff of large, closed, understaffed facilities, with poor architectural and spatial conditions.

The range of expectations towards officers in the area of social rehabilitation tasks may also be a stressor. Carlson and Thomas (2006) point out that the most stressful tasks are fulfilled by employees who have direct contact with prisoners, who develop plans for managing these inmates and then monitor the implementation of the plans in periodic reports. These officers also represent the interests of the prisoners in dealing with other staff and make recommendations regarding the forecast/possibility of early release. This scope of duties is not sufficiently recognised in the form of praise, awards, remuneration, or professional prestige.

An important variable modifying the level of occupational stress is age and seniority. Officers over 55 years of age and with over 18 years of experience cope much better with difficult situations than their younger colleagues (Schmidt, 2010; Linowski, 2010), which is in line with Cherniss' assumptions. Such situations probably become routine with age and seniority and employees are able to refine effective coping strategies. At the same time, some studies indicate that the more years of work experience the higher the exhaustion and frequency of psychosomatic disorders. However, this may also be due to the depletion of percep-

tual-motor resources due to aging and/or due to the appearance of additional life crises related to i.e. family life (divorce, death of a family member, adult children leaving home).

The educational attainment of the officers also has no simple impact on the perceived stress levels or the risk of burnout. On the one hand, employees with higher education declare a higher level of personal achievement and job satisfaction, but perhaps this is due to the fact that they have hierarchically higher positions (Kanonowicz, 2010), material rewards and higher sense of power and control (Korczyńska, 2010). On the other hand, higher education often means higher level of motivation to work and belief in the ability to influence professional reality. This is most visible among educators who are to implement social rehabilitation in accordance with the principles of psychological and pedagogical work, and among those who mainly ensure compliance with statutory regulations.

There is also a high risk of traumatic stress situations such as rebellion, prisoners aggression, inmates suicides, and self-mutilation when the health and/or life of the officer or prisoner is at risk (Weber-Rajek, et al., 2017). In about 30% of cases, such situations cause the entire set of post-traumatic disorders (Sęk, 2000), while some experience post-traumatic growth – an increase of personal effectiveness and mental resilience (Kaczmarek, 2016).

FACTORS PROTECTING AGAINST BURNOUT

Maslach (1982 in: Tucholska, 2001; Tucholska, 2008; Piotrowski, 2010) noticed quite early that the described phenomenon also has a positive pole – the so-called commitment. Unlike burnout, it is characterised by life energy, cooperation, and effectiveness. Commitment can be achieved by using emotional distance techniques that encompass strategies such as labelling, intellectualisation, isolating situations, sense of humour, and avoidance. Despite the similarity of these strategies to the symptoms of depersonalisation, their goal is to build skills that allow the individual to look after well-being of the client, at the same time taking into account their own needs. The sense of “psychological success” can also play a protective role. Its self-stimulating action consists of setting oneself a level of achievement, noticing success, and rewarding oneself (Czekaj, 2015). Also, the characteristic referred to as resilience, i.e. mental resilience, is very important for maintaining personality coherence (Kaczmarek, 2016).

There are two directions in the field of prevention, which avert the destructive impact of burnout: emotion-based and competence-based. The emotional path consists in building personal resources that help cope with stress. It involves a subjective redefinition of the stressful situation and the perception of the positive meaning of difficult experiences. An important skill is the use of substantive and emotional support, although the latter did not prove important in research (Beisert, 2000).

Techniques for improving emotional self-awareness, ability to relax in states of emotional tension, and ability to build satisfying interpersonal relationships are also useful (Schaufeli, et al., 2017). Keeping the balance between work and personal life, enjoying proper rest, spending leisure time creatively, having non-professional interests guarantees staying in good mental health (Carrola, et al., 2016; Şek, 2000). The competence-based direction consists in increasing professional effectiveness through good preparation for the tasks assigned to the role. Satisfaction with the performed work also depends on the conscious choice of profession, therefore, it is important to use professional counselling. A match between the person and their job guarantees harmoniousness and efficiency in fulfilling professional duties. It also stimulates personal development in other areas (Tucholska, 2001).

The problem of organisational stress and the resulting burnout requires systemic changes in the field of state penitentiary policy (increasing the number of open and semi-open corrective facilities), legal regulations regarding imprisonment and enforcing it, financial expenditure on prison infrastructure (improvement of architectural conditions), and the employee remuneration system. Garland (2002, pp. 117–119) proposed a guide for prison staff containing postulates of measures to prevent burnout. It contains the following guidelines:

- Making penitentiary rehabilitation a clear concept for a facility containing its goals, principles and practice in terms of recruitment, hierarchy, and training.
- Clearly defining the role and professional responsibility, i.e. writing down official duties, specifying requirements, defining implementation time, available professional training through cooperation with a competent manager, and determining how employees' academic education will be applied.
- Strengthening staff to overcome feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, and isolation by encouraging them to share problems with senior employees and organising systematic meetings to discuss the daily agenda, theoretical approaches, action plans, and options.
- Offering constructive feedback about the scope of responsibilities, performance evaluation, and clients' rehabilitation. It is important to include the positive aspects of staff activities, and to indicate realistic directions for improvement in the case of critical remarks.
- Going beyond the stereotypical scope of professional activities, especially in the case of senior officers who, in addition to indirectly learning about activities based on written reports, should verify them themselves (manage by walking around).
- Providing therapy-based training and information on how to deal with specific problems in specific limited conditions. Such training sessions should address dealing with excessive stress, social manipulation, convicts' negativity, and confrontational behaviour. Contact with supervisors should be an incentive to raise methodological qualifications.

- Employing competent management personnel who will become leaders but also advisers in the field of resocialisation.
- Creating groups in which balance between disturbing and aggressive prisoners will be maintained. Creating homogeneous groups consisting of dangerous criminals only hinders corrective work and intensifies the phenomenon of professional frustration.
- Ensuring stable organisation of space, including social rooms for employees, where they can rest, meet colleagues, and share their reflections.
- Reduce bureaucracy to eliminate multiple documentation of the same obligations. Perhaps the solution would be to develop special digital questionnaires to simplify reporting (Garland, 2002).

Finney et al. (2013) add some suggestions for improving communication between superiors and staff. Managers should provide employees with clearly described foundations of the institution's goals and policies. It is necessary to create conditions for subordinates to make decisions in an atmosphere of transparency and fair play principles by stimulating all possible forms of teamwork. It is also necessary to recognise current site restrictions and strive to remove them. Carlson and Thomas (2006) add that allowing employees to make professional decisions significantly reduces their stress levels and increases job satisfaction. The World Health Organisation indicates that reducing work stress in penitentiary institutions can lead to an increased sense of security, improved interpersonal relationships, retention, less absenteeism leading to illness, and increased work efficiency (1998 in: Finney, et al., 2013).

The dissemination of knowledge about occupational burnout, on the one hand, helps sensitise people at risk to the first symptoms that are easy to eliminate. On the other hand, it may cause an excessive rash in recognising burnout symptoms and confusing them with depression, fatigue, or stress.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The impact of risk factors on the occurrence of professional burnout is ambiguous because it depends on the individual characteristics of a person – their strengths and weaknesses, personal predispositions, specific intensity, as well as duration and the stage of career development. In addition, these factors may be interactive, since the ones analysed independently do not explain the mechanisms of occupational burnout. Also, in each case, the effects of protective factors should be taken into account, since their significance increases with higher intensity of risk factors, while with low intensity of risk factors it becomes insignificant (Okulicz-Kozaryn, Bobrowski, 2008, p. 184).

Not all stress must lead to burnout. The concept of Lazarus and Folkman (2004) emphasises subjective interpretation of the meaning of work-related variables, which results in relational and relative interaction of individual psychological,

organisational, and interpersonal factors. The requirements in the work of correctional officers are very high and carry the risk of burnout. Therefore, it is necessary to make a particularly careful selection of employees taking into account their health and physical fitness (Pałka, 2015) but also personal and social resources that protect them against personality disorganisation. In a situation where a candidate meets qualifying conditions, the institution should ensure preservation of the initial emotional and social potential through various forms of psychological support (especially in crisis situations), appreciation of the employee's importance through a transparent reward system, diversified offer of psychostimulatory and psycho-educational training such as anti-stress training and social skills training.

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STRESZCZENIE

Wypalenie zawodowe pojawia się u osób wykonujących zawody związane z niesieniem pomocy w trudnych emocjonalnie warunkach (lekarze, pielęgniarki, nauczyciele). Funkcjonariusze zakładów karnych są grupą zawodową obciążoną wysokim ryzykiem tego zaburzenia. Czynniki sprzyjającymi wystąpieniu symptomów wypalenia zawodowego są czynniki związane ze stresorami organizacyjnymi (autokratyczny styl zarządzania, formalna hierarchia, brak autonomii zawodowej pracowników) oraz predyspozycje indywidualne (styl radzenia sobie ze stresem, poczucie kontroli

zewnątrznej, wysoki neurotyzm, brak asertywności, niska samoocena, nadmierne zaangażowanie w pracę). Czynniki ryzyka są modyfikowane przez zmienne socjoekonomiczne (płeć, wiek, posiadanie rodziny, wykształcenie, staż pracy). Czynnikiem chroniącym są zasoby osobiste, które są stymulowane na dwa sposoby: przez pracę nad dojrzałością emocjonalną i sprężystością psychiczną oraz doskonalenie kompetencji zawodowych. Zmiany systemowe w zakresie zarządzania zakładami karnymi i zmiana pozycji zawodowej funkcjonariuszy również chronią przed destrukcyjnym wpływem wypalenia. Kierunkami przyszłych poszukiwań powinny być badania wykorzystujące nowe techniki diagnozy i zaawansowaną analizę wyników.

Słowa kluczowe: wypalenie zawodowe; funkcjonariusze zakładów karnych; stres organizacyjny; czynniki ryzyka; czynniki chroniące