

**Title:** A Confirmatory Factor Analysis of a Brief Version of the Secondary Traumatic Stress-Informed Organization Assessment (STSI\_OA)

**Authors:** Naemi Jimenez, Brown, Clark, Byers, Akin

**Cluster area:** Measurement/Psychometrics

**Paper presentation**

### **Background/Purpose:**

Previous research has shown that child welfare professionals are likely to experience symptoms of secondary trauma stress (STS; Baugerud et al., 2018). Due to prevalence of STS among child welfare workers, it is important that organizations support workers who are exposed to trauma as part of their work to help mitigate the effects of STS. As part of these efforts, one statewide initiative examined organizational behavior and response influencing STS among child welfare professionals using a modified version of the Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organization Assessment (STSI\_OA; Sprang et al., 2017). The purpose of this study is to describe the validation of the modified STSI\_OA measure which includes domains related to an organization's promotion of resilience building activities (Resilience Building), how much an organization promotes psychological safety (Promoting Safety), and STS informed leadership practices (Leader Practices). The central research question asked: Does the modified version of the STSI\_OA demonstrate adequate internal consistency reliability and construct validity?

### **Method:**

Data were collected as part of a statewide annual online survey of child welfare professionals and supervisors in one Midwestern state (N=318, missing data was addressed using FIML), which assessed the rates of organizational responses to STS, burnout, and compassion satisfaction among child welfare professionals. The majority (74%) of participants self-identified as White (non-Hispanic). They were employed in public and private agencies as frontline workers (67.4%) and supervisors (31.7%) and 57.2% of participants had either 1-3 years or 10 or more years of experience in child welfare. The modified version of the STSI\_OA consisted of fewer items (19 items) than the original 40-item Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicated a higher level of competency for each domain and the broader measure. Tests of construct validity and internal consistency reliability, including Confirmatory Factor Analyses and Cronbach's alpha were conducted.

### **Results:**

This study resulted in preliminary establishment of reliability and construct validity of a second-order latent construct of *Organizational Approach to STS* comprised of three sub-scale domains. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) demonstrated acceptable model fit (CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .08), all indicator loadings were statistically significant, and Cronbach's alpha indicated sufficient reliability (Resilience Building  $\alpha = .91$ ; Promoting Safety  $\alpha = .92$ ; Leader Practices  $\alpha = .94$ ; measure  $\alpha = .97$ ) and were consistent with the original STSI-OA measure.

### **Conclusions/Implications:**

These findings provide strong preliminary evidence for the psychometric soundness of a modified STSI\_OA measure with fewer items and domains than the original measure. Child welfare organizations may choose to use this modified version to assess the degree to which STS is addressed at the organization level. This brief version may be preferable when time

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constraints are challenging, as in child welfare organizations, or when measuring particular dimensions of organizational STS response, as in this study. Having effective measures that are usable in real-world child welfare settings is important. Use of this measure may facilitate the process of organizations to become more STS-informed and implement trauma informed organizational practices within the child welfare system, thus strengthening the workforce.