

The Helpers' Stress: Effectiveness of a Web-based Intervention for Professionals Working with Trauma Survivors in Reducing Job Burnout and Improving Work Engagement

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AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at evaluating mechanisms and effects of the **Helpers' Stress** program which consists of three web-based interventions: (1) self-efficacy enhancement intervention, (2) psychoeducational intervention, and (3) social support enhancement intervention. The three interventions aimed at a reduction of **job burnout** and enhancement of **work engagement** among human service professionals working with trauma survivors.

- Hypotheses:**
- Compared to a psychoeducational intervention, self-efficacy enhancement intervention and social support enhancement intervention would affect self-efficacy;
 - Compared to a psychoeducational intervention, self-efficacy enhancement intervention and social support enhancement intervention would predict job burnout and work engagement;
 - The effect of group assignment on job burnout and work engagement would be mediated by self-efficacy and perceived social support.

BACKGROUND

- Professionals who work with trauma survivors are at risk for indirect exposure to trauma (Bride et al., 2004).
- Indirect exposure to trauma can have positive (e.g., secondary traumatic growth) and negative (e.g., secondary traumatic stress) consequences (Shoji et al., 2014).
- Work-related indirect exposure to trauma may lead to job burnout (Cieslak et al., 2014).
- We can prevent the development of the job burnout and boost work engagement through psychological interventions enhancing self-efficacy and perceived social support – resources facilitating coping with trauma and work stress (Benight & Bandura, 2004; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007).

METHODS

Participants: 168 human service professionals working with trauma survivors. **Age:** $M = 37.49$; $SD = 10.39$; **Gender:** 78% females.

Measures:

- Self-efficacy.** The Work Stress and Burnout Self-Efficacy Scale (WSBSES; Lua, 2008), 28 items, response scale from 1 to 7, $\alpha = .93$ at T1, $\alpha = .96$ at T2, and $\alpha = .96$ at T3
- Job burnout.** The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti, Bakker, Vardakou, & Kantas, 2003), 16 items, response scale from 1 to 5, $\alpha = .89$ at T1, $\alpha = .89$ at T2, and $\alpha = .92$ at T3
- Work engagement.** Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), 9 items, response scale from 0 to 6, $\alpha = .90$ at T1, $\alpha = .94$ at T2, and $\alpha = .95$ at T3.

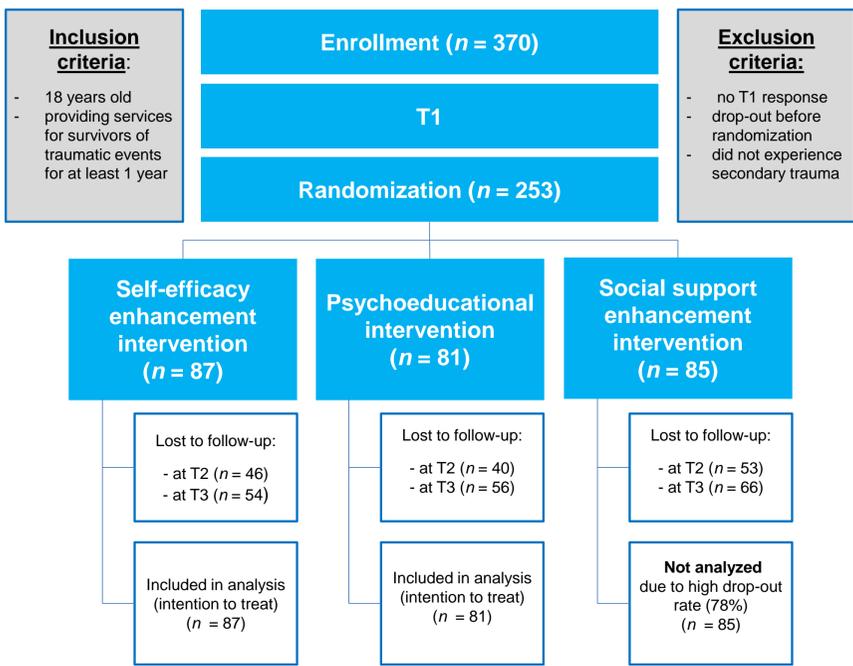


Figure 1. Flow of Participants in a Study.

CONTENT OF THE PROGRAM

- 3 types of web-based interventions delivered with minimal guidance: two CBT-based and including interactive tasks (self-efficacy enhancement intervention and social support enhancement intervention), and one psychoeducational and including static tasks
- 4 weekly sessions
- Online personal journal
- Automatic e-mail reminders to complete the sessions

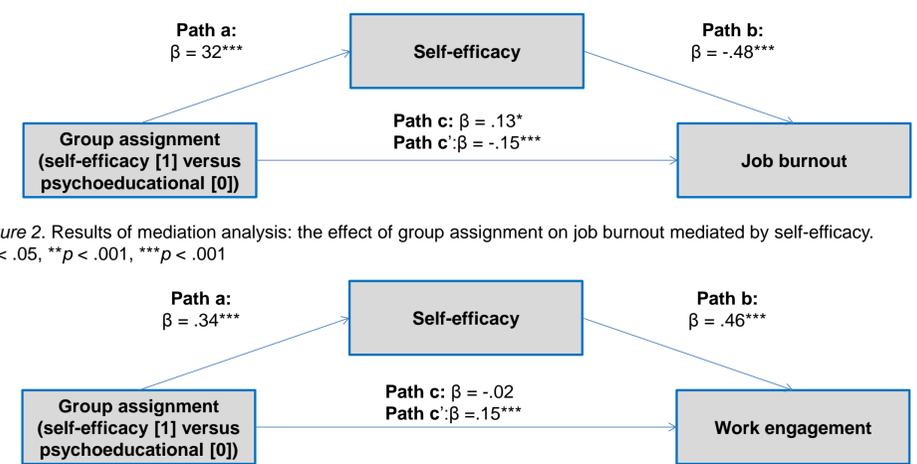


Figure 2. Results of mediation analysis: the effect of group assignment on job burnout mediated by self-efficacy. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 3. Results of mediation analysis: the effect of group assignment on work engagement is mediated by self-efficacy. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$, *** $p < .001$

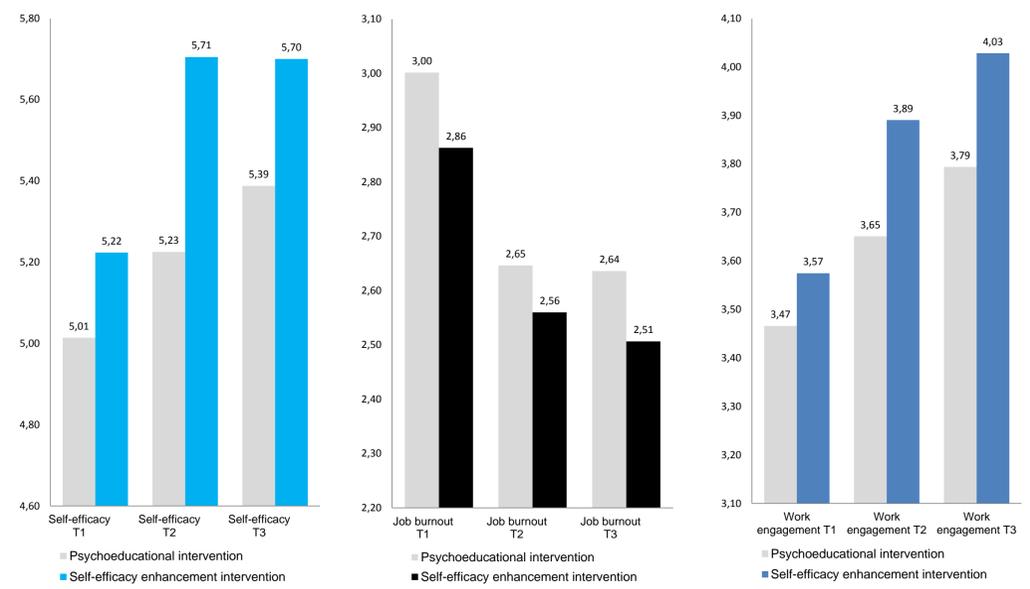


Figure 4. Levels of self-efficacy at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 5. Levels of job burnout at T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 6. Levels of work engagement at T1, T2 and T3.

STUDY RESULTS

- Self-efficacy.** A significant Group assignment x Time interaction ($F[2, 332] = 6.40, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$): participants assigned to the self-efficacy enhancement intervention presented higher levels of self-efficacy (at T2 and T3), compared to those assigned to the psychoeducational intervention.
- Job burnout:** A significant Time effect: job burnout decreased significantly between T1 and T2, and between T1 and T3, $F(2, 332) = 77.38, p < .001, \eta^2 = .32$.
- Work engagement:** A significant Time effect: work engagement increased significantly between: T1 and T2, T1 and T3, $F(2, 332) = 44.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21$.
- Mediation analyses.** Self-efficacy (T2) mediated the relationship between the group assignment (self-efficacy enhancement intervention versus psychoeducational intervention) and job burnout (T3) or work engagement (T3).

CONCLUSION

- The results highlight the role of self-efficacy enhancement in reducing job burnout and increasing work engagement among human services workers.

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