Voices of the Helpers: An Exploratory Study on Behavioral Intervention Team

Professionals and Their Experience with Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion

Fatigue

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Abstract

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<u>Voices of the Helpers: An Exploratory Study on Behavioral Intervention Team Professionals and Their Experience with Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue</u>

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This study explored the Professional Quality of Life in behavioral intervention team members at community colleges through the subcategories of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. Although major tragedies are rare at colleges and universities, the emotional toll that behavioral intervention team members experience through listening to student stories and creating appropriate interventions can be taxing on their Professional Quality of Life. Stamm (2010) founded the Professional Quality of Life scale which measures how those in helping professions experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue through the work they do. Student affairs professionals have not commonly been studied regarding compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, and this study aimed to navigate these experiences in behavioral intervention members.

There were a variety of themes that came from this qualitative study. The first theme was that behavioral intervention members found their work challenging, but very rewarding. Most of the participants found that graduation was the ultimate celebration because it meant that the interventions for the students had successfully led to completion of their degree. Another theme is that support from fellow team members, as well as

friends and family was important to the members keeping a positive Professional Quality of Life. Participants also shared that working for community colleges has allowed them to keep a good work-life balance. Another theme is that participants were growing professionally which helped their professional quality of life. There was also a common theme of the fear of missing important information that would impact a student's behavior that could possibly lead to tragedy.

Implications for this study include preparing new student affairs professionals for working in community colleges, as the experience can be vastly different than that of four-year institutions. Preparing student affairs professionals in helping skills is another way to better equip them to work with students of concern. Another implication and recommendation is for institutions to distribute funding to mental health services in general, and especially to their behavioral intervention team. More funding equates to more professional development and services available to help struggling students. The intentions of the findings, implications, and recommendations found in this study is to spark a greater interest in Professional Quality of Life in student affairs professionals at community colleges, and especially those doing crisis work through behavioral intervention.

Dedication

For my family, friends, partner, and my younger self. I can do hard things.

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There are numerous people I would like to thank for helping me along my journey to completing my dissertation. I would first like to than Dr. Tom Davis who put the crazy idea in my head that I could complete a Ph.D. Along my journey, I want to thank my committee members, Dr. Pete Mather, Dr. Dave Nguyen, Dr. Lisa Harrison, and my chair, Dr. Laura Harrison. Thank you for not giving up on me when I struggled to put together a coherent proposal and providing invaluable feedback so that I could create this dissertation. I would also like to thank Dr. Dean for getting me through my rough spots and believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself.

I also want to acknowledge the participants of this study because without you, none of this would be possible. I learned more about community colleges and behavioral intervention teams than I knew was possible. I thank you for volunteering your time and passionate stories about the challenging behavioral intervention work you do. I can only hope that this study helps spark a greater interest in community colleges in general, but more importantly, the behavioral intervention work that is being done for this population. Thank you for everything.

Finally, I would like to thank the special people in my life for their undying support and love. Michael, you have heard about behavioral intervention teams from our first date and have supported me through my entire journey. Through moments of tears and anxiety to complete elation; we've been through the gamut of emotions. Finally, Mom and Dad, none of this would be possible without you. There is not enough appreciation in the world to express my gratitude. I love you.

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Chapter 1: Background and Importance

This study investigated Behavioral Intervention Team (BITs) members that work directly with students of concern (i.e., a student who is homicidal, suicidal, or in crisis) on community college campuses. The tragedy at Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Virginia Tech) in 2007 that left 32 students and faculty dead created a nationwide awakening that the United States had not felt since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. The US Department of Health and Human Services investigated the tragedy and found there was a "lack of adequate services" for students with mental health issues (Leavitt et al., 2007, p. 14). Additionally, "Despite complaints from professors and students that Seung-Hui Cho, the gunman, was unstable and threatening, no one at Virginia Tech "connected all the dots" and adequately dealt with his problems, the state review panel found" (Wilson, 2007, para. 3). Furthermore, the panel reported that the counseling center and office of the Dean of Students "misinterpreted federal privacy laws in refusing to share information about Mr. Cho's behavior with one another and with Mr. Cho's parents" (Wilson, 2007, para. 3). This prevented the university from having a quick, proactive response to helping Cho and protecting the rest of the campus community.

In response to this tragedy and other tragedies that occurred on college campuses, BITs were implemented. BITs are defined as multi-disciplinary teams that promote campus safety through "the identification and support of individuals who demonstrate behaviors that may be early warning signs of possible troubled, disruptive, or violent behavior" (The Jed Foundation, 2016, para. 1). Although only mandated on college

campuses in the states of Virginia and Illinois, most colleges and universities have adopted BITs as an essential part of the institution.

BITs bear the challenging job of working with students in crisis to get them the help they need. The stories BIT professionals hear may be triggering and heartbreaking. Like the broader category of student affairs, BIT professionals may not be immune to the joys and struggles that come with the job of working with students of concern. Stamm (2010) introduced the idea of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue to describe the experiences that those in helping professions encounter in their work. Compassion satisfaction is the positive and encouraging aspects of the job that keep the BIT professional satisfied and wanting to continue engaging in their work (Stamm, 2010). Compassion satisfaction also suggests that the BIT professional has a positive professional quality of life as they enjoy their job (Stamm, 2010). Conversely, compassion fatigue is defined as the negative and difficult aspects of the job that can lead to burnout and secondary traumatic stress, resulting in a negative professional quality of life (Stamm, 2010).

Many student affairs professionals who are in a position to work with students who are struggling or in crisis succumb to burnout and attrition (Ellett & Stipeck, 2010). Professionals in residence life have been studied and found to have stress levels and burnout that leads to cynicism, exhaustion, and low job efficacy (Ellett & Stipeck, 2010). A greater understanding of these aspects impacting compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue needs further investigation.

Behavioral Intervention Teams

BITs were intended to be a proactive line of defense against violence and tragedy on college campuses. The main functions of BITs are gathering data, appropriately analyzing the information, and providing interventions with the students of concern (Sokolow et al., 2014). Another important aspect of BITs is the need to have policies and procedures in place about voluntary and involuntary leave of absence, suspensions, and temporary or permanent withdrawals (Hollingsworth et al., 2009). Although all BITs are unique in their protocols, interventions, team members, and relationship to the university, the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) has guidelines that all teams should follow.

The NaBITA guidelines help discern what constitutes an ideal team. NaBITA (2018) suggests that teams should be made up of at least five, but no more than ten members and should include a dean of students and/or vice president of student affairs, a mental health employee, a student conduct staff member, and a police/law enforcement officer. Additional members could involve a case manager, disability services, sorority and fraternity leaders, Title IX coordinator, and a residence life representative (NaBITA, 2018). Many BIT members are appointed volunteers that the head of the team recruit. Although mental health professionals may be on the team, many members do not have mental health training and are trained through their experiences on the team, the NaBITA annual conference, and trainings and seminars that NaBITA leads.

Although many colleges and universities have psychological services on campus, the BIT is another way to help the institution create a safe and effective place to learn

(Adelman & Taylor, 2000). BITs aim to evaluate threat assessment and early intervention with the goal of prevention (Sokolow & Lewis, 2009). As discussed earlier, there was great miscommunication about the Virginia Tech shooter that may have prevented loss of life if there were better communication across the campus community, and today's BITs seek to improve that communication (Higher Education Mental Health Alliance, 2012). Better communication between faculty, staff, and police aids in getting the correct information to the right people who can intervene with a student before there is a negative outcome. Overall, BITs focus on behavioral intervention, threat assessment, information referral, and student care (Gramm et al., 2011).

Why Community Colleges?

Community colleges emerged in the President Truman era and were created to provide education to all citizens (Hirt, 2006). Researchers found that all Americans could benefit from college, and community colleges provided an affordable way for almost anyone to get a post-secondary education (Hirt, 2006). Colleges and universities are said to have three goals: education, research, and public or community service (Astin & Antonio (2012). These authors also stated that at community colleges, emphasis is usually put on community service, but education remains the main purpose of the institution (Astin & Antonio, 2012). Ultimately, the goal is for community college students to be educated and develop skills that will improve their communities. To best prepare these students, there also needs to be a focus on the preparedness and support of student affairs professionals at community colleges (Knight, 2014). Looking at the professional quality of life of these professionals through their experience with

compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue is one way to cultivate support and best practices.

Although there have been many studies on student affairs professionals in four-year institutions and their relationship with job satisfaction, leaving their position, and their role perception, Tull (2014) was the first to look at these factors in community college senior student affairs officers. No studies have been conducted specifically on community college BIT professionals and their role perception, job satisfaction, and propensity to leave their institution. Tull (2014) discusses the various roles community college student affairs professionals serve and how they vary from mental health and counseling to financial aid, and career planning. The unique role these administrators play is impacted by the students they serve.

With any job, there is the opportunity for positive experiences that lead to job satisfaction and wanting to stay at that job, as well as negative experiences that lead to burnout and sometimes leaving the job. Tull (2014) found that community college student affairs professionals were more likely dissatisfied with their job if their expectations for their job was not met, and they had multiple roles to play within the student affairs division. Another finding was that when these professionals were dissatisfied with their jobs, they were more likely to have negative performances and may even leave their job (Tull, 2014). On the other hand, the study found that professionals who have positive perceptions of their roles report being more successful within their role, even when faced with difficult situations (Tull, 2014). Ultimately, BITs want their team members satisfied in their job so they can best help students of concern. This is

significant for BIT professionals at community colleges because the population of students of concern they work with have unique challenges that may make BIT work difficult.

McBride (2019) found that over 41% of people who attend post-secondary institutions are enrolled in community colleges. Students at community colleges tend to have different identities than students attending traditional institutions, including a student body that is older, socio-economic statuses that are lower, and students tend to be of minority race or ethnicity (Daniel & Davison, 2014). Furthermore, Daniel and Davison (2014) also found that compared to traditional students, community college students reported more significant mental health issues and reported that they were not seeking treatment for their mental health issues. One reason community college students may not be seeking treatment for their mental health issues is that 95% of community colleges have no psychiatry services on-site (Bocchino, 2008; Conrad, 2010). With limited mental health resources for community college students, BITs can act as a safety net for students who reach the point of crisis. But the limited availability of mental health resources also creates issues for BITs looking to refer students to counseling.

In addition to mental health issues that many community college students face, there are other factors for BITs at community colleges to consider. Bennett and Bates (2015) stated that a unique factor of community college is that they are more likely to accept students who are looking for a second chance at college, including convicted felons and sex offenders. Those authors found that students who have been suspended or expelled from four-year institutions for violence or other behavior may enroll at

community college without the school knowing their prior records (Bennett & Bates, 2015). Students with prior records are usually able to enroll in community college without addressing their record due to community colleges' open enrollment policies (Bennett & Bates, 2015). Bennett et al. (2015) explains that few community colleges implement felony and other concerning behavior review committees to evaluate applications for admission, which allows for some students of concern to enter the institution undetected to BITs. Due to open enrollment that can attract students of concern at community colleges, BITs can be especially important to track these students and provide interventions to help them be successful in college (Kramer-Jefferson, 2017). Once these students are identified, BITs should keep close contact with them, as these students can be unpredictable (Kramer-Jefferson, 2017).

Another concern for BITs is that students at community colleges tend to have limited interactions with other students, faculty, and staff on campus because they commute from off-campus and are only on campus for classes. This lack of connection to the campus community creates difficulties for BITs because teams rely on information obtained through interactions with others to create a case for monitoring the students of concern (Kramer-Jefferson, 2017; Van Brunt, 2012). Additionally, with students on campus less, there are less opportunities for them to attend campus-sponsored or organization-sponsored events and meetings for groups such as 12-step groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, and ally (LGBTQIA) groups, and veteran groups where they could receive peer support (Katz & Davidson,

2014). With the challenges that face BITs at community colleges, it is helpful to see examples of BITs that are finding success in their efforts.

William Rainey Harper College in Illinois is one school that has set an example for BITs at community colleges across the nation. This college created a BIT named Harper Early Alert Team (HEAT). HEAT is like BITs at traditional four-year institutions as they conduct threat assessments, support students with concerning behavior, educate the campus community to feel comfortable with reporting to them, and provide best practice for preventing violence (Bennett & Bates, 2015). These authors stated that at William Rainey Harper College, referrals to HEAT have increased, while students referred to the student conduct office have decreased (Bennett & Bates, 2015). These authors contribute the increase in referrals to HEAT and the decrease of referrals to student conduct to the change on campus with a focus on prevention (Bennett & Bates, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

This study was shaped by Stamm's (2010) professional quality of life theory. Stamm (2010) defines professional quality of life as the quality someone feels in relation to their work in the helping profession (p. 8). This theory is comprised of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. Compassion satisfaction is the positive aspects of working with people with trauma or in crisis. Compassion fatigue is the negative aspects of working with people with trauma or in crisis. Stamm (2010) explains that professional quality of life is dependent on the helper's work environment and personal environment, and the environment of the person being helped (p.10). Understanding compassion

satisfaction and compassion fatigue related to a helping job assists professionals in creating their own meaning of their job and themselves.

In addition to compassion fatigue, compassion satisfaction is also of importance to this study. Stamm (2010) identified compassion satisfaction as the level of satisfaction a helper finds in their job, how successful they feel in their job, and how they feel supported by their colleagues (p. 21). In addition to those aspects, compassion satisfaction also measures how supported the helper feels from colleagues (Stamm, 2010, p. 17). Stamm (2010) has also explored whether people can feel satisfaction in their work while also experiencing compassion fatigue, and she found that both can be true at the same time. Although some studies have focused strictly on compassion fatigue, this study also encompassed the experience of compassion satisfaction as an essential part of the professional quality of life theory.

Problem Statement

With 32% of college students dealing with a diagnosable mental health condition, higher education institutions need to be prepared to help and support this struggling and vulnerable population (American College Health Association, 2018). In addition, there is the consideration that COVID-19 is having a great impact on challenges with college students' mental health. Much of students' time is spent outside of the classroom, and students are commonly in contact with student affairs professionals (Reynolds, 2013). Hollingsworth et al. (2009) also suggest that student affairs professionals are responsible for tracking and communicating student behaviors with the appropriate people, identifying potential risks in students, providing help in a crisis, and to help students from

slipping through the cracks. Higher education institutions have put great value on prevention, managing risks, and safety of their students, employees, and campus as a whole (Gamm et al., 2011). This creates an opportunity for student affairs professionals to intervene and implement safety measures.

As student affairs professionals have been put in a position to help students outside of the classroom, they have gained the title of a helper. Reynolds (2017) states:

> Student affairs professionals are frequently placed in the roles of helpers, and many students rely on them for compassion, support, and guidance. In order to be effective helpers, practitioners need to develop essential awareness, knowledge, and skills to guide their efforts. (p. 463)

As a helper, many student affairs professionals find themselves working over their typical work hours and sometimes even being on-call for crisis situations. Some student affairs professionals in similar roles to BIT professionals, such as those that work in residence life, conduct, or the office of the dean of students have had the opportunity for both positive and negative experiences in their job, leading to the possibility of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue (Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016).

In 2002, the *College Student Affairs Journal* only had 1% of its articles published about crisis response and its impact on student affairs professionals (Pearson & Bowman, 2002). Since then, there has been more research conducted on the topic, but only Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) has researched conduct and behavioral intervention professionals. She states, "Serving as responders to crisis on campus exposes professionals to the positive and negative effects of helping others during and after

stressful crisis situations" (Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016, p. 10). With limited research on BIT professionals, who do a substantial amount of crisis work in their jobs, there is a need to study how compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue affect them.

This study presented the issue that there is a gap in the literature on BIT professionals and their experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. These student affairs professionals have largely been left out of the conversation on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, although they are some of the helpers in student affairs who work directly with students of concern and their trauma and crisis. This study aimed to answer the call for the need of literature on the topic of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue with BIT professionals.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore how BIT professionals' professional quality of life is affected by their work. The study also explored their experiences with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue when working with students of concern in community colleges. Many fields outside of higher education have looked at the impact of helping professionals working with people in crisis or experiencing trauma. There have been studies on professions such as nursing and healthcare workers, police officers, counselors, and social workers (Adams et al., 2006; Andersen & Papazoglou, 2005; Boscarino et al., 2004; Lane et al., 2010; Ray et al., 2013; Rossi, et al., 2012).

Limited research has been conducted on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in higher education. Some studies on higher education professionals have focused on secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue in student affairs professionals

(Lynch, 2017; Marcus 2019; Stoves, 2014). Lynch (2017) found that student affairs professionals need more "professional preparation" to work with students in crisis or with psychological trauma (p. 106). Lynch (2017) suggests that more research be done on the topic of trauma stewardship in student affairs professionals. Marcus (2019) indicates that an investigation on turnover or attrition in student affairs professionals should be conducted to focus specifically on the professionals who work with students experiencing trauma. Similar to Lynch (2017), Marcus (2019) found that student affairs professionals need more support from their institution and offices to support students experiencing trauma. Stoves (2014) explored how student affairs professionals navigated their compassion fatigue and coped with the challenges of working with students. He focused on internal vs. external motivation and how that impacts compassion fatigue. Based on his findings, Stoves (2014) suggested the need for further exploration of resilience of student affairs professionals as they work with students in a variety of capacities.

Bernstein-Chernoff's (2016) study explored compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in student conduct and behavioral intervention professionals and found that these professionals had average levels of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress in that there were no statistically significant indicators of high or low compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. Additionally, because this was a quantitative study, Bernstein-Chernoff suggests that a qualitative study be conducted on student conduct and behavioral intervention professionals to get a better understanding of why these professionals are experiencing compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. This study aimed to answer that call and focused on BIT

professionals because they work directly with students of concern who are experiencing trauma and crisis. Understanding BIT professionals' experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue will give better insight into how these professionals can be supported and remain engaged in their work with students of concern.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research with the intent of gaining a better understanding of how BIT professionals experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue while working with students of concern. These questions are grounded in Stamm's (2010) professional quality of life theory. Using basic qualitative methodology, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. How does being on a community college behavioral intervention team affect members' professional quality of life (as defined by Stamm, 2010)?

2. How do members of community college behavioral intervention teams experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue?

Significance of the Study

This study can help BIT professionals and student affairs professionals improve job satisfaction, and thus retention in these difficult roles by informing how colleagues can support each other through compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue and promote a professional quality of life. The study also adds to the literature on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in helping professions. This study intends to give voice to the experiences of compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, and professional quality of life of BIT members. Student affairs professionals can benefit from this study

because many of the BIT members work in other offices within student affairs. This study may allow for a better understanding for how student affairs professionals can understand, support one another, and work through compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. For BIT professionals, this study may assist in being able to self-identify compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue and reach out for appropriate support. Finally, this study may help provide literature on how to help BIT professionals cope with compassion fatigue.

Reflexivity

As the researcher of this study, I intentionally reflected on ways to decrease potential bias and gain a better understanding of my experience through this process. One way qualitative researchers can practice self-awareness, understanding of themselves, and their biases is through reflexivity. Schwandt (1997) defines reflexivity as:

(a) the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences; (b) an acknowledgement of the inquirer's place in the setting, context, and social phenomenon he or she seeks to understand and a means for a critical examination of the entire research process (p. 155).

A variety of my education and experiences has helped shape how I entered this study, as well as how I managed to conduct and analyze it. Conducting a study with community college BIT professionals was a unique experience because I do not have any former experience or training in the community college setting. I entered the study thinking that community college students must have a substantially different college experience than students at four-year institutions, and that was proven to not necessarily be true. Students

at community colleges had great success and challenging struggles just like students at four-year institutions. I believe my unfamiliarity with community college was also an enhancement because I was open to the picture of community college that my participants painted, and I was there to learn from them.

Although I consider myself a new professional in higher education, I do have a significant background in mental health. Reflecting on this background helped me identify with the stories that the participants were sharing and being able to empathize with them about challenging stories as well as those of success. I also found my mental health background to be a strength, as I was able to better understand the Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue that my participants experienced and write about their experiences in this dissertation. To check my reflexivity, I will be using a journal throughout the interview and data analysis process to reflect on my experiences through the research process and identify any circumstances of bias.

Organization of the Study

This study is separated into five chapters, a reference list, and appendices. This first chapter served as an introduction to the topic and overview of the study. The second chapter is a review of the literature that includes an exploration of the history of behavioral intervention, unique concerns for community colleges, an in-depth look at the theoretical framework guiding this study, influential research studies on the present study, and the conclusion. Chapter Three discusses the methodology and data collection procedures used in this qualitative study. Chapter Four includes a presentation of the findings from this study based on individual interviews with BIT professionals at

community colleges. Finally, chapter five is the conclusion based on the results of this study, as well as implications for BIT professionals.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were chosen for this study as a guide for the reader to have a clear understanding of what I as the researcher mean when I use these terms. Stamm (2010) is the standard for aspects relating to compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, and thus his definitions are used in this study. The definition for BITs used in this study is from *The Book on BIT (2nd Edition)*, which is authored by leaders in the field of BIT. With this credibility, the definition can be used and trusted to be a universal definition.

Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs)

The *conceptual* purpose of a BIT is caring, preventative, early intervention with students whose behavior is disruptive or concerning. A BIT has three primary functions. A BIT gathers information, analyzes this information through an objective rubric or set of standards and then develops and engages in an intervention plan with the student (Sokolow et al., 2014, p. 3).

Burnout

Burnout is one element of the negative effects of caring that is known as compassion fatigue. Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively (Stamm, 2010, p. 13).

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue breaks into two parts. The first part concerns things such as exhaustion, frustration, anger, and depression typical of burnout. Secondary Traumatic Stress is a negative feeling driven by fear and work-related trauma. It is important to remember that some trauma at work can be direct (primary) trauma. Work-related trauma can be a combination of both primary and secondary trauma (Stamm, 2010, p. 12).

Compassion Satisfaction

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society (Stamm, 2010, p. 12).

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is an element of compassion fatigue (CF). STS is about work-related, secondary exposure to people who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. The negative effects of STS may include fear, sleep difficulties, intrusive images, or avoiding reminders of the person's traumatic experiences. STS is related to Vicarious Trauma as it shares many similar characteristics (Stamm, 2010, p. 13).

Conclusion

This chapter served as an introduction to the current study. Compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue are two concepts that have not been widely studied in BIT professionals, and this study served to add to the literature on this topic. Specifically, this study looked at BIT professionals at community colleges because of the unique challenges that community college students of concern face and how the students' experiences impact the professional quality of life of the BIT professionals who work with them. This chapter also gave an overview of the theoretical framework that was used in this study, Stamm's (2010) professional quality of life theory. This theory grounded the study and influenced the research questions that this study answered. The next chapter will extensively review the literature on this topic and provide background for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter consists of a literature review that thoroughly examines the literature relating to the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding and further the literature on behavioral intervention team (BIT) professionals and how they experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. This chapter begins with a look at the unique concerns of community college students. The following section looks at professional quality of life theory, including compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue, and the subcategories of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. The next section proceeds to explore the history of BITs, including crisis intervention teams and threat assessment teams. The next section focuses on current research being done to look at compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in higher education. Finally, the chapter ends with a conclusion of the chapter.

To give purpose to this study, the following two research questions are presented:

1. How does being on a community college behavioral intervention team affect members' professional quality of life (as defined by Stamm, 2010)?

2. How do members of community college behavioral intervention teams experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue?

Unique Concerns for Community Colleges

Community colleges, typically two-year institutions, serve as an alternative to traditional four-year colleges and universities and can also provide a steppingstone to those interested in getting a two-year degree before entering a four-year institution. Also common is for high school students to begin taking college credit hours at community

colleges that will transfer to their institution of choice after graduation. The American

Association of Community Colleges states that over 41% of the population that attends a

post-secondary institution is enrolled in a two-year community college (McBride, 2019).

With a large percentage of the post-secondary population enrolled at community colleges,

it is important to include community college students in the conversation about mental

health in college students. Furthermore, this study looked at how the BIT professionals

experience the struggles of community college students and the impact of student stories

on the professional.

Understanding the demographics of community college students helps to

understand how and why the conversation of mental health should be discussed regarding

community college students. Students attending community colleges are more likely to be

non-traditional, and many are balancing their education with work and/or family

(American Psychological Association [APA], 2012; Barrio-Sotillo et al., 2009; Eisenberg

et al., 2016). Community college students include many underrepresented populations,

first-generation students, single parents, and students with a General Education Diploma

(GED) or technical high school diploma (McBride, 2019). Additionally, community

college students have diversity in ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status (Cohen &

Brawer, 2008; Horn & Nevil, 2006; McClenney, 2007; Miller et al., 2005).

With many of these demographics depicting community college as a place for the

more marginalized populations, it is no surprise that community college students may

face more stress and adversity, thus impacting their emotional and mental health due to

these populations facing more systemic oppression and inequities (Katz & Davison,

2014). To address this issue, the Community College Task Force & American College Counseling Association (Edwards, 2011) created a comprehensive, national survey of community college counselors. This study found that the most common issues that community college students present include academic problems, stress, anxiety disorders, and depression (Edwards, 2011, p. 1). These concerning issues show some of the emotional struggles community college students face. However, it is important to note that just because community college students have a higher rate of facing these mental health issues, it does not mean that they will necessarily be working with a BIT.

Mental health in community college students is a concern. Also, of concern is the lack of mental health resources available to community college students on campus. The American College Counseling Association revealed in the Community College Task Force survey of community/two-year college counseling services found that 87% of the community colleges surveyed did not have on-site psychiatry resources (Edwards, 2011, p. 1). A 2015 survey of 10 community colleges found that half of the 4,000 students in the study reported a mental health condition, with less than half of these students receiving mental health care (McBride, 2019). Research shows that community colleges admit many potentially at-risk students but offer little to no mental health services and support (McBride, 2019).

Although mental health concerns are the number one most pressing issue facing student affairs, community colleges are facing difficult financial decisions due to decreased funding and enrollment, which leads many community colleges to suspend on-campus mental health services, and refer students to community providers (Anderson,

2019). With a lack of mental health professionals working on campus, student affairs professionals have more responsibility to support students through aspects of college such as goal setting, careering planning, time management, and achieving a work-life balance (Anderson, 2019). Unfortunately, student affairs professionals at community colleges are not being prepared to work with these types of issues. Knight (2014) emphasized the importance of preparing student affairs professionals at community colleges for excellence in their work through training, education, and mentorship to better prepare them for working with students seeking help.

When comparing four-year institutions to two-year community colleges, there is a significant difference in how they manage student mental health services on campus. Klebes (2017) stated that community colleges are failing to provide basic mental health services, while four-year institutions are allocating money and resources to support student mental health. Katz and Davison (2014) support Klebes' claim and suggest that both four-year institutions and community colleges would benefit from mental health resources, which community colleges being in greater need. Research shows that community colleges and four-year institutions have an almost identical number of students with mental health issues, yet community colleges have significantly fewer resources (Klebes, 2017). Not only are community colleges losing counseling staff positions, but students at community colleges have also reported more counseling interactions with mental health professionals who are inexperienced and in training and do not have full counseling credentials (Klebes, 2017). This is largely in part to

community colleges resorting to budget-friendly options like partnering with local crisis teams, using interns as counselors, and even using peer support (Patel, 2015).

When community college counseling centers do see students, they are often limited to the number of sessions they can have, and the centers reserve the right to refuse treatment to students with severe mental illness that exhausts the capabilities of the staff (Klebes, 2017). If these students are turned away or exhausted their number of sessions, they are usually referred to mental health resources in the community. This creates a challenge for community college students because they often lack insurance and transportation to receive off-campus services (Klebes, 2017). In addition to these challenges, many of the marginalized and minority students with mental health issues that attend community colleges are more likely to need services than non-minority students but are less likely to reach out for services or return after their first appointment (Klebes, 2017). With the concerns stated above regarding the culture of mental health resources on community college campuses, it can be understood why BITs are vital to the campus community and the students they support.

According to Lunceford (2014), faculty and administrators at community colleges have been retiring since the boom in the community college sector in the 1960s and 1970s. In their place, new professionals are hired. As for the BIT members who support students in crisis, their role in student affairs at community colleges are unique. These professionals are sometimes not prepared or experienced in working at a community college (Tull et al., 2009). Most of the preparedness and training for working in higher education comes through graduate work, but community colleges are not commonly

discussed in these programs (Hirt, 2006; Kuk & Cujet, 2009). Another important aspect of higher education training is doing practicums, internships, and assistantships at a college or university, but most students never complete these experiences at community colleges (Hornak et al., 2016). The gap between working at a four-year institution and a community college can be very different.

Professional Quality of Life Theory

Those working in student affairs in a helping role may experience the impact of the feelings and experiences that their students in crisis share. As the BIT professionals are exposed to crisis and trauma, they may face an overlap from work to their personal life. The idea of professional quality of life originates from Figley (1995) and was modified by Stamm (2010). Stamm (2010) stated, "The professional quality of life is the quality one feels in relation to their work as a helper. Both the positive and negative aspects of doing one's job influence one's professional quality of life" (p. 8). In this current study, the Professional Quality of Life instrument (Stamm, 2010) will be used to help assess the quality of life for BIT professionals at community colleges.

Figley's (1995) original work on professional quality of life began with a screening he called the Compassion Fatigue Self-Test. It was not until Stamm began studying professional quality of life that compassion satisfaction was studied in addition to compassion fatigue (Stamm, 2010). In the early 1990s the name of the assessment changed to the Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Test, and in the late 1990s, Stamm was responsible for creating the scale known today as the Professional Quality of Life Scale (Stamm, 2010).

According to Stamm (2010), professional quality of life could be broken down into a positive realm (compassion satisfaction) and a negative realm (compassion fatigue). Furthermore, compassion fatigue had two parts: burnout and secondary trauma (shown below in Figure 1).

Figure 1

Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) Scale (Stamm, 2010)
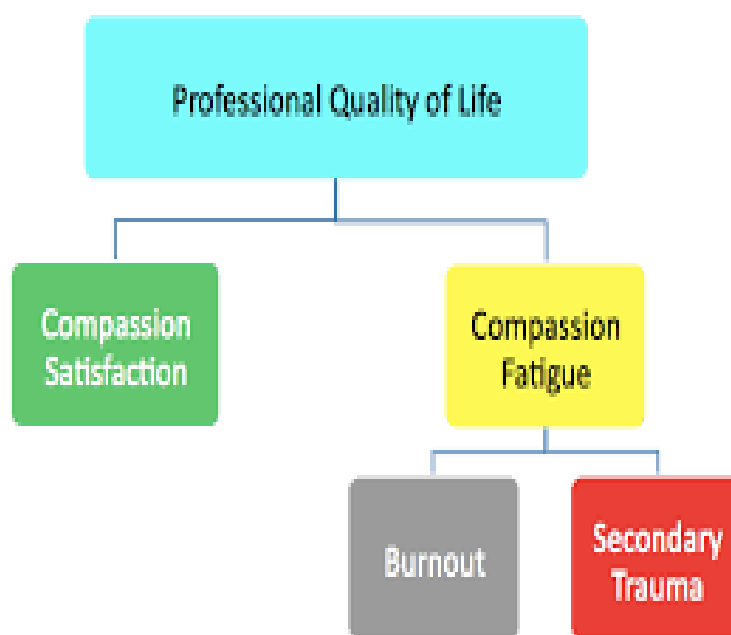
Stamm (2010) stated that professional quality of life "is associated with characteristics of the work environment (organizational and task-wise), the individuals' personal characteristics, and the individual's exposure to primary and secondary trauma in the work setting" (p. 10). In addition to full-time paid employees, professional quality of life can also refer to those working part-time or as a volunteer (Stamm, 2010).

The three factors that influence professional quality of life are (a) the helper's work environment, (b) the environment of the individual being helped, and (c) the helper's personal environment (Stamm, 2010). Since these environmental factors vary from person to person, helpers may be impacted differently, even if they are involved in managing the same trauma or crisis. With the individuality of the professional quality of life in mind, this study sheds light on the helper's (BIT professional) individual experience. The following sections will give a more detailed description of the aspects that make up the Professional Quality of Life Scale, compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Compassion Satisfaction

With the nature of BIT work, there are both positive and negative experiences as BITs work with students of concern. One concept that refers to the positive experience a BIT professional may face is compassion satisfaction. Compassion satisfaction refers to the idea of having a positive outlook on one's work in helping people, especially those in crisis (Stamm, 2010). Gardner (2015) suggests that the positive feelings one has with work, helping others, and how work can contribute to the community all influence compassion satisfaction. Compassion satisfaction is often intended to offset the idea of compassion fatigue (Bernstein Chernoff, 2016).

In the study by Bernstein-Chernoff (2016), she evaluated compassion satisfaction in student conduct and BIT professionals and found that as compassion satisfaction increased, secondary traumatic stress (discussed below) decreased. Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) concluded that professionals who had an increased secondary traumatic stress had

decreased compassion satisfaction. Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) also found that those new to student affairs and those who had more than 26 years of experience had a higher compassion satisfaction rate than those who had been in student affairs for less than five years. Another interesting finding from the study was that compassion satisfaction had a relationship with how much time a professional spent with students on a weekly basis (Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016). Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) suggests that the more time professionals spend with students, the more opportunities they will get to have a positive experience with students. Ultimately, the extent that these professionals experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue is dependent on many factors.

Most studies on compassion satisfaction occur outside of student affairs. Van Hoang (2013) looked at compassion satisfaction, burnout, and compassion fatigue in addiction counselors. Van Hoang (2013) found that there was a positive relationship between compassion satisfaction and years of experience for addiction counselors. Compton (2013) found that trauma victim advocates experienced high compassion satisfaction based on their age and debriefing after the incident. Additionally, nursing faculty studies regarding compassion satisfaction found that compassion satisfaction was highest in oncology and psychiatry faculty (Gardener, 2015). Other professions that have been studied regarding compassion satisfaction include police officers, social workers, and sexual assault nurse examiners. This current study extends the field of study of compassion satisfaction, specifically relating to BITs at community colleges.

Compassion Fatigue

The contrasting concept to compassion satisfaction is compassion fatigue. Stamm (2010) gives the definition of compassion fatigue as the negative experience of those in a helping role with individuals in crisis. The concept of compassion fatigue was first created by Charles Figley, as he worked with the families of soldiers with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Stamm, 1997). According to Figley (1995), professionals working in the helping capacity can be affected by crisis without being in the crisis. This concept implies that professionals working in the helping capacity can be negatively impacted through the other person sharing their trauma (Figley, 1995).

Compassion fatigue is said to happen without warning and is often identified as helpers being unable to separate themselves from the trauma of the other people they are helping (Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016). According to Gardner (2015), compassion fatigue is described as a gradual process in which helpers begin to lose the capacity to care and increases the helpers' exhaustion as it is felt mentally, physically, and spiritually. According to Figley (2002), compassion fatigue in the medical field is better known as secondary traumatic stress (addressed below). Marcus (2019) identifies that student affairs professionals may experience compassion fatigue by working with students in crisis. As BITs are commonly housed in the realm of student affairs, this assumption may be especially true for BIT professionals who work with students of concern.

There are two aspects that make up compassion fatigue. The first aspect is called burnout and refers to exhaustion, frustration, anger, and depression (Marcus, 2019). The second aspect of compassion fatigue is secondary traumatic stress, which refers to

feelings that are driven by fear and work-related trauma (Marcus, 2019). A few studies

have shown that compassion fatigue is the combination of burnout and secondary

traumatic stress (Adams et al., 2006; Bride et al., 2007; Newell & MacNeil, 2010; 2011).

The concepts of burnout and secondary traumatic stress will be discussed next.

Burnout. In addition to compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, the

concept of burnout among BITs on college community campuses will be evaluated in this

study. The first subcategory of compassion fatigue is called burnout. Stamm (2010)

defines burnout as feelings of hopelessness that are usually related to difficulties with

work and doing one's job effectively. Burnout is described as something that does not

happen immediately, but occurs over time (Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016; Marcus, 2019).

Marcus (2019) goes on to describe burnout as feeling overwhelmed at work or that one's

work does not make a difference. He also explains that burnout can be associated with

high caseloads or an unsupportive work environment (Marcus, 2019).

As stated above, burnout is not an immediate or one-time event but occurs over

time when helpers are working with people in crisis or who have experienced trauma

(Marcus, 2019). Like compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue is impacted by the

number of years of professional experience (Marcus, 2019). When one is experiencing

burnout, they may lose the ability to successfully contribute to their work, as well as lose

the ability to contribute to other areas of their life (Schaufeli et al., 2008).

As student affairs, and especially BITs, are a people-oriented profession, these

professional identities have been identified as being more susceptible to burnout

(Maslach, 1998). Maslach (1998) contributed to the literature on burnout by recognizing

that burnout is not just focused on exhaustion. In addition to exhaustion, it was found that

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment was tied

to burnout (Maslach, 1998). These factors made people feel over-worked with less

resources, detachment from other people, and less favorable views on their work

(Maslach, 1998).

Secondary Traumatic Stress. A difference between people being exposed to

primary stressors and those being exposed to secondary stressors has been identified

(Figley, 2013). According to Figley (2013), secondary traumatic stress is "exposure to

knowledge about a traumatizing event" (p. 8). When the helper who has not directly been

exposed to trauma hears about trauma from the person they are helping, they may be

traumatized themselves (Bernstein Chernoff, 2016). Figley (2013) identified that a

combination of experiences may impact the helper's secondary traumatic stress,

including: empathic response from the helper, experience with personal trauma,

unresolved personal issues compounded by the primary trauma exposed individual, and

the type of population the helper works with.

Unlike burnout, the effects and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress can occur

immediately (Figley, 2013). Stamm (2010) identified secondary traumatic stress

symptoms to include exhaustion, frustration, anger, and depression. Additionally, the

symptoms can manifest emotionally, cognitively, physically, and behaviorally

(Morrissette, 2004). Figley (2013) identified that people who experience secondary

traumatic stress have feelings of helplessness, confusion, and isolation from others. One

positive note about secondary traumatic stress is that although those experiencing it show

signs quickly, they also may have a fast recovery rate, especially compared to those experiencing burnout (Figley, 2013).

History of Behavioral Intervention

Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs) were primarily formed on college campuses after the Virginia Tech (2007) and Northern Illinois (2008) shootings, however, a few colleges employed a BIT prior to those shootings. The original college BIT was not initially created to respond to campus shooters, but to identify students moving towards crisis, work with students showing self-injurious behaviors or ideation, and self-injury and suicide prevention (Van Brunt, 2012). Sokolow and Lewis (2009) state that the main function of a BIT is threat assessment and early intervention to promote prevention of homicide, suicide, and other concerning behaviors. More specifically, the goal of BITs is to identify concerning behavior, provide intervention strategies, and create action plans to address concerning behavior (Van Brunt, 2012). Additionally, BITs help improve campus communication and coordination towards monitoring concerning behavior (Higher Education Mental Health Alliance, 2012).

With the use of BITs, institutions have developed measures to assess potential threats and disruptive behaviors to provide a safe and secure environment on college campuses (Cornell, 2010; Golston, 2015). The focus on violence prevention has impacted higher education, as teams have seen a significant rise in the number of cases (*Best Practices,* 2007; Nicoletti et al., 2001). BITs create a space for the campus community to gather information about potential threats, assess risk of situations, and create plans of action to address the threat or concerning behavior (Education Advisory Board, 2013;

Sokolow & Lewis, 2008). Some of the concerning behavior that has been addressed in the literature on BITs include depression, anxiety, psychosis, classroom behavior, vandalism, alcohol or drug use, physical assault, suicidal ideation, and threats through social media (Van Brunt & Lewis, 2014). Of other importance is the support the institution gives BITs through policies and procedures related to voluntary and involuntary leave, interim suspensions, temporary and permanent withdrawals, and judicial sanctions for violation of student conduct codes (Hollingsworth et al., 2009).

Prior to the work BITs do on college campuses, there were Crisis Intervention Teams and Threat Assessment Teams. Both will be discussed in the following sections. Gaining an understanding of the history of behavioral intervention through Crisis Intervention Teams and Threat Assessment Teams shows the seriousness of the work and experiences these professionals have through working with people of concern.

Crisis Intervention Teams

Before there were BITs, there were crisis intervention teams (CITs). CITs are an example of behavioral intervention that originated outside of the college setting. Although BITs and CITs are similar, they vary slightly in origin and goals. Since CITs have a longer history than BITs, it is important to look at CIT history to better understand BITs.

CITs were first created in Memphis, Tennessee in 1988 to initiate a partnership with police officers and mental health professionals to address responding to people with mental illness (Ellis, 2014). Prior to CITs, there was an increase in contact between people with mental illness and the criminal justice system (Hartford et al., 2005). After

deinitialization of the psychiatric hospitals in the 1970s, many people with mental illness found themselves homeless and struggling to function in society (Ellis, 2014). As a result, law enforcement stepped in to intervene with these people, but quickly found out they were inadequately trained to work with people experiencing a mental health crisis (Deas-Nesmith & McLeod-Bryant, 1992).

The gap in law enforcement and mental health is where the CIT model arose. The CIT model was created to have a more comprehensive and safe approach to people experiencing mental health crises (Eleventh Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project, 2010). According to Ellis (2011), studies have also shown that CIT is a great resource when law enforcement work with people with mental illness. The CIT model is "assessing for the likely presence of mental illness, using communication and de-escalation techniques, communicating with mental health providers, and completing emergency evaluation petitions" (Watson et al., 2008, p. 365). The CIT training is a 40-hour course that teaches and reviews "the disease process as well as signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use disorders" (Ellis, 2014, p.11). There are eight pillars to the CIT program: (a) partnerships between law enforcement and mental health advocacy; (b) community ownership through dedicated planning, implementing, and networking; (c) law enforcement policies and procedures; (d) recognitions and honors of CIT officers' accomplishments; (e) availability of mental health facilities; (f) basic and advanced training for officers and dispatchers; (g) evaluation and research; and (h) outreach to other communities (Compton et al., 2011; Hanafi et al., 2008).

The benefits of CIT training have been explored in a study by Ellis (2014). Ellis

(2014) conducted a study on law enforcement officers who went through CIT training and compared their perceptions, attitudes, and impact on practice before and after the training. The quantitative study found that participants' perception of people with mental illness significantly improved. Participants' attitudes towards people with mental illness were significantly more favorable towards people with mental illness. After CIT training, officers were less likely to conclude that mental illness was a personal defect and more likely consistent with external and biological conceptions (Demir et al., 2009). CIT training can help to create a better understanding for team members and the people they work with.

The study by Ellis (2014) showed statistically significant changes in law enforcement officers' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes towards persons with mental illness. It helps validate other studies that infer CIT programs may be effective across several domains (Ellis, 2014). Therefore, BITs could benefit from CITs to help support members who do not identify as a mental health professional. Although most BIT members are not law enforcement, BITs can take a note from these CIT programs to help BIT professionals better understand students with mental illness and other behavioral issues.

Threat Assessment Teams

Another example of behavioral intervention is explored in Threat Assessment Teams (TATs). Looking at TATs gives more insight into behavioral intervention and builds upon the previous sections on BITs and CITs. Including TATs in the behavioral intervention conversation helps extend the field of research on these teams.

TATs are like BITs, as their job is to assess violent threats and intervene before any action can be completed. According to Cornell (2020), threat assessment was developed as a standard practice by the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. State Department, and the U.S. Marshall Service to protect federal officials. In addition to national security, threat assessment is widely used to prevent workplace violence, to protect public figures and celebrities from stalkers, and to prevent domestic violence (Hoffman et al., 2014; Kropp & Cook, 2014; Meloy et al., 2013). Relevant to this study, TATs are also present at K-12 schools and colleges and universities. Threat assessment is a form of risk assessment that is used when someone threatens to commit a violent act or engages in some threatening behavior (Cornell, 2020). Over the years, threat assessment has evolved to include the identification, assessment, and management of threats (Borum et al., 2010).

Understanding how threats are made and how they have changed over time is an important part of threat assessment. Sometimes threats can be directly communicated to the intended victim, but it can also be communicated through a third party (Cornell, 2020). Another aspect about threats is that they can be specific (e.g. "I am going to shoot you") or more ambiguous (e.g. "You better watch your back"; Cornell, 2020). Threats can also be made towards a specific person or target, yet other times, threats are more diffuse, such as threating to blow up a school or a plan to attack with no specific victims (Cornell, 2020). In the past, many threats were verbal, but with the popularity of technology, more threats are being posted online (Cornell, 2020).

Like BITs, TATs have standards that they follow, and commonly include a multidisciplinary team that is trained to identify, assess, and prevent or mitigate situations

that could possibly lead to violence (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). Like BITs, TATs should develop relationships with law enforcement and mental health services (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). As TATs develop a comprehensive awareness to threats, it is important to look at the unique aspects of targeted violence in higher education institutions.

In higher education, threat assessment takes a broader approach to assessing individuals threatening violence. A 2010 study by the FBI indicated that of subjects threatening or completing violence, 45% were current students, 15% were former students, 11% were current or former employees, 20% were people indirectly affiliated with the institution, and 9% with no known affiliation with the institution (Drysdale et al., 2010). With these statistics in mind, it is important for TATs to work collaboratively with local authorities, as violence and attacks are likely to be completed by persons outside of the student body. TATs on college campuses are important as "college campuses are prime locations for violent perpetrators to stage devastating multiple victim attacks due to their dense populations, relatively low police presence, and open and welcoming nature" (Sulkowski & Lazarus, 2011, p. 338). TATs are working to make college campuses a safer place.

TATs at community colleges have had limited research (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). These authors conducted a study of TATs at community colleges and found that of the 148 randomly sampled community colleges that participated in the survey, 72% indicated that they had a formalized team structure. They reported that 20% of respondents stated they had an informal team structure, and 8% were in the process of developing a structure for a TAT at their institution (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). Like

BITs, most teams were made up of administrators at the college, but some schools also included people external to the college (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). Of concern is that only 28% of respondents reported using a structed risk assessment; something that BITs are diligent to administer.

Like BITs, the TATs in the study by Bolante and Dykeman (2015) indicated that they received a low level of training related to threat assessment. The results specified that 67% reported fewer than 40 hours of threat assessment training (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). Interestingly, when comparing law enforcement and college administrators in what they wanted, more continuing education, there was no significant difference (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). The respondents reported wanting continuing education on legal actions, confidentiality, ethical, basic, advanced, practical exercises, investigative questions, and team dynamics (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). In addition to those topics, respondents were interested in learning more about Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), communication and documentation techniques, and implementing incident command systems (Bolante & Dykeman, 2015). This study indicates the gap between TATs and the need for training.

The collaborative and sensitive nature of TATs and BITs makes distinguishing the two difficult. In fact, sometimes the terms TATs and BITs are used interchangeably. The National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) indicates that threat assessment is included in the responsibilities of BITs, thus there is no need for two different teams on the same campus (2018). The name Threat Assessment Teams has slowly been abolished because the NaBITA suggests that team names should avoid law

enforcement terminology as people will be less likely to report concerning behavior if they do not perceive it as an extreme threat (NaBITA, 2018). It is important to discuss TATs because some of their components make up what BITs are today.

Research Studies Influencing the Current Study

The idea for the current study branched from a selection of studies and research completed on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in higher education and student affairs professionals. This section will look at a selection of previous studies used to influence the current study. With the numerous studies being examined, it gives the current study a strong foundation that is embedded in research. The research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology of the current study was generated from the studies being discussed.

A common theme among the studies by Stoves (2014), Bernstein-Chernoff (2016), Lynch (2017), and Marcus (2019) is that there needs to be a more open and frequent discussion among student affairs professionals on the topic of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. According to these studies, student affairs professionals are experiencing compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, but their student affairs community is not addressing it. Additionally, Stoves (2014) concluded that institutions need to add training and support in human resources for compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Another theme that evolved from these mostly quantitative studies was that student affairs professionals were not given the opportunity nor could not indicate what about their experiences was contributing to their compassion satisfaction and compassion

fatigue (Berstein-Chernoff, 2016; Marcus, 2019). There did appear to be a consensus from these studies that the amount of time of direct contact and nature of the meetings with students impacted their level of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue (Stoves, 2014; Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016; Lynch, 2017; Marcus, 2019).

These studies implemented Stamm's (2010) professional quality of life theory, which helped embed this current student in a theory that has been researched. This study adds to the literature on the topic of professional quality of life and compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue by giving the unique perspectives of participants to tell their story through a qualitative study. Of these studies, Stoves (2014) and Lynch (2017) used a mixed methods or qualitative study to gather more detailed accounts from participants. Of these studies, the researchers indicated the need for more research on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in student affairs professionals, and Berstein-Chernoff (2016) echoes the needs for student affairs professionals who work in crisis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the background of BITs was discussed, as BIT professionals are the participants of this study. Additionally, there was a discussion on community college students and their mental health as it relates to what BITs at community colleges may encounter. The next section focused on professional quality of life, including compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue and the sub-sections of burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Finally, current research on the topic of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in the realm of higher education was reviewed to give background for

the need for this current study. Chapter Three will focus on methodology and how the

current study will be conducted.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In chapter Two, the literature review provided a detailed explanation for the purpose of the study, which is to understand how Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) professionals experience compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction in their work with students of concern at community colleges. To begin, a history of behavioral intervention was provided, which included the more recent creation of BITs, as well as Crisis Intervention Teams, and Threat Assessment Teams that were implemented decades ago to assist police officers and mental health professionals, as well as those in the government.

Next, unique concerns for two-year community colleges that creates a different population of students than those students who attend four-year institutions were shared. Furthermore, the demographics of community college students was also shared in Chapter Two, with the goal of understanding how they can be a more challenging population to work with. For example, many community college students balance work and family with going to school, are often from underrepresented populations, are first-generation students, and may have a General Education Diploma (GED) or technical high school diploma instead of a high school degree. With some of the challenges that comes with the community college student demographic, it has been found that these students face more stress and adversity, which impacts their mental health (Katz & Davison, 2014). This is cause for concern for what situations the BIT may see, and thus impact their compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Chapter Two also discussed the theory that grounded this study, the Professional Quality of Life Theory. The Professional Quality of Life Theory is where the idea of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue are housed. Burnout and secondary trauma are components of compassion fatigue.

To conclude Chapter Two, current research on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in higher education was reviewed. From an observation of the research, compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in higher education is a new and rare topic of discussion. One quantitative study by Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) discussed compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue specifically in student conduct and behavioral intervention professionals. Most of the studies reviewed focused on student affairs professionals, but the current study is unique as it looks specifically at BIT professionals and their experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue working with students of concern.

In this chapter, the research paradigm, methodology, and research design will be discussed. The following are the research questions for this current study:

1. How does being on a community college behavioral intervention team affect members' professional quality of life (as defined by Stamm, 2010)?

2. How do members of community college behavioral intervention teams experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue?

The participant sample, data collection procedures, and data analysis will also be reviewed in this chapter. Finally, aspects of reliability and validity of this study, as well as the study's limitations will be shared.

Research Paradigm

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore how BIT professionals experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue with their work with students of concern. A constructivist foundation was used to guide this study. Creswell (2009) states that in a constructivist worldview, "the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants" (p.16). In the constructivist worldview, individuals seek to understand how their experiences make meaning of their world. Creswell (2013) explains that in constructivism, the goal is to rely heavily on the lens of the participants to get their views of the situation.

This study aimed to look at BIT professional experiences with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue while working with students of concern. With the constructivist worldview, BIT professionals made meaning of their own experiences to create rich data. Using this approach, data was collected to understand the BIT professionals' perceptions of their compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue working with students of concern (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015). The participants shared their personal experiences with BIT work and how that impacted their compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Creswell (2013) shared the assumption that in addition to the participants, the researcher has their own lived experiences. To address my own experiences in higher education relating to compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, I used bracketing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Patton (2015) describes bracketing as the researcher separating themself from the phenomena that is being studied to analyze the data without

contaminating the data with the researcher's personal experiences and values and being as free from bias as possible. An example of my bracketing was to journal after each interview, and not only highlight important findings from the interview, but also explore any bias or personal feelings I had about the participant or their experiences.

With the assumption of the constructivist worldview, this study used basic qualitative inquiry via interviews to gather a better understanding of how BIT professionals experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue while working with students of concern (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study included interviews with open-ended questions in accordance with the constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2013). Open-ended questions allowed the participants to go deep into their stories and experiences to create rich data. The goal of the constructivist worldview is for the researcher to interpret and create meaning out of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Research Methodology

As this study sought to explore and understand the experiences of BIT professionals with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue while working with students of concern, qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study. Using a basic qualitative study, I served as the research instrument for the study by asking primarily open-ended questions as assumed by the constructivist framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that qualitative research is unique in that it dives deep into people's lives and experiences and sheds light on phenomena that cannot otherwise be easily studied and explored. Creswell (2009) also states that

qualitative research is exploratory, as the researcher does not start with a clear understanding of which variables to examine. It was a process for me to analyze the participants' experiences and make meaning of them. For example, I did not anticipate that graduation would have such an impact on BIT members, but my research found that it was.

Vann Maanen (1979) defines qualitative research as a tool to "decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p. 520). Another description of qualitative methodology is described by Patton (1985):

Qualitative research is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting- what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what's going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting- and in the analysis is to be able to communicate that faithfully to others… and strives for depth of understanding (p. 1).

As described in these two definitions, qualitative methodology enables individuals' experiences to be heard, understood, and analyzed for themes to communicate their truth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ultimately, this gives meaning to everyone's experiences. By allowing participants to share their experiences openly, I was able to make collective themes from the thoughts and experiences that the twelve participants shared.

An important aspect of basic qualitative methodology is the researcher as the instrument. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) discussed the unique opportunity to be the instrument, as I was able to respond with the individuals I was interviewing and adapt to the situation to meet them where they were. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to help the participants construct their own understanding of their experiences and meaning, without influencing it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I accomplished this through open-ended questions that allowed the participants to explore their thoughts and feelings about compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. One participant was brought to tears sharing about a student who she worked with that completed suicide. From hers and other participants experiences, I was able to create themes that represented their collective thoughts and experiences. An inductive approach is used in qualitative methodology to create concepts, themes, and theories that the researcher constructs through participants' experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Research Method

This study used qualitative inquiry. Using this method allowed for an understanding of a phenomenon as it relates to those involved (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, since there has not been a qualitative study on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in BIT professionals, this exploratory research was appropriately completed through a qualitative study (Creswell, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The research design was cross-sectional, in which data is collected at one specific point in time. This non-experimental design enabled a snapshot of all participants at one point in time. Cozby and Bates (2020) wrote that the "cross-sectional method is much more

common than the longitudinal method" (p. 219). The cross-sectional approach was appropriate for this study as it allows for multiple characteristics to be observed at once and provided information about current experiences of the participants (Cozby & Bates, 2020). This method was also appropriate because it created a foundation for a longitudinal study that could be conducted in the future to study compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue over time. A longitudinal study could be important for future research on this subject because BIT professionals can be studied over months or years of working with students of concern, and their experiences with compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction may change.

Recruitment and Participant Sample

For this study, participants were contacted for a volunteer opportunity to participate in the study. These participants were BIT professionals who work at two-year community colleges located in the United States. The participants must have served on the BIT for at least three years and have direct contact with students. These participants were invited to participate because BIT professionals work directly with students of concern who may be facing trauma or crisis. This study sought to understand how the students' challenging experiences contribute to compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue of BIT professionals. All the participants had other duties outside of the BIT, and had other responsibilities within student affairs, student conduct, counseling, and law enforcement.

The sampling procedure began as convenience sampling and then later included snowball sampling measures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Convenience sampling is when

the sample of participants is chosen by the researcher based on ease of accessibility and availability. Furthermore, Patton (2002) states that snowball sampling occurs when the researcher asks current participants if they know anyone else who would be a good fit for the study. The goal of the study was to get information-rich cases, which for this study, would include the BIT professionals who work directly with students of concern (Patton, 2015).

This field-based study focused on BIT professionals as they are the subject matter experts for this topic. For this study, I recruited my participants though contacts that I had at community colleges in the United States and worked with these contacts to gain access to names and emails of BIT members at their community college. According to Creswell (2012), gatekeepers are the entry person to participants. In my initial interaction with the gatekeepers, I explained the purpose of the study and ask for them to share my information with interested participants. These gatekeepers were the leader of the institution's BIT, or other student affairs professionals who could refer me to potential participants.

In addition to reaching out to contacts, I asked them to pass along a brief Qualtrics survey to screen potential participants to see if they are eligible for the study. The Qualtrics form had a brief introduction of the study along with questions to determine if they were eligible for the study. Besides working on a community college BIT for at least three years, these professionals must also have direct contact with students of concern. The Qualtrics survey collected their name, gender, age, number of years working on the

BIT, position at the college, as well as their email address if they are interested in participating in the study.

After I received the email addresses from interested potential participants, I sent them a consent form for them to sign and keep for their records. If a participant was appropriate for the study, and wanted to participate, I contacted them to schedule an interview. After the interview with the BIT professional, I engaged in snowball sampling by asking them if they knew of others who may be interested in participating in this study. I also sent them an email to pass along to potential participants with an overview of the study and my contact information. When I did not initially get enough volunteers, I reached out via email or phone to BIT leaders at institutions I was not as familiar with to discuss my study and see if they had any willing volunteers. I continued to expand my search for BIT professionals until I get the appropriate number of participants.

Data Collection Procedures

Data for this study was collected using semi-structured, one-on-one virtual interviews which lasted approximately 60 minutes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual interviews were the safest and most appropriate way to conduct these interviews, as in-person may have created a health risk. Besides mitigating the health risk by doing virtual interviews, I did not anticipate my study to cause any harm to the participants but conveyed the possibility at the beginning of the interview. One possibility of harm was that the interview may bring up difficult memories and experiences that may cause distress. I offered to share information with the participants from their college counseling center, who can connect them with outside resources, as well as help lines that they can

call or text for support. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggest that semi-structured interviews should use an interview guide so that the researcher can have a template to follow, but also be flexible if the interview veers in a different direction. Specific to my interview guide, I used open-ended questions (Creswell, 2013).

Conducting interviews for this study has both advantages and disadvantages. Creswell (2009) states that interviews are beneficial when participants cannot be directly observed. This is true for this study, as BIT meetings are usually closed to those not on the BIT due to the confidential and sensitive information about students they discuss. Another advantage is that through interviews, the participants can provide historical information (Creswell, 2009). For this study, that included participants being able to discuss the history of their college's BIT, as well as their own personal history. A third advantage is that interviews allow for the researcher to control the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009). Interviews allow for the conversation to drift from the original script, thus allowing the researcher to modify the questions to keep the interview going and be present with the participant.

Creswell (2009) also identified disadvantages to interviews. The first disadvantage is that interviews provide indirect information as interpreted by the participants (Creswell, 2009). This indicates that there is no absolute truth, only the participants' lived truth and experience. A second disadvantage is that interviews do not allow for the researcher to study the participants in their natural field setting (Creswell, 2009). Another disadvantage is that the researcher may bias responses from the participant, as the participant may not feel comfortable giving full or truthful answers

(Creswell, 2009). Finally, Creswell (2009) identified that not all participants are equally articulate and perceptive, which is challenging for the researcher to get an accurate depiction of the participants' experience when they may have differing abilities to have answers to interview questions.

The interview questions for this study were inspired by Stamm's (2010) Professional Quality of Life Theory and Scale (see appendix). These questions helped support the research questions regarding professional quality of life and coping with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. The Professional Quality of Life Scale is a heavily researched way to evaluate an individual's quality of life in their profession and is appropriate for this study as it complements BIT professionals' experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue working with students of concern (Stamm, 2016). According to Creswell (2009), qualitative interviews should have a few unstructured and mostly open-ended questions that prompt the views and opinions of participants. The following is the list of scripted questions that will be asked in the interview:

1. Tell me about yourself and your professional background and what your current title is?
2. Tell me about your educational background?
3. How long have you been on the BIT?
4. Why did you agree to be part of the BIT?
5. What types of BIT training have you received?

6. Can you tell me about a time you were able to help a student and how you felt about this success?

7. Can you tell me about a time where you were not able to help and student and how that made you feel?

8. What is your greatest fear about working on a BIT?

9. How do you measure success in your BIT work?

10. What makes you feel accomplished when working on a BIT?

11. How has listening to student's traumatic or crisis stories changed your worldview?

12. Can you identify one or some of the most traumatic stories you have heard from students and how they impacted you?

13. Can you describe your personal experience doing BIT work in a few words?

14. Can you give examples of how you are able to separate your work life from your personal life?

15. Can you share instances of what sustains you or keeps you going and motivated in life?

16. With your experience on a BIT, how would you guide other BIT professionals in keeping a positive professional quality of life?

17. How have you grown professionally as a helper since working on a BIT?

18. Can you share if your work as a BIT member makes you feel satisfied, worn out, or other feelings?

19. What do you see as the benefits of your college having a BIT?

20. How do you think BIT members can best be supported through their work as a

helper?

21. Do you feel like your BIT work is making a difference in students' lives?

22. Is there anything I didn't ask that you would like to add?

As shown in the questions above, there is a focus of easing into the interview questions, beginning with questions about experiences helping students and what gives the participant meaning in life. As the questions progress, there is a more serious nature to the tone of the questions, and I asked about more difficult situations in BIT work. I closed the interview with realizations that the BIT professional has had since working with students of concern.

Data Analysis

Data collection was conducted using one-on-one virtual interviews. To strengthen the data analysis, I used data analysis procedures while data collection was occurring (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell (2009) states that data analysis is an ongoing process, and the researcher should write memos throughout the process. Another strategy is to hand code the transcripts promptly after the interview is complete (Patton, 2015). Hand coding included creating my first impression of key words and themes from the data. Hand coding provided a human element to the creation of codes and themes that may be missed by a computer program. The hand codes were short phrases, words, or ideas that are interesting in the data and may be reoccurring. After hand coding the transcripts, I used Dedoose, a coding software, to organize the data and create themes.

Dedoose served to arrange, reassemble, and organize my data in a systematic way that I could understand to interpret the data.

`   Saldaña (2016) defines a code in qualitative inquiry as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p.3). This study was coded in two cycles. The first cycle of coding was completed through affective methods. Saldaña (2009) states "Affective coding methods investigate subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgements) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences" (p.86). Emotion coding was the affective coding method that was used in this study. Emotion coding is a label for the feelings that participants may have experienced (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) explains that emotion coding is especially appropriate for studies that explore intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences. An example of emotion coding during this study was when Freya said, "that always feels good" when she was describing giving students autonomy in the BIT process.

The second cycle coding further reorganized and reanalyzed the data from the first cycle (Saldaña, 2016). The goal of second cycle coding was to narrow down the categories, themes, and concepts from first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2016). This study used pattern coding for the second cycle. Pattern coding helped identify emergent themes from the first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2016). These codes were used to create themes to make sense of the data. An example of pattern coding was found when all twelve participants

spoke about how graduation was the goal for students going through BIT, as well as that graduation is the ultimate success story.

Reliability and Validity Strategies

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, reliability and validity strategies were implemented. Creswell (2009) states that qualitative validity is achieved through procedures the researcher implements to check for accuracy of the findings. One way I certified reliability and validity was to have the audio of the one-on-one interviews transcribed by professional software. After I received the transcript, I checked it against the audio again to confirm its accuracy. To further ensure trustworthiness, I sent the transcripts to the participants for member checking, to make sure that they felt the transcription accurately portrayed their experience. I also produced credibility though interviewing participants until saturation occured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). According to Dworkin (2012), saturation begins to occur from anywhere between five to 50 participants. Saturation is when the researcher begins to hear the same themes and information with no new information added (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finally, originating my questions from the Professional Quality of Life Scale that has been tested and evaluated with success helped strengthen the trustworthiness of this study (Stamm, 2016).

Study Limitations

This study included BIT professionals working directly with students of concern at two-year community colleges in the United States. This study focused on BITs at community colleges, and BITs at four-year institutions may have different experiences.

Additionally, participants in the study must have had direct contact with students, so the BIT professionals who do not meet directly with students may not find this study applicable. Another consideration is that compassion fatigue can lead to burnout and changing jobs, thus potential participants with high compassion fatigue may no longer work on the BIT. This is a limitation because my research may not encompass the experiences of BIT professionals who were significantly struggling in their role enough to leave. Missing the opportunity to interview these professionals does not invalidate the experiences of the professionals who did participate in the study, but I may have missed valuable data without individuals with more negative experiences. Finally, it is important to note that due to COVID-19 and the lack of students physically on campus at some colleges, there were a decrease in cases reported. This gave BIT members a different perspective on their compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue than if they were being referred students at a usual capacity.

Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodology decisions that went into this study. To begin, a constructivist worldview was discussed and will be used in this study to provide a foundation for understanding how participants make meaning of their experiences. Next, qualitative methodology was discussed, with a focus on a basic qualitative study for the method. The next section discussed the recruitment and participant sample that will be used to recruit BIT professionals as participants for this study and how that recruitment was implemented. Data collection and data analysis was also discussed to give an understanding of the interview process and questions, along with how the

interviews were transcribed and two cycles of coding were used to help create themes. Next, a section on reliability and validity was discussed to ensure the credibility of the study. The final section explored the study limitations that raise possible concerns for the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

In Chapter Four I will discuss the findings from my interviews with 12 participants. A variety of themes emerged from the research, which will be discussed below. To begin the chapter, I provide an overview of the participants, followed by a chart depicting their demographics. I also give a brief summary of each participant with information on their background in higher education and BIT work, as well as the title of their current position and education. To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, each was given a pseudonym and the name of the affiliated institution was not included. Although I give the general title of their position, I left out any specific indicators in their title that could potentially identify their institution or them.

After the summary of participants, I share the findings of the study. Through the interviews, participants shared stories about students with who they worked through their BIT. To protect those students and participants, I gave a general synopsis of the situation followed by the participant's quote without specific indicators that could identify who or the origin of the story. These findings were assembled to answer the following research questions:

1. How does being on a community college behavioral intervention team affect members' professional quality of life (as defined by Stamm, 2010)?
2. How do members of community college behavioral intervention teams experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue?

Participants

There were 12 professionals who participated in this study. Qualifications for this study included that the person must work on a BIT at a community college for at least two years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was required that participants work on a BIT for at least two years because many of the BIT experiences during the past year have not been typical, and many colleges saw fewer referrals. Table 1 contains the demographics for each participant while sustaining their anonymity. Additionally, there is a brief description of each participant listed under their pseudonym. Although the participant intuitions are not listed, the state where their school located is included, as well as a general title for their occupation within their institution. The participants represented four different states and ten different institutions. Participants have worked on a BIT between four and 14 years.

Many of the participants held the role of the dean of students of their institution, but other roles included a conduct coordinator, counseling manager, and campus police officer. A substantial number of participants were the leader or chair of the BIT, but others were traditional team members. Most teams met on a weekly basis, but due to the pandemic had to meet virtually during the 2020-2021 school year. Members stated that going virtual did not help with team morale, and it was more difficult to support each other during this time. Although most participants indicated that the pandemic had negatively influenced the number of referrals they were given, a few said that the number of cases increased, especially cases referring to basic needs, such as food and housing insecurity.

Through the interviews, some participants indicated that community college BITs lack the recognition and funding to function at their best capacity. Conversely, some participants felt that they had substantial backing from their institutions. All participants shared that being at a community college posed challenges engaging students because of the lack of morale and engagement on campus as many of the institutions are commuter campuses and do not have students living on campus. This posed a challenge for the BIT because there was limited availability to monitor students and receive referrals as students were on campus for classes and nothing more.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Age	Gender	Race	Years on BIT	State	Professional Title
38	Female	White	5+	Oregon	Conduct Coordinator
37	Female	White	4	Ohio	Dean of Students
43	Female	White	5+	Ohio	Counseling Manager
42	Male	White	5+	Ohio	Campus Police

47	Female	White	5+	Ohio	Dean of Students
48	Female	White	4	Ohio	Dean of Students
37	Female	White	4	Nebraska	Dean of Students
45	Female	White	5+	Tennessee	Dean of Students
41	Male	African American	5+	Ohio	Dean of Students
37	Female	White	4	Nebraska	Dean of Students
52	Male	African American	5+	Ohio	Dean of Students
34	Male	White	5+	Ohio	Campus Police

Snapshot of Participants

Ann

Ann is a 43-year-old, white female. She has been working in higher education for 12 years and has held roles in advising, program management, and currently manages student services and counseling. She holds a master's degree in higher education and is

currently enrolled in a doctoral program. She has experience working on a BIT at a four-year institution and has served as a member on her current institution's BIT for over four years.

Curtis

Curtis is a 34-year-old, white, male who serves as a campus police officer at his current institution. He is a graduate of the police academy. He has served in different capacities on his institution's BIT for six years and has been directly involved on the BIT for four years.

Delilah

Delilah is a 38-year-old, white, female. She currently works in student conduct and is in her 16th year of being a student affairs professional. She also earned a master's degree in education. Prior to student conduct, she worked in service learning and residence life. Between her previous institution and her current one, she has worked on a BIT for six years and has been a chair of the BIT for the last five years.

Earl

Earl is a 52-year-old, African American, male who serves as the associate dean of students at his current institution. Prior to this role, he worked in residence life at a variety of higher education institutions. He also holds a doctoral degree in education. He has served as the chair of his institution's BIT for three years and has eight years of BIT experience.

Freya

Freya is a 37-year-old, white, female who currently serves as the dean of students at her institution. Prior to her current role, she worked as the director of disability services. Before her career in higher education, she worked 15 years in child welfare as a master's-level, licensed mental health counselor. She is also currently pursuing a doctorate degree in education. She serves as the chair of the BIT and has served on a BIT for six years.

Giselle

Giselle currently serves as her institution's dean of students. Prior to this role, she has worked in higher education in residence life, conduct, and as an assistant and associate dean of students. She holds a doctoral degree in education. She has worked on BITs for 14 years.

Hazel

Hazel is a 45-year-old, white, female who currently serves as the dean of students at her institution. She has been at this institution for 10 years. She holds a bachelor's degree. Prior to her role as dean of students, she worked in TRIO, admission, and disability services. Outside of higher education she worked at a domestic violence and sexual assault crisis center. She has served on her institution's BIT for over five years.

Margie

Margie is a 48-year-old, white, female. She is a dean at her current institution, but has worked previously in admission, financial aid, retention, student life, and enrollment

services. She also holds a master's degree in education. She has served on her institution's BIT for four years.

Noah

Noah is a 41-year-old, African American, male. He is the dean of students at his current institution. His previous roles in higher education include roles in residence life as a hall director and assistant director, as well as director of student conduct. He holds a master's degree and is pursuing a doctorate degree. He has served on his institution's BIT for over nine years and has served as the chair of the team for seven years.

Olivia

Olivia is a 47-year-old, white, female. She currently serves as the dean of students at her institution. Prior to working in this role, she worked as the assistant dean of students. She began leading the BIT as the assistant dean, and now is responsible for the administration of the group in her current role. She holds a doctoral degree and has served on the BIT for four years.

Stephanie

Stephanie is a 37-year-old, white, female. She works as the dean of students at her current institution and has been in this role for three years. She holds a doctorate degree, and has worked in admissions, enrollment management, and as dean. She has eight years of BIT experience and is the chair of the team in her role.

Uriah

Uriah is a 42-year-old, white, male who has worked at his current institution for 22 years for the campus police. In his current role he serves as the director of campus

security. Prior to his current role he worked as a security officer as well as a manger of security. He graduated from the police academy, as well as holding a master's degree. He has served on his institution's BIT for six years.

Research Question 1: Impact on Professional Quality of Life for BIT Members

In this section, I look at the two concepts that make up Professional Quality of Life. The first is compassion satisfaction, which is a summation of the positive emotions a helper has while doing their work that helps them feel satisfied, needed, and appreciated in their position. The major themes that arose from the research include student success stories, team efforts, graduation day, and professional growth.

The second component is compassion fatigue which is the difficult aspects of the helper job that makes work more challenging and may lead to secondary traumatic stress or burnout. Three major themes of compassion fatigue include BIT members not being able to help all the students they interact with, their greatest fears working on a BIT, and how their worldview has changed doing BIT work.

An observation among participants was that at the community college level, they see few cases, and the cases they do review are usually not considered severe. Additionally, all the participants had just completed a primarily virtual school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, causing fewer BIT referrals for most institutions. Nevertheless, BIT members were able to identify memorable stories of helping a student through the BIT process and how that success contributed to the compassion satisfaction element of Professional Quality of Life.

Conversely, all participants had at least one story of not being able to help a student through BIT and the toll those stories take on their compassion fatigue. Participants' views on their Professional Quality of Life also yields insight into what makes their work on a BIT challenging. Finally, participants shared how working on a BIT has affected their professional growth, as well as impacted their worldview.

Compassion Satisfaction Through Student Success Stories

Participants were eager to share their student success stories while working with students through their BIT. Success in BIT work looked like students accepting help, receiving the resources they needed, doing well in school after struggling, and ultimately graduation. The participants spoke fondly of their experiences of being able to help students and making an impact on their lives for the better. Success stories that BIT members shared were about empowering students to find themselves through the struggles they were facing and become a productive member of the campus community. Freya did not have a specific example of her student success stories, but instead shared that the best stories and outcomes are when the student is empowered to take control of their situation. Freya spoke a lot about students steering the way for their life:

> And so, that's always when students are driving the outcome that always feels good because I want them to have that sense of power and agency over what's happening in their life. So yeah, those outcomes where the students are like "thank you and now I'm back on track. I'm here, I'm registering again." That is awesome.

Freya was passionate about empowering students through the BIT process, and like

Freya, Noah also found satisfaction in students' autonomy. Noah's memorable encounter

with a student through BIT was one where the student was being dismissed from her

program and she was aggressive towards her department because she was devastated to

be derailed from her dream. He met with her to hear her story and talk with her about

finding different avenues to reach her goal. He found his balance of compassion fatigue

and compassion satisfaction through his work:

> So, no matter how many times I'm working too many hours, I realized it is worth
>
> it. And so, if I have to reduce my hours asleep by one or two, like it's worth it for
>
> that student. And then knowing that like she was working with her children, and
>
> that could be the difference of her being able to present inspiration to them, or
>
> them feeling like this is the role from mom and so why should I even try? So, like
>
> that generational opportunity, as well to really be able to breathe hope into
>
> situations means a lot.

BIT members explained how they loved to see when a combination of the BIT work,

campus resources, and the student's own resiliency had positive outcomes. Olivia shared

about a student who was struggling with depression and anxiety and how her team was

able to connect her with resources:

> She was struggling. And I think the easiest thing to say was that we were able to
>
> assist her and provide her with some support services. And it was something that
>
> really just led to a, I think, a good outcome. She was able to finish her schooling,
>
> she was able to be successful, she was a very bright young lady. And still every

once in a while, believe it or not, I will get an email from her just more or less

saying, 'Hey this is what's going on, or this is what's happening.'

Similarly, Giselle shared a success story about a student who was on the autism spectrum

and multiple BIT referrals were made for his disruptive behavior and aggressive

language. Giselle implemented an intervention for him to be able to come to her office

whenever he needed to vent and get upset without judgment. The intervention worked

and Giselle spoke of his success:

> There were zero reports on him. Yeah. Zero reports because he knew he had a
>
> safe place to be. And I was like all right, good deal. So, you graduate, you know?
>
> And we went from wanting to suspend this child to graduation. Yeah, there was
>
> no removing him from classes. There was no, you know, they weren't calling his
>
> mom. I mean, nothing had to happen. He was like 19 years old, 20 years old,
>
> something like that. And I mean, it was just… it felt good.

Uriah shared an insightful realization about BIT work and how helping students leaves

him with a good feeling that increases compassion satisfaction through knowing he did

the best he could to help the student:

> And to be able to walk away from that, knowing that, you know, I left everything
>
> on the table that from that meeting, and I walk away knowing that whatever the
>
> result is for that person, I did what I thought was appropriate or thought was the
>
> best for the person and the college.

These examples give insight into the work BIT members put in as helpers and how being

able to be a part of helping a student succeed leads to great compassion satisfaction

within their work. Next, I will discuss another aspect of Professional Quality of Life that increases compassion satisfaction, and that is members working collaboratively and feeling valued among their team.

Compassion Satisfaction Through Team Efforts

Participants spoke about the compassion satisfaction they received from working with a team and being surrounded by people who support them. They reported the support and encouragement they received made BIT work more enjoyable. Earl had some ideas of how he views his fellow team members and how they support each other:

> I think being a support system, because I think those of us who work on the BIT
> team, or those of us who are allies and work in student affairs, we know the
> human cost of what the kind of work that we do. And so just being able to be
> there for one another.

Earl also spoke about how his team supports each other by taking the time to have conversations that do not involve work or BIT concerns and has found that to be helpful in balancing his compassion satisfaction. Noah also agrees in the importance of team members being there for each other, especially when BIT work is difficult:

> And so, I think that that's been reassuring to know that even when it feels like
> you're at the end of the rope, you're not alone. And so, I have colleagues and I
> have a system of care and support to me, so that helped me feel that I can continue
> to do this work.

Hazel had positive things to say about her peers, but also praised her mentors that help her stay balanced and support her when work gets especially frustrating:

My peers at work, they support me. My supervisors are my mentors, and I love

them as mentors because they, they know me, and they allow me to grow. They

allow me to rage and be, you know, frustrated, but also kind of snap me out of it

when I'm being overly compassionate or whatnot. But my peers, they get me

through.

Stephanie found satisfaction in her job through her team and stated, "Just spending time

with my staff. Seeing their hard work that they're doing for the students, and spending

time with the students." Throughout the interviews I noticed a theme of how BIT

members cannot do this work alone, and it requires assistance and support from the other

members around them.

Ann had the opportunity to work on a BIT at a four-year institution before being

on the team at her community college. In her unique perspective, she shared how at her

previous job, she was solely responsible for BIT work, and now her job and compassion

satisfaction has improved as she can share responsibilities with other members:

I have to set some boundaries so there's always personal growth going on there.

But I think the sense of leadership that I now have, whereas before I was the one

who was responsible for engaging with the students in everything, now I am in a

position where I'm still engaging, but I'm also delegating to others. So that's

really helpful to be able to see that and separate myself a little bit more and to

have help and a team to rely on.

Graduation Is the Best Day of the Year

Another theme that was a great indicator of compassion satisfaction was that of graduation. Graduation was the ultimate success story that participants shared. All twelve participants spoke about graduation and the importance of getting students to that day because it meant that they overcame their struggles and reached their goal of graduation. Often graduation is thought of as a celebration for students and families, but a common theme among participants was the joy, relief, and excitement that graduation brought to celebrate the students who went through the BIT process, were able to continue with school, and ultimately graduate. One of the goals of BIT is retention and graduation, so participants shared their elation with the pomp and circumstance. Margie was excited to share her experience with graduation and reminisced on how fulfilling watching the ceremony is:

> And I tell you, graduation is the best day of the year. And you just get chills when you know the stories of so many of these students. And by God, they made it, right? And they made it. So that part is rewarding.

Stephanie also raved about the joy she feels during graduation to watch students she worked with via BIT and how she gets emotional when watching them graduate after seeing them struggle and then finally succeeding:

> And then seeing them walk across the stage at graduation. That's the ultimate. Yep, I keep tissues with me at every graduation ceremony. With all the students trying to keep it together. Yeah, it's just awesome. It's just the best feeling in the world and then hear their family. Just awesome.

Freya sees value and potential in all the students she works with through BIT. She also had a positive take on the impact of graduation and how she feels helping students get to the point where they can overcome their challenges and graduate:

> All these students with pride and the beams on the kids in the audience, like applauding for their parents. Like, this is pretty life changing. This is good stuff. So that's you know, when I feel accomplished, it really is that you know, if I can do anything to help somebody remove a barrier, so they can take one step closer to graduation, that's what I feel my personal mission is, and that's what I want to strive to do.

As a police officer on his institution's BIT, Curtis also sees the excitement of graduation and students' success. He stated that graduation was the ultimate goal of college, and especially of those who go through the BIT. He stated:

> Seeing the students succeed. Whether that's just finishing a semester or getting a degree. To me, that's a win. Because in BIT, we want the students to succeed. Whatever their journey is.

BIT Work Helps Members Grow Professionally

One aspect that BIT members pointed out was how they have grown professionally during BIT work. Growing professionally contributes to Professional Quality of Life in that members learn how to do better at their job and improve over time. Delilah shared how she grew professionally through better understanding and learning the services and resources available on campus and in the community for students in need:

I think that I've learned, I actually feel like I learned the backside of our university
or college a lot better than I ever would have had I not been on the care
team…and then also, just like, all the ways we can navigate that we would never
have known of or thought of advocating for a student in that way. But now, I'm
totally like, oh, no, we can do that. Here's how we're gonna do that. And so, I
think that that's how it's kind of helped me as a professional.

Hazel's experience with growing professionally has been focused on knowing when she
is burnt out when she doesn't want to go to BIT meetings and she combats that by
checking in with herself to see why she is feeling this way. Additionally, she feels like
she has grown professionally through navigating the ins and outs of higher education and
its politics:

I also think that growing as a professional is impacted by so many other areas. It's
impacted by your peers, it's impacted by the students, obviously. There's a lot of
different pieces and parts to higher ed that, you know, are political in some ways.
And so being able to navigate that too, because very quickly you could be viewed
as overly compassionate or too big of an advocate. And so, it's learning how to
navigate that. And I think that being on the team has allowed me to really
navigate those.

Margie had a different take on growing professionally and found that joining
memberships to connect with other higher education professionals doing similar jobs is
helpful. She also finds reprieve in consulting with colleagues across her state. In addition
to working closely with others in her field, she also takes the time to read articles and

attend meetings and conferences. The act of growing professionally also helps members to see BIT cases in a different lens.

Olivia shared her experiences that growing professionally helped her look into cases more carefully and thoroughly. She explained that she and her team make an extra effort to thoroughly utilize all the information at their disposal, including social media and public records to get the full story on the student:

> So, I think that's something that I definitely have learned from and that I have just grown into since being in my position. I think the thing that has just astounded me is the number of situations that take place because I wasn't aware prior.

Like other participants, Ann found that her listening skills had improved, and she looks deeper into situations. Ann's quote also emphasizes the importance of a team effort, which was discussed earlier:

> I feel like my listening skills have developed a lot more, and I don't feel as pressured to respond right away. Like, you know, take the time to absorb what's going on. Actually read between the lines to see if there's really more to the story than what's written in front of you – if it's an email or a phone call. Because typically, there's so much more. And there's usually different perspectives on what's going on.

Earl's perspective had his team in mind, but also considered his responsibilities as the chair of the BIT, and the important decisions that go into that. This aspect of growing professionally helped Earl increase confidence in his decision making:

> This has really taught me to understand that we have to be able to discern what
> we're really dealing with, and then make decisions that we're comfortable
> standing behind, and knowing that those decisions aren't ever going to be perfect.
> And so, it's not that we don't have any flaws. But am I making the best decision
> with the best resources that I can right now?

The participants all had stories to share about how they have grown professionally as part of their BIT work. Although there were many variations of how they grew professionally, it was a consensus that BIT work challenged them intellectually, as a leader, and as a higher education professional. Similar to how BIT work impacted participants professionally, the following section will look at how BIT work has affected how they see the world.

Compassion Fatigue Through Not Helping Everyone

On the other side of compassion satisfaction is compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue results in the burnout and secondary traumatic stress a helper feels when their job gets exhausting, and they feel like they are not making a difference or simply just get tired. BIT members are not immune to compassion fatigue because they have stories of students who they were not able to help or find services for. Findings indicate these situations were heartbreaking for the participants as indicated by language they used such as 'devastated' to explain not being able to help every student that comes through BIT. After sharing the joy of the stories that enhanced compassion satisfaction, participants were easily able to share the painful stories of not being able to help a student and how that made them feel because it is not easy to forget those stories. Delilah shared stories

about some of the students she was not able to help due to lack of resources and money, or because the students did not utilize those options available to them. She also indicated that it is difficult when the resources that were previously available were tapped out and students struggle to make ends meet and may even get kicked out of their living situation:

> There are situations where sometimes, like, we just can't help the student in the sense of like, we don't have either the counseling support that they need, and/or they're not willing to use outside resources because maybe they don't want to see how their parents know that they're accessing it or using that health insurance. And/or, it's really frustrating for me when they, when we have no money for them.

Stephanie shared a difficult story of a student who met with her and shared that he had been hazed at his previous institution and something bad had happened to him. The student's parents were aware of the situation, and he was in counseling, but the following week, he completed suicide. About the situation, Stephanie said:

> Yeah, still not okay obviously. Yeah. But it was awful. It was… it was just… it was horrible. And everyone had done everything right. And we still couldn't stop it. We still couldn't fix it.

Stephanie explained that the impact of this situation still haunts her and continued by saying:

> But it still feels like it was yesterday. Absolutely. And it's still there. When I'm working with students now as a guide of you know, because then you always look back on it. What could I have done differently? What should I have said? Who

should I have reported to? Is there anything else I could have done? So that is a guide for how I work with students now. For sure. Yeah, it still doesn't make it any easier though.

The example Stephanie gave could be considered an experience of secondary traumatic stress. Although it was not her completing suicide, the impact that student had on her left her hurting years after it happened. Secondary traumatic stress is a component of compassion fatigue and makes the job of the helper more difficult.

Similarly, Ann shared a tough story about a student who was under BIT watch for bringing a gun to campus. He explained to the BIT that it was to protect himself because he had been involved in a gang and was trying to get out and turn his life around, but he needed to protect himself in case the other gang members would attack him. As the student turned his life around and got more involved in school, the BIT had great hope for him. Unfortunately, Ann shared there was a change in events and the student had gotten back into drugs and was shot and killed. She spoke of her team's response:

And so, it was just really heartbreaking that we did everything that we could, but it still wasn't enough to help him. And so, you know, we had a conversation as a team. Well, could we have done anything different? What else was there to do? And I mean, I think we all just knew that we did everything we could from our perspective, but it didn't make it any easier to process.

Compassion fatigue does not always come in the form of tragic events such as suicides or murder. In fact, Noah had an experience with a student with mental health issues who had multiple BIT reports filed on them prior to the semester starting. When the BIT

confronted the student, he became violent and was handcuffed and taken to the psychiatric hospital. Noah's team was ultimately unable to help the student, and the student had to be expelled from their institution:

> And it was like this is not gonna get any better, we need to separate this person. So, we had to do that. And in that moment, it felt like a complete failure. We were trying our best to let this person know that we're here to provide resources, and then next thing we know that the person is being escorted out and hospitalized, but in handcuffs, because they were also aggressive. And so that definitely felt bad that the story kind of continued, and we have more interaction. But unfortunately, there weren't many changes to that behavior. And so that person was never able to ever start classes at our college, we had to just separate…and I hate that. I want students here, but that person couldn't be here.

Noah was noticeably pained by that story as he shook his head in defeat. Margie was able to discuss a student case that was challenging for her because the student was not succeeding regardless of the interventions the BIT implemented. She stated that she felt "defeated" and the case was "disappointing." She discussed how students need to take ownership and accountability for their actions, but this student was really struggling:

> You know, and we tried to do outreach early, we thought we were successful, you know, and then the reports kept coming in, and they were escalating. And so that really turned, it was disappointing, because the student had potential. She was a good student, but I tell you, like some of the students are just dealing with so much other stuff and crap, that this just can't be a priority sometimes. And so, you

know, hopefully she is receiving the help that she needs. But that was

disappointing, because, you know, we've rarely seen that.

Unfortunately, this student was unable to be successful with the interventions. Margie

and other participants recognized that students need to be accountable for their own

actions, and there is only so much a BIT can do for them before the student can help

themselves. This seemed to be a reprieve that participants did not have to put the burden

of the students all on themselves.

These stories are just a snapshot of the situations that BIT members endure when

it comes to compassion fatigue. Understandably, heartbreaking stories of students they

could not help leaves them feeling frustrated, defeated, sad, and many other emotions.

But there are other components to a Professional Quality of Life to consider that BIT

professionals experience that influence this.

BIT Members' Greatest Fears

Another theme that arose during the interviews was BIT members greatest fears.

These fears are associated with the negative feelings that accompany compassion fatigue.

Some of the fears ended up happening, like to Stephanie who lost a student to suicide.

Other members were able to relate and share about their greatest fears because BITs

provide help for sensitive and important situations that may result in tragedy. The most

common theme about members' greatest fears is that they will miss something, and a

student does not get the help they need and something bad happens. Delilah put it simply:

My greatest fear is that we'll miss something. Like that we will either in reviewing

a report or reviewing information or in like a conversation with the student will

miss like that they were really suicidal, or they were really a threat, and we didn't

have any indication of that.

Olivia's greatest fear stemmed from the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007 with an active

shooter who went undetected until it was too late and he killed fellow students and

faculty. She stated:

> One of the things that really concerns me that I have in the back of my mind is the
>
> profile of an active shooter. That is something that is constantly asked of me when
>
> we have a questionable student situation. And sometimes I'm thinking it and
>
> somebody else mentions it. We've had two students now that you know,
>
> according to campus police fit that profile. And so that makes me very uneasy,
>
> and it makes me… I don't leave any complaints unattended. Every complaint that
>
> comes into our office is fully reviewed. And that's something that really weighs
>
> on me heavily.

Focusing on the services that BITs help students connect with, Freya was afraid that she

would miss the opportunity to help a student with resources:

> So probably my biggest fear is that I'm going to refer one out or put on the
>
> monitor list, when I should have reached out and provided more intensive
>
> services, and then something bad happens or the student drops out or you know,
>
> causes themselves harm. So that's probably my biggest fear that I will misread
>
> something so badly that that I don't provide services, or we don't provide services
>
> when we should, and then a student that ultimately feels like they're not seen.

Noah's take on his greatest fear working on a BIT had to do with his institution's BIT being the last resort for students because students were referred to them when nothing else has worked, either counseling or other services. He also stated that his biggest fear is that there is a fatality on campus.:

> I think my biggest fear is many times, our campuses have used us as the last resort. And so, after everybody else has tried all that they can do, the Behavior Intervention Team, is the last hope the student has. And so, if we can't help them, then they are oftentimes like, 'there's no way for you to be here.' And so, I think that's my fear of letting either side of that team down. So, whether it's my colleagues were referring somebody to me who they had hope, hope in, and they were thinking that process could be able to assist them and getting on the right track. And if our process doesn't serve that student, well, then maybe they're gone. Or on the back end, if, in doing our assessment, if we were to get something wrong, things are high stakes all the time. And so like, like when we're making the assessment about, are you really a risk, then we could either be separating somebody, and then we would later find that it wasn't necessary to go that far. That's concerning.

Hazel agreed that missing something was one of her greatest fears, but she had a different perspective as well. She felt that there could also be an issue if the BIT was doing too well of a job and their team would be overwhelmed with referrals:

> Probably my greatest fear is that we will do such a wonderful job that we will overwhelm our own system with referrals, and I don't think that it's because I feel

like [my school] has problems. I think that it is that once students see and feel

something that is comfortable and good, and they can feel that support, you know,

it's a joyful thing to be able to refer and hope. But do we always have the

manpower based on budget based on other pieces and parts of jobs that we do to

support the student as they progress?

Uriah had a unique take on his greatest fear working on a BIT. Like other participants, he

stated that his biggest fear was missing something and having something bad happen on

campus, but he also acknowledged that BITs may intervene on a student who does not

need the intervention and cause them harm or complicate their situation:

But I also can think of it the other way. What if you prevent somebody…or you

overreact and someone that is legitimate not a threat, but because of their behavior

that one time or a couple of times, has put them in a light that they are a threat.

And often you're removing from campus, or you put some sanctions on them and

that helped, that caused them to not be successful

Another unique take to the theme of the greatest fear from a BIT member came from

Curtis. Curtis discussed the fear of having to hear about someone he knew or grew up

with during BIT cases. He gave the example that when that did happen, he excused

himself from the group for that case. But this brings up an important aspect. Many

community colleges are surrounded by the communities that many of the community

college students grew up in. Additionally, many faculty and staff have lived in the area

and know students outside of school. Giselle mentioned how she would see past BIT

students at the grocery store and had to consider appropriate boundaries from working with students via BIT verses at a grocery store.

Earl was the only participant to mention that his greatest fear did not have to do with missing information that would impact a case, his was race related. He explained that part of the BIT's job at his institution was felony reviews. Because community colleges have open enrollment, students with criminal histories are allowed to be accepted into the institution. He stated that most of the BIT committee is Caucasian and many of the students they are reviewing are Black and he is worried about bias. Earl stated, "So my fear is that the voice of those who are underserved and underrepresented are not given the same equal shake as those who may be of a Caucasian persuasion."

Participants had a myriad of situations that would cause fear, but the participants were confident in the skills and abilities of their team, as well the backing from their institutions. Although fear contributed to compassion fatigue, it did not appear to influence members enough to quit their BIT responsibilities. Members also shared that the good in BIT work outweighs the bad.

BIT Work Has Changed Members' Worldview

Findings indicate the work that BIT members do has an impact on how they see the world. For most of the participants in this study, it made them see the world with more compassion. On the other hand, some of the participants said it has made them cynical seeing what the world has dealt people and how people respond to stress. Giselle's worldview has changed as she now takes in a situation (BIT related or not) and

imagines the possibilities of why someone may be acting a certain way. She also states that she is less judgmental.

Uriah also saw the value in how BIT work has changed his worldview. He is thankful and states, "I've been fortunate for me. I haven't really had to deal with major crisis in my life." Uriah was not alone in that thinking, as other participants spoke up about being grateful for the life they have and that they can be there to support students who are not as fortunate to not have issues or situations that bring them to the BIT's attention.

Delilah transparently shared that BIT work encouraged her to look deeper into situations as well as not jumping to conclusions when first presented with a situation both inside BIT work, and outside in her daily life:

> I usually always say when I hear something, I want to know the story behind that. Because I get so much of when we get reports is just the tip of the iceberg. And then students share so much of what's underneath that analogy of underneath the water. And so, I think that it's just helped me to always pause and not jump to conclusions, you know what I mean? Sometimes I'm not always right though, like nope, that's just really like, that is what it is. But I do think that there's always usually more to anybody's story or more that's going on than meets the eye.

Earl made a point of saying that his BIT work has made him more tolerant, but so has his age. As stated in the table above, many of the participants are not young professionals nor new to the BIT realm. Earl shared the following:

So, I think it's generational. I think things I would say that – full disclosure – I'm 52 years old. And I am a man of a certain generation and certain things have experienced certain situations. I think now, I am more tolerant of things now than I would have been when I was much younger. So, I think what has changed for me is to be a little bit more tolerant, and not see things as black and white. I think that happens when you're around people you develop that everyone has a story inside of them. And that we make assumptions about people, I think, based on the exterior, and so I would say for me just being very, very tolerant of situations. And that has changed me and impacted me, I think, in a positive way.

A different take on how BIT work has changed members' worldviews is that it has made them see the world in a more negative light. For example, Freya stated:

And so, I would say, you know, working with individuals on Care Team and hearing their stories, it's…I feel like there are some things that I think it makes me much more intolerant and impatient with complaints from people that I perceived to have privilege. So sometimes I'm not as empathetic and sympathetic, and I'm like yeah, quit you're whining.

She admits that she is still compassionate towards people, but after hearing the stories from the students on her BIT, she has put in perspective what problems can be. Hazel had similar feelings and passionately shared, "Makes you cynical. It's hard to say that. I mean, I feel like I'm a pretty happy person. But it can be hard. I mean, it can be the most defeating feeling ever."

Olivia echoed the feeling of cynicism and added how a changed worldview has helped her be more diligent in BIT work and investigating situations in more depth because there could be parts of the story or situation that cannot be seen at first. Olivia proclaimed:

Again, I think that goes back to, it's made me a little paranoid, I'll be honest with you. Because like I said, when, when I'm hearing a student's situation, and I'm worried about, you know, whether or not they are fitting the profile of an active shooter, that makes me very worried and concerned. So. Has it made me jaded? No. Does it lead me to fully exhaust and investigate various different students' situations? Yes. Because I think that information can be very powerful.

Receiving a glimpse of how challenging BIT work affects members' worldview is an indicator of Professional Quality of Life. As some stated, BIT work has helped them see the world in a more positive view filled with opportunity and optimism. Others, on the other hand, found that the stories students shared with them were so disheartening that they now have a bleaker vision of the world. Regardless, member's worldviews made an impact on their Professional Quality of Life.

Research Question 2: Behavioral Intervention Team Members Experience with Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue

I used the second research question to address how BIT members experience Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue. From the interviews, two major themes were found, each with three subthemes. The first theme was Compassion Satisfaction through a positive work environment. The sub-themes of that are finding

benefits of the BIT on their campus, professional development, and acknowledging success and accomplishments. The second major theme of the second research question was that self-care and work-life balance was needed to cope with Compassion Fatigue. The subthemes include the relationships and support BIT members have both in and outside of work, maintaining boundaries, and recognizing what sustains the member.

Compassion Satisfaction Through a Positive Work Environment

Through these findings, participants acknowledged how difficult it can be to balance Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue, and the importance of taking care of oneself so that they can support their fellow BIT members, and more importantly, students in need. Many participants spoke about the benefits of working at a community college because they found it to be a more supportive work environment where employees were cognizant and adamant about work-life balance, as well as having a healthy work environment. BIT members sustained their Compassion Satisfaction through finding the benefits of their BIT on campus, staying up to date with professional development, and acknowledging their success and accomplishments through BIT work. Participants were able to identify the satisfaction they get from working on a BIT, although it can be challenging work. Maintaining a positive work environment was important to members enjoying what they do and doing it well.

Finding the Benefits of BIT on Campus. One way members are able to maintain their Compassion Satisfaction through a positive work environment is by looking at the good their BIT is doing on their campus. Overall, most members felt that their BIT was making a difference on their campus, and they were also able to acknowledge what they

saw as the benefits of their college's BIT. Giselle shared her thoughts on the issue, "Well again, it's the attack that never happens. But I also think it creates a culture of caring and a culture of reporting." Her thoughts make a strong case for why BITs are so essential to colleges, as BITs try to maintain safety on campus, and make it a place where it is okay to care for peers and let someone know when they are worried about a friend.

Ann had a similar view as Giselle about keeping the campus safe, but she also added a layer that BITs are helping the whole campus community, including professors, by taking some of the burden of student issues off them:

> I just think that we are helping students. We're meeting them where they are. And I think in the end, it helps the students to be successful. And it helps the faculty to be able to do their job, because let's be honest, they're not trained in that area, you know, that's not their area of expertise. So, it takes a burden off their plates, and then to know that there's someone else that they can turn to they don't have to figure that part out. And so, you know, you're just really kind of adding this extra layer of support for the institution, for the campus, and for everyone there. We may not always be able to retain the students. But if I can be quite blunt in many circumstances, we kept them alive. And that's probably you know, the best thing.

Although when thinking about the responsibilities of a college to a student, one may not think of keeping them alive an obvious goal, but thanks to the BITs, that has become a priority, especially as BITs have become more necessary. Delilah had similar views to Ann regarding how the BIT can be helpful to not just students, but faculty:

I think our students get better wraparound services. Faculty have somebody to point students to and faculty are able to focus on teaching and on what their expertise is, versus trying to figure out how to help their students. Now we always have faculty who are going to maybe overstep boundaries and try to help more than they need to or should. But I think for a lot of faculty, it's a relief that they're able to say, 'Here's the care team, or here's somebody who's on the care team that can help you.'

Delilah brings up an important point that not everyone is trained to help students in crisis situations. Stephanie's college struggles with a dilemma as she describes the necessity of her college's BIT because of the lack of mental health services on campus:

We have no in person mental health services here for our students. The care team is it as far as in person anything. I'm actually working right now to get some telehealth services up and some emergency phone call assistance up and running starting in June. And it's the work of the care team and some of the pandemic things that have opened the eyes of other folks here at the college, making them realize how important this is. I mean, without the care team, the students would have had, basically me, I mean, and I'm not a trained mental health counselor, you know, but I was trying to be the go-to person for everything. And that's not enough. So having that care team here is vital for the mental health of our students.

Unlike Stephanie's college, some of the participant's colleges did have mental health resources, and other services to support students. Olivia found that the benefits of her

college's BIT is that it provides needed services to students that they may not be able to get without the BIT. Olivia stated:

> Number one, first and foremost is to be able to provide those resources, you know, to students. I think, in time is the best way to do it and to do it as quickly and swiftly as possible. You know, that is going to not only support them, but that is a mechanism for retention. And we want to retain our students and being a commuter school, a community college that we expect, the people are going to walk in the door with various amounts of struggles, and we just want to be able to be standing there, and to almost have a menu of support services available that tell us what you need help with, and we will order it up for you and assist you.

Earl sees the benefits of his college's BIT as a tool to help students turn their life around. He feels that the benefit of his college having a BIT is very important to students' success. He shared:

> I think the benefits of the BIT team are numerous, but I would say on its face, the benefit is that we're able to do some type of corrective action to where we can save a student from making some bad choices that will negatively impact them later on in life. I think that thing that we do is essential work. It is courageous work that we do, and that I think that it's important work as well. But yeah, the thing that we do for the BIT team is making sure that we're able to meet that need for the student as best we can.

The participants had their own views of the benefits of their college's BIT, and ultimately believe that it makes the campus a better place for various reasons. It benefits the

students, faculty, staff, and even the BIT itself. Noah summed up his thoughts on the benefits of BIT for the team itself by saying:

> And so again, remembering that at our disposal we have so many tools, and if we're using them wisely, not one person should feel overburdened to have to accomplish all of this. As a team, we can get a whole lot done.

BIT members were able to identify that their work on campus was beneficial and thus gave them a purpose in their work. Members found Compassion Satisfaction through their BIT having a purpose and making a difference on campus, and specifically in individual students' lives. Many members discussed the satisfaction they get from doing BIT work, despite it being challenging at times. When members can find purpose in their work, it gives them a reason to come to work and enjoy what they do, which is important to work-life balance. Not only is it important to enjoy life outside of work but making the most out of the time they are at work appears to make a difference in how they feel about working on a BIT.

Professional Development. Another way BIT members sustain Compassion Satisfaction through a positive work environment is by keeping up to date with upcoming and relevant information, trainings, and trends in BIT work. A popular theme surrounding this was professional development to maintain a positive Professional Quality of Life. BIT members spoke of the various reasons for the team members to be focused on new and trending information and trainings relevant to BIT work. Stephanie shared her thoughts on professional development, "I mean, we always need more training. Any sort of professional development opportunities we can get our hands on, we

need it." She also stated that BIT members can better themselves as BIT professionals through training, stating "Get as much training as possible, so that you know how to handle all these various situations that can come flying at you to the best of your ability."

Ann also shared that professional development can be used to debrief from difficult cases, and members can support each other through those challenging times. Ann stated, "I think professional development opportunities to share and decompress after a really tough case is probably really important." Giselle agreed with fellow participants, and brought up the importance of teams being a member of NaBITA to help with their professional development:

Educate yourself. Participate in every training and every webinar you can and if you can't afford NaBITA, team up with another school who can go in half on something. Talk to NaBITA because they also can do something. And I don't know if they still do this or not, But Brian Van Brunt [former president of NaBITA] always said if somebody can't afford something, we want to work with them on that, and so, we'll try to figure something out. So, I just think you have to do those things. You have to stay educated, you have to stay on top of the issues and what's happening is the only way you're going to feel competent to handle a situation, which means you can sleep at night because you'll be ready.

Margie is another participant that spoke highly of NaBITA for professional development. She also belongs to other professional organizations. She indicated:

Professional Development is key. So actually, this morning I just renewed my ASCA (Association for Student Conduct Administration) membership, and I just

received authorization from the college that we could become part of NaBITA.

Something I've always wanted to do, but it's expensive. And again, we're kind of

on the low-risk scale of BIT cases, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't be

prepared and knowledgeable and professional. And so, we're actually using some

CARES money because of the mental health anxieties and the increased, you

know, behavior interventions that we're anticipating. So that's really important.

Margie goes on to talk about the importance for professional development for her team

and making a conscious effort to talk about the trainings as a team and evaluate how they

can apply what they learn to their college's BIT:

There are trainings that we will have available to our members, but I want to be

strategic. So, I'm not just going to send a link and say, okay, we have a

membership and a bit of good luck. No, I'm very much about wanting to have

outcomes. And so that's going to be important that we look at what we're given

through NaBITA, and we plan and then I want to have a conversation, I want to

follow up about it. And what does that mean for us? How can we fit this into the

work that we do?

As the chair of her college's BIT, Hazel spoke of how she has sought out professional

development but wants to encourage her fellow members to invest in their own

professional development:

I think that this is where I think in a community college setting, we don't always

do our best at this part is the professional development. So, I know that it's

available to me because I seek it out. But do others that are not in the role that I'm

in really understand the full impact of having continual professional development and self-awareness exercises and emotional intelligence work, you know? So, I think that professional development is probably one of the biggest supports and that can look different. That can be a small group that meets and talks about whatever, it doesn't have to be necessarily related to student development, it can be related to a completely other topic just to get that connectivity going with each other. So that they build bonds outside of the Care team.

One participant, Freya, had a unique take on professional development not just for her team, but also for the campus community to be aware of and utilize the college's BIT:

My hope is, and one of the things the aspirations that the team said, is not only training for members, but how are we going to train our college community, as well. And so that's one of our aspirations moving forward is, how are we going to, what training should Care team provide to our college community with regards to how do we respond when a student says something concerning? Or what do you do when a student makes some mention of something in a paper that kind of makes you go, you know, oh, that kind of raised the, you know, the hairs on the back of my neck or whatever?

Professional development creates an opportunity for growth for BIT members in an ever-changing profession. Participants acknowledged the importance of professional development for themselves, their team, and even their campus community. When teams can provide professional development to yield growth in the BIT profession for its members, it creates a more conducive and supportive working environment. Members

staying up to date on BIT information helps the team run smoothly and ideally creates space for students to succeed when going through the BIT process.

      Acknowledging the Success and Accomplishments. An additional way BIT members enhance Compassion Satisfaction through a positive work environment is by being able to acknowledge how they define success, as well as what they see as their accomplishments in BIT work. To begin, this section looks at how BIT members measure success in their work. Curtis was able to measure his and his team's success by the student's success:

> Well, I would for sure say for that question would just be seeing the students succeed. Whether that's just finishing a semester or getting a degree. To me, that's a win. Because in BIT we want, we want the students to succeed. Whatever their journey is.

Uriah also defined success through student accomplishment as well. He also felt that the diversity of services represented on his BIT made the opportunity for students to succeed even more likely. Uriah emphasized getting students "back on track," and stated:

> You know, if we can get someone that has...and one of the things I always say in the meeting is get them back on track, you know, we get someone back on track, get them to the degree or into the career field of their chosen career field, I think that is success. You know, I think about some of the cases that come through where it's happened where it has been that the person's had that one issue, then we've dealt with it, we moved on, and then they moved on and they gotten their degree or gotten back on track and so and that's where we've, I feel like success

for me is, you know, whatever transgression they had to help them get refocused and going again.

For Margie, she measures success when the students who go through BIT succeed, but also when her team works together and betters themselves. She stated:

We meet routinely, the BIT team. Every year we look at our letters, our documentation, the information that we have posted on the portal and the website. We improve the way in which we communicate and try to educate our colleagues…And then you see the students have progressed or graduate. I mean, that is that's a bonus for us that that means that we've done the work. The behavior that was brought forward was addressed. It didn't reoccur. The student was successful. I mean, there's just so many things that that make it well rounded for us as a team. But certainly, the students' success, but also our own success with professional development. And just making sure all of our content is up to date and accurate. And we're compliant.

Hazel approached the concept of success by something that the team creates themselves. She also found that the system working and connecting students to resources was invaluable:

I think that you have to define your success. And we have some pretty good student learning outcomes and goals that are prescribed for the group. And so, one of those goals are to ensure that the student connects with the resource and maintains that connectivity as they're connecting to that end result resource.

In her interview, Hazel also spoke of keeping the team accountable and organized so that they can best serve students.

Giselle has had extensive training with NaBITA and the risk rubric, so her definition of success is derived from what she has learned from the leaders in the field. She stated:

> If your BIT team is really operating smoothly, most of your cases are going to be mild and moderate. Because you're heading off the crisis before it happens, you know, you're going to get a couple of critical, elevated things that happen. But if your BIT team is operating smoothly, they're going to downgrade quickly, because you're going to put your protocols into effect, and things are going to be handled, and it's all going to be good. So, I think I say that we probably measure success that way.

Like Giselle, Stephanie and her team take an approach of evaluation to monitor the success of their BIT. Stephanie expressed:

> Obviously, we measure it formally with a lot of our student satisfaction surveys, you know, and getting feedback from them specifically, about some of those services that we offer. We also work to get that feedback back from the students we actually work with through the care team, you know, where we've been able to intervene, and been able to provide them the support. And then we also just take a look at overall, what is their retention? What is their completion rates? What are their success? Were we able to give them what they needed to be okay, but to also stay in school, and to reach their goals? So really, those are the sort of three

prongs, you know, that we use to make sure that they're getting what they need from us.

Freya takes a different approach to success and wants the students to feel heard and be engaged with her – even if to say to leave them alone. She states:

And so, mine is your successes, I'm presenting it, and I'm going at the pace and the speed the student wants, so it's not feeling overwhelming. And they're engaging in the service at whatever level and speed that they need. But there's some leveling engagement.

Freya said that she feels like students are more engaged when they go at their own pace and not what the BIT wants the pace to be. Remaining student-centered has helped her build rapport with students and help them be successful at their institution.

Two participants, Delilah and Olivia, put it simply that success for them is when students are no longer on their BIT concern list. This can be because the student has received the resources they need and are no longer a concern, and it also can mean that they have succeeded enough to graduate. It also should be noted that sometimes students are taken from the concern list because they had to leave the college. Participants indicated that sometimes the best option for the student is to leave the institution, either because they need more help than can be offered on campus, or because they were not ready for community college at the time.

In addition to how BIT members define success, thinking about how they feel accomplished in their BIT work was also a way to maintain compassion satisfaction and work-life balance because it reminded them of what was going well. Like what he said

for how he defines success, Curtis also stated that he feels accomplished "if a student succeeds." Earl felt similarly to Curtis about student success and said, "So my greatest I think accomplishment is to see those students get their degree or their certificate or whatever it is and able to be productive."

In addition to helping students succeed, Ann felt a personal connection to her BIT work by truly helping students in need and finding meaning in her work. She stated:

Me personally, knowing that I'm part of something that's really making a difference. I'm not like in the in the student center giving away a gift to students, like we're actually doing something meaningful that's going to hopefully lead students in on a different path and allow them to continue on to achieving what they want to do. So just knowing that it's meaningful and has the potential to be meaningful for the student.

Uriah had a different view of what makes him feel accomplished working on his BIT. For him, he believes he will feel accomplished when his team is able to run smoothly regardless of who is on the team. He stated:

So, the idea that if we can get a solid team in place with when we don't have cases, running through exercises, we do case studies, and things like that where the system is just flawless. So, if someone does leave the team, we drop somebody else in. And the system just continues on without missing a beat, you know, whether it's me or one of the other representatives, that it's just very fluid. I don't know if we're there yet. I think we're getting close…God if I get to that point, I do think I'll feel accomplished.

The theme of helping students succeed was seen in all participants, but was especially expressed by Freya, who explained that 43% of the students at her college are Pell eligible and struggling with low income. She has worked with the community college world for many years as an administrator or an outside agency and has a passion for helping these students. Freya stated:

> When I feel accomplished, it really is that, you know, if I can do anything to help somebody remove a barrier so they can take one step closer to graduation, that is what I feel my personal mission is, and that's what I want what I strive to do.

Hazel agreed with helping students, but was also passionate about not only connecting students to resources, but educating them:

> I really think that it's if we are able to educate one new person on the importance of being an upstander for others or an active bystander; however, you want to spin that, to aid in situations. I think that's the part that we grow the most from.

By listening to the participants discuss their accomplishments, it was easy to see that this brought great joy for them and aided in Compassion Satisfaction. Their Professional Quality of Life appeared enhanced as they recalled their accomplishments and successes, as they smiled and spoke positively about these experiences.

Self-Care and Work-Life Balance to Cope with Compassion Fatigue

Participants spoke of the importance of self-care and work-life balance when talking about how to combat Compassion Fatigue. Many of them found solitude in different aspects of life outside of work like their relationships with family and friends, as well as co-workers. Additionally, they spoke of the importance of boundaries that they

keep between work and home life, as well as compartmentalizing some of the feelings that come up during their difficult BIT work. Finally, participants spoke of the importance acknowledging what sustains them to remind them of the positive aspects of their lives. These sub-themes support self-care and were identified as important for coping with Compassion Fatigue.

Relationships and Support. Participants indicated that the different relationships and supports they had in their lives are an important aspect to self-care. Many participants referenced their families and co-workers as relationships that helped them maintain self-care to cope with Compassion Fatigue. Margie spoke about her daughter returning home for the summer and how that would bring more balance into her life because she would be focused on their relationship instead of bringing her students' problems home. As the chair of her team, she also felt like the bond of the team was important, and for all of them to practice self-care:

> Because we were talking so much about self-care for our students, and I'm very much about self-care for my staff. They are my family. I will advocate for them and support them and uplift anything I can for them. And so while I promote self-care to them, I need to...I've tried to practice some of that myself.

As stated earlier, Ann feels that working at a community college has helped her create more balance in her life. She spoke highly of her team:

> I will honestly say it's the best team that I've ever worked with. So, it's really comforting. So, they're great, great group of individuals who care about each

other. And we have the same approach, similar approaches to how we want to

respond to students.

Curtis also found that he enjoys working on the BIT for the connections and relationships

he has made with fellow team members. He found that being a part of a team has made

him feel like he is a part of a greater good:

I also get that exposure with the other employees with the college. I mean, I built

pretty good relationships here with the other individuals on BIT. Because we all

come together on a Monday and go over our care list and our agenda. And all in

the common goal of just helping that person to succeed. And that's, I mean, that's

refreshing to see to be part of.

In addition to his comment about his team, he also spoke of his institution's support

saying, "I feel fully that the college is fully behind us as a BIT group." Uriah also felt that

his institution did a good job of supporting his team as well. In addition to team members

and the institution as a whole, Delilah found great support from her supervisor who

emphasized a work-life balance for her. When she would struggle after a hard case, her

supervisor would encourage her to take time off to practice self-care.

Olivia takes great pride in her college's BIT and stated, "I am there for my team

through thick and thin and I will do whatever I can to support them." She also shared that

she encourages them to seek help when needed. Olivia also shared that she leads by

example because she uses professional support to help her practice self-care and process

BIT work. She believes that her team is there for students every day, and they also need

support, so she supports them to find the resources they need. Reaching out for

professional help is a way BIT members can decompress and recharge from challenging cases, as well as work on personal issues they have to be able to be the best version of themselves for students.

The participants shared how they rely on different relationships and supports to help them remain emotionally balanced and able to focus on BIT work. Many of them found support within their team, through their mentors and supervisors, from family and friends, and even support from mental health professionals. They all mentioned that BIT is satisfying but challenging, so although support is important, it is also important to separate work life from home life.

Boundaries and Compartmentalizing. As stated earlier, findings showed some of the participants had a difficult time being able to separate their time at work from their time at home because the pandemic had forced many of them to work from home. They also spoke about the challenges of having email on their phone and having students with their cell phone number. Regardless of the demand that BIT puts on them, participants were able to identify that having boundaries and compartmentalizing their lives was important to self-care. Boundaries and compartmentalizing looked different in each participant and ranged from not answering emails when not at work to being able to compartmentalize their feelings when students would make decisions that the BIT member advised them against.

Freya describes how she compartmentalizes difficult interactions with students by stating, "And I will do the best that I can, and hope it makes an impact. But if it doesn't, I don't see that is a personal failing on my part". She said she thinks about what she could

have done differently to help the student have a different outcome, but ultimately concludes that students have their own free will and she cannot take it personally. This insight is important for Freya to keep boundaries with students, as well as compartmentalizing her feelings to know that if a student does not connect with her or does not follow through with the intervention, it is not her fault. As Freya keeps boundaries with her students, other participants shared how they kept boundaries with their work life and personal life. Curtis put it simply, "Make that disconnect between work and home." Earl can separate work life from home life even though he socializes with colleagues:

> You know, just make an agreement that we're going to talk about, you know, the
> basketball game, or the latest reality show, or whatever, you know, something like
> that. You know, that's how we kind of separate.

Stephanie spoke about her challenges of living and working in her hometown. She shared that although sometimes she cannot escape work because people will approach her about work at her nephew's baseball game or in the grocery store, she still makes in effort to keep a boundary between her work life and personal life by creating a boundary that when work is over, she disengages unless it is an emergency. Giselle has learned to create boundaries over time, and despite working from home, was able to recognize when she needs to disconnect from work. She has grown over time to realize when something is urgent and needs an immediate response, and when something can wait until tomorrow.

Other participants shared how working for a community college has helped them practice healthy boundaries between work and home because many of the campuses are

commuter campuses and students do not live on campus. This gives the BIT members a chance to not be on-call all the time and they feel that community colleges create an atmosphere that encourages boundaries and self-care. After working at a four-year institution, Ann stated about community colleges:

> There's a respect for your personal time. When I worked for a four-year institution, as I mentioned, I mean, seven days a week, I was getting emails and phone calls, and that's not the case. Like there's a there's a boundary instead.

Noah felt similarly to Ann about his experience working at a community college verses a four-year institution in that there was a value for personal time:

> I think that finding the community college helped me find balance because it wasn't a residential environment where I had to deal with everybody's issues all the time, it was a very time bound experience. And as long as I'm in the office, that's when I'm accessible to you.

The stories the participants shared about being able to compartmentalize and create healthy boundaries emphasized the importance of self-care when doing BIT work. The participants acknowledged that BIT work is at the same time challenging and rewarding, and members need to take care of themselves and each other to be able to do this work well. Being able to disconnect from work when at home was something that BIT members knew was important but struggled with because of the level of involvement found in student affairs work.

Recognizing What Sustains BIT Member. As participants explained what sustained them, there were many common themes, such as family, faith, good colleagues,

and overall support. Noah felt very strongly about how he can sustain himself through doing challenging BIT work by acknowledging that he has more successes than failures and that he is making a bigger impact on students than he realizes and that sustains him to continue to do BIT work. He also spoke about how his current institution encourages self-care and balance in its employees' lives. They support faculty and staff as they take advantage of resources to help themselves. He stated that this helps him feel like he is not alone and he and his colleagues have a system of care and support so he can do this work.

Freya stated that she loves her job and the people she works with, but also finds fulfillment in being a support for students who need it. She finds fulfillment in her job, the people she works with, and doing important work. She holds on to the possibility that she can provide help that a student may need. She also believes that she was put on this earth for a reason and with the skills she has so she can reach out to help people in need. She relies on her faith as a reason to keep going and doing BIT work. For Stephanie, she found that her family, colleagues, and students sustained her, but also found a passion for working in her hometown and helping making changes for the better. She emphasized how important education is to her and working to get people in her hometown a post-secondary education is sustaining for her.

Olivia spoke specifically of working at a community college and working with this population and how that sustains her:

> But I think that, you know, working in a community college, it's different than a four-year residential. You are intentionally committing yourself to that community college environment and that commuter mentality and those

commuter dynamics. And really the sense of urgency that is there to get folks

educated so that they can have family sustaining wages and contribute positively

to the world. And that is something that I most definitely signed up for. And I

want to have some type of impact.

When talking about what sustains him, Uriah shared his commitment to sticking to a routine, setting goals, and taking the time to learn new things through research online and through books. Ann felt similar to Uriah as she stated that she loves to learn, as evidenced by her going back to school in a doctoral program.

As participants were able to express what sustains them, it appeared to remind them of what they can do to keep motivated in doing challenging BIT work. As shown in their responses, having a healthy relationship with work and colleagues is important, but life outside of the office is just as important. Boundaries and compartmentalizing were also seen as essential to combating Compassion Fatigue and burnout. Finally, when BIT members discussed what sustains them both in and outside of work, there was a connection to the importance of self-care to combat Compassion Fatigue though acknowledging what fulfils them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the experiences of participants' Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue were explored in this chapter for BIT members at community colleges and I separated these experiences into themes. The first research question asked how being on a community college BIT affects members' Professional Quality of Life. Compassion Satisfaction was found through the themes of student success stories, team efforts,

graduation day, and professional growth. Participants identified and spoke of these themes as aspects of their BIT work that gives them purpose and meaning in their work. Conversely, Compassion Fatigue was found through not being able to help every student they worked with, their greatest fears while working on a BIT, and how their worldview has changed.

How BIT members cope with Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue was explored in research question two. The first major theme was that Compassion Satisfaction was bettered through a positive work environment. The sub-themes of a positive work environment include finding the benefits of the BIT on their campus, professional development, and being able to acknowledge their success and accomplishments doing BIT work. The other major theme was self-care and work-life balance were essential to cope with Compassion Fatigue. The sub-themes of this include the relationships and support BIT members have, using boundaries and compartmentalizing with work and working with students, and recognizing what sustains the BIT member.

After careful analysis of the participants' interview data, findings indicate work is challenging but satisfying for BIT members at community colleges. Implications of this research include insight into best practice for institutions and BITs to support and educate their members, giving insight into the important work BITs are doing at their college, and understanding how members can best take care of themselves while doing this difficult work. Ultimately, I found that they value the work they are doing through their BIT, and

they are making a difference in individual students as well as the larger campus

community at their institutions.

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Chapter 5: Discussion

In this basic qualitative research study, I explored how community college Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) Members' Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) was affected, as well as how they experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How does being on a community college behavioral intervention team affect members' professional quality of life (as defined by Stamm, 2010)?

2. How do members of community college behavioral intervention teams experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue?

Interviews were conducted with 12 individuals who work on their community college's BIT. The interviews were virtual, one-on-one, and semi-structured. Participants represented various institutions in five different states. All the participants held professional positions within their institutions in addition to their work on their campus' BIT. Many held positions as dean of students, while others worked in conduct, counseling, and campus police. Each participant self-identified that they work directly with students and had at least three years of experience working on a BIT.

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study regarding how being on a community college BIT affects members' ProQOL, as well as how they experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. Each participant had their own unique experience with BIT work, but many common themes arose. These findings both confirm and dispute the research presented in chapter 2. Next, I discuss the implications of this

research study, as well as give recommendations for future research looking at ProQOL and compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in BIT members.

Discussion

The participants of the study had an overall positive outlook on their BIT work. They found it to be fulfilling, although sometimes challenging. Another factor in how they perceived their compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue depended on their role on the BIT. Many participants were the head or chair of their college's BIT and felt more responsibility to have the team run smoothly and be prepared and trained for any circumstance. The participants felt that it was accurate to conclude that one could feel compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue at the same time when doing BIT work. The students they work with gave them purpose and energy to do the challenging work that they do, as well as the comradery of their team. All participants mentioned relying on their team members and feeling supported by them.

Participants' professional quality of life (ProQOL) was directly influenced by their time balancing work and their personal life. Although participants shared that sometimes it was impossible not to take some of the disheartening and disturbing students' stories home with them, being able to separate work life from personal life was essential to their ProQOL. They also spoke of the importance of professional development and teamwork within the BIT. A common theme was that the community college setting encouraged participants to take care of themselves personally and emotionally, that many of them found was not a priority at the four-year institutions they had worked for. When asked what they wanted the world to know about community

college BITs, the consensus was that they are doing hard work with little representation and funding, but regardless, they would not stop fighting for the student in need. They also agreed that community colleges are typically overlooked and shedding light on them may help to give them more of a voice and a seat at the table in the higher education conversation.

It is important to acknowledge that this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants spoke about how this affected their BIT work in different ways. One way it was impacted was that there were less cases reported to them because many of their colleges were remote or just returning faculty, staff, and students to campus. With less interaction with students in-person, it was difficult for everyone to report students to the BIT because it was harder to conclude how a student was doing through a computer screen. This impacted the participants because with less cases, they did not feel as though their compassion fatigue was as high as it typically can be. Another way the pandemic impacted their work was that ten of the participants were working remotely and most struggled to separate their work-life from their home-life. This impacted the study because it was exploring compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, which was impacted by work-life balance and self-care. To counteract the impact the pandemic was making on their work, having at least three years of BIT experience was required so that participants could draw upon experiences prior to the pandemic.

Professional Quality of Life for BIT Members

As discussed in chapter 2, Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) is a scale created to measure how professionals' lives in the helping field are impacted by the work

they do with people in crisis or who are struggling (Stamm, 2010). Although not commonly used to evaluate student affairs professionals, members of BITs step into the role of a helper when they meet with students of concern and help them work through their challenges. One aim of this study was to see how BIT members' ProQOL was affected. The data indicated that BIT professionals did not feel like struggling students were imposing on their compassion satisfaction aspect of ProQOL. In fact, they encouraged students to reach out for help and tried to express to other faculty and staff that the BIT exists to support these students. They wanted it to be encouraged for faculty and staff to refer students to the BIT.

In a similar study on ProQOL and compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue, Raimondi (2021) found that instead of having a negative impact on compassion satisfaction and increasing compassion fatigue, faculty learned to best support struggling students or referred them to someone who could. Although many participants lacked specific, direct training on BIT work, they learned from experience and information passed down from more senior members of the BIT. Most of what participants had to share about BITs were positive; there was a desire for more professional development to help with combating difficult situations and feelings that come up in BIT work.

My observation is that community college BIT members' ProQOL was not significantly affected by their challenging BIT work. They shared their struggles and triumphs, but ultimately saw working with struggling students as part of the job, neither affecting them negatively nor positively enough to make them not want to do BIT work. Below I will go into more detail about ProQOL and its makeup of compassion

satisfaction and compassion fatigue to explain it at its essence and its impact on BIT members.

Experiencing Compassion Satisfaction

Stamm (2010) defines compassion satisfaction as the aspect of a positive outlook that helpers feel when working with people who are struggling or in crisis. In addition to Stamm's (2010) definition, Gardner (2015) adds that the positive feelings a helper has with work, helping others, and how their work contributes to the community all affect compassion satisfaction. My study confirms Gardner's (2015) findings, as compassion satisfaction among BIT members was found in their work with co-workers, being able to help students in need, and impacting the whole college community.

The current study helped answer the call from Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) and Marcus (2019) to give a voice to student affairs professionals to explain their experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) and Marcus (2019) both conducted quantitative studies that did not let participants expand on their closed-ended questions about compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. Regarding compassion satisfaction, this study found that participants were feeling the emotions and having the experiences of compassion satisfaction through BIT work. The data indicated that graduation for students who went through the BIT process was one of the most powerful experiences of compassion satisfaction. BIT members also gained compassion satisfaction through the support of their team and growing professionally.

Bernstein-Chernoff's (2016) study focused on conduct professionals (including those that did BIT work) and their compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. She

focused on this population because they work in student affairs and specifically with students in crisis, which has not been extensively studied. In her study, she indicated that compassion satisfaction intended to combat compassion fatigue for her participants. I found this to be true of the current study as well, but I argue that the absence of compassion satisfaction does not cause compassion fatigue. There appear to be many factors, such as a support system for BIT members and their own personal experiences that impact how they experience compassion satisfaction.

Another interesting finding from Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) is that the more time student affairs professionals spend with students, the higher their compassion satisfaction. The BIT members of the current study had frequent, direct contact with students of concern and felt connected to many of them. BIT members went to extensive measures to help struggling students overcome their personal obstacles and get to a point where they could succeed on their own. One theme from chapter 4 was that graduation is the best day of the school year because all the time an effort BIT members put into helping these students succeed came to a conclusion and it was a privilege to watch them graduate. This was a great source of compassion satisfaction. Participants spoke highly of their experiences sitting through graduation with tissues, beaming with pride as the students walked across the stage and graduated with a degree after going through many struggles.

Gaining Energy from Working with Students in Crisis. The participants of the study were energized and excited when talking about the students they worked with. All twelve participants spoke highly of the success stories they had with students and said that it made the work they did worth doing. Some of the student's stories were so

emotional that it brought tears to the participants' eyes. I could hear how their tone of voice would change when I asked them to give specific examples of helping students and how that impacted them. After sharing their students' stories with me, they smiled and sometimes laughed with relief that they could share their experience with me as a success story. Commonly, the students' who are referred to BIT have challenging situations that do not always turn out well.

Participants shared that they really got to know the students that went through the BIT process because many of the community colleges had little or no mental health services on campus, and sometimes the BIT was the only service students had. One participant was in the process of making telehealth mental health services available on her campus because the BIT was the only resource the institution had. Although they found it challenging that the BIT was relied on so heavily by their institutions, they took pride in being able to support many students through their challenges and helped them move into their next steps in life. Participants reiterated that although retention and graduation was their goal, getting the student to their next right step was most important. For some students that were leaving the college or taking time off, which may sound like a failure, but for them, it was the best move to make for their mental health.

The findings also showed that participants gained compassion satisfaction in the challenge of being creative in trying to find resources for students on and off campus. Some of the issues that arose once BIT members spoke with students was basic needs, such as food and shelter. Some of the participants made it a personal quest to learn more about services at their college and brainstorm ways to support students that may not be

initially evident. Compassion satisfaction was evident when the member and their team could come up with an appropriate intervention that ultimately helped the student succeed to their next steps or graduation. Helping students problem-solve and find resources was important to the BIT members because it helped empower the student so they could ultimately thrive on their own.

As mentioned earlier, graduation was the BIT members' favorite day of the year. Participants shared that not only was it gratifying for them to watch the student graduate, but to watch the student's family celebrate. The participants commented that it was especially gratifying to watch the graduates who had children of their own, as the children were some of the proudest audience members for their parents. Almost every participant spoke of how great graduation. There was a great sense of pride on their faces and voices as they spoke of graduation because it meant that the BIT interventions worked and students were getting the support they needed to prosper and make it to their goal of graduation.

Support From Team Members. Findings indicated that team support was a source of compassion satisfaction. Not only did BIT members require support from their family and friends, but adamantly spoke of the support they received from their fellow team members. As Stamm (2010) and Gardner (2015) indicated, compassion satisfaction is also impacted by the co-workers who surround the helper. The participants shared that their fellow team members were a strong support because they understood what it was like being on a BIT, and that is something that other people in their life may not be able to relate to. Some participants shared one way team members support each other to be

better is through challenging each others ideas about what interventions should be used or what services should be suggested for students to use.

Participants also spoke of the diversity of the team because there were professionals from different offices across campus which helped strengthen relationships amongst offices. The expertise that a member from one office could bring would offset the uncertainty of another. The participants of this study represented the titles of dean of students, conduct coordinator, counseling manager, and campus police. They each had a unique perspective of how their role outside of BIT impacted how they contributed to the team. The two campus police participants were able to speak on interacting with students as a police officer and as a BIT member. They explained that although the roles were separate, it was common for students they had met during police work end up on the BIT's radar. One of the officers shared that many students are surprised when they see him in a support role on the BIT when they are used to seeing him in a more authoritative role as campus police. This is significant because having a diverse BIT with professionals from across the campus is important because members can serve in multiple roles. Seeing the campus police initially scared students because they thought they were in trouble, but they quickly learned they were there to help and support the student.

Team leaders tended to be participants who held the role of dean of students. They explained that the lines of dean of students and leading the BIT were usually blurred. Similar to the campus police, the dean of students commonly knew students outside of the BIT realm and had relationships with them through organizations and the support they gave in the dean of students' role. In addition to their role as dean, they had

a big responsibility leading the BIT. They must be organized, empathetic, able to delegate, supportive, and assertive. This leadership was noticeable in the participants of this study through the stories they told. One example of leadership was found in a participant who led by example. She spoke of the importance of counseling for her to process her work and personal life. She was also a strong proponent for her team members to get the support they needed through seeking help.

Being able to be the anchor for the team, while also making sure the team could run if they were not there was essential. One of the participants shared how he has been running BIT exercises when they are not working on cases. His goal was for the team to be self-sustainable enough that if he leaves, the rest of the team will be highly capable of continuing where he left off. He also wants the roles of members to be so well-defined and the training so thorough that new members of the BIT can easily transition to the team. This seamless transition will allow members to enter the team and exit the team without there being a distinct disruption where the team is less effective due to training new members to do jobs of past members. He believes if everyone knows their role and it is thoroughly discussed in a handbook, there will be smooth transitions for new members.

Another important aspect of team leadership was that the leader act as a supervisor for their members. Some participants shared that their mentors were crucial in the member taking time for themselves after a difficult case. As team leaders they also were responsible for educating and training the other members. Growing their team through professional development was a common theme among participants. This was commonly done through the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association

(NaBITA) and their white papers, training, and conferences. Team leaders generally did their own professional development but had goals for their team members to seek out opportunities themselves or have the team complete training together.

A vital takeaway from the study was that community college BITs take work-life balance seriously. One participant had transitioned from a four-year institution to a community college and was surprised and relieved that the community college allowed for his schedule to be more flexible and expressed their encouragement for him to take time off and separate his work life from his personal life. For those that worked on commuter campuses where students did not live on campus, crises after hours were rare. This was a change for participants that worked at residential four-year institution where students live on campus in residence halls and after-hour crises were common and must be addressed outside of traditional work hours, impeding on their personal time. Team members also encouraged each other to take a step back from their day and do what they needed to do to take care of themselves. The culture of self-care at community colleges is something that multiple participants brought up, especially if they had previously worked at a four-year institution.

Overall, team member support was identified as a strength and something that increased compassion satisfaction. One way members supported each other through encouraging each other to think critically and thoughtfully about the interventions being provided to students, as well as supporting each other as they navigated BIT work together, whether that be through seeking help themselves or meeting outside of BIT

meetings to socialize. Finally, participants emphasized the importance of and dedication to work-life balance as a vital facet to compassion satisfaction.

Challenging Work but Growing Professionally. Participants shared that being on a BIT has challenged them in ways that they do not think they would have been otherwise. They were required to meet students where they were on their journey and understand that each student has a story that affects where they are when they are on the BIT radar. This also impacted how they experienced life outside of work, as many of the participants found themselves more compassionate towards others and wanted to know more about a situation before creating an opinion. Participants have researched and found resources to help students succeed, and the participants would never have known about them without working on the team. One participant said that she knows the ins and outs of the college thanks to her time on the BIT. Other members shared about how they have learned to navigate the politics that higher education entails, such as having to go through certain offices to accomplish interventions and navigating policies and procedures the college has in place.

In addition to weaving through the politics, BIT members have learned how to work collaboratively with faculty who are usually one of the first people to notice when a student is struggling. With a good working relationship with faculty, the college can be more proactive in recognizing students in need and getting them the help they need. BIT members also share how working with faculty helps to take the pressure from the faculty who may not have expertise in mental health issues or know what to do with a student in crisis. When participants spoke of the BIT's relationship with the institution, they spoke

of gaining support from faculty, staff, and high-ranking individuals who have come to see how BIT work is challenging, but important to the institution. Many participants felt they had the support of their institution and hoped that the support would also lead to financial support for the BIT NaBITA membership and professional development.

The findings indicate that another way BIT professionals have grown professionally is through their interpersonal, problem-solving, and leadership skills. When working on a team as well as students, these skills become essential to resolve issues and come to the best decision for the students. Some participants worried if they were making the right decisions about a student because whichever interventions are chosen for a student has an impact on them, whether that be getting support or leaving school. Being in a position where they must make quick, challenging decisions, the findings indicate that BIT members became stronger communicators that are able to get things done to resolve issues. The findings indicate that communication with each other, the student, and the institution was important to making the BIT run smoothly so everyone was united on decisions.

When making tough decisions, it challenges members to stand confidently behind their ideas and interventions. One member shared how he has gained more confidence in his decision- making because he has been partially responsible for the future of some students' fate in college, and he takes BIT work seriously. Additionally, because it is a team effort, strong listening skills are essential as different people share their opinions to come to the best conclusion. Some participants shared how they appreciated the variety in

opinions to come to a decision on an intervention because the different viewpoints gave them a better understanding of the problem and how to resolve it.

Finally, BIT work helped members grow professionally as they learn to work with students who are struggling or in crisis. A few participants had prior work experience working with people in crisis through counseling and other support services, but for many participants, working in higher education was the first time they have been exposed to crisis work. They shared that BIT work can be extremely challenging and disheartening, but also very rewarding. As helpers, they all had a desire to move students from a place of challenge and struggle to a place of success. One participant worked at a predominantly male institution, and she was moved by the stories of the young men who went from hiding their feelings to finding a resolution to their problems through talking through their emotions. She found that at her institution, challenging the young men to get outside of their comfort zones and try talking about their lives was highly successful and these students successfully progress through the BIT interventions.

As BIT professionals learn to work with students in crisis, the findings indicated that they increase their people skills and emotional intelligence. As only one participant was a licensed mental health professional, these skills have been acquired by some members through their BIT work. This has helped them grow professionally because they are able to relate and connect with co-workers and other faculty and staff at their institutions. Many participants also talked about how BIT work has broadened their worldview through working with students who are in situations much different than their

own. They found that it can challenge members in a way that may not be comfortable but leads them to a place of growth both personally and professionally.

Experiencing Compassion Fatigue

In contrast to compassion satisfaction is compassion fatigue. Stamm (2010) defines compassion fatigue as the negative experiences helpers feel when working with people in crisis. Helpers do not have to experience the struggle or crisis to feel compassion fatigue, and Gardner (2015) goes on to share that compassion fatigue happens gradually as helpers lose the capacity to care. Marcus (2019) studied compassion fatigue in student affairs professionals and found that they may experience compassion fatigue working with students in crisis. This research was not specific to BIT members, but this study found that although BIT members feel compassion fatigue, it has yet to lead to secondary traumatic stress or burnout for those that I interviewed.

Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) did focus on student conduct and behavioral intervention professionals. She found that behavioral intervention professionals exhibited average levels of burnout and secondary traumatic stress, which are sub-categories of compassion fatigue. Bernstein-Chernoff (2016) states:

> Job responsibilities, support from colleagues and supervisors, the opportunity for personal growth, job stressors, implicit and explicit job expectations and the physical environment all impact individuals' perceptions of the workplace. (p. 132)

The current study found that participants valued the support from colleagues and supervisors and personal growth as aspects of compassion satisfaction. Regarding

compassion fatigue, there were two common themes that were explored. The first is work-life balance, which participants found necessary to combat compassion fatigue. The other is about fears that arise because of the nature of behavioral intervention work. Both work-life balance and fear affected compassion fatigue, but the participants of this study were experienced in behavioral intervention and knew how to take care of themselves so that they could contest compassion fatigue.

      Work-Life Balance Combats Compassion Fatigue. One of the biggest findings of this study was that having a work-life balance was key to combating compassion fatigue and being constructive and successful in BIT work. All 12 participants indicated that work-life balance was one key to combating compassion fatigue. As stated earlier, participants shared how their community colleges had valued their work-life balance more than some of their prior four-year institutions. The participants that had worked at four-year institutions concluded that their work-life balance had improved at community colleges because they were working on commuter campuses. Without students on campus full-time, they were able to maintain their traditional work hours and were rarely called after hours for crisis situations. Some of the participants also established that by working at a commuter institution, they commonly saw less severe cases than that of their four-year institutions. One participant felt that most of the cases she saw were not severe and easier to navigate, causing less stress and compassion fatigue. Other participants concluded that there was an impact of students being on campus less than traditional four-year institutions. With less participation on campus, a BIT report was less likely to

be submitted because of the minimal interaction between faculty and staff and the students than that of four-year institutions.

Work-life balance looked different for all my participants, but some of the common activities included not doing work or checking emails after work was done. Some participants admitted that sometimes that felt impossible because they want to be accessible for their students, but they understood that they need to be more cognizant of that. One participant felt that because he was not a team leader, he did not need to be on-call when he was not working and could focus on his family and friends. Although team leaders did feel more responsibility to be accessible after hours, they were prioritizing what needed to be addressed immediately and what could wait until the next day. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, participants found it more difficult to separate work-life and home-life because many were working from home. Some ways that they combated that was through making a home office and once they left the office, work was done. Other participants took their emails off their phone or muted them when it was 5:00pm. When it was safe for some of them to return to work part-time, they would do regular work hours in the office and then come home and turn off communication. One participant stated that she was thankful when she could come back to her office because working from home was stressful with her family being at home full-time as well and going to the office was a way to separate her work-life from her home-life.

Many participants looked to their family and friends for balance. One participant emphasized that having family and friends who did not go to college or have an association with college was helpful for him to disconnect from work because that was

not a common topic they discussed. He also shared that when he comes home, he does not discuss cases with his wife, which is another way to separate himself from work. Even when connecting with BIT members outside of work, participants enjoyed that they could get together and not have to talk about work if they did not want to. One participant explicitly told his work friends that there was a rule that they could not talk about work when they got together, so they could focus on their interests and commonalities outside of their institution. Most participants focused on spending time with family to decompress, while others found solitude in exercise to clear their minds. Another common support for participants was their faith. They expressed that their relationship with God and their church community was responsible for keeping them accountable and grounded.

Another way participants battled compassion fatigue was to process the difficult cases with each other or with a therapist. For the participants who had experienced severe cases such as homicide and suicide, they felt it was important to discuss the situation as a team. Team leaders took responsibility for checking in on other members during these difficult cases, but also relied on the members to support them through these challenging situations because they are human too and struggled with the deaths. One participant shared that when one of her students completed suicide that neither she nor her team members and co-workers were okay because it was unexpected, and she felt that she had missed a sign that the student was struggling. The participants that had experienced their student killed by homicide shared how surreal it was to see his name on TV and know that the student they had been working so close with had died.

Although all the participants had different ways of coping with compassion fatigue, it was evident that work-life balance was important. They were all thankful that working at a community college allowed them to be more flexible in their schedule and able to focus on life outside of work. Having activities they enjoyed outside of work, and supportive relationships from family and friends were essential to their work-life balance. The participants knew that the BIT work they were doing was challenging, but important. They knew that in order to be there for the students in need, they needed to take care of themselves and their team so they could work to their best potential.

Fears are Real, but Manageable. All 12 participants identified feeling fearful at times, but also still in control. This is significant because although this affected their compassion fatigue, they were able to overcome their fears to continue to do BIT work without feeling burnt out. Compassion fatigue was evident when participants spoke of their fears of working on a BIT. The work that they do through the BIT can be very serious and sometimes a life-or-death situation. There was also pressure to make the right decision because their intervention may affect the student's future. For example, Uriah shared his struggle with the BIT recommending that a student with severe mental health issues be asked to leave the institution for his disruption. The participate said that it was difficult because he liked the student and knew the student was suffering, but ultimately the best decision for him was to be expelled from the institution. Other interventions were based on students' situations with domestic violence, which required sensitive and critical evaluation. The participants did not take their BIT work lightly because of the nature of the cases they were assessing.

The most common fear was that the team would miss something and that something tragic would happen. One participant mentioned the tragedy at Virginia Tech and how she worried about the profile of an active shooter. She said that she worked closely with the campus police when there is potential for a threat. Other fears that BIT members had was that they would not be thorough enough with evaluating a student and they slip through the cracks and not receive the services or support they need. This is a realistic fear, especially for those working on commuter campuses. As mentioned earlier, students have more limited interactions with faculty and staff, so it could be more difficult to detect a problem that would be reported to the BIT.

Another fear was found in the institutions where the BIT was the only mental health resource and they feared they would be overwhelmed with referrals and could not help everyone. Additionally, one participant noted that she was worried that her BIT would do such a good job at acquainting the institution with the BIT and make people so comfortable with reporting to them, that they would also be overwhelmed with referrals. Not being able to help everyone was sometimes a reality, as the participants shared when they could not help a student. Some participants became emotional, and one cried during the interview as she shared about the struggles one student endured. Each of them had at least one example that easily came to mind of not being able to help a student. Another barrier to helping students was that some of the students did not want to seek the help that the BIT was offering. One example of this is students not wanting to go to counseling and using their parents' insurance in fear that their parents will find out that they are seeking help. Other students did not see the benefit of the resources that the BIT could provide

and would choose not to engage with them. As a helper, not being able to help a student was challenging and affected their compassion fatigue.

As challenging as these stories were for participants to tell, they all learned something that they can apply to their next case. As a helper, compassion fatigue was real when they were unable to help a student, but for the participants, it did not stop them from wanting to continue to do the hard work to do better for the next student. The participants showed great resilience in absorbing difficult stories from students, processing which interventions to use, and executing the best plan to help the students. Their fears of a tragedy, students slipping through the cracks, and the BIT being overwhelmed with referrals are all valid, but the participants have been successful in mitigating that fear with preparation and experience.

Compassion fatigue for BIT members was a concern based on the challenging work they do with students of concern. The findings showed that they combated compassion fatigue with maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Each participant had their own routine and way of dealing with compassion fatigue and conserving their work-life balance, including having supportive relationships and participating in activities outside of work. The nature of community colleges also supports work-life balance, particularly with commuter campuses where students do not live on campus. After-hours crises were rare, and participants prioritized what needed to be addressed immediately and what could wait. Fears also affected compassion fatigue, and participants identified missing something that may lead to a tragedy as their top fear. Other fears included students slipping through the cracks and the BIT being overwhelmed. Ultimately, the

participants of this study were aware of what leads to compassion fatigue in BIT work and how to alleviate it.

Implications and Recommendations

In this section, I will discuss the implications of this research and the recommendations for change for the benefit of community college BITs. Findings from the current study are used, as well as support from the literature. The first implication and recommendation is to better prepare student affairs professionals for working in the community college setting, with specific focus on helping skills training that student affairs professionals can use when working with students in crisis. The second implication and recommendation is to increase the funding for mental health services on community college campuses, as well as funding for professional development for BITs and individual members.

Prepare Student Affairs Professionals for Community College and Crisis Work

One way to improve ProQOL and increase compassion satisfaction and reduce compassion fatigue in BIT members at community colleges is to prepare new student affairs professionals for the community college atmosphere. Lunceford et al. (2013) conducted a study on community college student affairs professionals and found that of the 171 participants surveyed, only 12.4% reported feeling that their master's program did a "very good job" to prepare them to work in the community college setting (p.14). Many higher education graduate programs address the needs and considerations of students attending four-year institutions yet fail to consider the unique population of community colleges (Lunceford, 2014). Hirt (2006) based her research on conversations

she overheard new student affairs professionals having about how the expectation of a career in higher education they had in school was vastly different than their actual experiences once in the field. She emphasized the importance of understanding the population one is working with to be prepared for the job (Hirt, 2006).

As discussed in chapter 3, community colleges tend to have a diverse population, including first-generation students, students of color, and students who fall below the poverty line (Lunceford, 2014). The participants of the current study confirmed that they had experienced diverse students who represent a multitude of populations and specifically mentioned the impact that poverty has on the students they see in behavioral intervention work.

An exemplary model of preparing new student affairs professionals was found at William Rainey Harper College, a community college in Illinois. They have a training model called The New Counselor Training Program for new student affairs professionals at their college that has been recognized by the National Academic Advising Association (Joslin & Markee, 2011). The training program includes four components that make it a model program to be replicated at other institutions. The components include: (a) clear guidelines and expectations of roles and responsibilities, (b) sufficient time dedicated to training and socializing new professionals into their roles and the organization, (c) involvement of key individuals, and (d) ongoing evaluation and professional development (Joslin & Markee, 2011; Otto et al., 2013). Replicating this training for all new student affairs professionals at community colleges could be included in the onboarding of new employees because as evidenced by the current study, most

community college employees do not have specific training on community colleges prior to working at the institution.

In addition to introducing community colleges to new professionals through formal education and training, it could also be beneficial to have more classes specific to helping skills necessary for BIT work in graduate education. Although many higher education graduate programs have at least one counseling-related class, there continues to be a gap between student affairs professionals and knowing how to execute a helping role (Reynolds, 2011). Burkard et al. (2005) suggests that student affairs professionals receive advanced helping skills training to appropriately address the needs of college students. Some of the participants of this study had a formal mental health background, but many of the participants had not had any classes or training on supporting students prior to entering their job. This is consistent with Lunceford (2014), who explained that community college student affairs professionals commonly have varied educational and professional backgrounds. Reynolds (2011) also addressed that much of the helping skills student affairs professionals learn happen in on-the-job training and experience, so including helping skills and behavioral intervention practices in onboarding may be beneficial to incoming student affairs professionals.

Incorporating education and training specific to community colleges not only diversifies the plethora of knowledge of student affairs professionals but also prepares them to do work in different higher education settings. In addition, including behavioral intervention practices into formal education and national student affairs training can be another way to prepare new professionals for the unique and challenging work of BITs at

community colleges. The participants of this study who did receive BIT training found that they learned invaluable information from associations such as the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) and the Higher Education Case Manager Association (HECMA). Participants also praised the importance of professional development to stay relevant and informed in BIT practices. Also, consistent with the literature on the importance of mentorship (Knight, 2014), my participants echoed the value of having a supervisor or mentor who could guide them through their BIT experiences.

Funding for Mental Health Support on Community College Campuses

The participants of this study confirmed the findings by Klebes (2017), who discussed the lack of funding for mental health services on community college campuses, with some campuses with no services at all. Katz and Davidson (2014) also indicated that community colleges are investing less in psychoeducational information for students compared to four-year institutions (24% to 40%). With less investment in psychoeducational information, students have less opportunity to learn about mental health and the resources available. As discussed earlier, some participants felt pressure to be the last or only resort for student mental health needs at their college. Community colleges have traditionally been underfunded as compared to four-year institution (Anderson, 2019). They have been facing a decline in enrollment which affects how much money the institution is bringing in (Anderson, 2019) Further this impacts how money can be allocated to services on campus, including mental health resources. With lack of funding, staff at community colleges are becoming more resourceful and

transitioning to online or telehealth services (Dunbar et al., 2018). One of the participants of this study was in the process of opening telehealth services on her campus, which she was excited about providing an additional mental health resource for students.

As mental health becomes one of the most prominent issues on campus (Anderson, 2019), community colleges should take the steps necessary to prioritize mental health services at their institutions. Katz and Davison (2014) suggest that students at community colleges may have higher levels of stress and adversity based on their diverse demographics and challenges. Community college students were also found to report severe mental health issues with less access to mental health resources (Katz & Davison, 2014). The participants of this study reiterated that they were seeing students struggling with mental illness with limited resources to provide help. Consistent with the literature, with lack of funds being a barrier at most institutions, incorporating support groups for students such as a parent support group National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) support group; veteran support group; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questions, queer, intersex, asexual, and ally (LGBTQIA) support group; 12-step groups may be beneficial and more cost-effective for community colleges (Katz & Davison, 2014). Further adaptation to funding resource centers specific to the various identities of community college students may be another way to support students if the institutions are not able to fund counseling and mental health services. With multiple support resources on campus, BITs could be better equipped in their efforts and be able to serve students through referrals to these resources.

Institutions can also support BITs through funding teams and individual members' professional development. Many participants spoke about their association with NaBITA, HECMA, and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), but also indicated the price of membership as a barrier to their team or individual members joining professional associations. Professional development was indicated as one of the most important ways to stay relevant and competent in BIT work. The participants spoke of their teams needing ongoing professional development and training to continue to be the most effective in their BIT work. Haley (2015) describes ongoing professional development for student affairs professionals as essential as higher education is ever-changing as new practices and policies are being implemented. Helping BITs maintain their professional development is an investment in them as they invest in the students who make up the institution.

Future Research

Minimal research has been conducted on ProQOL, compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in BIT professionals, let alone those at community colleges. Bernstein-Chernoff's (2016) study inspired the current study to explore compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in a qualitative study. A recommendation for future research is to conduct a longitudinal study to explore how compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue affect BIT members over the course of months or years (Bernstein-Chernoff, 2016; Marcus, 2019). The current study is only a snapshot of community college BIT members' experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue and exploring this topic more in-depth may provide important research for BIT work. The

participants of the study shared that their experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue may fluctuate depending on the time of year and especially when not going through a global pandemic.

Although studies have been conducted on students and the differences in mental health between students at four-year institutions compared to students at community colleges (American Psychological Association, 2012), there is minimal research on the comparison of mental health and compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue of the student affairs professionals who are working with students in crisis at four-year institutions versus community colleges. A comprehensive study on the comparison of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue of BIT members at community college compared to those at four-year institutions may yield insight into how ProQOL is experienced based on institution type. The participants of this study who had worked at four-year institutions shared that they felt more supported and encouraged to take care of themselves while working at a community college compared to their time at four-year institutions. The insights from this type of study may impact how four-year institutions view their BIT members' experiences doing crisis work and may learn how to better support members through guidance from community colleges.

A suggestion for future research from the participants of this study is to conduct a comparative study on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue of BIT members at community college commuter campuses versus those at residential campuses. BIT members who worked at commuter campuses felt that they might be experiencing a more positive professional quality of life due to students not living on campus and not

attending to as many after-hour crises. One participant shared his experience in residence life and how he felt he could not disconnect his work-life from his home-life because he lived and worked where students studied and lived. It would be interesting to explore whether there is any impact on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue depending on whether the BIT members worked at a commuter campus or a residential campus. Similar to studying compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue at four-year residential campuses versus community colleges, residential community colleges may discover best practices for supporting BIT members to improve and sustain a positive ProQOL.

Because BITs are relatively new to the history of higher education, any research on behavioral intervention would be beneficial to the field. Additionally, community colleges appear to be researched less often than four-year institutions regarding issues such as mental health, compassion satisfaction, and compassion fatigue when this population needs more exploration due to the diverse population that frequently attend community colleges. Delving into the research of BITs and the members' experience with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue may inform organizations such as NaBITA to create best practices and informative training on the topic that can be beneficial to all of those in the behavioral intervention field. As with the rest of higher education, BIT work is constantly changing in evolving, and ongoing research, training, and best practices are needed to support and inform behavioral intervention professionals.

Conclusion

In summary, this study was conducted to explore how BIT work affects members' ProQOL who work at community colleges. It also investigated how these members experienced compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue through their BIT work. As a former mental health counselor who is now a new student affairs professional, the intersection of mental health and higher education was a fascinating topic that I wanted to explore. The gap in the literature on community colleges and the unique population they serve inspired the intuition type that was studied in this research. Conducting a qualitative study was necessary to add to the literature as an in-depth exploration of the experience of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue that could not be explored solely through the ProQOL survey itself.

A variety of themes were extracted from the research conducted in this study. One theme is that BIT professionals found their work challenging yet rewarding. The participants enjoyed working with students in crisis because they could make an impact on their life and empowered the students to succeed with the goal of the interventions leading to graduation. Another theme was that to maintain a positive ProQOL, BIT members needed support from relationships inside and outside of the team. Being able to separate work-life from personal-life was essential and work-life balance was frequently mentioned as a way to support their ProQOL and combat compassion fatigue. Participants felt that working at a community college that supported their work-life balance was essential to their success in BIT work. An additional theme is that members'

ProQOL was affected through BIT work because they were growing professionally through interpersonal skills, helping skills, and professional development.

Although participants put safeguards in place in their work and personal life to enhance compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue was indicated as a genuine difficulty in BIT work. The fears participants had about missing something important that may lead to tragedy when working with a student of concern was palpable and common among most participants. The participants suggested that they did not commonly see severe cases, but all the participants had stories about students they could not help and how difficult it was to not be able to provide the assistance the students needed. Student issues such as poverty, domestic violence, suicide, and homicide were discussed as issues that caused the most challenges for BIT members. The participants of this study showed great resilience in doing BIT work, as they overcame situations with students they could not help to learn and do better for the next student they worked with through the BIT.

The implications that arose from this study include preparing new student affairs professionals through formal education and trainings on community colleges as well as helping skills that they can implement to be prepared for working with students with mental health issues and those in crisis when the circumstance arises. Preparing new professionals either in graduate school and/or in new employee onboarding is one way to encourage them to learn about ProQOL and understand compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue. The other important implication and recommendation is allocating funds to better support mental health resources on community college campuses. Many community colleges find themselves with little or no formal mental health services for

students in need and securing recourses must be a priority to support students. Supporting

student mental health will ease the burden put on community college BITs and give the

teams more options for referrals through their interventions. Finally, funding professional

development opportunities is another way community college institutions can support

their BIT to be most effective with trending information and training.

The participants I interviewed for this study were very passionate about the work

they do through their BIT. Their team members are some of their biggest supporters, and

their students are the reason they go to work every day. Supporting and empowering

students to help them reach their potential was a common goal among all participants.

For BITs to support students of concern, they must be supported by their institution to do

this challenging and essential work. Although I found the participants incredibly resilient

in their BIT work, they are people with real emotions. Compassion satisfaction and

compassion fatigue were tangible, and none of them were exempt from feeling empathy

for the students they work with. If all community college BIT professionals are anything

like the participants of this study, we are leaving our students in good hands.

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Appendix A: Professional Quality of Life Scale

Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)
Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflections how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

I am happy.
I am preoccupied with more than one person I *[help]*.
I get satisfaction from being able to *[help]* people.
I feel connected to others.
I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
I feel invigorated after working with those I *[help]*.
I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a *[helper]*.
I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I *[help]*.
I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I *[help]*.
I feel trapped by my job as a *[helper]*.
Because of my *[helping]*, I have felt "on edge" about various things.
I like my work as a *[helper]*.
 I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of people I *[help]*.
I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have *[helped]*.
I have beliefs that sustain me.
I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with *[helping] techniques* and protocols.
I am the person I always wanted to be.
My work makes me feel satisfied.
I feel worn out because of my work as a *[helper]*.
I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I *[help]* and how I could help them.
I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
I believe I can make a difference through my work.
I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I *[help]*.
I am proud of what I can do to *[help]*.
As a result of my *[helping]*, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
I feel "bogged down" by the system.
I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a *[helper]*.
I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
I am a very caring person.
I am happy that I chose to do this work.

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval

Project Number 21-X-46
Project Status APPROVED
Committee: Social/Behavioral IRB
Compliance Contact: Rochelle Reamy (reamy@ohio.edu)
Primary Investigator: Sarah Gaskell
Project Title: Voices of the Helpers: An Exploratory Study on Behavioral Intervention Team Professionals and Their Experience With Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue
Level of Review: EXPEDITED
The Social/Behavioral IRB reviewed and approved by expedited review the above referenced research. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for expedited review, as indicated below.

IRB Approved: 03/12/2021 1:46:24PM
Expiration: 03/12/2022
Review Category: 7

Waivers: A waiver of signature on the consent document is granted.
If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. In addition, FERPA, PPRA, and other authorizations / agreements must be obtained, if needed. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Any changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).
The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Periodic Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of the IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. All records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least three (3) years after the research has ended.
It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the Office of Research Compliance / IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
This approval is issued under the Ohio University OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00000095. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Compliance staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.
The approval will no longer be in effect when the Primary Investigator is no longer under the auspices of Ohio University, e.g., graduation or departure from Ohio University.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Ohio University Online Consent Form
Title of Research: Behavioral Intervention Team Professionals and Compassion
Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue
Researcher: Sarah Gaskell
IRB number: 21-X-46

You are being asked by an Ohio University researcher to participate in research. For you
to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand
what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an
informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the
purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks of the research project. It also explains
how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form
and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to participate in this
study. You may print a copy of this document to take with you.

Summary of Study
Behavioral Intervention Teams have become an important part of campus safety, threat
assessment, and crisis intervention at many colleges and universities across the United
States. Behavioral Intervention Team professionals are working with these students in
crisis and are experiencing the positive (compassion satisfaction) and negative
(compassion fatigue) aspects of crisis work. This study will focus on participants'
experiences with compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue while working on a
Behavioral Intervention Team at a community college. Participation in this study
involves one screening survey and a recorded interview.

Explanation of Study
This study is being done because there is limited research on compassion satisfaction and
compassion fatigue relative to Behavioral Intervention Team professionals who are
working with students in crisis.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a virtual 60-90 minute
interview with the researcher about your experiences with compassion satisfaction and
compassion fatigue as a Behavioral Intervention Team professional at a community
college. After the interview, you will receive a transcript of the interview that you can
check for accuracy.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you may stop the interview at any time
and/or leave the study without consequences.

Risks and Discomforts
There may be some discomfort as you discuss your experiences working with students of
concern. As a precaution, you will be provided with contact information for mental health

hotlines and your campus counseling center who can connect you with mental health providers if you feel that you need to talk to a professional about your experiences that may have come up during the interview.

It is also important to note that I am taking measures to mitigate the risk of a breach of confidentiality. Because the interview is completed via Zoom, you may have your face and name recorded. If that is something you do not want, feel free to change your name on the screen and turn off your camera. Furthermore, I will not be using identifiers in the transcript to help protect your anonymity.

Benefits
This study is important to the literature on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue as a whole, as well as specific to higher education and those working in crisis situations.

Individually, you may not benefit from participation in this study.

Confidentiality and Records
Your study information will be kept confidential by a password protected computer. This includes recordings, transcripts, and the survey. I will be the only one with access to this information. The video/audio files and transcriptions will also be password protected. The video recording is used for transcription purposes and will be destroyed in August 2022. In addition, the screening data will also be deidentified in August 2022.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
> * Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
> * Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

Future Use Statement
Data collected as part of this research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used for future research studies.

Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the investigator:
Sarah Gaskell. sg197805@ohio.edu, 740-591-4861 or the advisor
Laura Harrison. harrisol@ohio.edu, 740-593-0847

> If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Chris Hayhow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664 or hayhow@ohio.edu.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered;
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction;
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study;
- you are 18 years of age or older;
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary;
- you may leave the study at any time; if you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Version Date: *[03/9/21]*

Appendix D: Recruitment Email

IRB Number: 21-X-46

Dear Invitee,

My name is Sarah Gaskell, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Ohio University. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: Voices of the Helper: An Exploratory Study on Behavioral Intervention Team Professionals and Their Experience with Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue. The goal of the study is to gain a better understanding of how Behavioral Intervention Team professionals at community colleges experience compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue while working with students in crisis.

This study involves participating in a 60-90 minute virtual interview with me, in which I will ask you questions about your experience on your college's behavioral intervention team, working with students in crisis, and how these experiences have impacted your compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.

Requirements for the study are for you to be:

1. A behavioral intervention team member for 3+ years
2. Work at a community college
3. Have direct contact with students of concern.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you would like to participate in the study, please read the informed consent letter attached and save it for your records. After that, please respond to this email and I can answer any questions and set up a time for the interview.

Your participation in the research will be of great importance to assist in the study of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in higher education professionals, and especially those working with students in crisis.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Sarah Gaskell, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate, Ohio University
sg197805@ohio.edu
740-591-4861

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

Introduction: Explanation of the study, my professional background and personal interest in the study, express gratitude Review any questions about informed consent Let interviewee know I am recording and transcribing, and the interview can be stopped at any time	Reflexivity, informed consent, rapport building
Questions:	**How it relates to theoretical perspective:**
Initial Questions:	
Tell me about yourself and your professional background and what your current title is.	Gather understanding of interviewee's experience in and outside of BIT
Tell me about your educational background.	BIT members come from a variety of backgrounds and this gives insight into how they approach BIT work
How long have you been on the BIT?	Gives insight into how many years of experience they have with BIT work. May impact professional quality of life and compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue
Why did you agree to be a part of the BIT?	Motivation behind working on BIT
What types of BIT training have you received?	Training is a weakness of BITs across the country. This gives insight into how they know what to do in any given intervention situation
Intermediate Questions:	
Can you tell me about a time you were able to help a student and how you felt about this success?	Aligns with Stamm's PQoL specifically compassion satisfaction for helping a student
Can you tell me about a time where you were not able to help a student and how that made you feel?	Aligns with Stamm's PQoL compassion fatigue not being able to help a student

What is your greatest fear about working on a BIT?	BIT work is difficult, and this question gives insight into what fears arise because of their work
How do you measure success in your BIT work?	Gives insight into what constitutes success in BIT member's eyes
What makes you feel accomplished when working on a BIT?	Aligns with Stamm on what helps with compassion satisfaction
How has listening to student's traumatic or crisis stories changed your worldview?	Stamm indicates that helpers are impacted by work with those in trauma/crisis and this question helps answer what personal impact these students' stories have on the helper
Can you identify one or some of the most traumatic stories you have heard from students and how they impacted you?	Gives insight into what kind of situations they have experienced with students and puts into perspective what may cause compassion fatigue
Can you describe your personal experience doing BIT work in a few words?	Narrows down what they think about their experience on the BIT and whether it is positive, negative, or a combination
Can you give examples of how you are able to separate your work life from your personal life?	Aligns with Stamm's theory discussing the ability to separate work life from home life, or if they bleed together. This influences PQoL
Can you share instances of what sustains you or keeps you going and motivated in life?	Stamm talks about the motivation to keep working in an environment and find pleasure despite working with those in crisis. Need something positive to keep motivated in difficult work
Ending Questions:	
With your experience on a BIT, how would you guide other BIT professionals in keeping a positive professional quality of life?	Exploring BIT members' opinions on how to make working on a BIT more valuable and productive
How have you grown professionally as a helper since working on a BIT?	Exploring ways that BIT members can embrace their experience on a BIT and translate it to other areas of their work
Can you share if your work as a BIT member makes you feel satisfied, worn out, or other feelings?	ProQoL explores both being satisfied by helping work and also worn out. This question explores how helping work makes them feel.
What do you see as the benefits of your college having a BIT?	Understanding the value BITs bring to the campus community to understand its importance

How do you think BIT members can best be supported through their work as a helper?	Gaining insight on BIT member's opinions on how to support helpers in their work
Do you feel like your BIT work is making a difference in students' lives?	Exploring how impactful they feel their work is as a BIT member, impacting compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue
Is there anything I didn't ask that you would like to add?	

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