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The Stressors and Buffering Effects of Burnout in Department of Children & Family Services Caseworkers

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Poster Presentation P80

**THE STRESSORS AND BUFFERING EFFECTS OF BURNOUT IN
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES CASEWORKERS**

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This photo ethnography focused upon the stressors that are attributed to burnout as well as the buffering effects that social workers can use to prevent burnout. Two participants were interviewed, J.H. and M.M. from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in Bloomington, IL. Time was also spent at the department's branch office in Bloomington speaking with other social workers and taking field notes on the day to day activities of the social workers and supervisors at DCFS. After combining the information from each participant, observations, and field notes, the factors effecting burnout were decided. Stressors which are attributed with burnout include: time available, nature of cases, caseload, and the lack of an appropriate number of caseworkers. While on the other hand those effects which seem to buffer burnout include: exercise, support systems within the department, caseworker supervision, smoking, and the knowledge that one is helping children find safe and loving homes. After the stressors and buffers of burnout were identified, photographs were taken as a way to depict and represent these issues. Many caseworkers from DCFS collaborated with me in brainstorming, setting up, and capturing the image desired. In the end, a photo essay was developed which depicts the stressors and buffers of burnout though a balance of text and images. It is hoped that this photo essay can be used as a platform to educate the community in the caring individuals who devote their time and energy to child welfare.