Resources available to psychologists within two adult psychiatric clinics

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Abstract

Since 2011, several reports regarding the increasing number psychologists on sick leave in Sweden have been published. These suggest deficits in their working environment. The aim of this study was to examine resources in the working environment of psychologists within the adult psychiatric clinics in a county council in northern Sweden. The research questions involved identifying resources in the workplace of psychologists, based on the four levels of the Job Demand-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The sample consisted of six participants and data was collected through individual in-person interviews. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results are in parts consistent with previous research but also include several resources less well-known related to well-being amongst psychologists. These were Nature of the work, Training and education, Physical resources and Mentoring. The conclusions provide useful information to improve the working environment of psychologists, by protecting existing resources and providing important resources requested.

Keywords: psychologists, resources, working environment.

Abstrakt


Nyckelord: psykologer, resurser, arbetsmiljö
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Introduction

In 2011, a Swedish Social Insurance Agency report (Försäkringskassan, 2011:17) highlighted the psychologist occupation, among a few high-risk occupations, as one of those with the highest amount of sick leave due to mental health issues. The most frequent diagnoses were depression, anxiety, stress-related issues, sleeping difficulties and alcohol abuse. The report also showed that psychologists, both men and women, were the second highest ranking profession with employees on sick leave due to being diagnosed with reactions to severe stress or adjustment disorders. These findings were again confirmed in a subsequent social insurance report from the same public authority (Försäkringskassan, 2015:1), indicating psychologists as one of few professions between 2012-2014, with not only the highest number of absences longer than two weeks due to sick leave, but also as one where a significant increase in sick leave can be seen.

Within the field of organizational psychology, the idea that the working environment can be assessed in terms of stressors and demands, in relation to available resources, is a widely acknowledged paradigm (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Karasek, 1979). The need to assess the employees’ working environment stems from the knowledge that work characteristics can have a substantial impact on employee well-being. The theory chosen in this study is that of Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The model was designed on the basis and opinion that previous influential models were too restricted and limited, and not applicable for all job positions. Also, characteristic of the JD-R model is the focus on negative as well as positive indicators of employee wellbeing. It has, since the first introduction in the international literature in 2001, been exceptionally influential (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

In the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), demands are described to be physical, psychological, social and organizational aspects of a job that demand prolonged physical and psychological effort and skill. These efforts are associated with physical and psychological costs. A few examples of demands are workload, emotional strain, conflicts, inadequate support and work pace. Demands are not inherently negative, yet they can however become stressors when meeting these demands require high effort and there is no possibility for adequate recovery. The description of resources provided by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) states that resources could be aspects of work that are physical, psychological, social and organizational in nature. To be defined as a resource, it must contribute to one or more of the following: Be functional in achieving goals at work, reduce the demands and the accompanied physiological and psychological cost, and facilitate personal growth, learning and development. Within the JD-R model, resources are emphasized to be of value in their own right; not exclusively to manage demands. According to the JD-R model, resources are means for the employee’s’ achievements, or for protecting other important resources. Job resources can be found on an organizational level, in interpersonal and social relationships, in work and task characteristics (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

An additional theory helpful when examining resources is that of Conservation of Resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989). The model was presented as an alternative stress model due to limitations in existing ones and has since become one of the most cited theories within the field (Halbesleben, Paustian-Underdahl, & Westman, 2014). In the COR-model, stress is defined as a response to the environment where there is (1) a threat of a net loss of resources, (2) the net loss of resources, or (3) a lack of resources gains following investment of resources – both actual, potential and perceived loss and lack of resource gain could result in producing stress. The defining principle of the model revolves around the universal premise that people strive to retain and protect current resources and acquire new ones. Hobfoll (1989) defined resources to be things
and aspects perceived as valuable, such as objects, states and conditions. He further acknowledged that the value of a resource varies among individuals, their experiences and situation, and the context. Taken together, the JD-R provides a useful model for understanding employees’ experience of their working environment and job tasks as consisting of certain general and job-specific demands and resources. Particularly, COR is useful in understanding the functioning of job resources.

**Background**

Research has focused on examining common demands that psychologists face in their working environment. In a recent review of the research focusing solely on psychologists, Rupert, Miller, and Dorociak (2015) state that psychologists face challenging and stressful demands during their work, due to the nature of the psychological services they provide. These stresses can often be seen due to the specific psychotherapeutic work, which creates the feeling of being responsible for the lives of clients, requires upholding constructive client relationships, and dealing with problems and emotional issues as well as demanding clients. On an organizational level, excessive paperwork and internal politics and conflicts receive prominent mention. These authors further state that how working hours are spent makes a difference; with some studies pointing out that work activities such as administrative and paperwork relate to a higher level of emotional exhaustion, as well as feeling less personal accomplishment (Rupert et al., 2015).

Some challenges are mentioned as relating to all psychologists, while others apply specifically to being a younger and/or a newly licensed psychologist. Aspects that have been identified in the literature are facing an environment that is unfamiliar, a job that entails great responsibilities, and demands to succeed. Expectations to maintain professionalism and be knowledgeable, objective and ethical (Kolar, Von Treuer, & Koh, 2017), all weigh heavily on psychologists when starting their professional lives.

As further examples of general job demands, organizational structure and conflicts with work colleagues predicts greater emotional exhaustion and disengagement among psychologists (Westwood et al., 2017). Other predictors of emotional exhaustion reported by Westwood et al. (2017), was more contact with clients (face-to-face and over the phone), hours spent capturing data, and working overtime. Further to this, a study with school psychologists’ states that one-third of participants experienced pressure from the organization related to ethical issues. Withholding recommendations for support as well as having to agree with incorrect decisions regarding placement for special education, was noted (Boccio, Weisz, & Lefkowitz, 2016). Amongst the practitioners who reported administrative pressure, the levels of burnout and dissatisfaction with the work and profession, as well as a desire to leave their current position, was also reported (Boccio et al., 2016).

In Sweden, the theoretical framework of demands and resources has been adopted by the public authority tasked with regulating and improving the working environment. Unhealthy work is defined as when demands at work, for more than a temporary period, exceed the resources. The imbalance becomes unhealthy if the work demands also proceed for some time without a chance for recovery (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2015). Kriisa (2017) reports in an article in the Swedish Psychologists’ Association publication, “Psykologtidningen”, that the working environment for Swedish psychologists is worrisome. Examples of reported issues are employers who make more and more decisions related to the daily work of the psychologists as well as what services they should provide, in terms of both method and number of sessions. Quantitative measures of performance, cutbacks due to savings and insufficient access to mentoring are acknowledged as further challenges in the working environment of psychologists. These conditions lead psychologists to try and compensate for the deficits in the organizations by helping as many patients as possible. The article also highlights that the current situation and prognoses is especially dim for
psychologists employed by municipalities and county councils. Kriisa (2017) goes on to say that this puts into question the ethical challenges faced, as well as the effect it has on the work environment.

Heinemann’s (2016) article further states that many places of employment have a high staff turnover particularly amongst psychologists as an employee group. As per Heinemann (2016), Child and Youth Psychiatry (Barn och Ungdomspsykiatrin; BUP) is one of the workplaces that report large staff turnover, affecting especially the employees that get left behind, and who are expected to pick up unfinished work. The added demands from the employer, together with the long waitlists for the clients, increase the expectations to perform. Staff turnover also means that employees may sometimes be faced with unethical situations, in having to finalize the work of others.

Within the somewhat bleak picture that emerges in the above outline of the international and specifically Swedish literature on the work environment of psychologists, it becomes of interest to have a better understanding of especially the resources psychologists experience in their work. As noted, job resources are important not exclusively to meet and manage demands, but that they also help in achieving goals at work, reduce demands and strain, and facilitate personal growth and development. In line with the description of resources provided by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), Arbetsmiljöverket (2015) describes typical resources as work methods and tools, competence, performance feedback, social support from supervisors and coworkers, reasonable and achievable goals, staffing, control at work, as well as time to recover. Gaining a deeper understanding of resources may also raise awareness amongst practicing psychologists about resources available to them, and how these resources may be employed in order to achieve work goals and manage demands and strain, and facilitate personal and professional development.

Related to psychologists, a resource consistently confirmed to be of importance is the sense of control at work, with the experience of lack of control a major stressor (Rupert, et al., 2015). In a meta-analysis by Lee, Lim, Yang and Lee (2011) a significant relationship can be seen between control and burnout. Those who reported higher levels of control also reported less emotional exhaustion, less depersonalization and a greater sense of personal accomplishment. However, the research does not provide further conclusive results as to how control functions as a valuable resource for psychologists, and does not distinguish between control related to schedule, workload, activities or treatment. In the meta-analysis by Lee et al. (2011) workplace support and personal accomplishment was found to be the most important resources for meeting demands. Workplace support has also been found to repeatedly correlate with higher levels of personal accomplishment (Rupert et al., 2015).

Personal coping and self-care strategies are underlined to be of significance in prevention of psychological distress in general, but again little research is devoted to psychologists in particular. The one personal characteristic consistently associated with their emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of clients is younger age (Rupert et al., 2015). Psychologists have reported the following strategies as important: maintaining a sense of control, reflecting upon work experiences that were satisfactory, maintaining work-life balance and self-awareness/self-monitoring (Rupert et al., 2015). Findings by Westwood et al. (2017), further state clinical supervision as predicting lower levels of burnout among psychologists. Therapists also report the utilization of therapeutic techniques as effective in the prevention of burnout. The most frequently reported personal strategies used by therapists are mindfulness and emotion regulation (Jergensen, 2017).

This review of the available literature highlights that a lot is known about the challenges faced by psychologists, but that comparatively less research regarding relevant resources exists. Therefore, the current study set out to address this lack of knowledge by examining the experienced and reported job resources of psychologists employed in a specific municipal area in Northern Sweden.
Research aim

Considering the background above, it is possible to hypothesize that the working environment for many psychologists is unhealthy. This assumption could be translated into theoretical terms by stating that demands exceed their available resources. Based on this, the purpose of this study is therefore to explore what resources are available to psychologists employed within county councils. These resources will be investigated in line with the four levels proposed in the JD-R model. The specific research question is:
· Considering the theoretical definition, what resources are available and identified, and what resources are desired in the workplace of psychologists, on the physical, psychological, social, and organizational levels?
Recommendations will be made regarding how the results could be applied to further improve and provide resources for psychologists.

Method

Sample

The inclusion criteria stated that the participants had to be licensed psychologists, employed by the same county council in northern Sweden and working within the adult psychiatric clinics. Additional criteria for inclusions or exclusions were not specified regarding age, gender and clinical practice, in order to be inclusive and representative of the working group.

Participants

Participants were recruited from two towns in one and the same county council in northern Sweden. An email containing information about the study and contact details of the student researchers (hereafter referred to as researchers) went out to all psychologists working within the adult psychiatric clinics within the two towns, through the coordinator of the psychologists in each town (Appendix 1 & 2). A total of six ($n=6$) psychologists showed an interest in participating, and all were then contacted by phone or email to set up a date and time for the interview to take place. The six interviews with psychologists that initially declared interest in participating were all included in the study and represent the total sample from which the data was collected. The selection method could be described as a sample of convenience. Both women and men were interviewed; they had a mean age of 40.3 years and with a wide range of years of clinical experience. The researchers used two criteria to judge the adequacy of their sample. Firstly, a qualitative evaluation of the data was made. Data saturation is a common criterion in qualitative research (Howitt, 2010). As the focus was very specific, i.e. practicing psychologists employed by the specific county council in northern Sweden, this criterion was deemed satisfied with six interviews. Secondly, taking a more quantitative stance, the researchers also evaluated the sample as a percentage of the total available population. With a total of 46 permanent psychologists working within the county council within the selected towns, including those on parental leave, the response rate of 13% ($6/46$) was also deemed adequate.

Materials and procedure

Data collection was done using an individual, semi-structured interview that was anticipated to take approximately one hour. An interview guide was composed with questions in regards to available resources, and these questions were divided into areas of physical, psychological, social and organizational resources as per the Bakker and Demerouti (2007) definition in
the JD-R model, and possible follow-up questions were also formulated (Appendix 5 & 6). The interviews were conducted in Swedish. The interviews were recorded with the use of the researchers’ mobile phones, thereafter transcribed within a couple of days. Once the interviews had been transcribed, the recordings were deleted. Following the transcribing of interviews, the data was then analyzed using a thematic analysis with a theoretical approach, due to the prior overview of available literature. All interviews were done in person and took place at the offices of the participants as per their request. The interviews were conducted over a two-week period during the month of October 2017, and ranged between 44 to 82 minutes.

Analysis

Analysis of the material followed a step-by-step procedure for thematic analysis, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach provides the opportunity to keep the analysis close to the original material. The analysis goes through a recursive process which will elaborate over time. The approach was to be deductive in nature, applying a theoretical framework on the gathered data. The first phase was to get familiarized with the material. This was done by the two researchers reading through the transcribed material in its entirety, multiple times. The second phase involved producing the initial codes. This was done individually by the researchers, who then read through each of the transcribed interviews separately, highlighting and underlining meanings and patterns that they each found. The researchers then met up and went over the now highlighted and underlined interviews, noting down data of interest. The researchers did this by going through each interview from start to finish without paying any attention to the areas of physical, psychological, social and organizational resources, by which the interview guide was set up. The third phase moved on to sort the initial codes into potential themes: This involved the researchers going over the initial codes and producing temporary headlines and themes based on what, at the time, felt like natural groupings. This process divided the initial 550 codes into 12 themes. Even though the interview was about available resources, the researchers noticed that together with resources the participants also mentioned “wanted resources” and even “demands” and these were noted down and became a separate theme as they were seen as an interesting finding in the collected data. Phase four involved reviewing the 12 themes, to check if themes fit in relation to prior codes, as well as the full data set. On doing this, some themes merged with other themes, or by becoming a sub-theme instead of standing as a theme of its own. For other themes that were viewed as well-defined and that held together in a meaningful way, sub-themes were created to improve and better represent the results. It was however clear that after step four, a clear difference could be seen between the themes.

This left nine themes which was to form the base of the thematic map. Phase five involved the defining and naming of themes. This phase was viewed and reviewed a few times during the process of the analysis so that the given names of the themes became clearer, and distinguished clearly between different themes and subthemes, as well as to best fit with the results presented in the report. Phase six entails the producing of the report based on the findings found in the analysis of the data, and is presented in the Results section. Finding citations that fits the reported results and present a clear picture of the theme is included under each. Finally, the results as well as the citations presented are related back to what can be found in the literature on the subject, in the Discussion.

Ethical considerations

The recruitment of participants was done by email with the help of the coordinator for the psychologists in each town. Participants were all who responded to the initial request for partic-
ipation. Participation was on a voluntary basis and prior to each interview taking place the participant got to read and sign an informed consent form, (Appendix 3 & 4). Information similar to that in the informed consent form was again repeated verbally as part of the initial presentation once the interview started. Each participant was specifically informed that they were free to withdraw their information, or to discontinue participation at any time, without consequence. Measures taken to protect the integrity and anonymity of the participants were explained. Participation was not associated with any financial or monetary costs or gains, although the results of this investigation will be shared with participants.

There are no known or intentional risks associated with participation. All information gathered within the framework of this thesis is assured to remain confidential. The finished report will be available to all participants. The participants were informed that the final report is part of the students’ graduation thesis and that both students and University staff will have access to the report as well as the final version being published on the Umeå University platform, and becomes a public document. To protect the integrity and anonymity of the participants, all interview data is anonymous. All citations that were included in the report has gone through rigorous auditing not to reveal any information about the participants. The participants were informed, both in the informed consent form as well as in the initial presentation, that direct citations from their interview might be used in the final report. All recorded material was deleted once the analysis of the gathered data had been done.

Results

After analyzing the interviews with the licensed psychologists in relation to what job resources are available to them, as well as exploring what resources they would like to see, nine prominent themes could be distinguished. The themes will be presented with the distinction of demands or wanted resources, as these themes emerged in all the interviews, but is conceptually still separate from the seven other themes regarding resources, which constitute the primary result. Demands will be presented first and wanted resources in the end of the results.

All participants have been represented in the citations and are presented separately. When choosing direct citations to illustrate the various identified themes, considerations have been made to ensure anonymity of the participants, and for this reason some citations have been modified. These modifications were kept to a minimum, for example, by excluding the name of a specific place of work. Citations will first be presented in Swedish, as this was the language used during the interviews, and this will be followed by a translation to English, done by the researchers.

Demands

In relation to the resources psychologists reported having, they also described several demands that are important in better understanding the complexity of their working environment. These findings will briefly be presented in the section below as they were considered important in providing a fuller understanding of the challenges faced by psychologists. The most prominent demands that are noted below are availability of medical staff, lack of senior or more experienced work colleagues, and the deficits and vacancies in staffing and recruitment of medical staff - a demand which was reported as both difficult and challenging in the day to day work of a psychologist. The latter was in relation to the deficits and vacancies in staffing and recruitment of medical staff. This resulted in insufficient and varying access to experienced physicians and more importantly, a physician that one could build a working relationship with. Several participants reported the associated unpredictability to be a difficult demand to manage.
Yes, staffing of physicians and the availability of physicians are different from week to week and day to day.

Then the resources in ways of physicians, substitute physicians and that as a physician on sick-leave which sometimes is, in psychiatric outpatient care the “specialist physician” is by far the most important function as they have the final say, so it’s important that they are around.

In a broader sense, insufficient staffing was also described to be demanding. Several of the clinics apparently had vacant positions, which resulted in an increased workload for current employees, psychologists included. Some of the clinics were also depicted to be disorganized. Yet another related issue which was mentioned was the mean age of the current workforce, often being predominantly constituted of younger employees. This brings with it a lack in the level of experience at the workplace; there are no more senior, or people with more experience, that the psychologist can turn to.

There is hardly any seniors/experienced employees that can mentor and help us. So most (deleted) have worked such short periods, so the newest recruits have worked as long as I have, maybe one or two years more. It’s about 40% new recruits that may not have much experience and almost no one to look after them.

The test environment was another area which was considered to be inadequate. Statements reported rooms which are inefficiently soundproof and occasionally fully booked. Fur-
ther, some report a working environment considered dangerous in a physical sense, with build-
ings bordering on what is considered toxic or unhealthy, or at a level to be kept under supervi-
sion. The organization as a whole is described as being slow, slow to respond, and bureaucratic,
as well as being faced with an increased demand from the society to provide mental health
services. The county council where the towns that psychologist were recruited from does not,
in general, meet the guaranteed maximum waiting period of 90 days as outlined by the organi-
zation of Sweden’s county councils and country municipalities (Sveriges Kommuner och Land-
ting, 2017, “1177,” 2017), resulting in increased pressure on clinics to increase their workload,
see more patients and work faster. Efficiency is apparently emphasized above the quality of
care provided. A further dimension of this organizational demand frequently reported was the
lack of monetary resources and the constant cut backs. Participants reported of the importance
of getting engaged in areas such as specialized mentoring or accessing relevant training courses,
or resources of importance to psychologists, which have not been prioritized due to the implied
costs to for the organization.

I testrummet att det är slut på grejer och att det är olika tillgång på rum och
sådana där saker, så det är viss resurs som kan vara lite flytande … det som är
problematiskt när det gäller testrum är att det inte är ljudisolerat, att det läcker
in, man får jobba ganska hårt för att få en bra miljö för…testmiljö och rättnings
område.

(The test rooms run out of stationary and the availability of rooms varies and
things like that, so some of the resources might be quite uncertain … what’s
problematic when it comes to the test rooms is that they are not soundproofed,
sounds transfer, you have to work pretty hard to get a good environment for …
test environment and evaluation area.)

Some of the participants mention their pay level to be lower, compared to psychologists
employed within other sectors.

De har jätte svårt att prioritera psykologer just nu för att dem flesta psykologer
i dag drivs av lönefrågan och då som landstingsanställd är du minst betald av
alla. Det är sant faktiskt.

(They find it hard to prioritize psychologists at the moment as most psycholo-
gists today are salary driven, and as a county council employee you are the least
paid of all. That’s true actually.)

The reporting of the results now shifts to those that have a more direct bearing on the
aims of the current research, i.e. experienced, reported and required resources of practicing
psychologists. The eight themes that were seen in relation to available resources were named:
Support, Personal resources, Nature of the work, Training and education, Physical resources, Recovery, Mentoring and Wanted resources. A mind map outlining the thematization process is presented below to provide an overview of the results (Figure 1.). These are being reported below.

![Mind Map](image)

**Figure 1. The result seen as per where they fit within the four levels and each other.**

**Support**

The participants all emphasized the significance of help and support at work. It became clear that the help and support came from different people in the psychologists’ immediate surroundings. Who the help and support came from mattered, depending on the nature of the help and support one required. Two subthemes will be presented due to the different function it provides the psychologist, these are: Colleagues and Management.

**Colleagues.** All of the participants described their colleagues to be an immensely important resource. This source of support and help was what they felt they needed to manage work assignments, as well as for maintaining their well-being. The availability of colleagues throughout the workday, together with the knowledge and experience that colleagues bring to the workplace, was both stimulating and welcomed. Knowing which colleague to turn to depending on the problem one is presented with is also important. Particularly valued were colleagues with more working experience than the participants, since it was perceived that there was more to learn from them. Access to an experienced physician was appreciated even more, as it also generated insights and opportunities for development and learning from the perspective of a different professional.

Another organizational resource which was described by all six participants was the division into teams, arranged so that all the different professions from the workplace were rep-
resented. Teams often consist of psychologists, nurses, physicians, social workers and caretakers. The opportunity to work in teams provides a forum to receive both positive and negative feedback, as well as praise. And even though the participants have individual assignments to carry out, the team provides support in dealing with cases that are difficult and complex. Further, the participants report a sense of security in the shared responsibility a team provides in regard to not only the decisions that are made, but also to the patient.


(All, above all, the best resources is having a team, others to talk to, reason and work together with. They help me a lot both as a psychologist and as a colleague. … But it is the colleagues that makes it work, it’s a lonely work in a way, because you are alone, or I am often alone as such. So, there is a huge need to get out, air things and discuss with someone.)

Ja, självklart arbetsgruppen, det är en viktig grupp, och där, jag är så tacksam på det sättet. jag tycker att jag finns i en sådan kompetent miljö med dem kollegor jag har här och dem överläkarna som vi har … det blir bra jobb gjort och jag får hjälp och stöd och tips och idéer och så där, och det känns jättebra tycker jag.

(Yes, of course the workgroup, it’s an important group, and that, I am so grateful in that regard. I believe that I am in such a competent environment with the colleagues I have here and the specialist physicians that we have … the work becomes great and I get help and support as well as tips and ideas as such, I think that’s great.)

Other support related aspects were the ability to express emotions at work. Psychologists report the importance of being able to express negative emotions, such as anger and sadness as well as laughing together and encouraging each other.
Vi har ganska gott klimat, jag tycker mycket om mina kollegor och vi kan skratta tillsammans och man kan visa känslor här på ett accepterat sätt och man blir liksom inte, alltså man vara arg eller ledsen. Det är väldigt viktigt för mig ... Men på den här arbetsplatsen får man visa känslor och det är jätteviktigt för mig.


Eh, but that there is the opportunity to openly show that you’ve become sad or are scared and worried about something, that’s important I think. And I think, also that the possibility of receiving emotional support. Otherwise, it’s quite often about feeling safe socially. Feel safe with your colleagues, it is pretty much without prestige, being able to say things that feel difficult at medical rounds and meetings so that I can get support and help, so that you don’t sit with things yourself.

Management. All the participants reported their manager to be a valued resource, and went on to describe manager behaviors and qualities that were helpful in their working environment. Reports included managers being able to regulate the workload, and sorting, prioritizing and defining work tasks. Furthermore, managers’ behaviors were perceived to be supportive and positive. All participants reported that they, without hesitation, would seek support and help from their managers when faced with challenges. Another aspect mentioned by several participants were managers functioning as a “gatekeeper”, to relieve pressure and keep the workload manageable and without feeling the pressure of the organization’s expectations at large.

Det har varit en stor arbetsbelastning på mig och min psykologkollega, men vi har jobbat på och chefen är som insatt i det och uppmuntrar oss och stöttar oss i
att tex. Att, vad ska jag säga, en ny organisation, dem andra mottagningarna, det är lite otydligt i en ny organisation, vem ska göra vad? Då har det varit så här att, ”kan inte psykologerna på (raderad) enheten göra det här också?” Men där har chefen som, det är ju skrivet tydligt i organisationsbeskrivningen som så där att, det tillhör inte, så när det har varit dem där pucklarna så har hon varit väldigt tydlig med att freda oss om man säger så.

(It’s been a huge workload on me and my colleague, also a psychologist, but we have kept at it and the manager involved and who encourages us and supports us is an example: That, what shall I say, a new organization, the other clinics, it’s unclear in a new organization, who should do what? It’s been like “Can’t the psychologists at (deleted) clinic do that too?” But that’s where the manager has, it is clearly stated in the organizational requirements, it doesn’t belong, when we have had those peaks, she has been clear and been wanting to spare us so to speak.)

The interviews showed that the closer the relationship, and the more frequent contact was with the manager, the larger the positive impact on the psychologist as well as it compensatory effect for other deficits in the workplace. One respondent mentioned the support from management in “tricky” situations - this was later explained by the manager always being there, but that there was no need for their support in day-to-day situations that the psychologist felt in control of.

Ja, är det riktigt kniviga fall så pratar jag med min chef, och nu pratar jag bara rent kliniskt, patientfallen så kan jag prata med min chef och säga att nu har det här uppkommit, ska vi utreda när den har tagit droger? … men i allmän karaktär så jobbar jag ju på, då behöver jag inte fråga någon så tänker jag, är jag inte osäker så jobbar jag ju på med det jag ska göra så.

(Yes, in the really tricky cases I speak to my manager, and that’s just clearly clinical, patient cases that I speak to my manager and say that now this has come up, should we still start testing when they have taken drugs? ... but in the more general cases I just keep working, I don’t need to ask anyone, that’s how I think, if I am not insecure, then I’ll just keep working)
Min chef har bra koll på vad som hamnar hos mig och mina psykolog kollegor om man så säger, och, nej men det känns bra. Det är sällsynt att man jobbar så här, att chefen har så här bra koll egentligen, chefen är med på alla möten som vi är på och så.

(My manager knows really well what lands with me and my colleagues who are psychologists so to speak, and, no but that feels good. It’s rare to work like this, that the manager has full control really, our manager attends all meetings that we do as such.)

The participants also report being shown respect and the manager instilling confidence in their employees. The managers’ close involvement and knowledge with the day-to-day work of the clinic were also highly appreciated. Finally, they reported having a relationship with the manager which welcomed a continuous dialogue.

Jo, jag tycker att jag har stöd från min chef och att det finns förståelse och att jag kan gå och be om saker, och att det blir bra bemött.

(Yes, I feel that I have support from my manager and that there is an understanding and that I can ask for things and that it is well met.)

Sen har vi en väldigt stark chef som *brinner* verkligen för mottagningen, och hon är mycket, mycket kompetent inom (raderad). Och hon har mycket kunskap om patienterna och den där chefen har jag stor tillit för så jag kan ju alltid gå till henne och berätta att det här blev inte så bra för mig och det här gjorde du inte så bra så jag känner att har en bra relation till henne.

(And then, we have a very strong manager who is passionate about the clinic, and she is very, very competent in (deleted). And she has a lot of knowledge about the patients and that manager I put trust in her because I can always go to her and say it didn’t turn out that well for me and you didn’t do this well, so I feel that I have a good relationship with her.)
Personal resources

Many participants feel a sense of security in the competence and capabilities that they have, and put trust in the basic skills gained from the fundamentals of courses and programs, giving them, the qualifications required to work as a psychologist. These instilled a self-confidence, as well as an awareness of one’s personal boundaries, and an acceptance that one cannot know it all. On a more personal level, subthemes that became prominent and which describe this theme were: Cognitive strategies and Self-awareness.

Cognitive strategies. When being asked about personal resources, the participants mentioned executive functions as an important feature within themselves, which they use both within work and in their private lives. Planning and organizing as well as having a structure in the work, together with the skill of dividing attention to where it is required at various times was mentioned.

Altså jag är väldigt duktig på att planera och utföra och hålla mig till sådana saker. Jag tror att det är väldigt ... Så jag tror att det är en fördel.

(Well, I am really good at planning and executing and keep to those things. I believe it is, very ... So, I think it is a benefit.)

Jag har väl hyfsat lätt att struktureras och planeras mitt arbete, alltså jag kan göra det på ett sätt som gör att jag inte blir destruktiv i mig själv.

(I find it pretty easy to structure and plan my work, I mean, I can do it in a way that doesn’t make me destructive in myself.)

A noteworthy finding was that the psychologists with the most experience (i.e. worked as psychologists for the longest number of years) reported being confident in their ability to manage demanding and stressful periods, in a way less experienced participants did not. These periods were not associated with as high levels of stress that they had been with earlier in their careers, since they now reported being able to rely on knowing they can manage, since they have managed it in the past. These reports clearly separated the psychologists with the most and the least experience.

Jag tror verkligen att jag blivit bättre och bättre på det över tid och att jag lärt mig att se det där mönstret av att i perioder är det för mycket och att det i perioder är för mycket jag inte är i kapp med. Men jag vet att kommer ikapp, och jag vet att jag fixar det sen och då behöver jag inte stressa upp kring det.

(I believe that I have gotten better and better at it with time and that I have learnt to see patterns of periods where there is a lot and that there is periods with me
being behind. But I know I will catch up, and I know I’ll fix it later and then I don’t have to stress about it.)

**Self-awareness.** Self-awareness and insight was highlighted in regard to knowing when to seek support, being able to let your guard down and admit that you don’t know it all, together with a knowledge of who to turn to, and to get the support and help one is after, is seen by many as their strongest personal resources. These participants state that they feel confident in seeking the support needed from any professional at the workplace, colleagues with different qualifications to themselves as well as higher management, when needed.

Sen tänker jag rent personligen att det som är min resurs är att jag är inte rädd att öppna mig själv och berätta att jag inte kan. Vilket ger mig möjlighet att få feedback och att få hjälp. Det här med att be om hjälp och säga att de här jag är inte kompetent kan jag få hjälp, det tycker jag är en väldigt fin resurs jag har.

(And then on a personal level I feels it a resource that I am not afraid to open up and reveal that I don’t know. Which gives me a chance to get feedback and help. But this, asking for help and this is not a competence of mine, can I get help, I feel that is a nice resource within myself.)

Och sen tror jag också att det är en inre resurs att, så har det varit för mig ända sedan jag började jobba, att jag har haft lätt för att be om hjälp. Jag har haft, jag känner mig inte dålig om jag säger att jag inte kan, det känns inte som ett misslyckande att säga jag förstår inte och det har jag liksom haft med dig ända från början och det, när man är nybörjare är det klart att man kan tänkta att det är klart att man inte kan för jag kan ju inte för jag är ju nybörjare men jag fortsatt tänka så: varför ska jag kunna? Jag kan inte allt. Och det känns också som en väldigt skön sak.

(And then I feel that it’s an inner resource, that’s how it’s been since I started working, that I find it easy to ask for help. I have had, I don’t feel bad when saying that I don’t know, it doesn’t feel like a failure, saying that I don’t understand, and that’s something I have been able to do from get go, when you are new, of course you don’t know, you are new, but I kept thinking, why should I know? I can’t know everything. And that’s a good feeling.)
Nature of the work

The profession of a psychologist and the basic knowledge that psychologists bring with them into their workplace is mentioned by all participants as a proficiency valued by the organization and colleagues alike. Also, this foundation is mention as a valued resource, together with a distinguished role in the organization and the team. This theme is further constituted by two subthemes that further exemplify resources found in the nature of the work: Professional development and Control.

**Professional development.** The constant development and growth due to the dynamics of the profession, together with being exposed to a larger amount of people, and with that a broader insight into different problems, is noted by some as a valued experience. The patients or clients are challenging but at the same time they are what drives the psychologist forward, to keep abreast with updates, training and to continuously broaden one’s competence, whilst at the same time instilling a sense of security.

Så det är en väldigt dynamisk arbete och jag får arbete inte bara med (raderad), utan med hela allmänpsykiatiska spektrat. För att många gånger har dem kanske autism kan de ha, de har ångest och depression kan de ha, svårigheter med relationer och problemlösning svårigheter kan de ha, så jag känner jättemycket igen från mitt arbete på allmänpsykiatrin. Och det gör att jag inte bara kan fokusera på (raderad), utan jag måste kunna allt. Och behöver läsa.

(So, it’s a very dynamic work and I don’t only get to work with (deleted) but with the whole general psychiatric spectrum. Many times they might have autism, anxiety and depression, difficulties with relationships and difficulties in problem solving, so I recognize a lot from my work within general psychiatry. That means I can’t just focus on (deleted) but have to know it “all”. And need to read.)

Det är patienterna som hela tiden driver en framåt, för jag kan liksom inte bara sitta still och vänta på dem göra jobbet, våra patienter är många gånger kognitivt nedsatta så man måste anpassa sina insatser utifrån det.

(It is always the patient driving you forward, I cannot be passive and expect them to do the work, our patients of often cognitively impaired and interventions must be adjusted accordingly.)
Det är ju också någon sorts stimulans i att det hela tiden kommer ny forskning och att det hela tiden finns nya saker att läsa, sen är det ju alltid en känsla av att man inte hinner läsa eller göra så mycket som man skulle vilja. Men psykologi är ju ett sånt fantastiskt område och det är ju så himla intressant.

(Control. The sense of being in control comes up as important in different areas related to work. Some describe a sense of being in control of the work situation, when they plan their work, the autonomy in choosing work methods and materials used, as well as control in planning their schedule from one week to the next. This control provides a sense of being able to regulate not only the workload but also the pace they work at as well as managing changes that take place. Others mention a sense of being in control thanks to a well-defined and demarcated work tasks, with clear limitations and distinct goals.

Här är det ganska planerat och avgränsat och jag har bra kontroll över … tempo och arbetsmängd. Mm, jag kan helt själv planera och det är en jätte viktig resurs. Så jag kan jobba jättehårt ibland och sen så kan jag planera för att ha det lite lugnare och komma i kapp till exempel.

(It’s quite planned and demarcated and I have good control over……..tempo and workload. Mm, I can fully plan myself and that’s an important resource. So, I can work really hard sometimes and then plan to take it a bit easier and catch up, as an example.)

Det känner jag som en, det är egentligen en jätte viktig resurs om man ska kalla det så. Förmågan ändå att kontrollera arbetssituationen, jag bokar ju tex. Själv mina besök. Jag har egentligen också ganska mycket möjlighet att styra över min arbetstid också. … och jag har alltid varit glad i att jag känner kontroll i det här jobbet, när krav nivån ökar, när det blir en sådan här puckel så känner jag fortfarande att jag har den där kontrollen, det är jätte mycket att göra och det är inte bara positiv stress så att jag blir stimulerad av det men någonstans känner jag, det är ändå jag som, jag vet att jag kan kontrollera situationen, jag gör det som behövs men det är ändå jag som bestämmer över det, det är ingen annan
(That, I feel, it’s truly a very important resource if that’s what you want to call it. The ability to control the work situation, I book e.g. my own visits. I do really have a chance to control my work hours as well … and I have always felt glad that I am in control of this work, when demands increase and there is one of those peaks, I still feel that I am in control, there’s a lot to do and it is not only a positive stress so that I get stimulated/affected by it, but it’s still me, I know I can control the situation, I do what’s needed but it’s still me that controls it, no one else keeps telling, directing or controlling me in that way. It’s more that I can get out of this by being structured and just do this and that.)

Training/Education

Within this theme, experiences of further education and training is included. A central resource to the participants were the opportunities for professional development. There are two distinct subthemes that were mentioned in all interviews, General advancement and Specialized education. Both resources are described as being of great importance.

General advancement. All participants reported having the opportunity to attend further training several times a year. These often have a broad approach and aims to be useful for a wide-ranging group of psychologists as well as other professions practicing within the different clinics. Some participants described the training as not being directly related to the work they do, whilst still providing valid aspects, generating new thoughts and ideas as well as being a forum to not only meet, but also to discuss with colleagues. This further training is described by all participants to be a valuable resource. It is often accessible to all and attendance is often encouraged by management. Often, the training provided is either free, or if a psychologist-specific training, financed with funds the psychologists as a group receive from mentoring psychology candidates. If training is to be financed by the organization, it is provided, given that a clear motivation can be made as to how the organization will benefit from the individual’s training, to increase efficiency, productivity or to bring down costs. Any training requiring funding goes through an application process, being either granted or denied.
(What’s available is that you have access to training sessions, so to speak, and that’s good, we need it. We have to fight to get access to education, but we do get them anyway, so I might get, within the organization 3, 4, 5 training sessions, training days a year. From my manager, I also have the option of attending others that are relevant that does not cost money, because it should not come at a cost, it should be for free, otherwise you have to seek approval for it.)

**Specialized education.** Access to specialized education (SE) was reported as a resource in all six interviews. The participants were either currently attending, had previously completed or had the ambition to pursue specialized education programs in the future. Specialized education is funded by the organization who pays the required fee and most participants went on to say that the organization even encourages it. The reason SE is such an important resource for the participants is that it provides the opportunity to further develop professional skills and theoretical knowledge. The participants describe how they themselves can influence and control the content in their SE, both the area of specialization as well as the specific courses they choose. The SE contributes to the much-desired further learning and the possibility to develop professionally, becoming a specialist within a field of choice.

Even though SE is described exclusively in positive terms, the circumstances surrounding SE seem to leave much to be desired. Opportunities for adjustments needed to facilitate adding SE to the normal workload are described to be very limited, with only time given to attend lectures. Participants also report the dilemma of work providing no study time or time to complete assignments, ultimately finding time for this in your leisure time, evenings and weekends as well as during annual leave and holidays. Participants report this as not only challenging but almost impossible when trying to maintain work and home life balance.

Jag har sett det som, det har inte varit helt förenligt med privata situationen helt enkelt att jag ska börja utbilda mig så ... du får inte just så mycket nedsättning i tjänsten som du kanske skulle kunna behöva för att klara av det utan stress. Jag vet inte mer vad dem har sagt men, dem har gått på knäna dem som har gått (raderad) dem har upplevt det som (raderad) tuffa år.

(I have seen it as, it hasn’t been quite suitable to my private situation, that I should start studying, simple as that ... You don’t get as much reduction in work time as you would need to manage it without being affected by stress. I don’t know any more of what they have said but they have been on their knees, the ones that has done (deleted), they have felt it as (deleted) tough years.)
Jag går ju en specialistutbildning och det är ju som också ett sätt att underhålla min kompetens utveckling och på något sätt tillgodose andra behov av stimulans och ny-inlärning som jag inte kan få igenom arbetet, att hålla mig uppdaterad med ny forskning och komma vidare yrkesmässigt.

(I’m attending a specialized education, which is a way to stimulate my competence and development and somehow meet my other needs of stimulus and learning that I can’t get through my work, keeping updated with new research and advancing professionally.)

Och jag får ju själv planera och lägga upp en plan för den specialistutbildningen och välja kurser som jag tycker är relevanta men i samråd med min chef men ja, men det finns väldigt stort utrymme för mig själv och att styra det mot det jag tycker att jag behöver här, så det är ju bra.

(and I get to plan and set up a schedule for the specialist education, choose courses that I feel are relevant, in consultation with my manager but yes, there’s a lot of leeway for me to control and guide it towards what I feel I need, so that is good.)

**Physical resources**

As physical resources, all participants mentioned the hardware in their immediate workplace, such as an adjustable desk, computers, phones, books and having both your own private office but also social work areas. Work spaces where you can either withdraw from people or meet colleagues, have a coffee and areas which are not work-related but for rest and recovery with colleagues. The main theme *Physical resources* has one subtheme *private office* due to its dual sided importance. Some participants went on to mention testing material such as questionnaires, specific instruments and interview guides. Others mentioned how they use technology not only to save them time but also the importance of technology in keeping in contact with other professionals, clinics and colleagues.

För att må bra, så tänker jag att som sociala aspekter att jag, är med på fika, lunchar tillsammans med mina kollegor eller andra, att jag tar mig tid att fråga om saker när jag behöver stöd och hjälp, och försöker mingla och lära känna folk och så här. Det tänker jag är sociala aspekter. Var med på olika professions möten, och vara med på liksom, när det finns möjlighet att träffas, att vara med på det känns skönt.
(To feel good, I think as a social aspect that I am, I participate during the breaks, have lunch with my colleagues or others, that I take time to ask about things, when I need support and help, and try to mingle and get to know people and that. This, I feel is social aspects. Joining in on meetings of the professions, to take part in, when there is an opportunity to meet, to participate, that feels good.)

Jag är också en sådan som kan välja att inte gå på rasten utan att jag ... jag stänger av för att jag behöver det.

(I’m also a person who can choose not to socialize at breaktime. I turn off because I need it.)


(That’s right. I have a decent room I think. It makes me happy, I’ve been able to decorate to my own liking, I like coming to my room. I have a height adjustable desk, and that’s not a given. I have the opportunity to work standing up, and that makes my body feel healthier.)

**Private office.** The private workspace is of significant importance to participants, this is where they can not only work undisturbed but also think and reflect. It is described as a necessity, a space where they can shut a door, get time alone, relax and recover whilst at work. Shutting the door to their office is described as having two dimensions, partly by closing an actual door but also metaphorically to close a door to the “rest of the world”.

Där kan jag tycka, jag har som behov att få dra mig undan och få stå och jobba ifred. Det tycker jag att jag ser här också, jag tror att man har det där behovet av att få stänga dörren och få sitta och skriva eller tänka och reflektera, eller vad det är man gör på rummet.
(I have a need to withdraw and being able to work undisturbed. I think that is what you see here too, I think there’s a need to close the door to sit down, to write, think or reflect, or whatever it is that you do in your office.)


(So, I do think I have my own room where I can be alone. That is really important. Otherwise, you’re never alone and won’t be able to relax or recover.)

Recovery

That it is important to find time for recovery in one way or another became clear during the interviews. Statements under this theme relate to of the importance of expending physical (as opposed to mental) energy, and stimulating the mind with something different from work, like spending time outdoors. The main theme recovery constitutes three subthemes; Exercise/Activity, Self-care and Strategies used “not to bring work home”.

Exercise/Activity. One of the first resources that the participants thought of when being asked about available resources was the healthcare hour, “friskvårdstimme” (optional 1h/week of the working hours devoted to physical activity). All participants emphasized the importance of psychical activity to reduce stress and recover from their daily work. This also exemplified the contrast between a very intellectually dominated and exhausting work and the opportunity to connect with the body and mental and physical relaxation that physical exercise provides. Psychical activity is used both after the work day to clear the mind as well as during the work day by some, in preparation for demanding work to come.

Jag tränar regelbundet ... jag ser till att vara ute i naturen och hitta på saker ...
Ja, alltså rent konkret så behöver jag göra de aktiviteter, det jag gör på fritiden är för att klara av jobbet, jag gör liksom saker för kunna slappna av, använda delar av min kropp som jag inte använder så mycket i arbetet så där.

(I exercise on a regular basis ... I make sure I spend time outdoors, find things to do ... Well, quite frankly, I need to do the activities that I do, what I do in my spare time is to be able to cope with work, I kind of do things to relax, use parts of my body that I don’t get to use much at work.)

Mm, jag tränar. Det har en jätteviktig funktion i att fylla på energi och att sänka stress för mig. Och dansar gör jag också, och det har också samma funktion för
mig. Att jag kommer ned i varv och ned i min kropp när jag är spänd och stressad. I perioder håller jag på med meditation och mindfulness, men det är som sagt i perioder och det är ju också som ett sätt att landa i saker eller att ladda om och komma i balans och inte ha för högt tempo och inte vara för målinriktad utan att landa.

(Mm, I work out. That has a really important function for me in re-energizing and lowering stress levels for me. I also dance, which has the same function. That I rewind and get connected with my body when I’m tensed and stressed. During some periods I do meditation and mindfulness, but like I said only sometimes and that it’s also a way to resolve things or to recharge and to get balanced, not having too high tempo and not to be too goal-oriented but to ground myself.)

Ja, och sedan tycker jag att den här fysiska aktiviteten, den är jätte betydelsefull och det tycker jag har kommit med åren ... men det är ändå just att få röra sig fysiskt, bli trött fysiskt det.”

(Yes, and then I think the physical activity, it is really meaningful and that has increased over the years ... to be physical and to become physically exhausted that’s.)

**Self-care.** All participants frequently mentioned re-creational activities such as being outdoors and spending time in nature as important to recover, together with the importance of having meaningful relationships and spending time with family and friends. This resource is brought up to contribute to variation and to have other things in life beside work. Four participants also note the basal need for sleep, to rest and recover.

Det är bara såna här vanliga sociala saker som att träffa kompisar och äta middag eller vara med familjen, plocka svamp eller vara ute i naturen.

(It’s just normal social activities like meeting friends and having dinner, or spending time with family, mushroom picking or being in nature.)

A resource used by participants during the workday is the application of mindfulness techniques. Examples here being to for a short period be in the present, being aware of sensations, thoughts and emotions.
Eh, jag försöker tänka att jag ibland tar mina mindfulnesspauser. Att jag kanske tittar på träd. … Ja, att jag kanske tittar ut i två minuter eller tar några andetag eller lyssna lite på musik. Det är inte återhämtning i egentligen men jag försöker stanna av, stanna upp.

(I try to think that I sometimes have mindfulness breaks. That I watch a tree … yeah, maybe looking outside for two minutes or taking a few breaths or listen to a little bit of music. It is not really recovery, but I try to stop and stay present.)

Fysiska aktiviteten är viktig, det där att få gå ut och plocka svamp, att få vara ute och gå så där i skogen.

(Physical activity is important, to be able to go out and pick mushrooms, to be outside walking in the outdoors.)

Strategies “not to bring work home”. Within this subtheme different strategies are used to distance work related thoughts and emotion from the private sphere. The participants note conscious strategies used in an effort to leave work at work. Examples include methods to “drop off” work-related thoughts at the bus or at a specific stop on route, to later retrieve them when returning to work. It is also mentioned that is important to notice and be attentive to work-related thoughts, and to develop methods to relieve yourself from them when desired.

Jag åker buss också, det gör jag lite för att typ lämna sakerna i bussen och tar upp dem där.

(I also catch the bus, and that is partly to leave things in the bus and pick them up later.)

Ja, eller när jag är påväg hem i bilen att jag liksom lärt mig att fokusera om och lämna kvar på jobbet och att inte, jag blir inte så lätt stressad över saker som jag har ogjort. Och det handlar ju också om tillit, jag vet att jag kommer att få ihop det. Jag vet att jag kommer att få till det, även om det kan vara mycket ibland så vet jag att det där kommer jag att ta en sak i taget och sen kommer det att bli klart.
(Well, on my way home from work I kind of learned to refocus and to leave at work and not, I’m not easily stressed out about unfinished tasks. And that is also about trust, I know I’m going to get it together. I know I will finish, even if there is a heavy workload sometimes I’m confident that by taking one thing at a time I will complete it.)

Men annars är det ju mer känslen av att veta när man sitter i något mer jobbigt, känslen av att veta det här kommer jag att kunna skaka av mig när jag tar min hundpromenad. Det är skönt att veta att, då blir det lugnt.

But otherwise, it’s the feeling of knowing that when you’re in the middle of something difficult, the feeling of knowing I will be able to shake it off when I get to go for a walk with my dog. It is nice to know, I will calm down.

**Mentoring**

Mentoring (Swedish: “Handledning”) was often mentioned during the interviews. To have people in one’s immediate surroundings with whom you can test questions and ideas, as well as someone to share the thoughts and responsibility one feels in regards to the patients with. Mentoring was the main theme found during the analysis, with the subthemes: *professional mentoring* and *collegial mentoring* due to the nature of the benefits the psychologist gained in relation to the mentor.

**Professional mentoring.** All participants mention professional mentoring as a resource second to none. In areas like therapy or treatment, professional mentoring is received whilst the quality of it may vary. Professional mentoring in testing (“utredning”) is mentioned by most as not only a highly valued type of mentoring, but also one they have an urgent need of receiving. Testing not only constitutes a sizeable proportion of the psychologists’ work duties. The county council also puts high pressure on the clinics regarding testing due to the long waiting queues.

It is also amongst this, the most valued resource to a psychologist, that there is the largest discrepancy. Some are fully missing professional mentoring in testing and have been for some time, something they raise as a big concern. Others paint a picture of an untenable situation which went unnoticed or not prioritized by management and organizations alike, where dedicated people took control of the situation setting up their own test meetings as well as making sure the access to professional mentoring and experts in the area became available on a regular basis.

Finns det inte i organisationen redan, en sån, ett sådant forum så går det att skapa liksom ... vi skapade bara den träffen ... Det är ingen chef som har godkänt att vi träffas på det viset men det är ingen som skulle protestera mot det heller tror jag.
(If it’s not in the organization already, a forum like that, then you can create it … No, we didn’t ask anyone, we just created that meeting … There is no manager approval in us meeting in that way but I don’t think anyone would complain either.)

**Collegial mentoring.** Mentoring provided by colleagues was mentioned as a tremendous resource. Some mention that they have constant access to it and can bring up issues in the daily morning brief. Others mention it as a resource within themselves where they feel they can search out the colleague that they best feel can assist them regarding a certain issue, that they find their own mentors and use them as a resource. The ones that don’t have access to it also brings mentoring from colleagues as something they want more of.


(There is always an option to reason with others, I feel that goes without prestige, If I have a question, then I can walk over to the person that I believe best can answer the question, without a doubt, that’s what I do too. You know, like, you walk into your colleague’s office and ask, you shut the door, and now I have met this person. e.g. If it’s in regard to a patient. It’s not a problem, and it’s not that you would just turn to a psychologist, it could be any profession at all, that’s how I feel.)

**Wanted resources**

This theme covers the resources that the participants mention they would like to have or would like to have more access to than what they do at present. These include time to read up on chosen areas of interest, which was mentioned by two thirds of the participants. Time to keep up to date with changes, theories or just to read up more on the specifics of the area that one works within was mentioned as part of this. General training courses were commonly mentioned as being on offer by the organization, giving a broad knowledge to many. However, many mentioned the desire to get training courses specific to their area of expertise or work. These were however not offered or budgeted for, or it took dedication and effort by the psychologist to get it approved due to the costs involved. More contact with colleagues in one way or another were also mentioned as something many want more of. Some portray it as a desire in trying to reach a uniform care across counties and the country at large, compared to what it is today. Others feel that the importance of filling vacant positions are not prioritized by the
organization, and when they are being left empty no alternatives are given to the present staff to keep in contact with colleagues elsewhere to cover this shortfall. Participants do however state that the organization puts trust in their employee, but doesn’t realize the importance of having immediate contact with colleagues, no matter at what level of expertise your competence is at or for how long you are required to work in an understaffed office.

Och det gör att jag har inte har tid själv att läsa om (raderad) och det är tänkt att jag ska fördjupa mig i det och bli specialist inom (raderad) men jag får liksom inte utrymme i mitt schema att göra det och att på egen hand skaffa kunskap för att jag är belastad. För vi fick ingen som ersatte (raderad) ... Så just nu har jag stagnrat i mitt lärande utifrån min organisations situation.

(that means I don’t get time to read about (deleted) which is an area that I am meant to learn more about and become (deleted) specialist in, but there is no space in my schedule to acquire the knowledge or get it done by myself, I have a too bigger workload. Because we didn’t get anyone replacing (deleted) ...So right now my development has come to a halt due to the organizational situation.)

Gällande resurser så saknar vi ju handledning på (raderad) mottagningen för psykologer i neuropsychologi.

(Regarding resources, at (deleted) clinic we are missing mentors in neuropsychology for the psychologists.)

Discussion

The general aim of this study was to look at what resources psychologists identify in their working environment, and specifically, what resources psychologists within the adult psychiatric clinics in a county council in northern Sweden identify.

This aim was pursued by answering what resources are identified in the workplace of psychologists, based on the four levels of job resources (physical, social, psychological and organizational), according to the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The results from this qualitative investigation present the answer to the research question, and are discussed below and brought in relation to the existing literature. At the end of this discussion, recommendations based on the results and implications for future research are also provided.

The broad theoretical framework applied to understand the working environment in this study was the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and COR (COR; Hobfoll, 1989). And use was explicitly made of that JD-R model’s definitions. In line with this model, resources are
described at organizational level, and as residing in the social, physical and psychological environment of employees. Also in line with the model, this discussion includes “demands”. Although it was not an explicit aim of this investigation, it is of interest that the discussion of resources also emerged as resources ‘in relation to demands’. Thus, it forms part of the overall result and provides further, useful contextual information. However, it is important to note that it was beyond the scope of this study to examine the demands in the psychologists’ working environment. Therefore, the demands that were reported was spontaneously brought up by participants and no questions were specifically asked targeting demands, and no in-depth follow-up questions were asked when demands were mentioned. Our findings however reflect the theoretical stance of Bakker and Demerouti, in that employees described their work environment in terms of resources and demands.

As acknowledged, the information regarding demands does provide insight into some aspect of the working environment that the participants need resources for to manage. Many of the described demands are also organizational in character, for example insufficient staffing. Described situations typically put additional strain on existing resources reported by the participants. Additional demands are, from the reports of this study, rarely associated with additional resources.

Results from the current study regarding resources can be related to that of Rupert et al. (2015) – a review article presenting a summary of research findings about preventing burnout in psychologists up to that point in time. This provides a framework for comparing current results to what resources have been previously identified and how these findings could be further understood by the current research. Thereafter, findings from the current study that did not come to light in the outlined background are discussed as new findings.

The concept of control at work has consistently been proven to be inversely related to the experience of burnout amongst psychologists (Lee et al., 2011; Rupert et al., 2015). The feeling of being in control has in studies such as Rupert, Stevanovic and Hunley (2009) been identified as a resource that is of benefit not only to psychologists’ work situation, instilling a sense of control over the work duties and decisions made, but also in relation to less work-family conflict. Current findings again confirmed control as being a significant resource in the working environment of practicing psychologists. The current results also enhance our understanding of the specific context, by highlighting that having control over work pace, methods, scheduling and planning of the day-to-day work, as well as planning time-off, are of particular importance.

Overall, support from co-workers and managers was reported to be very important. It could be concluded that the participants in this study identify social support to be a significant resource for them, assisting them in being able to manage work-related goals, and thereby reducing demands, as well as the support they are given in helping to manage their work. Participants stated that it is what’s needed for maintenance of their own well-being, thereby reducing the psychological costs, part of what constitutes a work resource.

Support in the workplace has also been examined in several studies (Rupert et al., 2015) and with different approaches, and these findings are not as consistently related to lower levels of burnout, when compared to the impact of control. Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth (2002), do however state in an article on social workers that teamwork and the supportive relationships with colleagues is reported as a reward, buffering against burnout. Both professions, social workers and psychologists, work with the relationship to the client in one way or another which makes us believe that this could also be applicable to the people that we have interviewed, who describe working in a team as a resource available to them.

Roncalli and Byrne’s (2015) study further notes the importance of constructive communication and support, not only from colleagues, but also in order to have a positive relationship and communication with managers. Adding to this it states that for psychologists to enhance
their job satisfaction, they should embrace and encourage a culture of open communication at work (Roncalli & Byrne, 2005). Without knowing what interventions, the workplaces investigated have put in place, it is however clear that colleagues and managers alike generally play a huge role in how the psychologists experience the day to day work, as both resources were mentioned. Many of the participants also highlight the significant role their manager has in not only providing support, but also to stand up to the organization at large, on their behalf. Many of the qualities that they describe can be seen in the transformational leadership style as described by Bass (1990) with the four dimensions of idealized influence (acting as a role model), inspirational motivation (creating a vision), intellectual stimulation (setting challenging tasks) and individual consideration (care for individual needs and differences). Some that became evident in the interviews were, idealized influence, described in one manager especially, as being an example of ethical behavior, showing the staff with their own actions that there is more to life than work, no matter what position one holds.

Another of these transformational leadership behaviors evidenced is intellectual stimulation, which many gave evidence of in the interviews. The managers being very involved with the daily work of the employees, being present at morning meetings, sharing own thoughts and welcoming ideas and changes that the employees initiate are all textbook-examples of this behavior. Individual consideration was also seen in managers’ behavior, with examples of managers being able to readjust goals and work requirements to suit the individual employees and their development needs, something that didn’t go unnoticed by their staff.

In the review by Rupert et al. (2015), the individual characteristic of younger age is consistently reported to be related to burnout and exhaustion among psychologists. In the current study, a somewhat similar finding is made; but the results showed how years of experience seem to be of greater benefit than age. Participants reported that with experience, they gain confidence and a sense of knowing that, no matter what problem they are faced with, it is manageable, and they will work through it. Others with less experience did also mention that interacting with patients with a variety of problems gave an accumulative experience that would be useful in the future. Age and years of experience are confounded, with younger employees also necessarily having less work experience. However, our findings seem to highlight that it is when the psychologists program was finalized that was more significant – i.e. not necessarily participants’ biological age, but their years of experience specifically working as a psychologist.

Rupert et al. (2015) also presented other personal resources that had been found to be useful for psychologists, and typically greater personal resources are related to less negative outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion. These personal resources (which are all found and supported by the findings in this study), included recreational activities, self-care, social support and cognitive coping skills. The coping skills that have been found effective in reducing stress and burnout are mainly problem-focused coping strategies, e.g. seeking support and planning (Rupert et al., 2015) - coping strategies that were also reported by the psychologists in this study. For example, the sub theme self-awareness has the reports of participants actively seeking adequate support and identifying this behaviour as an important personal resource.

Cropley, Zijlstra, Querstret, and Beck (2016) have, in a review of 3 studies, looked at how executive functions might be affected by work-related rumination. This is of interest to our results, as our participants reported executive functions as a personal resource. Qualities like attention, cognitive flexibility and planning, that Cropley et al. (2016) state as crucial to succeed at work, were also mentioned in our interviews. At the same time, our participants also reported use of strategies “not to bring work home” - ways to avoid work-related rumination that Cropley et al., (2016) review found to be detrimental to not only functioning at work, but also necessary to utilize these executive functions to their fullest potential while at work. Our results are in
agreement with the findings by Cropley et al. (2016); that these strategies participants report using are of benefit to their functioning at work. Cropley et al. (2016) goes even further, stating that interventions to reduce demand at work usually involves providing coping strategies to reduce work-related rumination.

Participants reported using strategies to keep work-related thoughts separate from their private lives. Participants describes a strategy to consciously and purposefully let go of work-related thoughts and to only return to them when back at work. The purpose of this was reportedly to increase quality of life and to recover by actively detaching from the experience of work. This particular strategy used by our participants is related to the strategy Sonnentag and Fritz (2015) refer to as ‘psychological detachment’: to mentally leave work behind and withdraw from it. Further, they state that psychological detachment can present itself as a meditative state (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015), which in our results was described under the subtheme of self-care, where participants also described mindfulness techniques. Sonnentag and Fritz’s (2015) concept does however specifically specify psychological detachment from work when not at work, while the mindfulness techniques mentioned by our participants were something they utilized for brief moments throughout the workday as well, when needed.

One of the main themes recovery, was understood as overlapping with personal resources, and with the subthemes self-care and exercise/activity can all be understood in terms of personal resources (Rupert et al., 2015) of psychologists. Several of the participants reported regularly using different mindfulness techniques to assist them in situations of feeling tense or stressed. Di and Swadling’s (2014) research demonstrates that using mindfulness techniques show a strong negative relationship with burnout amongst psychologists, and Jergensen (2017) also reported the using therapeutic techniques, like mindfulness, to be associated with lower levels of perceived stress among therapists’ personal life.

All participants highlight the importance of physical activity as a resource and with ease they all mentioned the “friskvårdstimme” (i.e. the opportunity to use one workhour/week to exercise). Five of them emphasized the beneficial effects they experience from physical activity. It seems to be common knowledge today that regular physical activity is important to one’s well-being, and is also recommended and promoted by a wide range of institutions and healthcare professionals. This belief is also supported by research where it is found to be associated with less symptoms of depression and anxiety and being protective against negative or harmful consequences of stress (Salmon, 2001). An additional facet found in this study was the reports of the contrast between a job that is very intellectual in nature and physical exercise. This contrast was described as especially wholesome, and we found no studies previously addressing this.

In addition to the state-of-the-art resources identified in Rupert et al. (2015), there are several resources that have been identified in this study. These were the nature of the work, training and education, physical resources and mentoring. In closing, these four resources are discussed below.

The theme regarding the nature of the work psychologists perform was constituted by sub-themes that dealt with control (noted and discussed above), and professional development which includes continuous development and growth attributed to meaningful and stimulating work. There is a lack of consistency regarding the concept of meaningful work in research, and the definitions vary across studies (Both-Nwabuwe, Dijkstra, & Beersma, 2017). The participants in this study contribute to definitions relating to constituents of meaningful work (Both-Nwabuwe et al., 2017), by providing descriptions of particular aspects making their work as psychologists meaningful e.g. working with patients and the work field as such.

The participants expressed that the general training received was useful to them, despite its general character. However, they all clearly expressed the desire to participate in training especially targeting their specific areas of expertise. Burney et al. (2017), state the importance
of professional psychologists receiving continuous and up-to-date training. Training in essential areas, targeted at their own or the clinic’s specialization, as well as for their specific career development, seems important and needed. It can also be related to the previous dimension which speaks to continuous development.

The specialized education that the organization encourages psychologists to attend does meet many of the criteria for multi-component training (Herschell et al., 2010). In accordance to Herschell et al., (2010) it is therefore reasonable to assume that specialized training would provide the effects and usefulness participants sought. It was however highlighted in the results that specialized training itself is a highly valued resource, but that the conditions to attend it are associated with several challenges. Regarding reading written materials, studies have demonstrated effects (c.f. Herschell et al., 2010), with reading often resulting in knowledge change, but that these were often short-lived and smaller than effects from participating in more intensive training.

Participants reported resources in having offices, interiors, supplies and technology necessary to complete work tasks. Their desks and having a private space to work in was highlighted. Research has shown that prolonged sitting time is a workplace issue with negative effects (Adeleke, Healy, Smith, Goode, & Clark, 2017). In the same article it is concluded that installation of sit-stand workstations is effective in reducing sitting time. The importance of having a private office was also noted in the results, while research has shown cell offices being associated with reports of lower levels of distraction and cognitive stress (Seddigh, Berntson, Bodin Danielson, & Westerlund, 2014). They also concluded in the study that cell offices are preferable, to other office types, especially when job tasks require a higher need for concentration; but also in providing a space of solace. Private offices are therefore likely to benefit the psychologists, since the participants on this study describe their work as intellectually demanding.

Two types of mentoring were brought up by all participants as an essential resource, both as a current valued resource but also as one they thought had potential to be further improved. The first, which is also one of the most common research characteristics identified in this report, is a mentor more experienced in a particular field than the mentee (for example, the need for an expert in neuropsychology was mentioned by several participants), to whom the mentee could turn (Abdullah et al., 2014).

The other kind of mentorship the participants had most frequent access to, was through the work in teams and in collaboration with colleagues, receiving guidance and help from colleagues of various professions. Collegial mentoring can be seen as overlapping in many ways with the theme of support. This support is often compensating for the lack of access to an expert mentor. It is important to note that the participants valued both of these resources, and access to both was reported as necessary. The research reviewed related to mentoring focuses on mentorship in early career professionals (ECP’s). Green and Hawley (2009) describes that mentors can also be invaluable in terms of establishing a network for ECP’s. Most of our participants describe how they turned to different colleagues depending on the support and help they needed. This was supported by Green and Hawley (2009), who highlight the benefits of proactively finding different individuals capable of being mentors in different areas.

**Recommendations**

The first suggestion is based on the reports of being unable to find the time to keep up to date by reading books and research during work hours, in order to further professional development. This could be met in a number of ways, albeit from the researchers’ outsider’s perspective. Firstly, allowance may be made for professional development as part of the normal course of work. Training courses psychologists now attend may be made available online, so
that they have greater freedom to choose which ones that apply to their line of work, as well as to which ones to attend online or not. For smaller clinics with less staff and more specialized services, courses could be exchanged between various parts of the country. This could provide the opportunities to grow and learn, and if combined with online training courses, this could provide contact and communication with other psychologists within chosen areas of expertise at a small or reduced cost to the organization. The organizations could also make it available to other psychologists with an interest in these kinds of training courses, possibly lowering the cost, generating income to use courses directly related to different lines of work. In addition to this, more support should be provided for psychologists attending specialized education so that it remains the resource that it is and without the demands it at presents adds. The way it is offered at present does not make it available to all, if you are in a workplace with high demands and where the effects of stress is prevalent, specialized education could be out of reach, especially when it needs to be balanced with a busy life outside of work, including a family, interest groups or hobbies, and other parts that are also important for well-being.

The second implication of this study concern all six participants clearly expressing the immense value of receiving support from colleagues and working in teams. There is a simultaneous desire to interact more with colleagues within the same profession. The participants experience being able to discuss or get help from other psychologists being especially valuable, since they have the same basic training, have similar roles and tasks, and face the same dilemmas. The need was not only expressed regarding having more interaction with other psychologists, but also ideally, with more experienced psychologists. Examples of how to create these networks, overcoming geographical hurdles and cost, would be to set up networks, forums or discussion boards to share knowledge within the profession. And if a national set-up would be limited by patient security issues, a regional system may be more easily attainable. The technology available today does allow for more effective and creative solutions.

Specifically, mentoring in neuropsychology should be prioritized due to high demand and complexity of the task. This should be an organizational responsibility, not something the psychologists themselves spend working time organizing and setting up. Another recommendation for the organizations is to be aware of how vacant positions affect not only the clients, but also staff, due to the extra pressure it adds to the workday. If positions stay vacant for a longer period, organizations may look at alternative ways of putting staff in contact with required professionals, again maybe by making greater use of technology.

Limitations

Both researchers conducted interviews, and this may have influenced how the interviews were managed and how questions were asked, together with the fact that different things could have triggered the interviewers on when to move on to the follow-on questions. This effect was anticipated and likely diminished by the researchers developing the interview guide together, and having a continuous dialogue and discussions throughout the interview process. Also, the method was semi-structured which allows for some variation in the data collection.

An observation from the interviews was that the participants found it somewhat difficult to come up with examples of resources. The term “resources” was somewhat hard to grasp and did not appear to be as familiar to the participants as for example the word “stress” is. As researchers we however started every interview with giving the same theoretical definition, and believe this supported our participants in responding with the same concept in mind. Also, we chose to explore what they see as resources available to them as a psychologist and for them to freely report them as they came to mind, rather than specifically asking about the common resources often reported used in the workplace. The examples given to what a resource could be, might have restricted the participants’ thoughts, but it could also have encouraged them to
think about more resources than they normally would have. When it comes to using the term ‘resource’, perhaps it could have been useful to have more synonyms for the term available to participants.

It must be acknowledged that, even though we applied qualitative and quantitative considerations in estimating our sample size, the sample is small. Also, we ultimately present results from a convenience sample, of psychologists who felt they had contributions to make in relation to experienced work resources. This, together with the fact that they had the resource of actual time or control over their schedule to devote time to participate may have restricted who are represented in the sample. This self-selection may have introduced bias into the results – either positive or negative. It has to be borne in mind that our results represent a description of a specific sample from a specific region and place of employment, rather than a representative description for all available psychologists.

The results regarding specialized education show that it is an important resource to psychologists and organizations alike, but the reports revealed some problematic dimensions to that resource. This might present an interesting avenue for further research. For example, by examining how organizations and managers work to improve the work environment of psychologists and how those efforts are perceived. Another example is what resources, in particular, are important to psychologists and especially problematic if lacking.

Finally, having enough resources in the working environment is a necessity for work related well-being, and it is the employers’ responsibility to see to this (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2015). In addition to that, it is the county councils’ psychiatric clinics’ duty is to provide high quality care. Psychologists are but one group that delivers this service, despite the identified strain of the increased prevalence of mental illness in this population. It should therefore be of high interest for county councils to look after this valued resource in the organization: a healthy psychologist.
References


Rekryterings e-mail.

Hej!

Vi är två psykologstudenter som just nu går sista terminen på psykologprogrammet vid Umeå universitet.

Vi håller nu på med vårt examensarbete där vi utgår ifrån rapporter gällande det ökade antalet arbetsrelaterade sjukskrivningar bland psykologer. Vi vill utifrån detta undersöka psykolyrket i relation till vilka resurser som psykologer har tillgång till och använder sig av.

Vi söker därför legitimerade psykologer som är intresserade av att ställa upp på en intervju. Den beräknas ta ca 1h. Intervjuerna kommer att genomföras under oktober enligt överenskommelse.

Allt material kommer att avidentifieras och behandlas konfidentiellt.

Vid intresse att delta eller vid frågor och funderingar kontakta oss gärna på:

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Erika Helmersson

Malin Doolin
Appendix 2.

Recruitment e-mail translated to English.

Hi,

We are two students currently attending the psychology program at Umeå University during the final semester.

We are at present finishing our graduation thesis which we based on reports regarding the increase in work-related sick leave amongst psychologists. Based on this, we would like to investigate the profession of a psychologist by looking at the resources available to them and used by them.

We are for that reason looking for licensed psychologists, willing to participate in an interview. It is estimated to take approximately 1 hour. The interviews will be conducted during the month of October, as agreed.

All data will be confidential and anonymous.

If there is an interest to participate, thoughts or questions, please contact us:

Regards,

Erika Helmersson Malin Doolin
Läs igenom nedanstående information noggrant.

Samtycket gäller deltagande i intervju för vårt examensarbete på psykologprogrammet vid Umeå Universitet. Examensarbetet undersöker psykologyrket i relation till vilka resurser som psykologer har tillgång till och använder sig av, samt önskar sig.

Intervjun beräknas ta ca 60 min, anteckningar kommer att tas och den kommer att spelas in. Resultaten kommer sammanställa i en examensuppsats och beräknas vara färdig januari 2018 då den blir en offentlig handling.

Alla personuppgifter kommer att avidentifieras för att säkerställa deltagarnas anonymitet. All information som samlas in kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt och förvaras på ett tillförlitligt sätt. Materialet som samlas in kommer enbart användas i syfte att besvara frågeställningarna i denna studie. Citat från din intervju kan komma att användas i den färdiga rapporten.

Medverkan är helt frivillig och du kan när som helst avbryta ditt deltagande utan konsekvens. Du har också möjlighet att kontakta studenter eller handledare vid funderingar.

Härmed medger jag att jag tagit del av ovanstående information:

_______________________________
Datum och underskrift

_______________________________
Namnförtydligande
Appendix 4.

Informed consent translated to English.

**Informed Consent**

*Please, read the following information carefully.*

The consent is in regard to participating in an interview. The interview forms part of the graduation thesis done by students attending the psychology program at Umeå University. The aim of the study is to examine the profession of psychologists in relation to the resources that are available to them, resources that they use as well as what resources they would like.

The interview is expected to take approximately one hour and will be recorded. The results will be compiled in a report, to be finalized by January 2018 and thereafter become a public document.

All personal information will be anonymized for the sake of the participants. All collected data is confidential and will be handled accordingly. The data will only be used to answer the research questions of this study. Citations from your interview may be used in the finalized report.

Participation is on a voluntary basis and you can withdraw at any time without consequence. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the student researchers or mentor.

I do hereby agree that I have taken note and agree with the above information.

________________________________  _____________________
Date and signature                  Printed name
Appendix 5.

Intervjuguide.

Jag heter [namn på student] och är psykologstudent som just nu går sista terminen på psykologprogrammet vid Umeå universitet.

Tillsammans med en klasskompis [namn på klasskompis] håller vi nu på med vårt examensarbete där vi utgår ifrån rapporter gällande det ökade antalet arbetsrelaterade sjukskrivningar bland psykologer.

Vi vill utifrån detta undersöka psykologyrket i relation till vilka resurser som psykologer har tillgång till och använder sig av, samt om det finns resurser man önskar att man hade tillgång till.

**Arbetsresurser:** Är det i arbetet som bidrar till ett eller flera av följande:

* Funktionellt för att uppnå mål på jobbet
* Minska kraven och de medföljande fysiologiska och psykologiska kostnaderna
* Underlätta personlig tillväxt, lärande och utveckling

Vi kommer utgå från följande teman/resurser:

- Organisatoriska
- Sociala
- Psykologiska
- Fysiska

Och vi vill höra vilka resurser du upplever dig ha utifrån dessa huvudteman.

För att göra detta kommer jag att använda en intervjuguide med förutbestämda frågor. Det är frivilligt att delta och du kan avbryta när du vill.

Jag kommer att ta anteckningar och intervjun spelas in, vilket kan förväntas ta ca. 1 timme. Resultatet kommer att sammanställas i en rapport som du har möjlighet att ta del av. Om det blir aktuellt att använda citat från den här intervjun så kontaktar vi dig för att godkänna citaten innan de används.

Materialet kommer att avidentifieras och behandlas konfidentiellt och du kommer att vara anonym.

******************************************************************************

**Bakgrund**

Hur länge har du arbetat som legitimerad psykolog?

Hur länge har du varit anställd inom landstinget? och på den här arbetsplatsen?

Har du själv valt team/ arbetsområde?

Vilket team arbetar du inom? (Bedömning/Behandling/Utredning, annat?)
Ålder?
Familjeförhållanden?

Innan jag börjar fråga kring resurser så ska jag bara repetera exemplen.

**Arbetsresurser:** Det i arbetet som bidrar till ett eller flera av följande:

- Funktionellt för att uppnå mål på jobbet
- Minska kraven och de medföljande fysiologiska och psykologiska kostnaderna
- Stimulera personlig tillväxt, lärande och utveckling.

Och vi vill höra vilka resurser du upplever dig ha utifrån dessa huvudteman som vi nämnde tidigare, och jag kommer att ge några exempel:

Exempel på resurser kan vara: arbetsmetoder och arbetsredskap, kompetens och bemanning, rimliga och tydliga mål, återkoppling på arbetsinsats, möjligheter till kontroll i arbetet, socialt stöd från chefer och kollegor och möjligheter till återhämtning.

Har du några frågor innan vi går vidare till resten av intervjun?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisatoriska resurser</th>
<th>Följdfrågor:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vilka resurser finns tillgängliga för dig som psykolog?</td>
<td>Hur blev du informerad om tillgängliga resurser?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finns det resurser:</td>
<td>- För din yrkesgrupp?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Som ser annorlunda ut från en dag till en annan dag?</td>
<td>- På arbetsplatsen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Som skiljer sig från en månad till en annan eller från olika perioder under året?</td>
<td>- Inom verksamheten?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Upplever du de erbjudna resurserna som tillräckliga eller otillräckliga?</td>
<td>- Inom organisationen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Upplever du de erbjudna resurserna som tillräckliga eller otillräckliga?</td>
<td>- På orten?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vilka, om några, resurser finns på din arbetsplats för att uppmuntra till god hälsa och välfungerande på arbetet.</td>
<td>*Inom olika arbetsuppgifter?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Finns resurser anpassade speciellt för dig?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Vad identifierar du att du skulle behöva mer av?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Några specifikt för dig som psykolog?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dig som privatperson?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vilka resurser är viktigast?</td>
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<td>Kan du påverka dessa?</td>
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<td>Kan resurser anpassas på arbetsplatsen efter tex.</td>
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<td>sjuksskrivningar?</td>
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<td>Prioriteras</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Är de fasta eller ändras dem beroende på arbetsstrycket?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skulle du kunna berätta lite mer om vilka sociala aspekter du använder som resurser i ditt arbetsliv?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kan du berätta mer om vilka sociala resurser du har utanför arbetsplatsen?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aktiviteter du ägnar dig åt som hjälper dig att må bra?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finns det resurser utanför arbetet som hjälper dig att klara av/hantera jobbet?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utveckling</th>
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<tr>
<td>Har du möjlighet att utvecklas på arbetsplatsen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Har du möjlighet att få vidareutbildningar eller specialistutbildningar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilka förutsättningar ges du för detta?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upplever du att detta är en hjälp för dig i ditt övriga arbete?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finns det resurser som uppmuntrar till detta?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arbetsmetoder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hur fungerar de arbetsmetoder ni använder er av?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hur är de anpassade till era arbetsuppgifter?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Har du frihet att välja arbetsmetoder?</td>
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<tr>
<td>I hur stor eller liten grad.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Får du feedback på ditt arbete?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hur bedömer du eller hur bedöms din prestation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur fungerar det? Något du skulle vilja ha eller saknar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hur ofta får du feedback på prestation och i övrigt?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vem får du mest feedback ifrån?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Möjlighet till återhämtning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finns det möjlighet till återhämtning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur ser återhämtningen ut?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur anpassar arbetsgivaren arbetsplatsen så möjlighet till återhämtning ges?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mål</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vet du vilka dina mål är?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Är målen rimliga?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Är målen tydliga?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur vet du om du nått dem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om inte, hur gör du för att hantera det?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur ofta följer närmaste chef upp ditt arbete med dig?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Följfrågor: Möjlighet till stöd och hjälp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>är det möjligt att få stöd eller hjälp från någon eller några i organisationen? tex: Stöd från chef/medarbetarna?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>från andra yrkesverksamma?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sociala forum eller grupper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vad tror du att du skulle behöva mer av?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Psykologiska resurser

- Vilka är dina personliga resurser?
- Vilka använder du dig av:
  Dagligen/veckovis/månadsvis
  - I dina arbetsuppgifter?
  - på arbetsplatsen?
  - vilka bidrar till att minska påverkan av stress?

- Hur gör du för att återhämta dig?

Fysiska resurser

- Vilka fysiska redskap anser du vara en resurs i ditt arbete?
- Vilka resurser önskar du att du hade?

- Vad skulle du vilja ha mer av? Och har du möjlighet att påverka detta?
- Resurser du utvecklat över tid?
- Något du känner att du skulle behöva mer av?

Följdrågor

- Coping strategier? kognitiva strategier?
- Använder några coping strategier?
- Gör du något för att stimulera din egen utveckling i din roll som psykolog?

Följfrågor:

- Känner du att du har tillgång till de redskap du behöver för att klara av dina arbetsuppgifter?
- Något fysiskt redskap du önskar att du hade tillgång till?

Avslutningsvis,

Något som du funderat på under denna intervju eller reflektioner som väckts i samband med detta som du vill lägga till innan vi avslutar?

Tack för din medverkan!
Interviewguide translated to English.

My name is [name of interviewer] I’m a student in the final semester of the psychology program at Umeå University. I am, together with a fellow student [name of fellow student] finishing our graduation thesis which we base on reports regarding the increase in work-related sick leave amongst psychologists.

Based on this, we would like to investigate the profession of a psychologist by looking at the resources available to them and used by them, as well as their desired resources.

**Job resources:** That which in the workplace contributes to one or more of the following:
*Functional in reaching work-related goals.*
*Reduce the demands and adjoining physical and psychological costs.*
*Stimulate personal growth, learning and development.*

We will ask about the following theme/resources:
- Organizational
- Social
- Psychological
- Physical

And we would like to hear what resources are available to you, based on these.

To do this, I will use an interview guide with predetermined questions.

Participation is on a voluntary basis and you may withdraw without consequence at any time.

I will take notes and the interview will be recorded and it is expected to take approximately 1 hour. The results will be finalized in an official report. Citations from your interview may be used in the finalized report.

All data will be confidential and anonymous.
Background

For how long have you been working as a certified psychologist?

For how long have you been a county council employee?

For how long have you been at this workplace?

Have you chosen your team or area of work yourself?

What’s your main area of work? (Assessment/Therapy/Testing/other) (Bedömning/Behandling/Utredning/annat)

Your age?

Family status?

Before starting the questions in regards to resources I will just repeat the examples.

**Job resources:** That which in the workplace contributes to one or more of the following:
*Functional in reaching work-related goals.
*Reduce the demands and adjoining physical and psychological costs.
*Stimulate personal growth, learning and development.

And we would like to hear what resources are available to you based on the main themes I mentioned earlier, examples of resources could be:

*Work methods and work tools, competence and staffing, reasonable and clear goals, feedback on work performance, control at work, social support from supervisors and colleagues and time to recover, just to mention a few.*

Any questions prior to us starting the interview?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational resources</th>
<th>Possible follow-up questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **What resources are available to you as a psychologist?** | *How did you get informed about available resources?*
| Are there resources: | - For your profession? |
| • That differ from one day to another? | - At the workplace? |
| • That differ from one month to another or during different periods of a year? | - In your operation of work? |
|                          | - In the organization? |
|                          | - In the town you work? |
|                          | *Within different work duties?* |
|                          | *Are there resources customized especially for you?* |
|                          | *Anything you would need more of?* |
- Are the resources on offer sufficient or insufficient?

Which, if any, of the resources in your workplace encourages your health and wellbeing at work?

- How do changes to available resources occur?
- Do you get to take part in creating/improving or changing these?

What resources, out of the already mentioned ones, help in your work as a psychologist? ...in comparison to helping you in the workplace and in comparison, to other professions?

**Development**

- Have you got the possibilities to develop at work?
- Have you got the possibilities for further education or to specialize?
- What's the conditions for you to participate in this?
- Do these assist you in your other work?
- Are there any resources that encourage this?

How does the organization prioritize resources?

**Any specific one's for you as a psychologist? Any for you personally?**

**Which are the most important resources? Can you affect these?**

**Can the workplace accommodate for resources to be adjusted due to ex. Sick leave?**

**Work methods**

- How does the work methods you use work?
- Are they suited to your work duties?
- Are you free to choose work methods?
- To what extent?

**Feedback**

- Do you get feedback on your work?
- How is your performance judged?
- How does it work? Anything you need or miss?
- How often do you receive feedback on your performance? And in general?
- Who do you receive most feedback from?

**Time for recovery**

- Is there time to recover?
- What does recovery look like?
- How does your employer and the workplace accommodate time to recover?

**Goals**

- Do you know what your goals are?
- Are the goals reasonable?
- Are the goals clear?
- How do you know if you have reached your goals?
- If you haven’t, how do you handle it?
- How often does your nearest supervisor follow up your work with you?
**Social**
- Could you tell us more about what social aspects you use as resources at work?
- What social resources have you got outside of work?
- Activities you dedicate time to that help your feel well?
- Are there resources outside of work that assists in handling/coping with work?

**Psychological resources**
- What are your personal resources?
- Which do you get to use:
  - In your work duties?
  - At the workplace?
  - Which contribute in reducing the effects of stress?
- Are there personal resources that:
  - Are different from one day to another?
  - Are different from one month to another or for different periods during the year?
  - How do you recuperate?

**Physical resources**
- What physical tools do you consider to be a resource in your work?
- What resources do you wish you had?

**Possibility for help and support**
- Is it possible to get help and support from anyone in the organization? Ex. support from management/colleagues?
  - From other working professions?
  - Social forums or groups?
  - What would you need more of?
  - What would you like more of? Have you got any influence over this?
  - Resources you developed over time?
  - Anything you feel you need more of?

**Follow on questions**
- Coping strategies? Cognitive strategies?
- Do you use any coping strategies?
- Is there anything you do to stimulate development in your roll as a psychologist?

**Follow on questions:**
- Do you feel you have access to the tools needed to handle your work duties?
- Any physical tool you wish you had access to?

**In conclusion:**
Any thoughts or reflections that has come to mind during the interview that you would like to add before finishing up?

Thank you for your participation!