

Sources of On-the-job Burnout, Protective Factors, & Protective Reactions:

The Voices of the Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team (DVERT) Advocates

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INTRODUCTION

- **Burnout**
 - is a psychological phenomenon that develops as a result of repeated exposure to work-related stressors
 - is indicated by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, & inefficacy
 - can lead to decreased productivity & effectiveness at work, as well as mental & emotional strain
- **Sources of burnout** are feelings of dissatisfaction in:
 - workload
 - control
 - reward
 - community
 - fairness
 - values
- Mental health professions carry an increased risk for burnout

Research Aims

1. Identify risk factors for burnout in intimate partner violence advocates (IPVA)
2. Identify existing protective factors for burnout in IPVA
3. Summarize proposed protective reactions to mitigate burnout in IPVA

METHOD

Participants

DVERT: a first response Cincinnati-based non-profit team from Women Helping Women which works in collaboration with Cincinnati Police Department to provide support to survivors of IPV

- 9 DVERT advocates interviewed in person
- 8 females & 1 male
- Ranging in age from 22 to 38 years old
- Employed as a DVERT advocate for 8 to 20 months

Procedures

Audio-recorded interviews with the advocates conducted by one doctoral research assistant between April & August of 2019

- Semi-structured, opened-ended questions
- Duration about 1 hour
- Transcribed and thematically coded for analysis

Coding

The areas of the workplace experience identified by previous research were coded using MAXQDA for:

- sources of burnout (feelings of dissatisfaction)
- protective factors (feelings of satisfaction)
- suggestions for protective reactions against burnout

FINDINGS

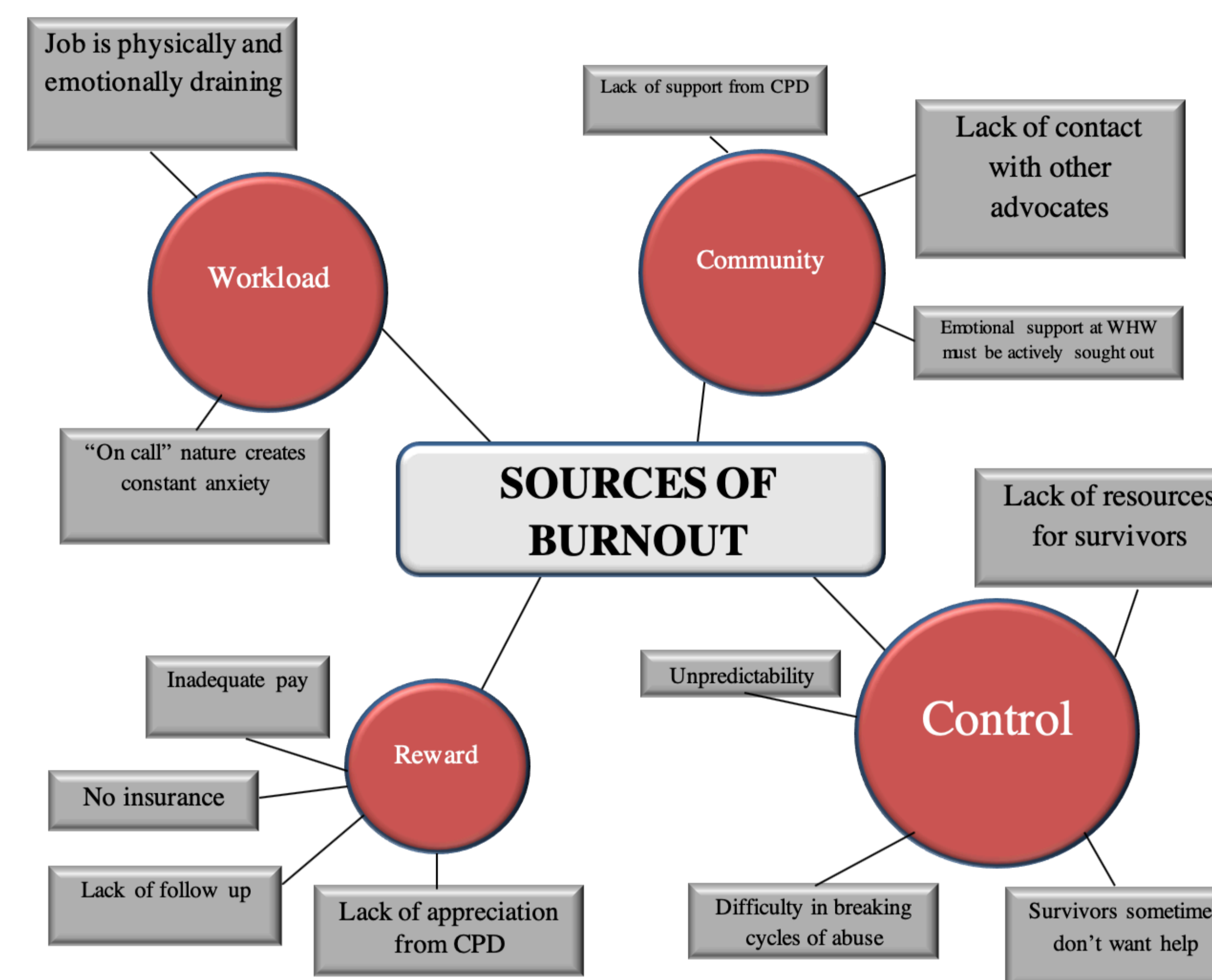


Figure 1. Burnout Sources*

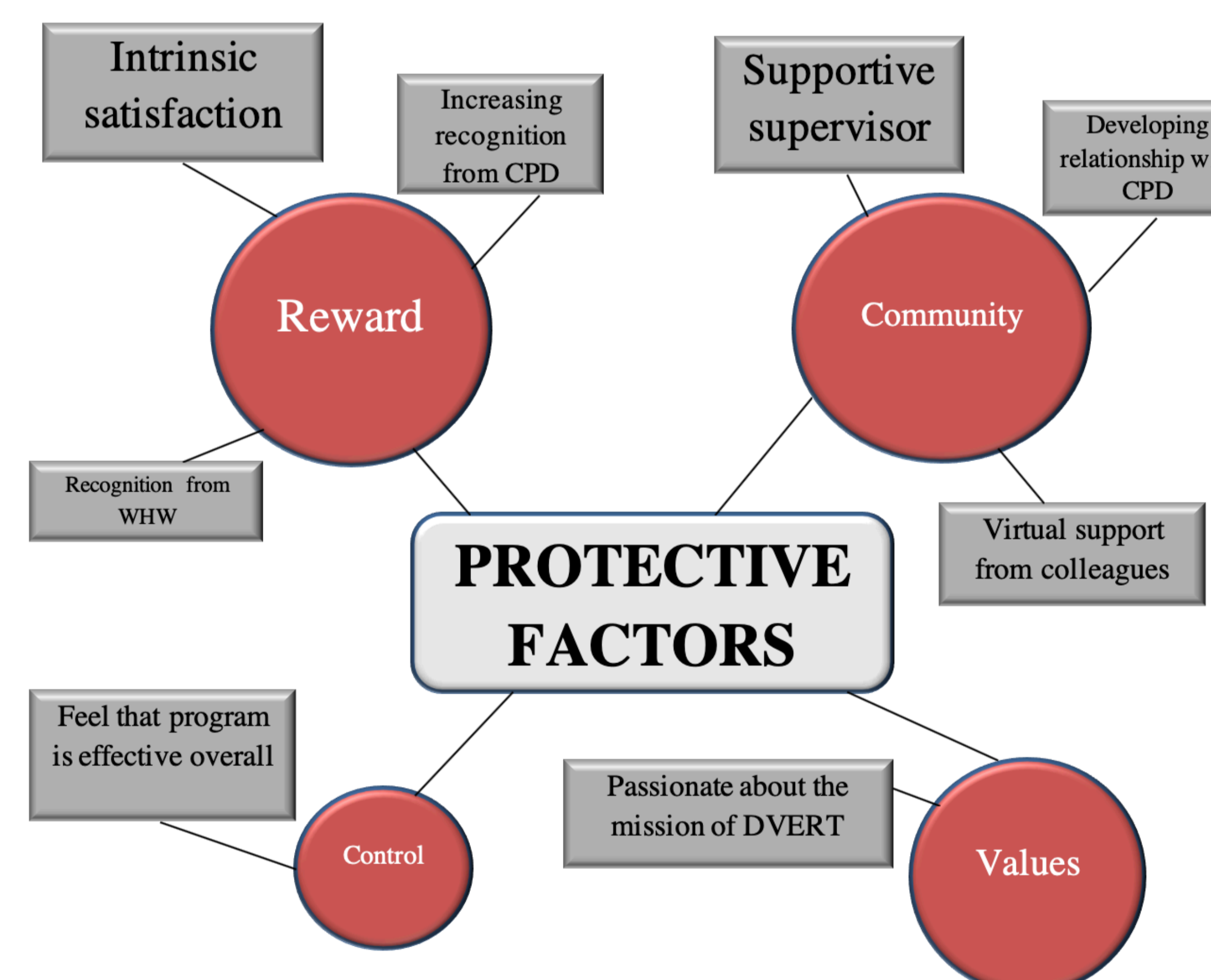


Figure 2. Protective Factors Against Burnout*

*Size of chart elements is representative of importance of factors based on frequency of mention, with larger circles & rectangles indicating higher frequency.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

- Most frequently mentioned sources of burnout:
 - **Control:** “Sometimes there is really just nothing I can do and that is [...] horrible and frustrating.”
 - **Workload:** “It’s that on-call type environment [that is] actually really draining.”
- Most frequently mentioned protective factor against burnout:
 - **Reward:** “To be able to be a part of that healing right away, it’s probably one of the greatest things I’ll be doing in my life.”
- Partnership with CPD
 - initially stressful and linked to burnout sources
 - developing relationship and mutual respect
 - feelings of **collaboration and support**
- Existing individual protective measures
 - **Self care:** “That’s like my time where I can just...relax and be able to be like, free of everything.”
 - **Boundary setting**
 - separating work & personal life
 - not becoming too personally invested

Suggestions for Protective Reactions

- To optimize advocates’ sense of control, WHW could
 - offer refresher courses on how to handle various situations
 - continue to provide them with updated lists of resources
 - integrate self-care education that emphasizes boundary setting
- To provide structured support from WHW could
 - schedule “check-ins” with the program coordinator
- To increase sense of community & support, WHW could
 - connect other advocates in an informal setting outside of staff meetings
- Provide CPD with IPV training to
 - alleviate disconnect
 - foster a sense of supportive collaboration
- Employment benefits could include:
 - increased pay
 - opportunity for full-time employment & benefits
 - discounted self-care resources (i.e., mental health therapy, gym membership, etc.)