

Burnout among social workers a real issue amid pandemic, Tulane researchers say

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Researchers stress the importance of social workers taking care of themselves in order to combat burnout amid the COVID-19 pandemic. (Stock art)

Social workers are on the front lines of the public and mental health crisis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic as their clients deal with everything from job loss and food insecurity to housing issues and parenting challenges.

They are an integral part of the helping community, yet they are as susceptible to job burnout as anyone on the front lines, according to authors of a paper in *International Social Work*, a social science journal.

“Social worker burnout is a very real issue in the field and if we (as social workers) do not take care of ourselves and our own mental health, then this can impact the quality of care we provide to our clients,” said Micaela Peinado, a Los Angeles-based social worker who recently received her doctorate from the [Tulane University School of Social Work](#).

Peinado co-wrote the paper, [Reducing Social Worker Burnout During COVID-19](#), with New Orleans social worker Kelly N. Anderson, who also received her doctorate in social work from Tulane.

“We felt it was important to address social worker burnout specifically related to COVID-19 as social workers can be found throughout society addressing this pandemic,” Anderson said. “Like any helping profession, it can be easy to prioritize the needs of others.”

In the paper, Anderson and Peinado stress the importance of social workers taking care of themselves in order to combat burnout amid the pandemic.

“In the last several months, individuals that previously had few concerns with personal, physical, or professional stressors are now reporting symptoms of burnout which are attributed to our recent societal turmoil,” the authors write.

“Particularly during this time, social workers should prioritize their own mental health. This is necessary in order to have continued success when working with others.”

As March is [National Social Work Month](#) celebrating the essential role the profession plays in community well-being, social workers may also want to take this opportunity to discover what they need for their own well-being.

“Even during these trying times, we can still carve out ways to care for ourselves.”
Micaela Peinado, recent graduate from Tulane School of Social Work doctorate program