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## The Effects of Downsizing on Survivor Employees: A Literature Review

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE EFFECTS OF DOWNSIZING ON SURVIVOR EMPLOYEES:

A LITERATURE REVIEW

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. THE EFFECTS OF DOWNSIZING AND POTENTIAL MODERATORS .....	3
Organizational Commitment	
Productivity, Performance and Motivators	
Feelings Toward Dismissed Co-Workers and Fellow Survivors	
Job Security	
Marital and Family Problems	
3. INTERVENTION MODELS FOR SURVIVORS .....	27
Level 1: Manage the Layoff Process	
Level 2: Facilitate the Grieving Process	
Level 3: Break the Codependency Chain and Empower People	
Level 4: Build a New Employment Relationship	
4. DISCUSSION .....	42
REFERENCE LIST .....	46
VITA .....	53

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In order to cut costs many companies have decided to reduce the size of their labor force (Fagiano, 1993). Such reductions have been achieved by downsizing, restructuring, reengineering, rightsizing, retrenchment or in more common terms, layoffs. In fact, layoffs have become standard operating procedure for many companies (Zemke, 1986; Baggerman, 1993). While such cuts have created a large number of unemployed individuals, it has also created an even larger number of “survivors” (Brockner, 1985). Survivors are those individuals who are considered to be among the “lucky ones” as they have retained their positions (Brockner, 1986). Despite such apparent “luck” however, many of these individuals experience a variety of emotional, physical and psychological ills associated with their continued employment (“Corporate Downsizing: Minimizing Employee Trauma, 1988; “Fear and Trembling after Downsizing”, 1993). This resulting “layoff survivor sickness” has become of a great concern as it is the remaining work force that is to keep the company competitive (“Layoffs Seen Causing Guilt in Survivors”, 1992). Yet, despite the importance of the remaining workers, little systematic organizational effort has been directed towards their diverse needs (Right Associates, 1993; Boroson and Burgess, 1992; Kaufman, 1992). In light of such growth in the

number of corporate survivors, it is crucial to better understand the implications of layoffs on those who remain and create intervention programs to minimize the effects of survivor sickness (“Fear and Trembling After the Downsizing, 1993).

This thesis examines the impact of downsizing on survivors. specifically, examined will be the effects of downsizing on survivors’ subsequent organizational commitment, job involvement, work satisfaction and security, work performance, and marital and family relations. The reviewed literature will reveal that downsizing has the potential of having substantial impact in each of these areas. Thus, this thesis will also review and attempt to delineate factors that may moderate (i.e., exacerbate or reduce) the effects of downsizing on each of these variables. The thesis will conclude by examining, in light of the reviewed literature, interventions that have been developed to help survivors cope with the effects of downsizing and suggesting future directions for program development.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE EFFECTS OF DOWNSIZING AND POTENTIAL MODERATORS

Although many experts in the field of corporate downsizing have attempted to define the precise nature of the “survivor” (e.g., Boroson & Burgess, 1992) as well as the psychological process that occurs subsequent to such work force reductions (e.g., Nowlin, 1988) no single explanatory model has been widely accepted.

Studies examining the effects of corporate downsizing have suggested that a grieving process occurs when employees survive work force reductions. In fact, it has been even suggested that the surviving employee faces a death of the employment relationship (“Death of Corporate Loyalty”, 1993) as well as loss of relationships with the layoff victims (“Layoffs Seen Causing Guilt in Survivors”, 1992), the loss of faith in the organization (Lee, 1992), and the loss of job security (Jacobs, 1988). Ultimately, they also grieve the loss of the “psychological contract” between employer and employee (Soroohan, 1994). The “psychological contract” is an unspoken agreement, in which the employee gives unwavering loyalty to the organization and in exchange the organization promises job stability and security to the employee. This “psychological contract” virtually guaranteed organizational commitment. However it is noted during downsizing that one of the areas affected by downsizing is the organizational commitment.

### Organizational Commitment

Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt, and O'Malley (1987) in a study of organizational commitment, observed that survivors often isolate themselves from the organization by decreasing their commitment to the group. Specifically, Brockner, Grover, et al. noted the survivors can either distance themselves from the organization or distance themselves from the layoff victims. To determine what factors influenced the survivors' isolating behaviors, the researchers utilized both a field study and a laboratory experiment. In the field study, workers whose organization had recently gone through a downsizing were surveyed. The survey targeted survivor's perception both of fellow worker identification and the issue of whether the company did a good job at caretaking for the workers who were dismissed. In the lab study, 132 participants volunteered to take part in a "test validation" experiment in exchange for \$5.00 and the opportunity to win a \$75.00 raffle. The participants worked either with a co-participant (no layoff condition) or with a co-participant and a confederate (layoff condition). Following this activity, they were asked to complete an attitudinal survey and then work on several proofreading tasks. Participants were allowed to peruse the responses of the other participants (and in the layoff condition, the confederate). In the no-layoff condition the responses for the participant and co-participant were manipulated to be moderately similar. In the layoff condition, the co-participant's responses were moderately similar and the confederate's were either similar or dissimilar in response to the participant. Layoffs took place after a



first proofreading task was performed. The confederates were the ones let go and were not compensated for their participation up until the time of release.

Brockner, Grover, et al. reported that results were the same for both studies. Those survivors who identified with the dismissed employees/participant and felt there was not an offer of good caretaking, reported less commitment to the organization/task after the layoffs than before the layoffs. Those survivors who did not identify with the dismissed employee/participant showed a lower change in commitment level. The same provisions were offered to all laid off workers, in the field study, but there was a variable response in the survivors' perceptions of those provisions. Brockner, Grover, et al. suggested that this might have been due to the fact that the provisions were not communicated uniformly across the organization, or that those who were laid-off had not perceived the provisions as fair. If the latter reason is true, the results offered further evidence that identification is a powerful moderating variable in this process. Although the authors identified possible methodological problems with the study, the results offered interesting insights into the downsizing phenomenon.

To address the methodological limitations of the Brockner, Grover, et al. study Wong and McNally (1994) attempted to systematically survey army personnel affected by downsizing both prior to the event and subsequent occurrence. They used a focus group to discuss downsizing implementation before it took place. Specifically, the study group was concerned with the future of the army and the violation of the "informal contract". According to Wong and McNally an "informal contract" is a contract in which the

workers give their loyalty to the organization in exchange for job security. Based on the responses obtained from the focus group, Wong and McNally hypothesized that the effects of downsizing included: (1) the organizational commitment of survivors will be lower than it was before downsizing; (2) the organizational commitment of survivors who perceive the communication of the downsizing plan as effective will be higher than those who perceive it as ineffective; (3) the organizational commitment of survivors who perceive the incentives to leave as fair will be higher than those who perceive them as unfair; (4) the organizational commitment of survivors who perceive transition assistance as adequate will be higher than of those who perceive it as inadequate, and (5) the organizational commitment of survivors will be negatively related to the number of laid off personnel known by survivors.

In their study, Wong and McNally surveyed 900 officers after the downsizing had been implemented. Of this number, there was a total of 791 usable responses. Overall, the researchers found support for their hypotheses. In general, there was less organizational commitment after the downsizing than before as well as a decrease in the belief of the “informal contract”. On the average, the sample felt that the army did an effective job of communicating the downsizing, however for those who felt there was inadequate communication had less organizational commitment. Further, the more an individual could identify with the victims, the more organizational commitment decreased. Those who viewed the caretaking as effective exhibited more organizational commitment than those individuals who did not perceive the caretaking as effective. In addition, those who

felt there was adequate transition assistance (from service to civilian life) had a higher organizational commitment than those who felt it inadequate. The overall number of terminated personnel did not seem to have as much bearing on the decrease in commitment as did the factor of high identification. The weakening of the informal contract seemed to be the most significant change in the study. Many of the sample surveyed felt the informal contract had been violated, which resulted in less belief in the organization. It was the belief that if the personnel served their country then they could remain in service as long as they wished, however downsizing proved this is no longer to be the case.

Mellor (1990), investigated *how* survivors judge the legitimacy of an account for a layoff decision. In his study, he relied on interactional justice theory, to develop his hypothesis. Specifically, he sought to examine the relationship between fairness and the treatment people received during work force reductions. His study involved the commitment of union survivors to the union after a layoff. The explanation offered by the organization for the layoffs was due to the inflexibility of the union. Using a moderated cross-level design, Mellor attempted to predict union commitment from survey data obtained from 355 union members across 15 sites. The sites either experienced a mild layoff condition (2% reduction) or a severe layoff condition (75% reduction).

Using interactional justice, Mellor predicted an interaction between the severity of layoffs and the belief in the explanation given for the layoffs. As predicted there was an interaction between the severity of layoffs and the preferred explanation. Specifically, he

found that if the layoffs were severe and the union survivor believed in the legitimacy of the explanation offered, they then had less of a commitment to the union. If the union survivors did not believe in the explanation, the commitment to the union remained. Mellor contended that his study was noteworthy because it was the first study to examine survivor reactions in a union shop. Other studies have traditionally been done in non-union settings.

Brockner, Konovsky, et al. (1994), investigated the interactive effects of procedural justice and outcome negativity on organizational commitment of survivors. Procedural justice maybe defined within the context of fairness of the organization in managing the layoffs. The researchers examined the outcome negativity of three different groups of workers, laid-off victims, survivors and "lame ducks". The term lame ducks referred to individuals who had been told they were to be laid off, but as yet had not departed from the organization. The laid-off victims were respondents found at an unemployment facility. They were asked to fill out a survey only if they were laid off from their job. The second group were survivors at a financial services company and the third group were respondents who completed the survey following their exit interview. Interviews took place two months after announcement of the layoff and one month prior to actual departures.

The results were, if the organization gave ample warning of the impending layoffs there was less negative response from all groups. In contrast, if the groups felt the organization did not give ample warning of impending layoffs there was a more negative response from

the groups. It was further noted that if the organization did not give adequate advance warning the survivors entered into an organization-blaming mentality, resulting in less organizational commitment.

Brockner, Tyler, and Cooper-Schneider (1992b) investigated how prior organizational commitment affected the survivor's attitude toward the organization after layoffs. They hypothesized that the more individuals were committed to an organization, prior to layoffs the more they will experience an adverse reaction to layoffs. Specifically, they wished to examine the interactive effect of individuals' prior commitment and (a) their perception of how fairly they were treated during the encounter, and (b) how their commitment level may have changed. Based on the tenets of group value theory, the researchers predicted that individuals who were highly committed and viewed the encounter as negative would exhibit the most dramatic decline in commitment. This is because, as the theory dictates, individuals who have a high commitment to a group have invested more of their sense of self-worth in identification with the group. Therefore, if they are treated unfairly, they will reduce their commitment.

To test the hypothesis a two-fold study was conducted. The first part was done in a field setting with a downsized organization and the second part studied the reactions of citizens to an encounter with the legal system. The independent variables in both studies were prior commitment and perceived fairness of the encounter. The dependent variables in the first study were commitment after the layoffs, work effort, and turnover intention. The dependent variable in the second study was commitment to the legal system after an

encounter with authorities. From the survey data obtained, the authors concluded that individuals who had prior high commitment to the organization had a more favorable reaction than those individuals who had low prior commitment, when the layoff was perceived as fair. However, if the layoff was perceived as unfair, the prior high commitment individual had a more negative reaction. Similar results were obtained with both studies.

The study conducted by Brockner Tyler, et al. was important as it showed the influence of prior commitment on organizational commitment after a downsizing. It did not, however, investigate organizational commitment with the knowledge of future layoffs. If an organization plans future layoffs, knowledge of this might influence organizational commitment, perceived fairness, turnover intention and work performance.

Similarly, Brockner, DeWitt, Grover, and Reed (1990) have reported that employees who do not have a clear understanding of why layoffs occurred have less organizational commitment, less work effort and an increase in turnover intention. From their work, they have identified five factors which define the term uncertainty experienced by survivors: (1)unusualness of the layoff, (2) avoidability of the layoff, (3) lack of clarity of the decisional basis to keep certain employees and lay off others, (4) unfairness of the decisional basis to keep certain employees and lay off others, and (5) perceived adequacy of organizational caretaking in the event of future layoffs.

Brockner, DeWitt, et al. conducted a field study in which employees of a chain of small retail stores were retrospectively surveyed and asked questions reflecting these

dimensions of uncertainty. In addition, they also conducted a laboratory study to address the possible shortcomings of internal and construct validity of the field study. In the laboratory experiment participants were asked to complete a "Test Validation" in exchange for cash. They were then to perform a proofreading task individually and another task jointly with co-participants. In this setting three layoff conditions were manipulated. These were low caretaking layoff, high caretaking layoff and no layoff control condition. In the low caretaking layoff condition, a confederate was laid off and not compensated for his/her participation during the first task. The confederate protested the unfairness of the situation. In the high caretaking layoff, a confederate was compensated for his/her participation during the first task. When dismissed, the confederate stated that the compensation was fair.

The results of this study, indicated that employees/participants will have a more favorable response to layoffs, if communication of the layoffs addressed the five factors defining uncertainty. Furthermore, Brockner, DeWitt, et al. observed that without this communication employees expend energy to find the information on their own. Without proper channels of communication an employee begins to develop the anger, animosity and resentment towards the organization, all of which can lead to a reduction in worker productivity, a decrease in worker performance and motivators.

### Productivity, Performance and Motivators

After watching many colleagues dismissed, the survivor begins to suffer from survivor guilt. This guilt will then result in lowered productivity and worker performance.

Brockner, Davy and Carter (1985) studied such guilt among downsizing survivors. Specifically, they hypothesized that layoffs cause survivors to experience positive inequity, or the perception that one's outcome to input ratio is greater than that of relevant others. This in turn will have motivational consequences. Using a laboratory setting, Brockner, Davy, et al. manipulated conditions to cause positive inequity using self-esteem as a moderator variable. Seventy-eight undergraduate participants were examined. They were first tested on a self-esteem scale. They then participated in a proofreading task. Confederates were used to serve as co-workers who were to be laid-off.

The experiment was split into three intervals. The participants were to do two proofreading tasks separated by a break. In the experimental condition, the planted confederate was laid off during the break. When the confederate was laid off it was done so that it appeared random and there was no compensation given for their participation. The confederate would protest mildly of the unfair decision rule. In the control condition, there was no lay-off. Brockner, Davy, et al. found that individuals who reported high or medium levels of self-esteem increased their work performance slightly during the second proofreading task. The low self-esteem group, however, increased their work performance significantly.

To further study the effects of downsizing on survivors, Brockner, Greenberg, et al. (1986) investigated the roles that knowledge and clarity play in decisions of reductions. The researchers cited that guilt is not the only emotion experienced by the survivor, but also anger and worry (to name but 2 others). The goal of this present study was to



attempt to exclude all other emotions except guilt. Specifically, they wanted to examine the impact of the decision rule upon the survivors' guilt. Using a laboratory setting, the researchers examined three experimental conditions. These were the random layoff group, the no layoff group (control group) and the merit layoff group. Again a reading task was involved in the merit condition. The number of lines read determined who would be laid off. The participant was always informed that he/she did the most work and therefore earned the position to stay. The random lay-off group had participants draw straws to determine which was to leave. The drawing was rigged so that the confederate was chosen to leave.

Brockner, Greenberg, et al. found that the random lay-off group increased the number of lines read from the first proofreading task to the next proofreading task, while the merit layoff group exhibited a slight increase. Both showed an increase over the control group. From these results they concluded that if the survivor does not know the decision rule employed for layoffs, work performance is increased.

In a related study on productivity and performance, Brockner, Grover, Blonder (1988) investigated how productivity is affected by layoff for survivors with high work ethics. The researchers contend that if the worker has a high work ethic he/she will have an adverse reaction to severe lay-offs in contrast to mild lay-offs. Using a field study design, two groups of workers were studied. The first group consisted of individuals who experienced a mild layoff condition in their organization. The second group consisted of individuals who experienced a severe layoff condition within their organization. The mild

condition was defined by a 2% to 5% reduction in the work force, while the severe condition was defined as a 25% to 70% reduction in work force.

As part of the survey, the researchers included measures of the independent variables work ethic and prior role ambiguity, the dependent variable job-involvement, and two control variables, self-assurance and prior task variety. Brockner and colleagues found that work ethic and prior role ambiguity predicted survivor's job involvement. Individuals with high work ethics still had job involvement. However, the writers did note, that there was less job involvement in severe layoff conditions. The writers felt the study was significant because it explored survivors' reactions in an actual field setting and practical implications which could help manage a surviving work force.

Finally, in another study Brockner, Grover, O'Malley, Reed and Glynn (1993b) addressed this question of work performance under the threat of future layoffs. Examining the construct of self-esteem, they investigated the impact of the threat of future layoffs on work performance. Utilizing both a field study and laboratory setting. Eighty-seven undergraduate participants were examined in lay-off and no lay-off conditions. Performing test validations, participants were either informed of high threats of being dismissed or low threats of being dismissed. Brockner, et al. also administered self esteem scales to the participants. They found the individuals who exhibited low self-esteem expressed more worry and worked harder than high self-esteem individuals, when faced with future lay-off threats. The level of worry was positively related to motivation when the threat of future layoffs was high.

### Feelings Toward Dismissed Co-Workers and Fellow Survivors

Feelings toward dismissed co-workers and fellow survivors was another area examined in the literature concerning survivors.

Brockner (1988) has observed that it is not unusual for survivors to increase productivity, blame the victim and resent their fellow survivors. More specifically, Brockner has developed a three component conceptual model that has guided his study of layoff survivors. The first component of this model has suggested that layoffs have the potential to evoke a variety of psychological states, including job insecurity, positive inequity, anger, and relief. The second component has suggested that these psychological states have the potential to affect survivors' work behaviors. The third component of the conceptual model has attempted to delineate the factors that moderate the actual impact of layoffs on those who stay. Suggested moderator variables include: a) the nature of the work and interdependency of the worker on dismissed employees; b) survivor individual differences; c) formal organization (i.e., rules procedures and policies of the organization); d) informal organization (i.e., values and norms which emerge as the employees and firm go about accomplishing their task) and e) environmental conditions (i.e., factors external to the organization). Brockner has cautioned that this conceptual model is not a theory per se, but rather a compilation of theories to predict survivor reactions. Both, equity theory and organizational stress play an important role in productivity.

Brockner (1990) conducted a study in which he examined the impact of perceived unfairness in managing the layoffs. He hypothesized that if survivors perceived that the layoffs were unfair, their response would be negative and moderated by the extent to which they included the layoff victim in their "scope of justice". Scope of justice was defined as tolerance of injustice toward innocent victims. Brockner predicted that if the survivors did not include the victim in their community model, they will not be as adversely affected by the layoff. He employed both a field survey and a laboratory study to explore this issue.

In the field study, questionnaires were sent to employees of a small retail store chain. The questionnaire was a retrospective survey which included questions about organizational commitment and the degree to which the survivor included the laid-off victim in their scope of justice. Results from the survey indicated survivors responded more negatively towards the organization when the victims were included in their scope of justice and the organization managed the layoffs unfairly. Organizational commitment seemed to favor best when the inclusion in scope of justice was low and fairness of layoffs was high.

In the following laboratory experiment, Brockner addressed the shortcomings of the field study. In the field study, the independent variables, unfairness and scope of justice, were not manipulated, but rather measured. The dependent variable was the retrospective reports of how the survivors felt about the organization. The population in the laboratory experiment were, again, undergraduate students. In this study, Brockner examined

undergraduate students who were asked to perform several proofreading task individually and, later, they were to work jointly on another task with another participant. During the study, participants completed an attitude survey, which was shown to the partner in the latter task to manipulate the scope of justice variable. A confederate within the study was shown to have similar attitudes as the participants. Information about the confederate was manipulated to appear similar to his/her partner in the last task. After working together on one task the manipulation layoff took place. Participants who included the confederate in their scope of justice were found to be less productive in the second task than the first task.

Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover, and Martin (1993a) investigated, the interaction between job content and job context. The objective of the study was to see why survivors may stay with a declining organization. Brockner and his colleagues contended that survivors view work context as favorable to the extent of how fairly the layoff was handled and the perceptions of their fellow survivors' reactions to the layoff. They further argued that if the layoff was handled unfairly, trustworthiness of the organization's future actions was decreased. In addition, if the remaining survivors viewed their co-workers' perceptions as negative towards the organization, so too their view of the organization would be negative.

The researchers utilized both a field study and a laboratory study. The initial field study consisted of retrospective self-reports administered to survivors working for a chain of small company owned retail stores throughout the United States. The subsequent

laboratory experiment consisted of proofreading task for a population of undergraduate students. Results of the field survey indicated that survivors reported (a) a decrease in organizational commitment when the job was perceived to become less intrinsically interesting, (b) the organization was perceived as unfair in the layoffs, (c) their fellow survivors reacted negatively and (d) there was a strong identification to the layoff victim. The laboratory experiment supported the results of the field study. In addition, even if the survivors saw the job content improve after layoffs, they did not view the situation favorably as the context was viewed as negative. Brockner, Wiesenfeld, et al. concluded that such behavior demonstrated an interactive relationship between job content and job context. Specifically, they suggested that survivors, in order to justify staying with the organization must either perceive the organization as acting fairly, or to view their fellow survivors perception as positive.

Furthermore, while this study demonstrated how interactive factors might be associated with job content and job context, it did not, however, fully answer the question of why the survivor stays. The researchers speculated that workers justified their staying by heightening the fairness of the organization, thus allowing a sense of control in an atmosphere where they perceive little control.

### Job Security

Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) have attempted to clarify a model of job insecurity. The authors defined job insecurity as perceived powerlessness in a job threatening

situation. They addressed the inadequacies of past research to define the job insecurity construct. The inadequacies included (a) the content domain of the construct, (b) individual differences in reaction to job insecurity and (c) identity of these reactions. They have presented a two factor model to describe job insecurity. The first factor is severity of threat. Severity of threat depends upon the potential involuntary loss of a job and the subjective probability of loss of the job. The definition of loss is inclusive of the (1) type of loss, whether permanent or temporary, (2) the action of the loss, and (3) the loss of the job itself or features of the job. Other views of threat can be (a) newly imposed ceilings on intraorganizational mobility, (b) curtailment of income, (c) loss of status, and (d) loss of community in the work environment.

The second factor in the model is powerlessness. Powerlessness can take on four different forms. The first is a lack of protection against the impending threat of loss. The second is unclear expectancies from the organization. The third is the culture of the organization (whether the individual has input). The fourth form is the belief about the organization's standard procedures for dismissing employees. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt have concluded, that an operationalized model of job insecurity must encompass both severity of threat and the sense of powerlessness.

To support their model, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt have reviewed various results of studies that examined reactions to job insecurity. One study of note to them reported a negative correlation between job insecurity and work efforts. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt observed that this was an interesting finding because it contradicted expected results based

on assumptions that one, security and complacency are related and two, because insecure workers should work harder to appear invaluable to the organization and thereby increase security.

Based on their understanding of the research, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt further concluded that individuals with personality characteristics which give them an aversion to job insecurity, will react the most strongly to job insecurity. Furthermore, an individual whose self-worth and identity is dependent upon their work role, will be most adversely affected. They further concluded, that a job insecurity scale should be developed that can comprehensively encompass the severity of threat and the feelings of powerlessness. They have also encouraged future researchers to clarify the factors outlined in their paper.

Ashford, Lee, and Bobko (1989) attempted to assess the causes and consequences of job insecurity. They have hypothesized that antecedents for job insecurity are: 1) organizational change; 2) role ambiguity; 3) role conflict, and 4) internal locus of control. The consequences of job insecurity included: greater somatic complaints and higher intent to seek a new job as well as low levels of organizational commitment, trust in the organization, job satisfaction, and job performance. Using a variety of established scales to measure intercorrelational relationships between these antecedents and consequences, they developed a measure for job insecurity. They reported an intercorrelational relationship between all the antecedents and consequences excluding somatic complaints, role conflict and job performance. Explaining only partial support for their predictions the researchers suggested that this study may have only tapped into chronic job insecurity, and



not acute job insecurity. Acute job insecurity results from a series of layoffs. Further limitations affecting this study included organizational intervention, situational factors which contribute to a sense of control, and the social support of the individual. Ashford, et al. recommended further research is needed in the areas of resistance to change, and moderators of the link between job insecurity and outcomes. Despite these limitations the study provided an initial step toward creating a scale that assesses job insecurity. Such a measure is likely to have far reaching implications in the intervention and treatment of individuals who suffer from job insecurity.

Attempting to extend the work of Ashford, et al., Davy, Kinicki, Scheck and Sutton (1991), subjected the job insecurity measure to a longitudinal study. In their research, they surveyed a random sample of 120 employees working for a high tech firm. The first administration of the survey was done one month after layoffs began. A second administration was completed three months later, while layoffs continued. In their study, Davy, et al., specifically examined issues of procedural justice, perceived fairness of layoff, and job security during the first survey and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, behavioral intention to be absent and behavioral intention to quit in the second survey. Procedural justice was measured with a seven-item scale developed from previous definitions of procedural justice. Job insecurity was measured by a four-item scale which were obtained on a 5 point Likert scale. Fairness of the layoff was assessed by one item with a five-point Likert scale ranging from extremely satisfied (1) to extremely dissatisfied (5). Job satisfaction was measured by ten items from the Minnesota Satisfaction

Questionnaire. Organizational commitment was measured using Mowday's organizational commitment scale. Finally, behavioral intention to be absent or quit was measured with a single item ranging from 100% chance (5) to 0% (1).

In this study, Davy, et al. examined five hypotheses. These were: 1) procedural justice positively affects perceived fairness of a layoff decision; 2) perceived fairness has a direct negative affect on psychological withdrawal; 3) job security results in decreased psychological withdrawal; 4) job security results in decreased behavioral withdrawal and 5) psychological withdrawal has a direct positive affect on behavioral withdrawal. From the results, the authors reported that four of the hypotheses were supported. The only hypothesis not supported was that which predicted a relationship between job security and behavioral withdrawal. Davy, et al. concluded that psychological withdrawal functions as a mediator between job security and behavioral withdrawal. In addition, they believed they had developed the broadest theoretical model explaining survivors' psychological and behavioral responses to layoffs.

In general, the majority of previous studies on job insecurity, have examined mixed samples of management and non-management employees. To assess whether group membership affected survivor response, Roskies, and Louis-Guerin (1990) evaluated only managers in a chronic job insecurity atmosphere. Specifically, they were interested in discovering whether white-collar workers felt the same as their blue-collar counterparts when faced with downsizing. To address this issue, they surveyed 1291 managers not in

danger of losing their jobs, who either worked for a firm who had laid off managers within a five year span or in a stable expanding firm.

In this study, Roskies and Louis-Guerin assessed five facets of job insecurity. Four variables concerned short term insecurity while the fifth concerned long-term insecurity. They reported that the results of the study were surprising in that while there was a perception of insecurity, many of the surveyed participants did not believe they would actually be displaced by the company. Roskies and Louis-Guerin speculated that the managers' belief systems enabled them to go into denial about their insecurity. Furthermore, they suggested that these managers believed that if they worked hard, they would continue to reap the benefits of personal and professional growth.

Because 87% of the managers in the Roskies and Louis-Guerin study were male, the results might have limited generalizability. To examine this issue, Russell-Earnshaw, Amundson and Borgen (1990) conducted a study of professional women and job insecurity. Utilizing intensive interviews with a small number of participants (N=20), ranging in age from 23 to 49, they evaluated job insecurity ranging in length from a few weeks to five years or more. From these interviews, Russell-Earnshaw, et al. identified five transition stages in response to job insecurity. These were identified as enthusiasm, disillusionment, remission, realization and adaptation. During the stage of enthusiasm, the women reported a denial of the insecurity. During the stage of disillusionment, the women experienced shock, immobilization and initial signs of depression. They then experienced remission, in which they alternated between feelings of hopefulness, and fear and anxiety.

Realization of the situation becomes evident and the women felt resentful and angry with their employer. The final stage was adaptation. During this stage the women accepted the loss of job security. Russell-Earnshaw, et al.'s findings appear remarkably familiar to those stages identified by Kubler-Ross (1969) in her model of grief and loss.

The final aspect of job insecurity, which was not addressed in the previous studies, is the impact of economic need as a moderator variable. Brockner, Grover, Reed and DeWitt (1992a) investigated if the relationship of job insecurity and work effort was an inverted-U correlation. The inverted-U correlation between job insecurity and work effort is defined the higher job insecurity the lower work effort, the lower job insecurity the higher work effort and when both are moderate optimal work conditions prevail. According to Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) two component model job insecurity should be high when threat is high and control is low, low when threat is low and control is high and moderate when either threat and control are high or threat and control are low. Moreover, if job insecurity is low survivors should be unmotivated due to complacency. If job insecurity is high survivors should be unmotivated due to feelings of helplessness. In addition, Brockner, Grover, et al., wished to examine whether survivors' economic need to work moderated the predicted inverted-U relationship between job insecurity and work effort. Based on the research, they predicted that job insecurity should have more of an impact upon those individuals who were the main breadwinners in the household than individuals who were not.

Surveying 1602 employees randomly across 300 small retail stores, Brockner, Grover, et al., received 597 usable responses. These responses supported their hypothesis. The authors concluded that there was an inverted-U relationship between job insecurity and work effort. Additionally, if an individual was dependent upon the job for monetary reasons, they perceived a greater sense of job insecurity than those who did not depend upon the job for monetary reasons.

### Marital and Family Problems

Larson, Wilson, and Beley (1994) surveyed families of employees who were to experience layoffs at work. By so doing, they wished to measure the impact that job insecurity had on marital and family relationships. Utilizing measures of unpredictability of the stress due to job insecurity, marital adjustment and overall family functioning, Larson, et al., also wanted to find out what services the families sought to alleviate stress. The researchers found that job insecurity stress was significantly related to lower marital adjustment, poorer overall family functioning, less family role clarity, less family affective responsiveness and more family and marital problems. Additionally, in terms of desired support services the respondents were asked which services would ease the stress on familial relationships. Larson, et al. reported that the top six requested services were marriage enrichment groups, family life newsletter, family enrichment groups, financial counseling, marital therapy and family therapy. The results of this study are significant in

pointing out that the survivor is not the only individual affected by downsizing. It also affects family life, which is possibly added pressure for the survivor.

## CHAPTER 3

### INTERVENTION MODELS FOR SURVIVORS

Noer (1993) devised a comprehensive intervention model to address the various aspects of survivors' sickness. Noer believed having a theory base to understand the reactions of survivors legitimized their feelings. Noer's intervention model is based upon a 4 level intervention which addressed managing the layoff process, facilitate the necessary grieving, break the co-dependency chain and empower people, and build a new employment relationship.

#### Level 1: Manage the Layoff Process

In his model, Noer emphasized the crucial importance of how the downsizing is implemented. He has suggested that during the initial stages of layoffs, communication cannot be overabundant. Moreover, Level 1 interventions are directed toward preventing employees from becoming dispirited from a lack of information and open communication. Consistent with this theme, Right Associates (1993) have also stressed the importance of implementing layoff procedures correctly. They have suggested that before organizations initiate work force reductions, alternative avenues should be explored. Additionally, if the organization communicates to the employee while exploring such alternative avenues, it is

likely that the survivor will be more accepting of the layoffs as all other avenues have been exhausted. Obviously, emphasis is on communication during this stage of the downsizing process.

To provide empirical support for Noer's model, Covin (1993) conducted a survey of employee reactions during a downsizing effort. In her study, Covin evaluated three broad areas. These were communication of the change, implementation of the change, and general employee reactions. From a total of 96 interviews with employees from 78 companies, Covin analyzed 44 interview that focused on downsizing efforts.

To ascertain how communication of the downsizing was done, Covin asked the employees how they found out about the downsizing. A high number of this sample found out through the grapevine about the reductions, many of the survivors expressed a preference for personalized communication (one-on-one meetings, small group question and answer sessions), rather than finding out through informal channels. Additionally, Covin reported that companies which engaged in this type of communication had favorable response from survivors about the layoff implementation. Turning to the issue of how the employees viewed the implementation of the downsizing, Covin found that employees perceived that the downsizing process was hierarchical with no input from the lower ranks. Most employees suggested that if they had had greater input, they would have slowed down the process, done more planning, encouraged honest and open communication with employees and determined which employees should be retained. Lastly, turning to the issue of employee reactions to the downsizing, Covin surprisingly



found that a high percentage endorsed the need for change. Moreover, many also viewed the downsizing process as effective, for such purposes. In conclusion, Covin stated that faulty or miscommunication between the organization and its employees increased negativity and stress.

### Level 2: Facilitate the Grieving Process

According to Noer, the next level of intervention requires allowing the survivor opportunity to express repressed feelings. During this level of intervention, Noer has recommended that survivors be encouraged to get in touch with the various feelings they are experiencing. He has utilized Kubler-Ross' (1969) model of grief to legitimize the feelings for the survivor and label the feelings for management. Managers can be trained to facilitate survivors in the process of grieving.

Similarly, Jacobs (1988) has also advocated involving managers in maintaining morale for survivors during downsizing. She has argued that managers can and should take an active role in raising workplace morale. She specifically has urged managers to establish a dialogue about employee concerns, empower the employee so they do not feel passive in the situation, and improve communication about day to day operations.

To meet the emotional demands of this difficult period, Sullivan and Silverstein (1993), have created a type of cathartic intervention based upon Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD), a specific model for crisis intervention. This model is focused on the stress created by organizational change, and its goal is to promote open communication between

managers and employees. The intervention is comprised of seven phases identified as, introduction, fact, thought, reaction, symptom, teaching and plan of action. The introduction phase introduces the employees to the consultants and the purpose for their presence in the organizational change. The next phase is the fact phase. At this time the consultants gather information about the organizational cuts and what happened during those cuts. The next phase is thought. During this phase, the consultants elicit the thoughts of the survivors about their situation and the layoffs. The next phase is the reaction phase. It is here that the consultants try to get at the feelings of the survivors. The phase of symptoms asked the survivors to describe any signs of distress which have emerged, such as physical, emotional and functional changes. The phase of teaching serves to educate survivors about the reactive symptoms which may appear during the crisis to normalize distress. The final phase, plan of action, is dedicated to encouraging the group to have open dialog between survivors and managers and the working toward a common goal. Sullivan and Silverstein concluded this intervention model is most applicable because downsizings are group affecting events.

In contrast, Alveras and Frigeri (1987) have argued that the individual symptoms of the survivors need to be addressed. They have found it helpful to first “categorize” the employee, and then apply a more individualized intervention for each employee. From their work in the area, Alveras and Frigeri have suggested that employees fall into one of four categories. These are leaders, followers, victims, and avengers. The leaders are employees who act positively in a layoff environment and often urge others to participate

in efforts to promote the goals of the organization. These individuals tend to be higher up in the hierarchical chain of command. Their positions often allow them access to information that the lower level workers may not have. In contrast, the followers are individuals who fall behind the leader and have no independent thinking about the situation. They may be subordinates of the leaders and are likely to support the leader more so than form their own opinion about the layoff environment. The third group, are those individuals who experienced feelings of powerless and helpless in the situation. They isolate from the organization and fellow workers. The victims feel they have no say so over events and therefore, take no initiatives. Finally, the fourth group is comprised of the most distressing type of employee. This is the employee whom the company fears will sabotage the work flow atmosphere. Avengers often use their power for their own personal concerns. They may overtly sabotage or even more frightening covertly sabotage fellow workers or the organization in order to feel in control. Alveras and Frigeri reported that survivors react in various ways and to have a "one-size-fits-all" intervention model will not be effective. Each survivor is reacting from their own set of stressors and the intervention model employed must address those individual set of stressors.

Roskies, Louis-Guerin and Fournier (1993) examined the relationship between personality and the survivor's reactions associated with downsizing, particularly job insecurity. They conducted two studies. The first study looked at employees (N=93) in an acute job insecurity setting. It was clear that there would be further workforce reduction. The second study examined employees (N=998) in a long term job insecurity

setting where it was unclear if and when workforce reduction would take place. Using a variety of scales, to assess objective job insecurity risk, perceived job security risk, coping resources, coping strategies, personality disposition and socio-demographic controls, to correlate with psychological distress. Roskies, et. found in both studies, that psychological distress correlated most strongly with personality. More specifically, they found that both positive and negative affectivity significantly affect the individuals perception of commitment and stability in a downsizing organization. On the basis of these findings, they concluded that an understanding of the positive personality involved withstanding the pressure of job insecurity can lead to developing better interventions for survivors. Notably, such interventions may teach the individual who possesses negative affectivity, how to better cope with the pressures, and subsequently achieve the same immunity as the individual with positive affectivity. Moreover, they have suggested that interventions be developed to help prevent survivors with positive affectivity from leaving the company. The positive affect individual will be more likely to leave the organization and seek employment elsewhere than a negative affect individual. Although, Roskies, et al.'s study did not offer a specific intervention model, it did underscore the importance of including personality factors in intervention methods. It emphasized that every employee will not react in the same manner to downsizing practices.

### Level 3: Break the Codependency Chain and Empower People

According to Noer's model, the level 3 intervention is designed to help individuals break from organizational codependency and to lead a self-empowered work life. In the

corporate organization, employees who are codependent with the organization allows the organization to define their self worth, self-esteem and identity. In return, the organization continues to promote the dependent relationship by rewarding loyalty with promotion and recognition, offering comprehensive benefit packages and punishing employees who do not conform to the organizational culture, or even worse thinking of leaving the organization.

As noted previously, Cameron, Freeman and Mishra (1991) have concluded that if the employees feel that they are included in decisions regarding layoffs and the structuring of the new organization, they are more likely to be committed to the organization. However, such inclusion into decisions should not be limited to just implementation of downsizing processes. Rather, such inclusion should be expanded to day to day operations. Survivors can also analyze and express what tools are needed to do an effective job in their new roles. Such opportunities are useful in empowering the survivors and giving them some sense of control over their employment situation.

In addition, Myers (1993) stated managers need to figure out a way to empower their employees. Myers has suggested that team building, empowering middle managers, mentoring/training programs, maintaining enhanced communication programs, adopting recognition programs, and restructuring benefits may serve to accomplish such a goal. With this approach, Myers emphasized that team building should be fostered before the layoffs take place. If this cannot be done before downsizing, it can be used to foster communication after downsizing. Within their role, managers can present opportunities

for employees to speak their views, even if this means, personally walking around to talk to subordinates. In addition, he has suggested empowering middle managers can be critical as this group suffers heavily during layoffs. Mentoring or training allows the employee to expand their personal and professional growth. Enhancing communication, again, keeps the employees from expending energy to seek out information. Adopting recognition programs and restructuring benefits however could cause the interdependent tie between employer and employee to continue. All these suggestions will be helpful in empowering the work force.

Isabella (1989) attempted to utilize individual differences as a method of intervention and a means of empowering the survivor. In particular, Isabella looked at the various stages of management maturity and has identified three groups of managers. These are managers just beginning their career, managers who have mastered their skills and abilities and managers who are concerned with alternative definitions of success. Isabella suggested interventions which are most effective in empowering the first group of managers are interventions that supply resources to expand potential. Isabella suggested the next group of managers are empowered by allowing input into the direction of the company after downsizing. The final group of managers can be empowered by offering new opportunities to train and acquire new skills for personal growth. Isabella concluded that understanding the various levels of managerial maturity may better help to empower the manager, and simultaneously address the problems of negative attitudes.

Mone (1994) discussed dimensions of self-concept, that can influence the reactions of survivors and dictate their intentions of leaving the organization. Mone looked at the a twofold dimension of self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-esteem was defined on three levels. Global or chronic self-esteem was defined as the overall self-worth. Role-specific self-esteem was defined by social relationships. Finally, task or situation-specific self-esteem was defined as a self-evaluation resulting from task-specific mastery. Mone further defined self-efficacy as the beliefs persons have about their ability to perform a particular task.

Using several scales to measure self-efficacy, self-esteem, goal setting, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intent to leave, Mone evaluated three hypotheses. 1) There is a positive relationship between dimensions of self-concept and intent to leave a downsizing organization; 2) Self-efficacy and self-esteem to task performance are more likely to predict intent to leave an organization than role self-esteem, but role self-esteem is more predictive than global self-esteem, and 3) Individuals possessing high self-concept have a greater intent to leave an organization which goes through downsizing, than an individuals with low self-concept. To test these hypotheses, Mone distributed 207 surveys to full-time unionized production employees. One hundred and eleven of these were usable. The results indicated support for the hypotheses. In addition, self-efficacy and self-esteem affected personal goals, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These in turn, influenced intent to leave the organization. Individuals high in self-efficacy and self-esteem appeared better equipped to deal with the risk involved in looking for

employment elsewhere. Mone concluded that if companies do not want to lose their highly productive workers, they must provide ways in which the high self-concept individual will get the necessary feedback needed to self-affirm their abilities and talents in the organization. He further stated that if organizations communicate an assurance of job security for the high performers as well as help for those individuals who were displaced, satisfaction and commitment will increase and intention to leave will decrease.

Brockner (1992) supported Noer's first three levels of intervention. Brockner stated that appropriate managerial action steps should be taken before, during and after the layoff. Before the layoff, he suggested that the organization evaluate its relationship between the layoff and corporate strategy and culture. In other words, he has urged organizations to have an appropriate plan of what they are trying to accomplish with the layoff. He advises to give ample warning to the work force so that they will be prepared for the event. Identify the key people and ask for their help while the layoff takes place. Key personnel can help other survivors to adjust. He further has advised to prepare the supervisors and managers for the layoff, make sure they understand their role during the layoff, and be available to the work force for support. If supervisors carry out the layoff, he has urged training beforehand. During the layoff, Brockner again has supported the idea of giving information and over communicating the intents and plans of the organization. If the work force is not given information, he has stated they will "fill in the blank" with erroneous information. This misinformation will further distance the survivor from the organization. Brockner has advised to do good caretaking of the layoff victims,



as well as, the survivor, and the survivor will react much more favorably. He further suggested that managers need to become more accessible during downsizing to reassure the work force by soliciting employee input whenever possible. The survivor is less likely to isolate from the organization and more likely to feel a part of the new organization. He has strongly urged companies to do “rightsizing”, defined as streamlining unnecessary work routines so the survivor does not feel overburdened with new responsibilities.

#### Level 4: Build a New Employment Relationship

The final level of intervention proposed by Noer involved changing the psychological contract, between organizations and employees, which has dominated in the business world since the ending of World-War-II. Noer observed the old psychological contract, between organizations and employees, had implicit assumptions which included: a) long-term employment; b) promotions as reward for performance; c) paternalistic management; d) loyalty to the organization, and e) lifetime career. In contrast, Noer has predicted that new psychological contracts will include: a) situational employment relationships; b) acknowledgment of contribution and relevance for performance; c) empowerment of management; d) responsibility and good work means loyalty, and e) explicit job contracting. Noer reported the change is necessary because the concept of downsizing has evidenced that tenets of the contract are no longer guaranteed.

Similarly, Sorohan (1994) argued the old psychological contract, which fostered dependent trust, should be replaced by a new psychological contract, which fosters non-

dependent trust. Specifically, Morin noted that the old psychological contract fostered compliance among workers as they aligned with their employers in exchange for job security. Moreover, traditional long term employment relationships resulted from employees being “tied” to the organization by such things as benefit plans, pensions and recognition systems (Noer 1993). Instead of such ties, Noer has advocated flexible and portable benefit plans and tenure free recognition systems. He further has argued that organizations should not make a distinction between full-time, part-time and temporary employees. Rather, organizations should create a “just in time” work force which can meet its needs and allow the work force to remain fluid. Additionally, Noer has suggested that instead of rewarding an employee for performance by promotion, performance should be rewarded by acknowledgment of contribution and relevance. Such changes are necessary as traditional promotions did not reward performance, but rather rewarded loyalty, fitting in, and length of service. In the new paradigm, the employee will be rewarded by the opportunity to do a good job and therefore, achieve job enrichment. Such an approach will foster a return to total quality in work performance and emphasize self direction and motivation. Advocates of this approach are growing. For example, an article in *Personnel* (“Downsizing After-Shocks Demand Coaching, Training and Leading, 1991) has reported that the Work in America Institute published a report that supports this model.

In addition, Noer has suggested that empowering the employee, through the tenets of the new psychological contract, is an important next step in the process of corporate

change. Empowering the employee will lead to autonomous employees, who take risk, make decisions and take their career paths into their own hands.

The old paradigm forged loyalty to the organization and remaining with the organization. Seemingly to advocate the traditional thinking of the old paradigm, Traub (1990), appeared to penalize the employee who has tried in the old paradigm to explore new avenues of employment. He stated in his article that loyalty only existed as defined by the employee. He pointed out some of the recent graduates of college are coming into the business world with the attitude of leaving an organization for only a short amount of time. He reported the attitudes of recent graduates is to learn as many marketable skills as possible from an organization and move on. He also noted that middle managers are now taking on career plans of not being with an organization for more than 10 years before departing. Traub concluded not understanding why so many employees are so upset about corporate loyalty in a downsizing atmosphere, when many employees only practiced loyalty until the next better offer came along.

Noer's model encouraged employees to forge new loyal ties to the work they perform and not to the organization. Consistent with this view, employees should be openly encouraged to seek employment as this will create an atmosphere in which employees will take responsibility for their careers. In turn, the organization will create mobility, gain flexibility and reduce costs. Overall Noer has advocated that this new approach creates a win-win situation for all.

Newell, Redfoot and Sotar (1987) have reported an improved orientation system for new employees at the U. S. Department of Education, which demonstrates an application of Noer's idea of the new paradigm. The system was designed to enable new employees to take control of their own careers through various support systems. Additionally, it was created to maintain morale of new employees in a work force which had gone through a downsizing. The focus of this new system was to involve each employee in a people network. To accomplish this managers were instructed to devise action plans to affect three environments, physical, social and work for the new employees. Personnel teams were used to give the new employee access to career counseling on a regular basis and intervention methods for any problems which may arise for the employee. Career intern councils served to educate the new employee about all aspects of the organization. Monthly one-day training sessions provided the opportunity for new employees to see each other on a regular basis, and therefore, give and receive encouragement from peers. Finally, a first class of new employees were to be paired with a second class of new employees. This would provide the opportunity to keep the program going and to change the new work force into autonomous, independent thinking individuals. In conclusion the system was herald as an innovative step towards the new psychological contract.

A final component of Noer's model was diversity recruitment. he has urged that organizations need "new blood" to continue their growth and development. Such efforts should break the organization from the old paradigm of promoting from within and thereby pulling from a narrow pool of similar people.

Despite efforts to promote diversity, African-American managers have been seen as targets of downsizing efforts. Williams (1994) reported that white workers have become hostile toward the African-American co-worker because of feelings of “unworthy competitors”. African American professionals are no longer a protected group of workers during downsizing efforts. African-American managers have reported that they are being shut out of team projects and team planning (Williams, 1994). As a result, they then appear unproductive and fearful and are often targeted for future downsizing. Dingle (1987) has argued that the affirmative action efforts which got many African-American managers to the level of management, have been “placed on the back burner” in the wake of corporations busily shuffling their assets.

Noer’s model is the most comprehensive one to date. It has attempted to address survivor reactions from the perspectives of emotional, psychological and behavioral. However the model has not been empirically tested and therefore, it is not known if the model really works. Relying upon anecdotal feedback does not satisfy the scientific verification to prove this a viable model for intervention. Nonetheless, Noer must be commended for thinking through the various stages the survivor progresses and his attempt to address the needs of those stages.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

The literature reviewed has reported that survivors experience many different characteristics and processes. While much of the literature concerning downsizing and survivor reactions (e.g. "Corporate Downsizing: Minimizing Employee Trauma, 1988; "Fear and Trembling After Downsizing", 1993), appeared anecdotal, an effort was made to address the survivor reactions from a scientific framework. The literature on characteristics addressed areas of organizational commitment, productivity, performance and motivators, feelings toward fellow survivors, job security and marital and family problems.

The literature found that survivors decreased their organizational commitment due to identifying with the workers who were laid-off (Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt and O'Malley, 1987), specifically if the survivor felt that the organization did not perform good caretaking practices. Survivors also showed decreased organizational commitment because of the legitimacy of the lay-offs (Mellor, 1990). Survivors appear to lose organizational commitment when the decision to downsize lacked clarity (Brockner, DeWitt, Grover and Reed, 1990). Further, survivors have been shown to decrease organizational commitment when they have very high commitment towards the

organization before the downsizing (Brockner, Tyler, and Cooper-Schneider, 1992b). Finally survivors were shown to decrease organizational commitment when there was no ample warning period concerning the impending downsizing effort (Brockner, Konovsky, et al., 1994).

In addition survivors appear to decrease their productivity and performance. Brockner, Davy and Carter (1985) offered survivor guilt as an explanation for reduction in productivity and performance. Brockner, Davy, et al. stated that the survivor would reduce their productivity due to high self-esteem and the low self-esteem worker would increase their productivity and performance. The reduction was due to survivors needing to prove to themselves that they were worthy of retaining their positions and therefore more valuable to the organization than their counterparts. Work productivity and performance decreased because the survivor experienced the anger towards the organization for not searching for more viable solutions than downsizing. Particularly, survivors were angry if the identification was discovered to be high with the victims.

Survivors may also either distanced themselves from the victims or they distance themselves from the organization (Brockner, 1990). In doing so survivors, may be better able to cope with the mixture of emotions of anger, hurt and disillusionment. Finally, survivors have had further unfavorable reactions when the job content and job context changed after downsizing (Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover, and Martin, 1993a). In addition, survivors are often left with the uncertainty of future downsizing. Thus the development of job insecurity.

Job insecurity appears to contribute to the survivor having difficulty believing in the organization again. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) have attempted to develop a model to clarify the definition of job insecurity. This in turn can be used to develop intervention methods to alleviate the adverse affects of job insecurity on survivor reactions. Job insecurity not only affects the survivor but also affects the survivors family. Larson, Wilson and Beley (1994) demonstrated the survivor's familial relationships are also affected. They conclude that this adds to the pressure of the survivor.

Intervention models are needed to address the issues of survivors in the work environment. Brockner (1986) attempted to outline four factors needed to develop a comprehensive intervention model to ease the impact of downsizing for survivors. They included nature of work, formal organization, informal organization, and environment. The nature of work addressed the stress of the job before layoffs and then after the layoffs. The formal organization was defined as the communication of the layoff efforts. The informal organization was defined as the culture of the company, which dictates behaviors, norms and acceptable consequences. Finally, the environment was defined as other organizations in the industry and whether or not those organizations are experiencing downsizings. Brockner stated if the four factors are addressed in an intervention model, chances were good of developing an affective intervention model.

Noer (1993) attempted to develop a comprehensive intervention model, based upon some of Brocker's factors. Noer developed a four level intervention model addressing the variety of survivor needs and reactions. Noer attempted to address the needs of the



survivor before the downsizing began in Level 1 intervention. He emphasized abundant communication is helpful to diffuse some of the adverse survivor reactions. In addition he pointed out the significance, as did Right Associates (1993), further adverse reactions can be avoided if alternative cost effective strategies were used. Level 2 interventions can be used to help the survivor process the emotions felt during the downsizing. During this stage, it has been noted that survivors engage in many negative behaviors, from organizational blaming to isolation. Level 3 interventions helped the survivor become autonomous and empower the worker. The literature pointed out that the survivor experienced a loss of control over their work situation. Level 3 restored that control. Finally, Level 4 addressed the new psychological contract. Various intervention methods attempted to address the survivor's needs (e.g., Covin 1993, Sullivan and Silverstein, 1993, Alveras and Frigeri, 1987, Roskies, Louis-Guerin, Fournier, 1993), however, they were not as comprehensive as the Noer model in addressing the psychological, emotional and behavioral aspects of survivor reactions.

Downsizing has become a standard operating practice in corporate America. Along with the commonality of this practice, the commonality of survivor sickness will increase. The literature reviewed has suggested that this is an area which needs continual research to fully understand what survivors do experience and what can be learned about those reactions to develop better intervention models.

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## VITA

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Community Counseling.

4/7/97  
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