

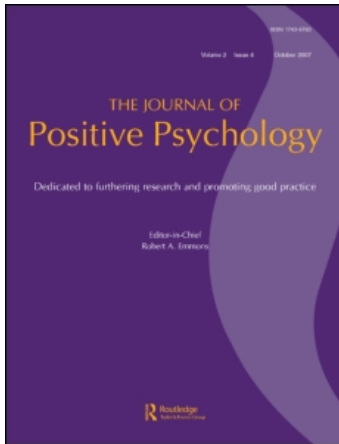
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## The influence of organizational respect on emotional exhaustion in the human services

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The influence of organizational respect on emotional exhaustion was examined in a longitudinal field study in the human services industry. Of a sample of 108 Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) working in a long-term health care facility for the elderly, those CNAs who reported greater organizational respect at Time 1 experienced less emotional exhaustion 16 months later (Time 2). Through a longitudinal field experiment, we also examined the outcomes of an organizational change intended to increase organizational respect for the facility's employees. As predicted, CNAs on units undergoing organizational change experienced a decrease in emotional exhaustion from Time 1 to Time 2 compared to CNAs on the control units, and this effect was partially mediated by the degree of organizational respect reported by the employees. CNA's satisfaction with the change was also related to a decrease in emotional exhaustion, and this effect was completely mediated by the degree of reported organizational respect.

**Keywords:** respect; emotional exhaustion; burnout; organizational change; positive psychology; human services; long-term care; certified nursing assistants

### Introduction

Respect is a term used ubiquitously by management in organizations. Companies as diverse as Ben & Jerry's (n.d.), Microsoft (n.d.), and Bayer (n.d.) have emphasized respect in their mission statements, or listed respect as a core value of their organizations. However, organizational behavior scholars have only recently focused on respect and its role in the workplace (Cronin, 2004). In this article, we examine existing evidence from the basic social sciences, as well as from organizational behavior research, to understand the concept of respect and its influence in human service work. We then investigate the role that organizational respect plays in alleviating the emotional exhaustion of employees; a critical component of burnout, and an important outcome in human service organizations (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Last, through a longitudinal field experiment in a long-term health care organization for the elderly, we examine whether the level of organizational respect can be purposefully increased by an organization's management, and in doing so reduce emotional exhaustion among the organization's employees.

### What is respect?

Research about respect is widely dispersed across disciplines, ranging from philosophy to sociology to psychology. In philosophy and ethics, receiving and giving respect is understood to be a fundamental right and duty of human beings (Kant, 1993). From the receiver's perspective, respect communicates recognition of one's existence (Honneth, 1992), and encourages positive views of one's self to which all human beings are thought to be entitled (Rawls, 1971). Respect has an inherently powerful social dimension. For example, G. H. Mead (1934) described how an individual's self (his or her identity and ability to function in the world) is a reflection of the approval and recognition that is gained from others. Likewise, Goffman (1967) argued that the sacredness of the self is affirmed through others' expressions of regard. Thus, receiving respect confirms an individual's worth as a human being (Margolis, 2001). Conversely, experiencing a lack of respect from others can undermine a person's very existence (Goffman, 1959). As Honneth (1992) argues, 'the experience of disrespect poses the risk of an injury that can cause the entire identity of a person to collapse'

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(p. 189). This is because, when treated disrespectfully, an individual's feelings of self-worth are negatively impacted (Miller, 2001). Furthermore, disrespectful treatment communicates others' disapproval and/or devaluation of the disrespected person (Hornstein et al., 1995). Disrespectful behavior may also communicate that the enactor of the disrespect believes the receiver is not worthy of minimal common courtesies due to other members of the same community (Hornstein et al., 1995). What emerges from these studies of respect is that giving respect is based on the showing of esteem, dignity, and care for another person's positive self-regard. Because employees can create a sense of self based on their workplaces (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), the respect and dignity they obtain in their organizations can be critical to their self-worth (Hodson, 2001) and thus may operate as a powerful force in shaping work outcomes.

### Organizational respect

When considering respect in organizations, the core elements of respect described above (esteem, dignity, and care for others' positive self-regard) remain critical. Additionally, however, one needs to explicitly consider another important factor, the collective nature of organizational life. Organizations are comprised of groups of individuals working together, and we need to take this into account to fully understand how respect operates in the collective context of an organization. One way in which researchers have accounted for respect in a collective context is by defining the phenomenon as regard by one's social group, often communicated in the form of status within the group (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; Smith & Tyler, 1997; Tyler, 1999; Tyler & Blader, 2001). In this view, a person who is respected in an organization will often be a recipient of high-status within the organization, and respect is collective because it is conveyed by the group at large to the individual. There has also been research about respect in organizational settings where respect is conceptualized as a property of the collective itself; that is, members of the organization can jointly agree upon and recognize what constitutes respect in their organization. For example, in a study of organizational culture surveying over 800 employees across seven organizations, O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell (1991) found that 'Respect for People' was one of seven organizational values consistently jointly identified by participants as a meaningful way of characterizing their organization's culture. Similarly, Tenbrunsel, Smith-Crowe, and Umphress (2003) discuss organizational respect as a climate in which organizational members collectively share their perceptions of the esteem, dignity, and consideration shown to people within the organization.

Last, respect can be conceptualized collectively to the extent that all others in the organization, not just the self, are treated with respect. This would occur because of the social nature of information processing in organizations; information comes not only from the employee's own experience, but also from second hand sources such as coworkers and managers (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978), and from vicarious learning via direct observation of others' experiences in the organization (Bandura, 1977). Thus, building on this research across disciplines and within organizational behavior, we define organizational respect as an individual's perceptions regarding the extent to which employees in the organization, including but not limited to the self, are treated with dignity and care for their positive self-regard through approval and positive valuation.

As research on organizational respect is in its initial stages, it is important to differentiate respect from theoretically related constructs in other areas of organizational behavior. For example, Cronin (2004) theoretically and empirically distinguished respect from trust, an important aspect of interpersonal relationships in organizations. He argues that while trust communicates judgments of a person's believability, respect communicates judgments of that person's worth. In the justice literature, the closest constructs to organizational respect are interactional and interpersonal justice, both of which reflect the quality of communication between the employee and the direct source of justice (e.g., supervisor or manager) (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001). In some views, the interpersonal component of interactional justice is seen as treating others with politeness, dignity, and respect (Bies & Moag, 1986). However, others have argued that perceptions of injustice are not the same as perceptions of disrespect, but rather an antecedent to respect (Miller, 2001). An important distinction is that justice perceptions are directly related to the actual authority figure that enacts a procedure or decides an outcome (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001), while judgments about organizational respect are not limited to the way one is treated by a particular other, but rather how employees are generally treated, and treat each other, within the organization.

### The human services industry: the influence of organizational respect on emotional exhaustion

The human services industry offers a particularly relevant setting for studying respect because ensuring respect for individuals in such organizations is espoused as a very important value (Gallagher, 2004; Jacobs, 2001; McCormack & Reed, 2005). Emerging research on respect in the human services industry shows that respect influences outcomes such as trust in management (Laschinger & Finegan, 2005) and patient care (Blanchard & Lurie, 2004). We expand on this

research by examining the influence of respect on a phenomenon that is prevalent among employees in the human services: emotional exhaustion, a core component of burnout (Cherniss, 1980; Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Evans & Fisher, 1993; Leiter & Maslach, 1988; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout is a 'psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job' (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001, p. 399). Emotional exhaustion, a central dimension of burnout, is characterized by feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted by one's work, usually in the context of interpersonal work transactions (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion has been shown, across a variety of organizations, to influence a wide range of organizational and individual outcomes, including organizational commitment, citizenship behaviors, performance, and turnover intentions (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Richer, Blanchard, & Vallerand, 2002). In human service organizations, emotional exhaustion has been found to influence organizational performance outcomes such as client satisfaction and care (Garman, Corrigan, & Morris, 2002; Leiter, Harvie, & Frizzell, 1998), as well as individual employee outcomes such as job performance and turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). In this paper, we integrate the importance of respect in human service organizations with the existence of high levels of emotional exhaustion among human services employees (Cherniss, 1980; Leiter & Maslach, 1988) to see how organizational respect may be able to decrease emotional exhaustion.

Organizational respect could influence emotional exhaustion in a variety of ways. First, as previously discussed, respect positively influences self-regard while disrespectful behavior calls it into question (Goffman, 1959, 1963; Greenberg, 1993; Miller, 2001). Positive self-regard, or a belief in one's fundamental worth, is a component of self-esteem (Locke, McClellan, & Knight, 1996), and high self-esteem has consistently been shown to be negatively associated with emotional exhaustion (Golembiewski & Kim, 1989; Golembiewski & Aldinger, 1994; Janssen, Schaufeli, & Houkes, 1999). Second, there is research linking aspects of respect to one's engagement with work; engagement has been described as the opposite of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). For example, employees who feel respected by their organizations have been found to expend more effort on their organizations' behalf and be more engaged with their organizations (Smith & Tyler, 1997; Tyler & Blader, 2001). Additionally, work engagement has been discussed as coming from high quality connections among individuals (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Gittell, 2003) and characteristics of high quality connections which may lead to high engagement, such as a high

degree of coordination and information sharing and low levels of conflict, can be driven by respect (Cronin, 2004; Gittell, 2003). Thus, overall, employees who feel respected are expected to be more engaged, an opposing psychological state to emotional exhaustion. Last, disrespectful attitudes and behaviors in a human service setting can lead to greater emotional exhaustion directly because of the apparent hypocrisy of the organization. For example, if an organization's mission statement stresses the importance of respect but members of the organization do not actually treat one another respectfully this could lead to cynicism and emotional exhaustion on the part of employees (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). Organizational disrespect may also result in the need to suppress and mask negative emotions at work, which can lead directly to emotional exhaustion (Grandey, 2003). As such, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1. Organizational respect will be negatively related to employees' emotional exhaustion.

***Organizational change: can organizations reduce emotional exhaustion by enhancing respect?***

One of the key implications of identifying organizational respect as an alleviator of emotional exhaustion is that organizations may be able to intervene to improve organizational respect and thus reduce emotional exhaustion in their employees. That is, organizations with low levels of organizational respect need not live with the status quo, but can act purposively to convey respect to their employees via cultural and complementary structural changes. Theoretical perspectives on organizational change indicate that organizations can often successfully change what they intentionally set out to alter (Huy, 2001; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Empirical evidence also suggests that this is the case across various types of organizational change efforts (Bartunek & Franzak, 1988; Collerette, Legris, & Manghi, 2006; Nurick, 1982), including culture change involving the values, norms, and practices within organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Gibson & Barsade, 2003; Nadler, 1983; Schneider, Brief, & Guzzo, 1996; ).

How could change focused on increasing organizational respect reduce emotional exhaustion? First, such a change could lower emotional exhaustion by directly instilling a greater amount of respect into the workplace. Employees could observe, experience, and convey respectful treatment towards others as part of a change in values, norms, and practices, thereby creating a positive cycle of respect (similar to other positive cycles of emotion; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Hareli & Rafaeli, 2007). Laboratory researchers have been successful in doing this by increasing respect experimentally, finding that



increased respect positively influences constructs similar to engagement, such as individuals' investment in and contributions to a group (De Cremer, 2002; De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; Simon & Stürmer, 2003). For instance, in De Cremer's (2002) experimental manipulation, participants in the 'respect' condition were told that other members of the group felt that consideration for group members was important, and that all contributions would be valued in making group decisions. In the 'no respect' condition, participants were told the opposite. The manipulation was successful, and also led to differences in outcome, with people in the respect condition contributing more to the group (in the form of giving more of their own personal resources for the public good) than in the non-respect condition. Simon and Stürmer (2003) used a similar approach to foster respect. In the 'respect' condition, participants read statements from alleged group members that conveyed interest in the participant's contribution, while in the 'no respect' condition, the statements conveyed the opposite. In this study, the authors also found that participants in the 'respect' condition contributed more to the group (in the form of willingness to devote more time to group tasks) and identified more with the group than participants in the 'no respect' condition. Although creating respect through organizational change is more complex than inducing respect in an experiment, these studies offer preliminary support that respect can be intentionally fostered and can lead to predicted outcomes.

Thus, we predict that in organizations undergoing a change designed to increase organizational respect, employees who are part of the change will experience increased organizational respect and a subsequent decrease in emotional exhaustion as compared to employees who are not part of the change. Also, because organizational change is complex and can include many intended and unintended structural and psychological components (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002), we do not presume that the only factors lowering emotional exhaustion will be related to organizational respect. We therefore offer the following partially mediated hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Employees who are undergoing an organizational change to increase organizational respect will experience decreases in emotional exhaustion relative to employees who are not undergoing such a change, and this effect will be partially mediated by organizational respect.

One challenge of creating an organizational change towards respect is that the process of change can be demanding and difficult to control (Gibson & Barsade, 2003; Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992; Ogbonna & Wilkinson, 2003). Employee satisfaction and acceptance of change, which often occurs through a process

of interpretation and sense-making, is critical to the success of a change (Barrett, Thomas, & Hocevar, 1995; Fiss & Zajac, 2006; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Palmer & Dunford, 2002; Weick, 1995). Researchers in a range of studies across many organizations have shown that organizational change can have unintended negative consequences if it is not executed well (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Hannan, Pólos, & Carroll, 2003; Hrosckikoski, Solberg, Sperl-Hillen, Harper, McGrail, & Crabtree, 2006; Landsbergis & Vivona-Vaughan, 1995; Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000). In a study of culture change, for example, Harris and Ogbonna (1998) found that employees in two retail organizations displayed a wide range of reactions to culture change attempts including acceptance, ambivalence, cynicism, and rejection. In another study, Ogbonna and Wilkinson (2003) found that rather than effecting a positive transformation in values, employees in an organization undergoing culture change perceived a greater degree of surveillance and control by the organization, an unanticipated negative outcome of the change.

Even if employees are not cynical or disillusioned about the motivations for change, organizational change is a turbulent process and employees often react to change with stress and fear (Pollard, 2001). They may experience greater stress due to uncertainty, as fundamental norms and assumptions of their working world are changed (Ashford, 1998). Indeed, employees who perceive greater uncertainty during organizational change have been shown to exhibit less job satisfaction and greater turnover intentions (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006), while employees who are open to organizational change show greater job satisfaction and less intention to quit (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Therefore, we predict that in addition to the organization's actual initiation of a change process towards greater respect, employee satisfaction with the organizational change effort will be an important element in achieving the predicted positive outcomes. Specifically, we predict that satisfaction with the change will lead to feelings of greater respect, which will in turn positively influence emotional exhaustion. Similar to our earlier hypothesis, the effects of satisfaction with the organizational change may act upon emotional exhaustion through psychological mechanisms other than organizational respect, or even act directly upon emotional exhaustion. Thus, we offer this partially mediated hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Employee satisfaction with the organization's culture change effort toward increasing organizational respect will be related to decreases in employee emotional exhaustion, and this effect will be partially mediated by organizational respect.

To summarize, the purpose of the present study is to explore the influence of organizational respect on

emotional exhaustion in the human services. In particular, we argue that organizational respect will negatively predict employees' feelings of emotional exhaustion. Second, we examine whether organizational change can influence employees' emotional exhaustion by increasing the level of organizational respect in the organization, and whether employees' satisfaction with that change can influence emotional exhaustion via organizational respect. We test these hypotheses in a longitudinal field experiment, in a long-term health care organization for the elderly that was actively pursuing an organizational culture change which included increasing the organizational respect shown toward, and among, its employees.

## Method

### *Participants*

This study was conducted in a large urban long-term health care facility for the elderly on the North-East Coast of the USA. The entire three campus organization includes 47 units and serves approximately 1600 elderly nursing home residents. The participants were full-time certified nursing assistants (CNAs) who worked in 13 units across the three sites of the organization. CNAs are paraprofessional staff members who provide most of the hands-on care (e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, and grooming) for nursing home residents. CNAs typically take care of about 6 to 10 residents at a time. The work of the CNA can be both emotionally and physically taxing due to the manual labor of the job as well as the intense interpersonal interaction with individuals who are chronically ill and/or dying.

Data from participants were collected in two waves. The first wave occurred in September 2003 (Time 1) and the second wave occurred 16 months later in January 2005 (Time 2). At Time 1, 214 CNAs received the survey and 161 CNAs responded (75% response rate). At Time 2, 67% of those that responded in Time 1 returned the survey, leading to a sample of 108 CNAs in the study. The participants' mean tenure with the organization was 11.87 years ( $SD = 8.29$ ). Eighty percent of the participants were female. Twenty five percent of the participants completed some high school education, 32% had a high school degree, 31% completed some college education, 7% had college degrees, and 5% reported another type of degree. Level of education had no influence on study outcomes.

### *Procedure*

At the start of this study the participating long-term health care facility was about to begin an organizational change process to transform the organization from an organizational culture based on a primarily

medically focused hospital model of care to one focused on the quality of life and everyday well-being of the residents. Greater respect for all staff members was a critical goal of the culture change initiative. The management of the organization, assisted by two of the authors, designed a field experiment by assigning 13 of the organization's 47 units to either an experimental or control condition. Seven of the 13 units were experimental units and the remaining 6 were control units. Experimental and control units were matched as closely as possible on key structural and population dimensions, including level of care needed by the residents, number of staff members on the unit, number of residents on the unit, and the physical structure/layout of the unit.

In the seven experimental units, the change in culture toward greater respect for all staff consisted of various components. For instance, instead of the traditional hierarchical organizational structure found in most hospitals and nursing homes, unit staff members were organized as community teams responsible for setting and implementing unit policies and procedures, within the parameters of overall facility budget and clinical standards. Increasing respect in this context included, among other things, involving the staff, including the CNAs, in problem solving, actively listening to their ideas, and valuing their different cultural perspectives. For example, certified nursing assistants, nurses, social workers, recreation therapists, and physicians on each unit worked together to solve problems and provide holistic resident care. Certified nursing assistants were also increasingly asked to take part in care meetings, which was a signal of respect for their work and an affirmation of their knowledge of the residents they cared for.

In the six control units, employees continued to function along the facility's pre-change model of care. Thus, they maintained the typical nursing home/hospital organizational structure with the standard administrative and departmental hierarchy of care; no team efforts or greater opportunities for greater participation were instituted. However, residents, family members, and, in particular, staff members on the control units were aware that the change initiative had begun on other units, and that they too would eventually take part in the change.

Prior to the organizational change being implemented, two of the authors conducted extensive site visits which consisted of interviews with all levels of employees in the organization, as well as focus groups and a town hall meeting (which included senior management involvement). From these meetings, we developed a list of survey items, including items reflecting measures of organizational respect in this long-term health care facility. These items were circulated again and received approval from senior management, organizational change leaders,

department heads, and line staff that the items accurately reflected the culture the organization was trying to establish. Time 1 baseline measures were collected prior to the change implementation. The Time 2 measures were collected 16 months later to allow sufficient time for the organizational change to take effect. At both Time 1 and Time 2, employees received the surveys during the workday and were able to complete them in a confidential manner. Study authors debriefed staff members at the end of the study and led discussions about the results of the study with participants in small groups across the organization and, in conjunction with senior management, conducted a debrief in a town hall meeting open to anyone in the organization.

## Measures

### Organizational respect

Organizational respect was measured at Time 1 and Time 2 with a 5-item scale. We generated the scale directly from a cross-section of organizational members (through the interviews, focus groups, and town hall meetings described above) by determining what it would mean in this long-term health care facility to be respected, thus using an 'emic' approach. That is, we operationalized respect based on what it meant to the employees in this specific context.<sup>1</sup>

The organizational respect scale consisted of the following five items that reflected what it meant to be respected in this organization: staff members respect each other; staff members are treated with dignity; cultural diversity of the staff is valued; staff members are encouraged to be creative when solving problems; and supervisors pay attention to staff members' ideas. Participants rated each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = not at all characteristic to 5 = very characteristic of their unit, with higher numbers indicating greater organizational respect. Across the entire sample, the mean of the scale at Time 1 was 3.37 (SD = 0.86), with a Chronbach's alpha of 0.82. The mean of the scale at Time 2 was 3.41 (SD = 0.84) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81.

### Organizational change units

Of the 13 units chosen as part of this field experiment, 7 units were assigned to undergo a culture change while 6 units were designated as study control units. Units were coded as 1 if they were experimental units involved in the organizational culture change and 0 if they were control units.

### Satisfaction with organizational change

This was measured at Time 2 with a 6-item scale which asked participants how they felt about the

organization's culture change. The items were: I think that culture change in my unit is a good idea; I do not like the way the [the organization] has gone about doing the culture change (reverse-coded); There has been information and communication about [the organization's] culture change initiative; I am excited about the culture change process; I think that culture change will lead to positive changes in my unit; and I think that culture change will lead to positive change in resident quality of life. Scores ranged from 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction with the organizational change process. The mean of the scale was 3.73 (SD = 0.69) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.76).

### Emotional exhaustion

This was measured at Time 1 and Time 2 with four items from the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Ito & Brotheridge, 2003; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The items were: I feel emotionally drained from my work; I feel used up at the end of the workday; I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job; and I feel burned out from my work. The responses were measured on a Likert scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, with higher numbers reflecting greater emotional exhaustion. The mean of the scale at Time 1 was 2.78 (SD = 0.89), with a Chronbach's alpha of 0.79. The mean of the scale at Time 2 was 2.90 (SD = 0.87), with a Chronbach's alpha of 0.76.

### Trait negativity affectivity

Past research has shown a robust effect of personality factors such as the Big Five and other individual differences on emotional exhaustion (Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Negative affectivity is one of the most widely cited personality variables relating to emotional exhaustion (Burke, Brief, & George, 1993; Houkes, Janssen, de Jonge, & Bakker, 2003). Thus, we control for Trait Negative Affectivity at Time 2, using an 8-item version of Watson, Clark, and Tellegen's (1988) Trait NA-PANAS scale.<sup>2</sup> This is a dispositional measure for which employees rated their general tendency to feel distressed, scared, hostile, irritable, upset, nervous, afraid, and guilty on a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = extremely. The mean was 1.66 (SD = 0.67), with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81.

### Site

Since there were three different sites in this long-term health care facility, dummy variables for location were included. A total of 42.5% of the sample worked at Site 1, 39% worked at Site 2, and 18.5% worked at Site 3.



### Tenure

Tenure data were provided by the organization's human resource department and were calculated as the number of years the employee had been employed by the organization at Time 2 (mean = 11.87 years, SD = 8.29).

### Sex

This was a categorical variable coded as 0 if the participant was a female (80% of the sample) and 1 if the participant was a male (20% of the sample).

## Results

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for all study variables as well as the zero-order correlations among them.

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine the hypotheses. To test Hypothesis 1, that organizational respect is negatively related to emotional exhaustion, we first predicted emotional exhaustion at Time 2 from the control variables at Step 1.<sup>3</sup> At Step 2, we entered Time 1 organizational respect in the regression. As presented in Table 2, we found a significant influence of organizational respect at Time 1 on emotional exhaustion at Time 2 ( $\beta = -0.23$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1.<sup>4</sup>

To test Hypothesis 2, that employees who experienced an organizational change to increase organizational respect would experience a decrease in emotional exhaustion relative to employees who did not undergo such a change, we first examined whether levels of organizational respect and emotional exhaustion differed between the organizational change and control units at Time 1. As we would expect from a measure taken at baseline, there were no significant differences in Time 1 organizational respect or Time 1 emotional exhaustion between the organizational change units and control units ( $F(1, 102) = 2.07$ , n.s. for organizational respect and  $F(1, 102) = 0.02$ , n.s. for emotional exhaustion). However, by Time 2, after the organizational change was enacted, there were significant differences between the organizational change units versus control units on both organizational respect and emotional exhaustion ( $F(1, 106) = 6.60$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for organizational respect and  $F(1, 106) = 8.817$ ,  $p < .01$  for emotional exhaustion). As predicted, after the change effort had been implemented, employees on the organizational change units reported more organizational respect and less emotional exhaustion than employees on the control units.

To determine whether, as predicted by Hypothesis 2, the relationship between the organizational change condition and decreasing emotional exhaustion was

partially mediated by organizational respect, we used the regression procedure described by Baron and Kenny (1986). In this analysis, three regressions are required. First, the independent variable should predict the outcome variable directly. Second, the independent variable should predict the mediator. Third, the mediator variable should predict the outcome when the initial independent variable is included in the equation. As Hypothesis 2 predicted that organizational respect would partially mediate the relationship between organizational change and emotional exhaustion, we expected to see that organizational change (the independent variable) would predict emotional exhaustion at Time 2 (the dependent variable); organizational change (the independent variable) would predict organizational respect at Time 2 (the mediator) and organizational respect at Time 2 (the mediator) would predict emotional exhaustion at Time 2 (the dependent variable) when organizational change (the independent variable) is included in the regression. The regressions used to examine Hypothesis 2 are presented in Table 3 (see Figure 1).

As presented in Table 3 Model 1, we predicted emotional exhaustion at Time 2 from Time 1 emotional exhaustion and relevant control variables at Step 1. At Step 2, we entered the organizational change unit variable and found that employees in organizational change units had a significant reduction in their emotional exhaustion level from Time 1 to Time 2 as compared to those who were in control units. As indicated in Table 3 Model 2, employees in organizational change units also reported significantly greater organizational respect compared to those in control units. Last, when we included both these variables in Table 3 Model 3, the regression coefficient for organizational change units was smaller (but still significant) when organizational respect was included in the regression, indicating support for partial mediation. Although the regression analyses are a primary test for mediation, it is also useful to confirm the results with a test of the indirect path (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Accordingly we used the Sobel test for significance of the indirect path to examine these hypotheses, and found that it was statistically significant ( $z = -2.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), also offering support for Hypothesis 2 showing that organizational respect is a partial mediator of the relationship between organizational change and decreases in emotional exhaustion.

We employed the same mediation technique described above to test Hypothesis 3 in which we predicted that employee satisfaction with the organization's change effort to increase organizational respect shown to staff members would predict decreases in employee emotional exhaustion, and that this effect would be partially mediated by organizational respect. The regressions used to examine this hypothesis are



Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Organizational respect (T1)	3.37	0.86	—										
2 Organizational respect (T2)	3.41	0.84	0.57***	—									
3 Organizational change units	0.57	0.50	0.14	0.24*	—								
4 Satisfaction with change (T2)	3.73	0.69	0.38***	0.56***	0.32***	—							
5 Emotional exhaustion (T1)	2.78	0.89	-0.20*	-0.20*	0.02	-0.16	—						
6 Emotional exhaustion (T2)	2.90	0.87	-0.31**	-0.43***	-0.27**	-0.36***	0.51***	—					
7 Trait negative affectivity (T2)	1.66	0.67	-0.14	-0.10	-0.14	-0.27**	0.34***	0.35***	—				
8 Tenure in years (T2)	11.87	8.29	-0.22*	0.06	-0.06	-0.09	0.12	0.24**	0.05	—			
9 Male	0.20	0.40	0.18	0.22*	0.10	0.21*	-0.07	-0.12	0.01	0.26*	—		
10 Site 1	0.43	0.50	0.34**	0.31**	0.14	0.42***	-0.11	0.04	-0.09	-0.01	0.15	—	
11 Site 2	0.39	0.49	-0.26**	-0.37***	-0.23*	-0.29**	0.16	0.13	0.12	0.01	-0.01	-0.68**	—

Note:  $N = 108$ ;  $T1 = \text{Time 1}$  and  $T2 = \text{Time 2}$ .

\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ ; two-tailed tests.

presented in Table 4. As seen in Table 4 Model 1 (see also Figure 1), we predicted emotional exhaustion at Time 2 from Time 1 emotional exhaustion and relevant control variables at Step 1. At Step 2, we entered satisfaction with organizational change. The results indicate that the more employees were satisfied with the organizational change effort at Time 2, the more likely they were to experience a reduction in their

emotional exhaustion level from Time 1 to Time 2. As indicated in Table 4 Model 2, the greater an employee's satisfaction with organizational change at Time 2 the more respected the employee felt at Time 2. Last, when we included both these variables in Table 4 Model 3, the regression coefficient for satisfaction with organizational change dropped to non-significance. The Sobel test was significant ( $z = -2.82, p < 0.001$ ), also offering support for mediation. Thus, the almost-zero and non-significant regression coefficient for satisfaction with organizational change, combined with the significant Sobel test, offer support for Hypothesis 3 that organizational respect mediates the relationship between employee satisfaction with the organizational change and reductions in emotional exhaustion. However, in this case, organizational respect fully, rather than partially, mediated the relationship between employee satisfaction with organizational change and emotional exhaustion.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analyses predicting emotional exhaustion (Time 2) from organizational respect (Time 1).

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$
<b>Step 1</b>			
Trait negative affectivity (T2)	0.26	0.08	0.32**
Tenure (T2)	0.00	0.00	0.26**
Male	-0.45	0.20	-0.20*
Site 1	0.38	0.23	0.21
Site 2	0.42	0.21	0.24 <sup>+</sup>
Organizational change units	-0.26	0.17	-0.15
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.28		
<i>F</i>	5.90***		
<b>Step 2</b>			
Organizational respect (T1)	-0.20	0.08	-0.23*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Change	0.05		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.33		
<i>F</i> Change	5.80*		
<i>F</i>	6.15***		

Notes:  $N = 98$ ;  $T1 = \text{Time 1}$  and  $T2 = \text{Time 2}$ .  
<sup>+</sup> $p < 0.10$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; two-tailed tests.

**Discussion**

This paper expands on existing perspectives on respect within organizations to examine the influence of organizational respect on emotional exhaustion in the human services. To this end, we conducted a longitudinal field study in a long-term health care facility for the elderly. As hypothesized, we found that for those certified nursing assistants (CNAs) in our sample reporting greater organizational respect there was significantly less emotional exhaustion 16 months later at Time 2. We also examined whether

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analyses with organizational respect as a mediator of the relationship between organizational change and emotional exhaustion.

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$
<b>Step 1</b>									
Emotional exhaustion (T1)	0.43	0.08	0.45***	-0.19	0.10	-0.21 <sup>+</sup>	0.43	0.08	0.45***
Trait negative affectivity (T2)	0.16	0.07	0.19*	0.01	0.08	-0.01	0.16	0.07	0.19*
Tenure (T2)	0.00	0.00	0.19*	0.00	0.00	-0.03	0.00	0.00	0.19*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.36			0.04			0.36		
<i>F</i>	17.87***			1.48			17.87***		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Organizational change units	-0.40	0.14	-0.23**	0.44	0.16	0.27**	-0.26	0.14	-0.15*
Organizational respect (T2)							-0.31	0.08	-0.29**
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Change	0.05			0.07			0.13		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.41			0.11			0.49		
<i>F</i> Change	8.49**			7.59**			11.74***		
<i>F</i>	16.56***			3.08***			17.79***		

Notes:  $N = 99$ ;  $T1 = \text{Time 1}$  and  $T2 = \text{Time 2}$ .  
\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; two-tailed tests.

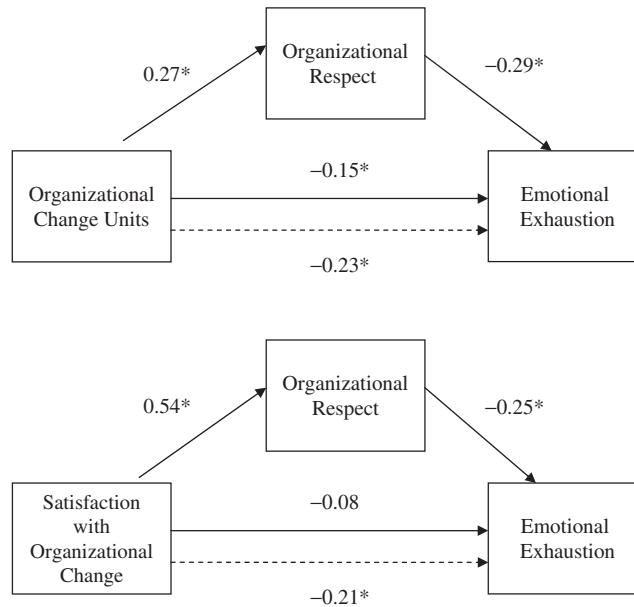


Figure 1. Organizational respect as a mediator of the organizational change variables on emotional exhaustion. Standardized betas are listed on the arrows. Broken line represents initial path without mediator. Solid line represents final paths with mediator.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression analyses with organizational respect as a mediator of the relationship between satisfaction with organizational change and emotional exhaustion.

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Emotional exhaustion Time 2			Organizational respect Time 2			Emotional exhaustion Time 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$
<b>Step 1</b>									
Emotional exhaustion (T1)	0.44	0.08	0.46***	-0.21	0.09	-0.23*	0.44	0.08	0.46***
Trait negative affectivity (T2)	0.13	0.07	0.16+	0.04	0.08	0.05	0.13	0.07	0.16+
Tenure (T2)	0.00	0.00	0.17*	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.00	0.00	0.17*
Organizational change units	-0.40	0.14	-0.23**	0.44	0.16	0.27**	-0.40	0.14	-0.23**
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.41			0.11			0.41		
<i>F</i>	16.56***			3.08**			16.56***		
<b>Step 2</b>									
Satisfaction with organizational change (T2)	-0.27	0.11	-0.21*	0.62	0.11	0.54***	-0.10	0.12	-0.08
Organizational respect (T2)							-0.27	0.10	-0.25*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Change	0.04			0.24			0.08		
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.45			0.35			0.49		
<i>F</i> Change	6.44*			34.59***			7.24**		
<i>F</i>	15.29***			10.25***			14.88***		

Notes: *N* = 99; T1 = Time 1 and T2 = Time 2.

+*p* < 0.1; \**p* < 0.05; \*\**p* < 0.01; \*\*\**p* < 0.001; two-tailed tests.

leaders in organizations could take purposeful action to change and enhance organizational respect in the workplace, and thus lower the emotional exhaustion of the employees who work there. To do so we examined the results of a longitudinal field experiment in which the goals of an organizational culture change process included increasing the organizational respect shown to employees. Our results show that the employees in our sample who worked in units

undergoing a culture change, which was aimed at increasing organizational respect conveyed toward staff members, did experience a decrease in emotional exhaustion from Time 1 to Time 2 as compared to employees who worked in control units. As predicted, this relationship was partially mediated by the employees' reports of organizational respect. Furthermore, we found that employee satisfaction with the change was also positively related to ratings

of organizational respect and, in turn, to a decrease in emotional exhaustion from Time 1 to Time 2. Organizational respect fully mediated the relationship between employee satisfaction with organizational change and emotional exhaustion. This is an interesting finding as our partial mediation hypothesis for Hypothesis 3 was intentionally conservative, under the assumption that given the complexities of organizational change, organizational respect would not explain all of the influence of satisfaction with change on emotional exhaustion. It may be that in the case of satisfaction with change, organizational respect played an even more dominant psychological mediating role than we predicted. This result could have interesting theoretical and practical implications for the importance of organizational respect in predicting employee satisfaction more broadly. For instance, future research could examine employees' reports of organizational respect and staff satisfaction surveys across a variety of domains, to see if this construct also mediates other aspects of staff satisfaction.

Examining the mean level change across the experimental and control units in this study indicated that while there was an expected downward change in emotional exhaustion in the experimental units from Time 1 to Time 2 (2.79 to 2.69), there was a more significant change upward in emotional exhaustion in the control units during this time period (2.76 to 3.18). To better understand these effects we investigated this phenomenon in debrief sessions (personal conversations, group meetings, interviews with senior management, and a town hall meeting). The explanation given most often by employees and management was that the culture change coincided with a difficult time in the organization. Between Time 1 and Time 2 there were layoffs, turnover, a tightening of resources, and expectations of sustained performance despite these difficulties, all of which influenced both the organizational change and control units. Thus, the respect conveyed by the organizational change may have served as a type of inoculation for employees in the change units, as employees in these units did not experience a significant increase in their emotional exhaustion over this time. This unexpected influence of the external environment is one of the drawbacks of field research. For example, Landsbergis and Vivona-Vaughan (1995) found a similar phenomenon in their study of an organization's intervention to reduce stress that occurred at the same time that the organization was undergoing reorganization and layoffs. However, a benefit we have in this study is the experimental nature of the design, even within the field setting. The knowledge that the control units did not differ significantly from the experimental units in Time 1 in either level of respect or emotional exhaustion, but did differ in the predicted directions at Time 2 after

undergoing the same 'environmental treatment,' helps give confidence to our results. Thus, these results suggest that organizational respect can directly influence, and reduce, emotional exhaustion in a human service setting, even in turbulent times.

While organizations can be sites of negative experiences and emotions (Cherniss, 1980; Driver, 2002), research in positive psychology suggests that workplaces can also be sources of positive phenomena, such as resilience (Gittell, Cameron, Lim, & Rivas, 2006), thriving (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005), and compassion (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006). We contribute to this area by showing how organizations can actively and purposely evolve to become places of greater respect and dignity for their employees. The topic of respect could also be expanded upon in current perspectives on positive organizing. For instance, positive regard, a central component of respect, appears in Dutton and Heaphy's (2003) theory of high quality connections. Gittell (2003) explicitly discusses mutual respect as an integral element of relational coordination (a form of coordination that depends on intensive exchanges of information as well as positive aspects of relationships such as mutual respect and shared goals), and shows that relational coordination has an impact on outcomes such as quality of care in health care settings (Gittell et al., 2000). It would be useful for future researchers to continue to examine these linkages and focus on respect more specifically. This focus on respect could also be fruitful in other related research domains, such as the meaning of work. For example, recent research shows that managers of employees in 'dirty work' occupations, occupations with physically aversive or socially stigmatized components, may be able to offset the negative effects of the job by helping employees create and find meaning in their work (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, & Fugate, 2007). Our results indicate that managers can do so by creating respectful workplaces in which employees' dignity and self-worth are protected and valued. Last, we also add to the growing empirical literature on positive organizing by examining organizational respect in a longitudinal field experiment, showing that organizations' leadership can purposefully set out to make their organizations a better place for employees, and can do so successfully. This adds to the positive psychology literature by longitudinally and quantitatively examining the outcomes of respect in a dynamic and potentially difficult work setting.

This study helps to expand the scope of antecedents used to explain burnout. Traditionally, researchers have focused their examination of the causes of emotional exhaustion on the nature of the human service work itself (Cherniss, 1980; Maslach & Jackson, 1981), or on the influence of individual personality



characteristics, such as negative affectivity (Zellars, Perrewé, & Hochwarter, 1999, 2000). While job demands and personality factors are clearly important, the collective environment or context within which employees work (Johns, 2006) may have a far more important role on emotional exhaustion than has yet been articulated in the literature (Maslach et al., 2001). Organizational respect is shown here to be one such contextual variable. The implications of our findings could be that for employees committed to the human service professions, finding an organization that is respectful might be an avenue of hope in what otherwise could be an emotionally exhausting career path. Moreover, although our study focused on emotional exhaustion in the human services sector, recent research on burnout has extended the theoretical and empirical findings beyond just the human services to employment involving physical labor, customer service, sales, and professional and managerial work (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach et al., 2001). Similarly, as both respect and burnout are likely to be prevalent across many industries, we would expect these findings to be generalizable; although this is an area for future research.

Last, this study has implications for the literature on organizational change, as we provide preliminary evidence that good versus poor management, in the form of organizational respect, may have a clear and critical role in stemming emotional exhaustion, and that organizations can successfully change towards a culture or environment of greater respect. Changing the current environment could be particularly important, given research showing that emotionally exhausted workers may not necessarily turnover but may simply remain in an organization (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), providing less satisfactory care to clients (Garman et al., 2002; Leiter et al., 1998). Given our findings here, human service organizations may be able to improve the quality of care given to their clients by reducing the burnout of their employees through fostering organizational respect. While organizational change is clearly a complex process, treating employees with respect is a feasible and practical way to create positive change. This type of organizational change may also have far-reaching effects, starting with the organization's employees, rippling out to the clients the organization serves, and ultimately perhaps influencing society at large by making organizational respect an expected norm within the human services, and beyond.

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### Notes

1. See Davidson, Jaccard, Triandis, Morales, & Diaz-Guerrero (1976) for an example of a similar 'emic' approach.
2. In the pre-testing meetings we determined that participants would respond negatively to the overall survey if the word 'ashamed' was used, and that participants did not understand the word 'jittery', so neither adjective from the 10-item trait NA scale could be included here. However, the Chronbach's alpha of the trait NA scale was still at an acceptable level without these items included.
3. We include the control variables (site, tenure, and sex) in the analyses only where significant, with the exception of trait negative affectivity which has a well established relationship with emotional exhaustion, and is thus included in all analyses.
4. We also repeated this analysis with Time 1 Emotional Exhaustion as an additional control variable and the results were the same.

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