

## Abstract

**Title:** Exploring Special Educator Burnout, and in Turn, the Impact of Burnout on Special Educators' Treatment Integrity in Behavior Support Plans: *Project Burn and Turn*

**Principal Investigator:** Justin D. Garwood, Ph.D. – University of Vermont

**Purpose:** The Principal Investigator (PI) will conduct a program of research to better understand the risk factors for special educator burnout and the consequences of burnout related to fidelity of implementation (FOI) of behavior support plans (BSPs) to students with and at risk for emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs). The PI intends to conduct a multi-phase mixed methods investigation to determine what can be done to prevent and remediate special educator burnout. The evidence-based practice movement is designed to identify and promote the use of practices in schools with sufficient backing in high-quality research. The focus by national education agencies (e.g., Institute of Education Sciences) on identifying, validating, and scaling up effective school-based interventions has come along with a concern about teachers' abilities to implement procedures with fidelity. The current situation in the field of special education is precarious: serving students with EBD can lead to stress and burnout, which in turn leads to struggles with FOI in behavior interventions, which then causes more distress as behaviors among students do not improve. If this negative cycle is to be broken, there needs to be an examination of the malleable factors that influence teacher burnout along with an in-depth inquiry into the specific mechanisms within burnout that trigger teachers' low FOI of behavior interventions. The PI will address these gaps in *Project Burn and Turn*.

**Research Plan:** The PI will conduct an exploratory project to address the following overarching research question: What factors are associated with teacher burnout and could be potential targets of interventions designed to prevent/reduce burnout and subsequently improve teacher instruction and educational outcomes for students with and at risk for EBD. Standardized measures for all variables of interest are included in the project.

**Dissemination:** The PI will disseminate findings at national conferences and in peer-reviewed journal publication, while maintaining confidentiality of all participants. No materials will be shared that divulge the location of any participating school districts.