Our team’s goal is to strengthen human resources for abortion care. Abortion providers face highly unique stresses, including being targets for stigma, violence, harassment, and restrictive legislation.

Outside of abortion, there is extensive literature documenting need for supportive interventions for workers in helping professions. To date, the focus of human resources for abortion care has been on educating and training new physician providers. Psychosocial needs of providers have received scant attention in the medical literature. However, these psychosocial needs may be related to provision of abortion services after training. The needs of non-physician caregivers have received virtually no scholarly attention, but also may be an important abortion human resource issue.

Previously, our team developed the Providers Share Workshop, a 5-session group workshop designed for abortion workers, to help alleviate some of the unique burdens of providing abortion care, in particular the burden of doing stigmatized work. SFP funded a pilot study of Providers Share, as well as a larger national study. Pilot and national data showed that participants find the Workshop immensely valuable, and that it reduces the burden of abortion stigma that workers face, among other benefits.

In the current project, we converted Providers Share from a research protocol to a “manualized” tool that can be used at any abortion-care site. We partnered with Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s (PPFA) Consortium of Abortion Providers (CAPS) to revise, carry out and evaluate the new workshop. We designed the new Workshop to meet the logistical needs of PPFA affiliates, while maintaining its content; trained a cadre of Workshop facilitators.

Through CAPS, we recruited 19 PPFA affiliates to participate in the Workshop, including a total of 265 individual participants. At the suggestion of SFP reviewers, we changed our format from a cohort study of 12 sites that participate in PSW, to a randomized controlled trial of the PSW including 19 sites, thus extending the scope and timeline of the study. We randomized the sites so that 10 received the PSW intervention and 9 did not, and measured a variety of relevant dimensions of human resources before and after the intervention in the intervention group, and at two similar time periods in the control group that did not receive the intervention. Later for ethical/fairness reasons, we offered the intervention to the control group. The survey data included measures of stigma, professional quality of life, burnout, psychological empowerment, psychological distress, job/organizational commitment and religiosity.

All data collection is complete, and data analysis will be completed over the next six months. Deliverables to date include: New Providers Share Workshop Catalogue; Providers Share Workshop Facilitator’s Manual; new cadre of 19 facilitators across the U.S. who are now trained and experienced and can provide support to abortion providing sites around the country; revised Abortion Provider Stigma Survey; Video vignettes – on negotiating disclosure of abortion work. They are available on DVD. Finally, ANSIRH’s Early Abortion Training Workbook includes one of our PSW exercises on negotiating disclosure of abortion work.