



Overcoming burnout

Reflection guide

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Overview

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Define burnout
- Explore personal resilience strategies
- Reflect on proactive team cultures
- Explore strategies for overcoming burnout

Key takeaways



Main points:



Learning insights:



What areas do I need to improve on?



My action plan:

Job aids or activity materials

Course description

Burnout is a growing phenomenon in workplaces, and the pandemic has only amplified the problem. Beginning by understanding of the causes, signs, and impacts of burnout, this workshop focuses on proactive personal practices, team cultures, and communication. The workshop provides strategies, tips, and frames to help you prevent and address burnout in yourself and successfully support others who might be facing burnout.

Course outcomes

At the end of this workshop, you will:

- Understand burnout and be able recognize the signs of burnout in yourself and others
- Learn strategies for proactively preventing burnout at the personal level
- Explore caring team cultures
- Explore skills for supporting others experiencing burnout

What is burnout?

Exhaustion from extending too much energy without sufficient time for recovery.

The World Health Organization names 3 characteristics of burnout:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
- Increased mental distance, cynicism, or negativity to one's job
- Reduced professional efficacy

Burnout is:

- Often used in the context of work
- Can be caused by physical, mental, emotional, social, or spiritual factors
- Usually, predictable

Contributing factors:

Often, burnout doesn't have just one source, but is a combination of:



Burnout is on the rise:

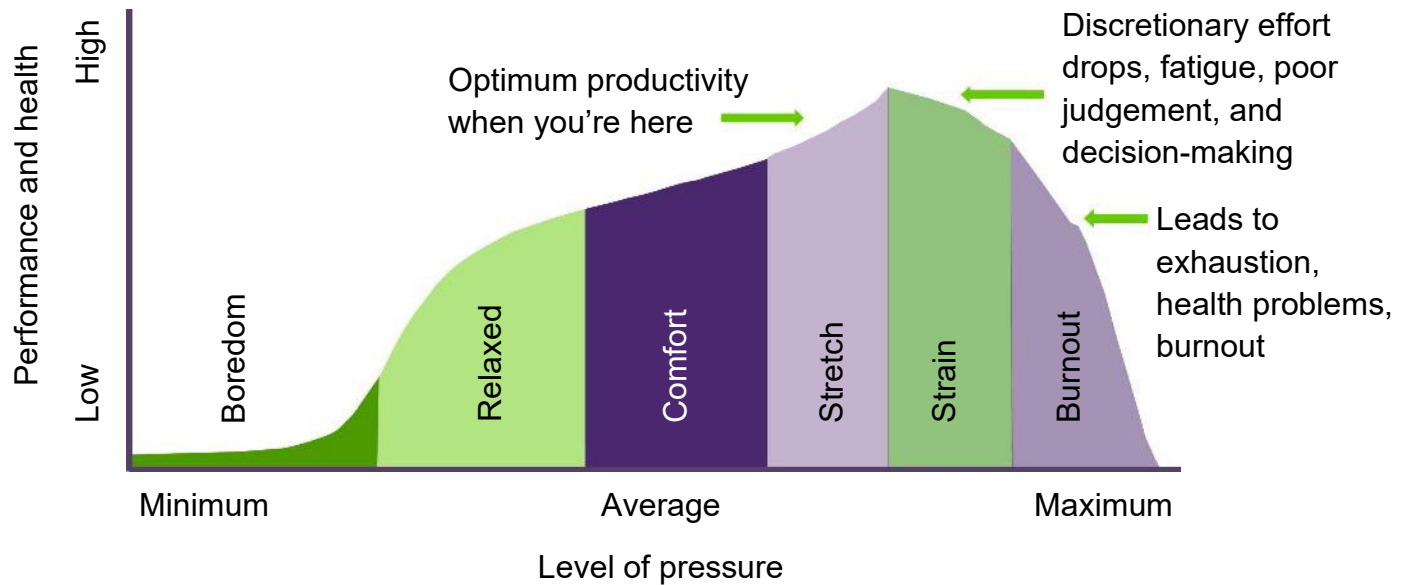
A 2021 MHA Workplace Health Survey found:

- Nearly 83% of employees reported feeling emotionally drained from work
- 71% of employees strongly agreed that workplace stress affects their mental health
- Nearly 1 in 4 employees experienced more severe signs of burnout

2019 Gallup poll found employees experiencing high levels of burnout are:

- 63% more likely to take a sick day
- 13% less confident in their performance
- 23% more likely to visit the emergency room
- 2.6 times as likely to be actively seeking a different job

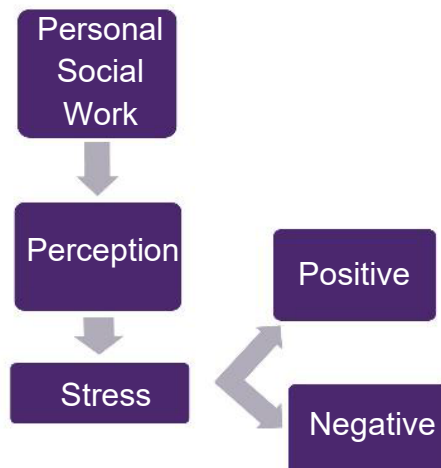
The performance/health curve



Personal resilience: proactive self-care

Thoughts: positive stress vs. distress

The reality of our situation is that when it comes to stress and pressure, we don't always have full control over our situation. But, while you may not have control over the situation you are in, you do have control over an incredibly important piece - yourself. Specifically, you can control your thoughts, your emotions and how you choose to act.



The fight or flight response

Stage 1: Any perceived threat (real or imagined).

Stage 2: Stress reaction is triggered.

Stage 3: Hormones flow into blood stream (adrenaline, cortisol).

Stage 4: Body prepares itself for “Fight or Flight”.

This leads to increases to:

- Muscle tension
- Blood pressure
- Breathing/heart rate
- Mental alertness
- Emotions or anger/fear

This leads to decreases to:

- Digestion
- Immune system
- Mental creativity
- Emotional stability

Our actions: healthy habits

Prioritize your own wellbeing:



Our thoughts: self-talk

- Reframe stress
- Learn from mistakes and move on
- Emotions are information
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Practice gratitude
- When times are tough, adopt a “what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger” attitude
- Water off a duck’s back

Consistent self-reflection on boundaries

- Clearly define your role and responsibilities at work and at home
- Where am I on the performance/health curve?
- Find purpose in and outside of work – what matters to you?
- Think through and communicate your needs and boundaries
- Learn to say “no”

Personal reflection

What areas of my own self-talk and healthy habits need more attention?

Provide support: a culture of caring

Preventing and addressing burnout

Organization:

- Reasonable expectations
- Fair and manageable workloads
- Care about the wellbeing of their team members
- Accommodate those requiring support regarding burnout

Team member:

- Practices healthy habits
- Discuss work challenges with Manager/ HR
- Reach out before reaching burnout

Approaching a team member:

- Ask for permission to give feedback
- Use “I” statements and a conversational tone
- State what you have observed and the potential impact (on you and others)
- Explain your concern – you want to help
- Reinforce your confidentiality
- Listen, express empathy and be supportive
- Build a bridge for the person to get professional help as needed

Personal reflection

Where can I make space for rest, recovery, and celebration in my personal and work cycles?

When someone opens up

Signs of potential strain and burnout:

- Reports feeling exhausted and/or overwhelmed
- Complains of a lack of a good night sleep many days in a row
- Increasingly negative talk related to work
- Quick to anger, frustration, and defeatism
- Drop in quality of work
- Increased conflicts and sensitivities with colleagues

When the person shares, what does a supportive colleague do?

- Actively listen
- Express empathy
- Suspend judgement
- Discuss/keep confidentiality
- Discuss solutions only after statements of understanding
- Build a bridge to resources – no ‘hard’ sell
- Agree on a follow-up get-together

Active listening and expressing empathy

When a colleague shares with you they are struggling with strain or burnout, your role is to first listen and empathize before strategizing solutions and sharing resources.

Actively listen:

- Eliminate distractions
- Suspend judgment
- Show interest
- Paraphrase
- Summarize
- Eye contact

Express empathy:

- Recognize emotions – imagine self in their shoes
- Name the emotion
- Confirm the emotion
- Mirror the emotional tone
- Open body language

What to do when you're facing burnout

Burnout self-assessment tool

Have you...

- Been experiencing feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion?
- Had an increased mental distance from your job?
- Had increasingly negative feelings or cynicism related to your job?
- Been feeling less efficient at your job?
- Been unable to get a good night sleep many days in a row?

Talk about it

- Manager and HR
- Trusted loved ones
- Family doctor or therapist
- EAP

Take action

- Think about your comfort and relaxation zones
- Set boundaries
- Work, home, social media

Personal reflection: what will you do?

What might you do differently to prevent or address burnout? Make a commitment to yourself.

References or additional resources

- TedTalk: Sandra Dalton-Smith – The Real Reason We are Tired and What to do About it
https://www.ted.com/talks/sandra_dalton_smith_the_real_reason_why_we_are_tired_and_what_to_do_about_it
- Burnout Self-Test - https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm
- Mind The Workplace – MHA Mental Health Survey 2021 -
<https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/Mind%20the%20Workplace%20-%20MHA%20Workplace%20Health%20Survey%202021%202.12.21.pdf>
- CAMH Canada - <https://www.camh.ca/>
- Anxiety Canada - <http://www.anxietycanada.com/>