

Webinar 8: Addressing Burnout in the Workplace

Thrive in your Workplace | 2019

Agenda

- I. Objectives
- II. What is “Burnout”?
- III. Organization strategies to address burnout
- IV. Case studies
- V. Resources and tools

Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Define burnout and its impact on the workplace
- Understand the causes of burnout and how it differs from stress and mental illness
- Implement organizational strategies to address burnout
- Access tools and templates to get started

What is “Burnout”?

Burn-out is a syndrome that results from chronic *workplace* stress and manifests as one or more of the following:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion
- increased mental distance, negativism or cynicism related to one's job
- reduced professional efficacy

How are stress and burnout different?

Stress

- over-engagement
- over-reactive emotions
- anxiety or hyperactivity

Burnout

- disengagement
- blunted emotion
- depression, detachment, helplessness, hopelessness

The Burnout Epidemic

The World Health Organization declared burnout an occupational phenomenon in 2019. The data tell an alarming picture:

- Over 66% of full time workers report feeling burned out at least some of the time
- Over 50% of tech workers experience burnout
- 93% of teachers report high levels of stress
- Call center workers report high levels of burnout and turnover
- Physician burnout, in particular, is a public health emergency

“What started out as important, meaningful and challenging work becomes unfulfilling and meaningless.”

- Maslach, C., et al., 2001

What are signs of potential burnout?



- Appearing bored and/or spaced out
- Lack of participation in meetings
- Irritability and anger
- Lack of interest in activities that were previously important or interesting

How does burnout impact your bottom line?

According to a 2017 survey, nearly 50% of HR leaders say employee burnout is responsible for up to half of their annual workforce turnover:

- Almost 10% of leadership blame employee burnout for causing more than 50% of workforce turnover each year
- Though burnout touches organizations of all sizes, larger organizations seem to suffer more

There are 6 common drivers of burnout

1. Lack of control

- Role confusion
- Role ambiguity
- Missing autonomy

2. Insufficient reward

- Financial: insufficient compensation
- Intrinsic: lack of perceived purpose
- Social: recognition from peers

3. Lack of community

- Minimal support and/or trust
- Ongoing, unresolved conflicts

4. Absence of Fairness

- Inequity in workload or pay
- Mishandling promotions / evaluations
- Poor dispute resolution practices
- Unaddressed cheating or bullying

5. Conflict of values

- Organization holds different values from individual

6. Work overload

- Unsustainable workload

Strategies to address burnout



- Increase awareness of burn-out
- Build a foundation of organizational support
- Create community among employees
- Teach new skills

Strategy 1: Increase awareness of burnout

- Name the issue
- Educate employees about signs of burnout
- Co-facilitate meetings with employee champions to enlist feedback about company culture and possible solutions
- Provide frequent communication about employee resources for mental health
- Conduct a survey to identify rates of burnout



Strategy 2: Build a foundation of organizational support

- Communicate consistently and openly about organizational goals and priorities to reduce anxiety and provide clear guidance
- Show appreciation for high-quality work
- Provide clear guidance on workplace policies, such as flex-time, to ensure consistent adoption and fairness
- Provide updated organizational charts
- Provide clear job descriptions and autonomy
- Use standard performance management tools for reviews and promotions

Strategy 3: Create community among employees



- Foster social support and knowledge-sharing by introducing Employee Resource Groups
- Create coaching or peer mentorship programs
- Encourage collaboration between departments
- Develop a strong onboarding process
- Incorporate principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in workplace programming

Strategy 4: Teach new skills

Skill-building provides a very concrete opportunity to increase the availability of support.

- Build “resilience” in employees, which is:
 - the ability to withstand, recover and grow in the face of stressors in the workplace
 - associated with greater job satisfaction, happiness at work, loyalty, and employee engagement
- Offer meditation and mindfulness at work to help reduce psychological distress
- Use cognitive behavioral therapy programs to help manage stress and symptoms related to common mental health issues such as depression and anxiety
- Offer digital apps to increase accessibility of tools and trainings

Case Studies: Addressing Burnout in the Workplace



Case study 1: Non-profit social service employer

Scenario

A nonprofit social services employer provides case management for homeless women. Case managers have been reporting high levels of stress, and their managers have noticed the following behaviors:

- Low engagement in meetings
- Case notes submitted late
- Increasing arguments between staff and management

How can the organization respond by using strategies to address burnout?

Case study 1: Strategies

How can the organization respond by using strategies to address burnout?

- Define burnout in staff meetings and provide access to organizational resources for mental health and wellness
- Show appreciation and celebrate the hard work of staff
- Provide positive supervision skills training to managers
- Conduct training on vicarious trauma
- Create employee resource groups to solicit feedback and learn about needs

Case study 2: Global retail organization

Scenario

A global electronics brand with many retail locations recently shuttered several large branches. They are also consolidating multiple departments to increase efficiency. Staff have been reporting high levels of stress and there have been a lot of complaints. The company is worried about losing staff.

How can the organization respond by using strategies to address burnout?

Case study 2: Strategies

How can the organization respond by using strategies to address burnout?

- Hold a company town hall to discuss and explain the recent organizational changes
- Address role ambiguity and show appreciation for staff during the transition
- Provide updated organizational charts and job descriptions to ensure that employees are aware of the new structure and reporting channels
- Conduct onsite training at retail spaces to teach employees how to access mental health benefits through the company

In Sum: Burnout is a very common, organizational issue across all industries



- Burnout is a complex issue that requires different types of intervention
- Addressing burnout requires building a foundation of trust to create an environment in which employees feel they can thrive personally and professionally
- By thoughtfully adapting organizational culture and policy, employers can help support employee mental health and reduce burnout

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TWP Addressing
Burnout in the
Workplace

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Webinar 4: Workplace Diversity and Mental Health

Webinar 5: Accommodations, Risk & Compliance

Webinar 6: Offering High Quality Benefits

Webinar 7: Supportive Management Practices

Webinar 8: Addressing Burnout in the Workplace

Webinar 9: Building a Peer Support Program

Webinar 10: Creating a Vicarious Trauma Informed
Workplace

Tools & Resources

- [American Heart Association Resilience in the Workplace](#) provides an overview of current research around resilience in the workplace and actionable tips to implement programs
- [Center for Workplace Mental Health](#) provides tips for employers to build a resilient workforce
- The [Office for Victims of Crime Vicarious Trauma Toolkit](#) includes tools and resources to support organizations to address the vicarious trauma needs of their staff
- [Staying in Balance](#) is a free toolkit developed by Vibrant Emotional Health provides solutions for managing workplace stress
- Subsidize digital apps for employees such as: Calm, Headspace, Insight Timer, Happify

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- All images via <https://www.pexels.com/>