



AIM LEADERSHIP



Understanding Burnout

Burnout Defined

The [World Health Organization](#) characterizes burnout as:

- 1 Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion (emotional and physical)
- 2 Increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- 3 Reduced professional efficacy.

How Burnout Presents



MIND

Distraction

Inability to focus

Forgetfulness



BODY

Trouble sleeping or difficult waking up

Fatigue

Lack of motivation to be physically active



EMOTIONS

Anxiety

Stress

Depression



SPIRITUAL

Cynicism

Hopelessness

Overwhelm

Burnout is real and on the rise. Focused actions can reduce its impact.

Burnout's Causes

Burnout is a chronic stress syndrome that develops during periods of prolonged struggle.

Traditional definitions of burnout reflect a failure to manage stress, but this definition fails to account for:



A The intensity of pandemic-related stress;



B The toll of uncertainty; and



C The challenges of recharging while socially distanced

Prevalence of Burnout

Burnout is a problem across professions, and research suggests it is often ignored. A 2015 study by Deloitte found that nearly 70 percent of professionals feel their employers are not doing enough to prevent or alleviate burnout and 21 percent of respondents said their company offered no burnout-prevention programs.



During the pandemic, burnout has increased. A recent Morneau Shepell study found that as of October 2020, self-reporting of high burnout had tripled from 9% pre-pandemic to 30%.

Why burnout is on the rise?



The unusual stress and strain of the pandemic combined with political instability and system racial injustice;



Economic and job uncertainty;



Heighten uncertainty about the future;



Isolation;



Disruption to energetic deposits: physical, emotional, and spiritual;



Chaos and home management challenges, especially for people with young children;



Fewer opportunities to recharge (cancelled vacations and social gatherings and reunions).

Cost of Burnout

Burnout was already a problem. Pre-pandemic, the cost of burnout was estimated to be \$125 to \$190 billion annually. The cost of burnout in 2020 and 2021 will likely be much higher.

To mitigate the cost of burnout, invest in resilience training. A 2014 PWC report found that investing in resilience delivers a 2-3 return.

Identify → **Assess / Accept** → **Act** → **Invest in Longer-term Wellbeing**

Build Healthy Habits: Invest in Prevention

Change is hard. It gets harder to address the more burned out we become.

Learning to tackle burnout before it becomes a problem is a life tool that we can keep in our back pockets. It is also a tool we can and should pass along to our teams.



Diagnose Burnout

[Maslach Burnout Inventory](#) is a validated assessment tool for burnout.

“Burnout” isn’t a medical diagnosis. Some experts think that other conditions, such as depression, are behind burnout. Whatever the cause, burnout can affect your physical, emotional and spiritual health.

At the moment, identifying burnout is also more complex than ever because:

- We are all struggling (our burnout may not seem like a problem given that we’re now all suffering);
 - Prolonged, enduring stress has no definitive end in sight;
 - It can feel selfish to focus on self care when so many are suffering;
 - Renewal strategies are more difficult as we are remote and removed from loved ones;
 - We have less contact with others and don’t have anyone to mirror back our state of mind;
 - Working remotely, even close friends may be less likely to intervene (ask if we’re burnt out and need support).
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Build Awareness

We all have energetic bank accounts: When our accounts dip or go into the red, we experience burnout. We can reduce the risk of burnout by replenishing our energetic reserves.

Individual Strategies to Avoid Burnout



MENTAL

When overdrawn we feel...

Distracted and overwhelmed

Replenish reserves by...

Making lists to create more time

Triage list items as:

- Urgent
- Important
- Can wait



PHYSICAL

When overdrawn we feel...

Exhausted

Replenish reserves by...

Taking care of your physical wellbeing

Investing in rest, sleep, exercise, hydration etc.



EMOTIONAL

When overdrawn we feel...

Compassion fatigue and detachment

Replenish reserves by...

Managing commitments

Spending time with loved ones

Having genuine, heartfelt conversations

Laughing

Engaging with people who “fill you up”



SPIRITUAL / PURPOSE

When overdrawn we feel...

Cynicism, despair, and hopelessness

Replenish reserves by...

Creating a purpose statement and revisiting it often

Connecting regularly with your personal sense of purpose

Archiving affirmations and expressions of gratitude



How Leaders can Proactively Work to Prevent Team Burnout

WORK

- Increasing/maintaining job control
- Increasing/maintaining supervisor social support
- Increasing/maintaining co-worker social support
- Feedback seeking
- Seeking/performing tasks that energize
- Reducing hindering job demands

HOME

- Increasing/maintaining home autonomy
- Increasing/maintaining home social support
- Reducing work-home conflict

PERSON

- Improving/maintaining physical health
- Developing/maintaining psychological wellbeing
- Engaging in relaxing activities

***Source:** M. Otto et al., (2020). The Development of a Proactive Burnout Prevention Inventory: How Employees Can Contribute to Reduce Burnout Risks, [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#), 17, 5.

Ways to proactively create a positive work environment:



Increase and Maintain Job Control:

Create clear expectations with success criteria.



Increase and Maintain Supervisor Social Support:

Recognize that remote work can feel lonely. Check in.



Increase and Maintain Coworker Social Support:

Coworker relationships become more important when living socially distanced. Encourage mentorship relationships and support networks.



Increase and Maintain Feedback:

Be more intentional in expressing appreciation, providing real-time feedback and calibrating expectations.

Burnout is real, on the rise, and retractable. Let us help you and your team prevent burnout before it starts.

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