

Preventing and Managing Burnout in Your Workplace

Burnout is another way of describing the feeling of insurmountable stress that leaves you feeling delusional and completely exhausted. Burnout can happen to anyone—managers and employees alike. It is a serious issue that impacts all aspects of your life and daily functioning. If you or a fellow employee is suffering with burnout, here are some warning signs to look for:

- A sudden change in work performance and attitude
- Loss of enthusiasm and motivation
- An increase in negativity and confrontation
- Feeling a general lack of fresh ideas and creativity
- Frequently running late to work
- A rapid increase in absenteeism or time off
- Health problems

How do you stop burnout in your team?

You need to pay attention to your employees, monitor their work habits, look out for the events, and listen up for the conversations that hint at bigger issues. If the damage is already done, you need to work quickly to help the employee recover before the burnout gets worse.

The following are some common events and challenges that lead to burnout.

Missed Opportunities

Employees who miss out on a promotion, don't receive a bonus when they're told it's coming, or aren't rewarded with feedback or support for a job well done are more likely to

experience burnout. They need to know that their hard work is noticed and that their efforts will be rewarded. By not recognizing employees, you might make them feel as if their work is undervalued or has no real contribution to the success of the organization.

Reorganization

A changing office climate can cause feelings of anxiety to develop. Employees might be concerned about a shift in roles or responsibilities. They might be concerned that the processes they have control over might be handed off to someone else. Long periods of anxiety can quickly wear on an employee and lead to burnout.

Uncertainty

A company that has experienced a setback, is struggling to find a new customer base, or is experiencing layoffs, can expect to see a rise in employee burnout. Many employees are expected to take on the work of two or three employees without an increase in pay or time off. The fear of job loss coupled with the extra demand on their time and work performance can rush them into feeling burnout.

Change in Career Track

An employee planning on transitioning into another job or leaving for another organization is likely to experience burnout in their present position. The present position might feel tired or uninspired to the employee, causing him or her to slowly retreat from daily responsibilities and goals.

Provide a Release Valve

Burnout is often linked to feelings of frustration—frustration over not being in control, not having an impact, or not having a voice that's heard. Here are some examples of ways that you can support your employees:

- If your company is downsizing, readjust workloads in creative ways. Ask employees for input, and see which tasks they would prefer to do and which tasks they would like to avoid.
- Give ample notice about changes in positions or tasks. If reorganizing has occurred, firm up schedules to give a sense of routine and continuity.
- Redistribute workloads if employees seem overwhelmed.
- Listen to employees and try to counsel them the best you can.
- Pay attention to what motivates each individual employee and utilize that when assigning projects.
- Understand your personality style and be aware of how that can play a role with individual employee communication.
- Schedule after-work events to boost employees' spirits.
- Refer employees to resources provided by your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Overall, by providing opportunities for employees to vent their frustrations, release the tensions that they carry, and engage in healthy recreational activities, you help them unwind, recharge, and feel renewed in the workplace.

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The Maslach Burnout Inventory

How do you perceive your work? Are you exhausted? How capable are you of shaping your relationship to others? To what degree are you personally fulfilled?

Indicate how frequently the following statements apply to you and add the points indicated on top of the respective box:

- 0 = Never
 1 = At least a few times a year
 2 = At least once a month
 3 = Several times a month
 4 = Once a week
 5 = Several times a week
 6 = Every day

	NEVER						EVERY DAY
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work							
2 I feel worn out at the end of a working day							
3 I feel tired as soon as I get up in the morning and see a new working day stretched out in front of me							
4 I can easily understand the actions of my colleagues/supervisors							
5 I get the feeling that I treat some clients/colleagues impersonally, as if they were objects							
6 Working with people the whole day is stressful for me							
7 I deal with other people's problems successfully							
8 I feel burned out because of my work							
9 I feel that I influence other people positively through my work							
10 I have become more callous to people since I have started doing this job							
11 I'm afraid that my work makes me emotionally harder							
12 I feel full of energy							
13 I feel frustrated by my work							
14 I get the feeling that I work too hard							
15 I'm not really interested in what is going on with many of my colleagues							
16 Being in direct contact with people at work is too stressful							
17 I find it easy to build a relaxed atmosphere in my working environment							
18 I feel stimulated when I have been working closely with my colleagues							
19 I have achieved many rewarding objectives in my work							
20 I feel as if I'm at my wits' end							
21 In my work I am very relaxed when dealing with emotional problems							
22 I have the feeling that my colleagues blame me for some of their problems							

Overall Score for Occupational Exhaustion (EE)

Add together the answers to questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, and 20.

Occupational Exhaustion	EE < 17	EE 18 - 29	EE > 30
	low degree	moderate degree	high degree

Overall Score for Depersonalisation / Loss of Empathy (DP)

Add together the answers to questions 5, 10, 11, 15, and 22.

Depersonalisation	DP < 5	DP 6 - 11	DP > 12
	low degree	moderate degree	high degree

Overall Score for Personal Accomplishment Assessment (PA)

Add together the answers to questions 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21.

Personal Accomplishment Assessment	PA < 33	PA 34 - 39	PA > 40
	low degree	moderate degree	high degree

Degree of Burnout

EE	Occupational exhaustion (burnout) is typically connected to a relationship with work that is perceived as difficult, tiring, stressful...Maslach sees this as different from depression, as it is likely that the symptoms of burnout would be reduced during holidays.
DP	Depersonalisation or loss of empathy is characterised by a loss of regard for others (clients, colleagues...), and by keeping a greater emotional distance, which is expressed through cynical, derogatory remarks, and even callousness.
PA	The personal accomplishment assessment is a feeling that acts as a "safety valve" and contributes to bringing about a balance if occupational exhaustion and depersonalisation occur. It ensures fulfillment in the workplace and a positive view of professional achievements.