

Workplace burnout

Burnout is a psychological syndrome that occurs in response to chronic unmanaged stressors related to the work environment. Three defining characteristics of the burnout response include:

- Extreme exhaustion that feels overwhelming
- Feelings of cynicism and detachment from your job
- Feeling a lack of accomplishment and a sense of ineffectiveness

What factors lead to burnout?

Burnout may occur or be aggravated as a result of:

- Vigorous job demands without the necessary resources to meet those demands
- Valued work resources consistently threatened or lost
- Ineffective coping strategies used by individuals in an attempt to protect themselves from work-related stress
- An imbalance or mismatch between the individual and their job in relation to:
 - **Workload** (e.g., work overload without adequate rest and recovery)
 - **Control** (e.g., a lack of control and autonomy leading to lower work engagement)
 - **Reward** (e.g., insufficient financial, social, or institutional recognition leading to feelings of inefficacy)
 - **Community** (e.g., a lack of support or trust between employees)
 - **Fairness** (e.g., insufficient equity and social justice leading to cynicism and anger)
 - **Values** (e.g., a gap between organizational and personal values)

Did you know?

Burnout may also occur as a result of non-work-related stress, such as the stress involved with being a caregiver to a sick family member.



How to address burnout at work

Preventing burnout relies on the workplace systems that are in place as well as individual factors. Workplace management teams should implement mental health interventions, such as mindfulness-based programs and workplace and education practices that promote fairness, community building, and employee recognition.

Strategies to mitigate workplace burnout

The following coping strategies are useful for mitigating stress and may be helpful for reducing and preventing burnout.



Adapt work patterns

Work fewer hours (if possible), take more breaks at work, avoid working overtime, and prioritize a balance between work and home life.



Develop coping skills

Engage in education and training on conflict resolution and improve your time management skills.



Seek social support

Get social support by reaching out to family and friends.



Use relaxation strategies

Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and meditation, or participate in hobbies you enjoy, such as art or woodworking.



Promote health and fitness

Ensure that you're getting enough good-quality sleep, regular exercise, and adequate nutrition.



Improve self-awareness

Participate in therapy or counseling to achieve a fuller understanding of one's self and improve mental health.

Helpful stress management apps

- **Calm:** [App Store](#), [Google Play](#)
- **Headspace:** [App Store](#), [Google Play](#)
- **Sanvello:** [App Store](#), [Google Play](#)
- **Stoic:** [App Store](#)

References

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3. Montero-Marin, J., Prado-Abril, J., Piva Demarzo, M. M., Gascon, S., & García-Campayo, J. (2014). Coping with stress and types of burnout: Explanatory power of different coping strategies. *PLoS ONE*, 9(2), e89090.



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This handout was developed and medically reviewed by Fullscript's Integrative Medical Advisory team.

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