



### ACTIVITY: Do We Have Burnout?

#### Purpose

- Identify the symptoms of burnout
- Create a plan for if/when burnout occurs

#### Background

Burnout is 'a state of emotional and physical exhaustion that results from poorly managed workplace stress' – in other words, when we're stressed out for too long, our body forces us to shut down to recover. There are three core symptoms of burnout:

- Emotional Exhaustion** – reduced empathy and cognition
- Depersonalization** – detachment, going through the motions
- Inefficacy** – feeling like nothing you do matters

Burnout can lead to serious physical and mental medical issues. It's important to combat burnout in four ways:

**Resiliency:** Learn what makes you resilient prior to burnout so you can practice techniques when you need them. The [resiliency.bjclearn.org](http://resiliency.bjclearn.org) website has many practices to try, either on your own or with your team.

**Release:** Find what *physically* helps you release stress from your body, either physical activity or mental downtime. Create dedicated breaks in your day that focus on recovery and set boundaries so they're not disturbed. If we don't, our bodies will make us stop to recover by using burnout.

**Revise:** Burnout occurs as a result of chronic stress. If the cause of stress doesn't go away, burnout is inevitable. While we can't fix everything, discovering what areas we can control gives us agency to reduce stress.

**Relationships:** Seek help from others. Reach out to family, friends, coworkers, and/or leadership so they know you need something to change for your health. Professionals such as a licensed counselor can assist by developing a customized plan with you to counter burnout.

The good news – all four ways will lower our stress and burnout no matter what order we take them in.

#### ESTIMATED TIME

**10** minutes

#### MATERIALS

##### Required:

Facilitator note-taking materials

##### Optional:

- A. Pens
- B. Paper for notes



## Activity

- 1) Ask: "What is burnout?" Allow time for a few answers.
- 2) Explain what burnout is using the definition and three symptoms of burnout on page 1.
- 3) Say: "Learning the warning signs and symptoms of burnout help us address the issue before we burnout and can help us return from a state of burnout."  
Ask: "Knowing this, what are your personal warning signs we should know if you feel you're getting close to burnout?" Allow time for answers and take note of responses.  
Note: If your team isn't comfortable responding in a group, ask them to send responses privately.
- 4) Say: "Thank you for sharing with us. Next, I'd like to work together to find ways to reduce our team's stress."  
Ask: "While we can't fix all of our stressors right this minute, what are some ways we as a team can support each other to combat burnout?"  
Allow time for answers and take note of responses.
- 5) Follow up with the four ways to combat burnout on page 1.  
Note options already mentioned by participants.
- 6) Thank everyone for sharing their ideas. Provide ideas to leadership and ask for their support.

## Key Points

- Burnout is your body's reaction to too much stress for too long
- As with any physiological damage, burnout requires dedicated recovery time
- BJC EAP or a licensed counselor can assist with plans to reduce burnout symptoms

## Let's Try This!

Share the "Burnout Assessment Tool" in the link below to evaluate your level of stress.

## Follow-up

Take note of participant's stress reducing responses and check in with them periodically to encourage continued practice.

<https://burnoutassessmenttool.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BAT-English.pdf>

Schaufeli, W. B., Desart, S., & De Witte, H. (2020). Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT)-Development, Validity, and Reliability. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(24), 9495. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17249495>

Nagoski, E., & Nagoski, A. (2019). *Burnout: the secret to unlocking the stress cycle*. First edition. New York: Ballantine Books.

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2021, June 5). *Know the signs of job burnout*. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved September 30, 2021, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>.

Maslach, Christina, and Michael P. Leiter. "Reversing Burnout (SSIR)." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Leland Stanford Jr. University, 2005, [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/reversing\\_burnout](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/reversing_burnout).