Burnout in the Workplace: A Focus on Prevention

Public Services Health & Safety Association
Olena Chapovalov, RN, MPH – H&S Consultant
Who We Are

ESTABLISHED IN

200
NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION

FUNDED PARTNER OF THE Ministry of Labour

WE PROVIDE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY Training Resources Consulting

WE WORK WITH

1.67+ MILLION WORKERS

10,000+ ORGANIZATIONS

ONTARIO’S PUBLIC & BROADER PUBLIC SECTORS:
Education
Healthcare
Emergency Services
Government
First Nations
Agenda

1. Burnout - what is it and why is it an issue for Workplaces
2. Recognizing burnout
3. Prevention of burnout
4. Controlling burnout
5. Resources
Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplace

- A workplace that promotes workers’ psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health including in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways
Hazard – Psychological

Mental Health (Psychological Health)

- A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community
Psychological Safety

○ The absence of harm and/or threat of harm to mental wellbeing that a worker might experience
Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

PTSD, OSI

Burnout

Chronic Mental Stress

Compassion Fatigue

WV&H
Worker Self-care, Resilience, Mental Health & Wellbeing

Workplace

Homelife

Community, Society

Safe Environments. Healthy Workers.

PSHSA.ca
Common reactions/conditions

- Occupational Stress Injury
- Burnout syndrome
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder/Injury
- Chronic Mental Stress
- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Trauma
- Moral Injury
- Second Victim Phenomenon (HC specific)
- Suicide
- Substance Abuse
A Canadian Spotlight on Stress

• General Social Survey 2010 – stressful – 73%

• Among these stressed workers, 37% reported that they were highly stressed

• Source of stress – work for 62% (followed by time, finances, family, personal/other)
What kind of experiences cause stress?

At least three different types of stress associated with physical and mental health risks:

- Chronic routine stress
- Sudden negative change
- Traumatic stress
INTRODUCTION TO BURNOUT
Burnout: what is it?

- Major psychosocial issue resulting from chronic stress
- Cumulative reaction to constant occ. stressors – misfit between worker and designated work (job)

- We cannot eliminate the work to be done but we can control the risk to injury
Burnout:

- Etiology
- Mismatch between expectations and processes or structures in workplace
- Workload
- Job Control
- Reward
- Community
- Fairness
- Values
Burnout - what is it?

• Also known as Burnout Syndrome (BOS)

• Characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism and a sense of professional ineffectiveness

• A Mental Health Issue - Psychological response to hazards, impacts individual as well as workplace

• Inability to cope with emotional stresses at work or the excessive use of energy leading to exhaustion and feeling of failure

• The focus of this presentation is the workplace factors which may have potential to cause mental harm and what we can do as individuals and as an organization to mitigate or control the risk this harm
Burnout: Emotional Exhaustion (EE)

Decline in emotional & physical resources
- Meaning and purpose
- Attention
- Control
- Rational thinking
- Instincts
- Lack of energy
- Motivation
- Capacity to do work is diminished
Burnout: Cynicism / Depersonalization (DP)

Psychological state

- Detachment
- Lack of enthusiasm / determination
- Egocentric behavior
- Loss of passion
- Impersonal treatment of people
- Anxiety
Burnout: Reduced Professional Achievement (PA)

• Inefficiency
• Low personal accomplishments
• Lack of self confidence
• Negative self assessment
• Dissatisfaction with achievements
Stress

Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand for change

**Eustress** or positive stress, has the following characteristics:
- Is short-term
- Motivates, focuses energy
- Is perceived as within our coping abilities
- Feels exciting
- Improves performance

**Distress** or negative stress, has the following characteristics:
- Can be short- or long-term
- Causes anxiety or concern
- Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities
- Feels unpleasant
- Decreases performance
Stress Continuum

- Eustress – “positive stress” to Burnout Syndrome (BOS)
- BOS – “distress”. Unable to cope with stressors over an extended period of time, leading to depletion of the body’s defense mechanisms and ultimately physical and emotional exhaustion (Vahedian-Azimi et al., 2017)
- BOS – Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal achievement (redefined in 1996)
Mental Health Continuum Model

- **Healthy**: Good Mental Health Normal Functioning
- **Reacting**: Common, self-limiting distress
- **Injured**: More severe and persistent functional impairment
- **Ill**: Diagnosable mental illness Severe and persistent functional impairment

Adapted from the US Marine Corps.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognize</th>
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</table>
| • Workplace Inspections  
  • Hazard Identification Tools  
  • Job Hazard Analysis  
  • Observations  
  • Problems/concerns of anyone  
  • Use your senses  
  • Review of Documents | • Compare to a standard  
  • Risk assessment  
  - Identify how the individual might get harmed  
  - Identify the probability that the hazard is going to cause harm  
  - Identify how severe the hazard could be  
  - Identify hazard priority | • Locations:  
  - At the Source  
  - Along the Path  
  - At the Worker | • The control is:  
  - Working as expected  
  - Has been communicated to affected workers  
  - Reduces the risk  
  - Reduces complaints, injuries, illnesses  
  - Does not create new hazards |

• Controls:  
  - Elimination  
  - Substitution  
  - Engineering  
  - Administrative  
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
### R.A.C.E. Against Burnout

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<td>Educating &amp; training Structural changes to reduce workplace stress</td>
<td>Check the impact of controls Are they making the desired difference?</td>
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RECOGNITION
Burnout; how do we Recognize it?

In ourselves and our colleagues.... can be broken down into 3 Categories:

• **Physical** signs and symptoms

• **Behavioral** signs and symptoms

• **Social** signs and symptoms
Physical Signs & Symptoms of Burnout

• Exhaustion
• Sleep Disruptions
• Headaches, migraines
• Aches and pains without a discernible physical injury
• Eye twitching
• Heartburn/indigestion, nausea
• Increased susceptibility to illness; frequent colds, flu
Behavioral Signs & Symptoms of Burnout

• Cognitive Weariness
• Forgetfulness
• Judgement and/or Decision Making
• Anger or irritability
Social Signs & Symptoms of Burnout

• Withdrawing from social events/gatherings
• Not wanting to be around others
• Overindulgence
How do we Recognize Burnout in our Organizations?

- ↑ Absenteeism
- ↑ Presenteeism
- ↑ MSD’s and other injuries
- ↑ grievances and or internal conflicts
- Employees with an exaggerated sense of responsibility
- Employees expressing inadequacy for accomplishments
- ↑ Errors
Recognition Continued

• ↓ Quality of service / work
• ↓ Employee morale
• Turnover
• Individuals with poor self esteem or devaluing their accomplishments
• ↑ Costs associated with healthcare/disability
• ↑ Mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety disorders
Factors Impacting on Changing Workplace

• Fast pace - More demand, less control
• Shift work
• Client populations
• Insufficient/inadequate funding
• Low social support at work
• Interpersonal conflicts
• Low participation in decision making
• Exposure to suffering, trauma, dying patients
### R.A.C.E. Against Burnout

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ASSESS

• CCOHS – Mental Health
  https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_risk.html

• Workplace Strategies for Mental Health
  https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/

• Mindful Employer
  https://www.mindfulemployer.ca/

• Stress Assess – OHCOW
  https://stressassess.ca/
• https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_risk.html
• https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_address.html
• https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_intro.html
Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Improve psychological health and safety in your workplace. Support employee success when mental health is a factor.

- When Your Boss is Stressing You Out
  There are many practical strategies we can use to cope with this stress. But what happens when it is your boss who is stressing you out? Read more

- Learn about the National Standard – Civility and Respect
  Civility and Respect means showing appreciation, care, and consideration for everyone, whether they’re coworkers, supervisors, customers, or clients. Create a psychologically safe and healthy workplace using these tips from the National Standard.

- https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/Search/DisplaySearch
IMPROVING WORKING LIVES

Everything we develop is made to improve workplace mental health (including yours) and increase the ability of leaders to respond effectively to others. We do this by providing the guidance you need through innovative and practical resources. We’re revolutionizing the Canadian workforce. Join us.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?
Stress Assess – OHCOW

Welcome to
StressAssess

A survey of the psychosocial factors in your workplace

Choose from two versions

Personal Edition

Workplace Edition
**Your Results**

See how your score compares to the average score collected from a representative sample of workers from Canadian organizations with more than five workers. Note that this is for your information only. Advice and ideas on how to take action to improve your psychosocial health and safety are provided, but decide whether these results represent a situation that needs to be addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity work demands</th>
<th>Tempo, work pace</th>
<th>Emotional demands</th>
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<tr>
<td>Influence at work</td>
<td>Possibilities for development (skill discretion)</td>
<td>Meaningful work</td>
</tr>
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<td>Predictability (sufficient information)</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Role clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role conflicts</td>
<td>Quality of leadership</td>
<td>Social support from colleagues</td>
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<td>Social support from supervisors</td>
<td>Sense of community at work</td>
<td>Insecurity over employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insecurity over working conditions</td>
<td>Vertical trust</td>
<td>Organizational justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical work environment concerns</td>
<td>Safety concerns</td>
<td>Satisfaction with work - job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Health</td>
<td>Burnout Symptoms</td>
<td>Stress Symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesired sexual attention</td>
<td>Threats of violence</td>
<td>Physical violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td></td>
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CONTROL STRATEGIES
Prevention of Burnout, Controls

Refresher of what it is ....

Characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism / depersonalization and a pervading sense of professional ineffectiveness
Prevention of Burnout, Control

The methodologies we use to prevent a physical injury can and should be applied for the prevention of a mental injury or illness
# R.A.C.E. Against Burnout

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Control Measures

1. CONTROLS AT THE SOURCE
2. ALONG THE PATH
3. AT THE WORKER

HAZARD

WORKER

ELIMINATION
Remove the Hazard

SUBSTITUTION
Replace the Hazard

ENGINEERING
Design out the Hazard

ADMINISTRATIVE
Safe Work Policies, Processes and Practices

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
Protect at the Worker
Hierarchy of Controls for the Prevention of Burnout

At the Source
Redesigning tasks or environments, encouraging participation, time management, team building, creating flexible working conditions and increasing personal support

Along the Path
Health promotion, relaxation techniques, stress and conflict management skills, assertiveness training, screening for early symptoms and exposures, mindfulness and resilience training, improving communication

At the Worker
Counselling services (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), EAP, rehab. programs, return to work initiatives, stress management services
## At the Source, Along the Path and at the Worker

<table>
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<tr>
<th>prevention level</th>
<th>individual</th>
<th>organizational</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>At the source</strong></td>
<td>Coping and appraisal skills (resiliency)</td>
<td><strong>At the source</strong> Changing the culture, climate, work structure, workload management &amp; organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Along the path</strong></td>
<td>Wellness, relaxation techniques (mindfulness)</td>
<td><strong>Along the path</strong> Awareness, Mental Health 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Aid training, screening (surveys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the worker</strong></td>
<td>Therapy, counselling, medication, support</td>
<td><strong>At the worker</strong> EAP, WSIA recognition of chronic stress, return to work</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Workplace Support: Opportunities

- involvement and influence
- workload management
- engagement
- work/life balance
- psychological protection from violence, bullying, and harassment
- protection of physical safety; and
- other chronic stressors as identified by workers

* CSA Z1003 clause 4.3.4.2

- psychological support
- organizational culture
- clear leadership and expectations
- civility and respect
- psychological job demands
- growth and development
- recognition and reward
Resilience

- Ability to ‘bounce back’ after an adversity
- Individual and organizational
- ‘Bounce forward’ after adversity and develop new strengths that contribute to the organization
Building Resilience – in Organizations and Individuals

• Low resilience - more likely to exhibit illness, disability, higher absence and turnover, and reduced engagement and productivity.
• Employees can be resilient by imposing resiliency building program that are:
  o Self-regulation
  o Efficient problem solving
  o Self-efficacy
  o Social support
Create a respectful workplace

• A disrespectful or uncivil workplace can result in reduced employee productivity, poor engagement, conflict and complaints. This may escalate to violence and can contribute to accidents, incidents and injuries.
• Harassment and bullying contribute to psychological injuries, including stress disorders, anxiety and depression.
• If not addressed, disrespectful behavior can become pervasive, resulting in a ‘toxic workplace’ that can undermine employee recruitment, labor relations and customer confidence.
Enhance Mental Health Knowledge

• Anti-stigma interventions
• Use of ‘contact-based education’, in which individuals with experiences of mental illness are invited into the workplace to share their stories and employee are given the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion
Coordinated RTW

- A key role for the RTW Coordinator is to facilitate communication between managers, health care providers and employees, coaching each of these key players and ensuring they are having the critical conversations needed to identify and resolve problems preventing work return.
Culture of Psychological Safety

- Shared commitment to the importance of promoting and protecting the psychological well-being and safety of employees by taking actions to identify and address risks
- Psychological Safety culture may be enhanced by:
  - Ongoing leadership commitment
  - Two-way communication
  - Learning approach
  - Employee involvement
  - Attitude towards blame
Path to Burnout

Non-occupational stressors → Excessive job strain → BURNOUT
R.A.C.E. Against Burnout

1. Recognize
   - Signs & Symptoms
   - Identify H&S metrics
   - Identify workplace stressors

2. Assess
   - Determine current state; Mindful Employer, Stress Assess Surveys

3. Control
   - Educating & training
   - Structural changes to reduce workplace stress

4. Evaluate
   - Check the impact of controls
   - Are they making the desired difference?
Evaluating Controls
Evaluating Controls

• Evaluating the effectiveness of control strategies can include short term and long term objectives:

• Short Term:
  o Has the hazard been adequately controlled?
  o Is the control easy to maintain?
  o Are there any concerns or problems?
  o Have any new problems or hazards been created?

• Long Term:
  o Number of psychological cases reported?
  o Severity of psychological injuries or injuries?
Take away messages...

• It’s okay to feel burnout
• Employers cannot ignore the psychological health and safety piece
• I understand what I can do in the workplace to help prevent burnout
• Many evidence-based resources are available to help employees and employers establish good practices
RESOURCES
Healthy Worker

We work, we care for and support our family, and we care for ourselves. We commit to juggling these roles in life, but doing so often puts us in overwhelming situations and constantly managing conflicting priorities.

Learn More →
If your inner voice screams “I’m Bored” – pay attention

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2018
KM SLADE

Here is a question for you. When was the last time you said, “I’m Bored”? If you have said it recently you should pay attention – that might be you inner voice shouting out.

According to an article in Psychology Today, boredom is often thought of as a result of doing too little, and burnout as a result of doing too much, and it is something to consider as we all try to improve our mental health.

As I investigated the link, I learned that boredom is twofold – being unoccupied or lacking interest in your current activity. The fact that many of our tasks are uniform and repetitive can lead to feelings of boredom or an inability to get ahead. Just think about long lists of emails, particularly the ones that fly in on a Friday night as work colleagues move their tasks forward by filling your inbox, sitting in back-to-back meetings with agendas that seem to move like molasses, or never being able to get to the end of the to-do list. When these predictable tasks are married with a highly intense workload, or when you are always pushing yourself to exceed expectations this is where we find the risk of burnout, which is physical or emotional collapse caused by overwork or stress. The World Health Organization describes the characteristics of burnout as “feelings of intense fatigue, loss of control and an inability to produce concrete results at work.”

Signs of Burnout

The following list, which was put together by Forbes Coaches Council, identifies signs of burnout. If you are experiencing these, you should probably pay attention:

1. Avoiding tough conversations
2. Lacking concentration
3. Feeling overwhelmed by an increasing load of work
4. Feelings of resentment towards the work
5. Feeling disconnected from your work

https://www.pshsa.ca/blog/if-your-inner-voice-screams-im-bored-pay-attention/
## Resources

### Mental Health Resources by Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Subtopic</th>
<th>PSHSA Resources</th>
<th>Other Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Mental Stress</td>
<td>WSIB Chronic Mental Stress Policy</td>
<td>PSHSA’s response to WSIB’s Chronic Mental Stress policy consultation <a href="https://www.pshsa.ca/newroom/pshsa-response-wsib-chronic-mental-stress-policy-consultation/">https://www.pshsa.ca/newroom/pshsa-response-wsib-chronic-mental-stress-policy-consultation/</a></td>
<td>WSIB – Chronic Mental Stress Policy <a href="http://www.wsib.on.ca/WSIBPortal/faces/WSIBManualPage7cGUID=15-03-14&amp;Def=WSIB_RD_OPM&amp;PfGUID=835502100835000498&amp;afrlLoop=216206574714000&amp;_afrWindowMode=0&amp;_afrWindowId=12w4eowsuw_1%40%3FcGUID%3D15-03-14%26_afrWindowId%3D12w4eowsuw_1%26_afrLoop%3D216206574714000%26rDef%3DW%5BSIB_RD_OPM%26_afrWindowMode%3D0%26GUID%3DB35502100635000498%26_adf.ctrl_state%3D12w4eowsuw_25">http://www.wsib.on.ca/WSIBPortal/faces/WSIBManualPage7cGUID=15-03-14&amp;Def=WSIB_RD_OPM&amp;PfGUID=835502100835000498&amp;afrlLoop=216206574714000&amp;_afrWindowMode=0&amp;_afrWindowId=12w4eowsuw_1%40%3FcGUID%3D15-03-14%26_afrWindowId%3D12w4eowsuw_1%26_afrLoop%3D216206574714000%26rDef%3DW%5BSIB_RD_OPM%26_afrWindowMode%3D0%26GUID%3DB35502100635000498%26_adf.ctrl_state%3D12w4eowsuw_25</a></td>
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<td>Chronic Mental Stress / Resiliency at work</td>
<td>Chronic Mental Stress and Resiliency – Key concepts and actions for employers. Dr. Ash Bender. <a href="https://www.pshsa.ca/product/chronic-mental-stress-and-resiliency-key-concepts-and-actions-for-employers/">https://www.pshsa.ca/product/chronic-mental-stress-and-resiliency-key-concepts-and-actions-for-employers/</a></td>
<td>Webinar: OEA – Mental Stress – the New Landscape</td>
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See above link
CCOHS Resources

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- [https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_address.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_address.html)
- [https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_intro.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_intro.html)
Free E-learning tools

- **Being a Mindful Employee: An orientation to Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace** – a course for anyone interested in learning more about how you can contribute to positive mental health at work.

- **Assembling the Pieces Toolkit** - online course recommended for employers, senior leaders, human resource managers, and occupational health and safety professionals who are working to implement the Standard.
Free E-learning tools

- [https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/online-training-psychological-health-and-safety](https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/online-training-psychological-health-and-safety)
Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Improve psychological health and safety in your workplace. Support employee success when mental health is a factor.

- https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/Search/DisplaySearch
“Beyond Silence” Training for Workplace Mental Health Champions

- “Beyond Silence”
  Evidence-based workplace mental health training program customized for healthcare and EMS workers
  - Focus on building skills to promote early intervention and support for mental health at work as well as psychological health and safety in the workplace
  - PSHSA will be offering 8 training programs over the next two years and evaluating the impact
Contact

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