

Beating Burnout



Participant Guide



West Virginia Division of Highways

Beating Burnout

Course Overview

We all may someday find ourselves burning out from too much work, too much stress, or too much negativity. This course will help trainees to understand what burnout and stress are and their differences; the causes and consequences of burnout; the impact of long-term stress; the four types of stress; how positive thinking can prevent burnout; ways of dealing with burnout and the consequences of each method; how to utilize the Life Wheel to pull one's own life back into balance; and how exercise, getting enough rest, and eating well can help alleviate stress- thereby lowering one's probability for burnout.

Agenda

Welcome, Overview, Housekeeping

What is Burnout?

Causes of Burnout

Consequences of Burnout

Stress VS Burnout

The Stress Scale

Recovering from Burnout

Are You a Positive or Negative Thinker?

Resilience Development Activities

Recovering from Burnout

Make a Plan

Case Study

It's the beginning of the week, and Mia is already longing for the weekend. For the past few months she's been feeling out of sorts at work, and she's not quite sure why. She's always tired, she feels disengaged and unmotivated most days, and she's constantly checking how long it is until she can go home. Mia is also snapping at her coworkers (something she never used to do) and she feels that there's never enough time to get everything finished. This leaves her feeling behind in her work and frustrated. Mia is showing classic signs of burnout.

Utilizing the above scenario, respond to the following questions:

1. According to the case study, Mia is "showing classic signs of burnout". What are the "classic signs" listed in the scenario?

2. Should Mia's supervisor address her observable signs of burnout? Why or why not?

3. How could Mia turn around her feelings of burnout? Or, once an individual shows signs of burnout, is it possible for him/her to have a change of attitude and once again enjoy his/her job?

4. How could Mia's new attitude toward her job affect her co-workers? The working environment?

Checking Yourself for Burnout

Instructions:

For each statement, mark the statement in the column with YES if it describes you, NO if it does not describe you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be) and don't worry if some When you are finished, please calculate your scores on the bottom of the page.

	Question	YES	NO
1.	Do you feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy?		
2.	Do you find that you are prone to negative thinking about your job?		
3.	Do you find that you are harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve?		
4.	Do you find yourself getting easily irritated by small problems, or by your co-workers and team?		
5.	Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by your co-workers?		
6.	Do you feel that you have no one to talk to?		
7.	Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should?		
8.	Do you feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed?		
9.	Do you feel that you are not getting what you want out of your job?		
10.	Do you feel that you are in the wrong organization?		
11.	Are you becoming frustrated with parts of your job?		
12.	Do you feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate your ability to do a good job?		
13.	Do you feel that there is more work to do than you practically have the ability to do?		
14.	Do you feel that you do not have time to do many of the things that are important to doing a good quality job?		
15.	Do you find that you do not have time to plan as much as you would like to?		
TOTALS:			

Adapted from "Burnout Self-Test: Checking Yourself for Burnout." *Mind Tools: Essential skills for an excellent career*. Mind Tools Ltd.. Web. 4 Apr 2013.

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm

The Stress Scale

Instructions:

To score your stress levels, simply check the box in the right hand column next to all the events that have happened to you in the last year. Once complete, calculate your totals at the end of the assessment.

#	Life Event	Value	Check if this applies
1.	Death of spouse	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Divorce	73	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Marital separation	65	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Jail term	63	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Death of close family member	63	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Personal injury or illness	53	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Marriage	50	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Fired at work	47	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Marital reconciliation	45	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Retirement	45	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Change in health of family member	44	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Pregnancy	40	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Sex difficulties	39	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Gain of new family member	39	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Work responsibilities changed	39	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Change in financial state	38	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	Death of close friend	37	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	Change to a different line of work	36	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	Change in number of arguments with spouse (increase)	35	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	A large mortgage or loan	31	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	Change in requirements at work	29	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	Son or daughter leaving home	29	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	Trouble with in-laws	29	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	Outstanding personal achievement	28	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	Spouse begins or stops work	26	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	Begin or end school/college	26	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	Change in living conditions	25	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	Revision of personal habits (e.g., quit smoking)	24	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	Trouble with boss	23	<input type="checkbox"/>

31.	Change in work hours or conditions	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	Change in residence	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	Change in school/college	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	Change in recreation	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	Change in church activities	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	Change in social activities	18	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	A moderate loan or mortgage	17	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	Change in sleeping habits	16	<input type="checkbox"/>
39.	Change in number of family get-togethers	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
40.	Change in eating habits	15	<input type="checkbox"/>
41.	Vacation	13	<input type="checkbox"/>
42.	Christmas	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
43.	Minor violations of the law	11	<input type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL: _____

NOTE: *If you experienced the same event more than once, then to gain a more accurate total, add the score again for each extra occurrence of the event.*

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
300+	You have a high or very high risk of becoming ill in the near future.
150-299	You have a moderate to high change of becoming ill in the near future.
<150	You have only a low to moderate chance of becoming ill in the near future.

"The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale: Understanding the Impact of Long-term stress." *Mind Tools: Essential skills for an excellent career*. Mind Tools Ltd.. Web. 4 Apr 2013.
<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_82.htm>.

Are You A Positive or Negative Thinker?

Instructions:

For each statement, mark the statement in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be) and don't worry if some questions seem to score in the "wrong direction". When you are finished, please calculate your scores on the bottom of the page.

#	Question	Not at all	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always
1.	When my boss asks to speak with me, I instinctively assume that he or she wants to discuss a problem or give me negative feedback.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	When I experience real difficulty at work/home, I also feel negative about other parts of my life.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	When I experience a setback, I tend to believe the obstacle will endure for the long-term, e.g., "The funding didn't come through so I guess that means they hate the project. All that work for nothing."	0	1	2	3	4
4.	When a team I am on is functioning poorly, I believe that the cause is short-term and has a straightforward solution. For example, "We're not working well at the moment, but if we can fix this problem, then we'll do much better!"	0	1	2	3	4
5.	When I'm not chosen for an assignment I really want, I tend to believe that I just don't have the specific skills they are looking for right now, as opposed to thinking I am generally unskilled.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	When something happens that I don't like or appreciate, I can tend to conclude that the cause is widespread in nature and will continue to plague me. For example, "My supervisor didn't "cc" me on that email he sent to my employee."	0	1	2	3	4
7.	When I perform very well on an assignment, I believe that it's because I'm generally talented and smart, as opposed to thinking I am good in that one very specific area.	0	1	2	3	4
8.	When I come up with a really good idea, I am surprised by my creativity. I figure it is my lucky day and caution myself not to get used to the feeling.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	When something bad happens at work, I see the contributions that everyone made to the mistake, as opposed to thinking that I am incompetent and to blame.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	When I receive a reward or recognition, I can tend to figure that luck or fate played more of a role than my actual work or skill.	0	1	2	3	4

11.	After winning an award/recognition/ promotion, I believe it's because I am better than the competition.	0	1	2	3	4
12.	As the leader, when my team completes a project, I tend to attribute the success to the hard work and dedication of the team members, as opposed to my skilled leadership.	0	1	2	3	4
13.	When I made a decision that proves to be successful, it's because I have expertise on the subject and analyzed that particular problem really well, as opposed to being generally a strong decision maker.	0	1	2	3	4
14.	When I achieve a long-term and personally challenging goal, I congratulate myself, and think about all the skills that I used in order to be successful.	0	1	2	3	4
TOTALS:						

Score Interpretation

Score	Comment
0 – 18	Yikes! It must feel like there is a rain cloud that hangs overhead all day. You have gotten yourself into the habit of seeing things as your fault and you've learned to give up your control in many situations.
19 – 38	You try to be optimistic and positive; however, some situations get the better of you. Identify your triggers for negative thinking and use rational thinking to become more optimistic.
39 – 56	Great job! You have a generally positive and optimistic outlook on life. You don't take things personally and you are able to see that setbacks won't ruin the rest of your life.

"Are you a Positive or Negative Thinker?." *Mind Tools: Essential skills for an excellent career*. Mind Tools Ltd., n.d. Web. 4 Apr 2013. <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_89.htm>.

Resilience Development Activities

- 1. Make a list of 6/7 things you feel irritated, upset, or distressed about. Ask yourself the following questions and write down descriptive phrases:**

What pressures am I feeling?

How are my life and work different from a year ago?

What is difficult for me now and what difficulties am I expecting?

What feels distressing to me?

- 2. Now make a list of activities that revitalize and invigorate you:**

What do I have fun doing?

What am I getting enthusiastic about?

What would I like to do that I keep putting off?

Who do I enjoy sharing good experiences with?

When do I sleep best at night?

What positive aspects of my life am I ignoring?

- 3. Let's go back to your list of negative experiences. Pick one of them and create an action plan to feel less vulnerable and more in control by asking:**

What if I ignored this?

What if I avoided contact?

Could I do something about this?

What could I change how it bothers me?

Can I make it go away?

Can I get it out of my life?

Examples:

If you work for a micromanaging boss, learn how to deal effectively with managers who micromanage in way that impair worker effectiveness.

If negative talk in the lunchroom is getting you down, could you go for a walk instead of listening to all of the complaining?

If you are distressed by seeing wounded or dead people on TV news, turn off the TV and listen to music instead.

Ask yourself - if I can't avoid it, change it, or make it go away, what if I changed my response to it? What if I decided to let it stop bothering me?

Disengaging yourself from some things around you conserves your resiliency energy for more important challenges.

Beating Burnout

Name: _____

Return This Answer Sheet with Your Telework Log

1. What is the single most important life skill that most people never learn to do properly?
 - a) Eat their vegetables
 - b) Run a marathon
 - c) Setting smart goals
 - d) Being on time

2. SMART is an acronym for what words?
 - a) Silly, maddening, artistic, realistic, trailblazer
 - b) Saturated, melodramatic, animal, redone, trouble
 - c) Simple, manageable, alert, reasonable, traceable
 - d) Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed

3. Sleep, meals, and _____ form the building blocks of our lives.
 - a) Exercise
 - b) Irritating
 - c) Noise
 - d) Distractions

4. Who rediscovered the Eisenhower Principle in 1994 and wrote a book centering on it?
 - a) Truman Capote
 - b) Stephen Covey
 - c) Maeve Binchy
 - d) John Grisham

5. What can you do to get a good start when you're assigned a new task?
 - a) Create a plan
 - b) Run for the hills
 - c) Go on vacation
 - d) Quit your job

6. What should you focus on at work?
 - a) Changes you can make
 - b) Home
 - c) Late bills
 - d) Message boards