

Beating Burnout



Participant Guide

West Virginia Department of Transportation

Beating Burnout



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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 and Burnout

Fight or Flight!

The Stress Scale

Four Types of Stress: Managing Common Pressures

Recovering from Burnout

Are You a Positive or Negative Thinker?

Recovering from Burnout

The Life Wheel

Exercise

Eating Well

Getting Enough Sleep

Setting Accurate Goals

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. For instance, 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 were 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 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.	Do you feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy?	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Do you find that you are prone to negative thinking about your job?	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Do you find that you are harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve?	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Do you find yourself getting easily irritated by small problems, or by your co-workers and team?	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by your co-workers?	0	1	2	3	4
6.	Do you feel that you have no one to talk to?	0	1	2	3	4
7.	Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should?	0	1	2	3	4
8.	Do you feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed?	0	1	2	3	4
9.	Do you feel that you are not getting what you want out of your job?	0	1	2	3	4
10.	Do you feel that you are in the wrong organization?	0	1	2	3	4
11.	Are you becoming frustrated with parts of your job?	0	1	2	3	4
12.	Do you feel that organizational politics or bureaucracy frustrate your ability to do a good job?	0	1	2	3	4
13.	Do you feel that there is more work to do than you practically have the ability to do?	0	1	2	3	4
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?	0	1	2	3	4
15.	Do you find that you do not have time to plan as much as you would like to?	0	1	2	3	4
TOTALS:						

Score Interpretation: 15-18: No sign of burnout here

19-32: Little sign of burnout here, unless some factors are particularly severe;

33-49: Be careful – you may be at risk of burnout, particularly if several scores are high;

50-59: You are at severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently

60-75: You are at very severe risk of burnout – do something about this urgently

"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, <i>as opposed to thinking I am generally unskilled.</i>	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.

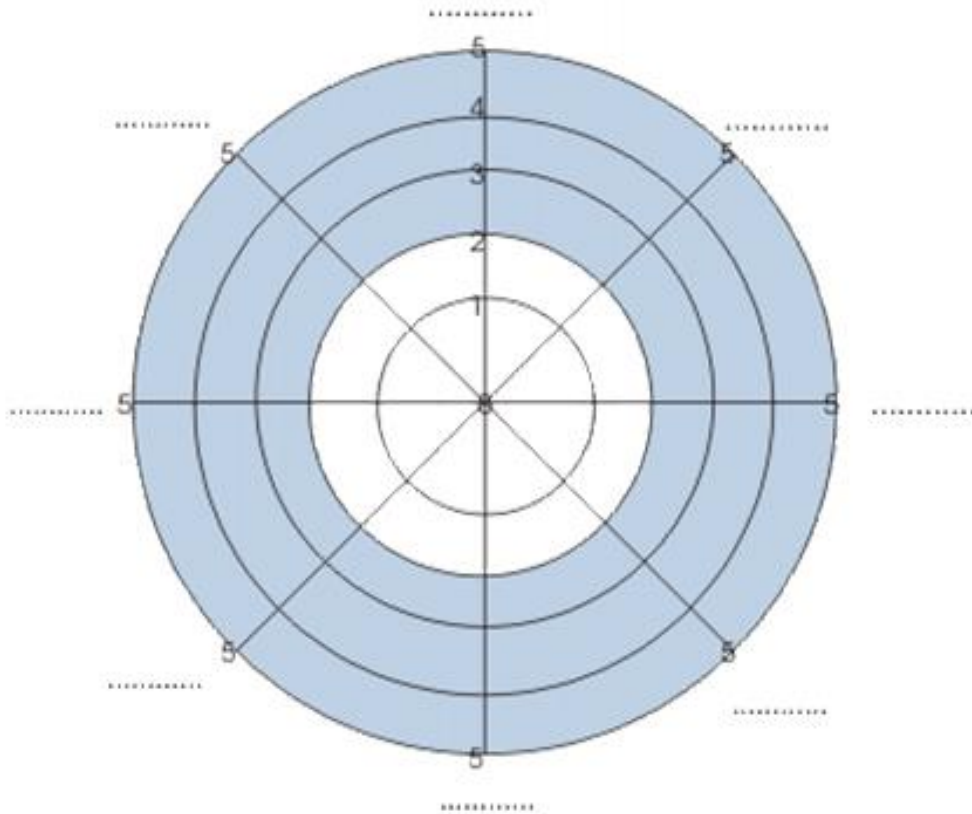
If negative talk in the lunchroom is getting you down, could you go for a walk instead of listening to all of the complaining?

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.

Life Wheel



Things I will START doing to regain balance in my life.	Things I will STOP doing, reprioritize or delegate.

The Life Wheel Instructions

1. Start by brainstorming the 6 to 8 dimensions of your life that are important for you. Different approaches to this are:
 - The roles you play in life may include husband/wife, father/mother, manager, coworker, team member, or friend.
 - Areas of life that are important to you may include positive attitude, career, education, family, friends, financial freedom, physical challenge, pleasure, or public service.
 - Your own combination of these (or different) things, reflecting the things that are your priorities in life.
2. Write down these dimensions on the Life Wheel diagram, one on each spoke of the life wheel.
3. This approach assumes that you will be happy and fulfilled if you can find the right balance of attention for each of these dimensions. And different areas of your life will need different levels of attention at different times. So the next step is to assess the amount of attention you're currently devoting to each area.
4. Consider each dimension in turn, and on a scale of 0 (low) to 5 (high), write down the amount of attention you're devoting to that area of your life. Mark each score on the appropriate spoke of your Life Wheel.
5. Now join up the marks around the circle. Does your life wheel look and feel balanced?
6. Next it's time to consider your ideal level in each area of your life. A balanced life does not mean getting 5 in each life area: some areas need more attention and focus than others at any time. And inevitably you will need to make choices and compromises, as your time and energy are not in unlimited supply!
7. So the question is: what would the ideal level of attention be for you in each life area?
8. Plot the "ideal" scores around your life wheel, too.
9. Now you have a visual representation of your current life balance and your ideal life balance. What are the gaps? These are the areas of your life that need attention.
10. And remember that gaps can go both ways. There are almost certainly areas that are not getting as much attention as you'd like. However, there may also be areas where you're putting in more effort than you'd ideally like. These areas are sapping energy and enthusiasm that may better be directed elsewhere.

"The Wheel of Life: Finding balance in Your life." *Mind Tools: Essential skills for an excellent career.* Mind Tools Ltd.. Web. 4 Apr 2013. <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_93.htm >.