

“BURNOUT AND ITS PREVENTIVE MEASURES”

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ABSTRACT

The seventeenth century has been called the age of enlightenment; the eighteenth century, the age of reason; the nineteenth century the age of progress; and the twentieth; the age of anxiety. It is not surprising that interest in ‘stress’ has been raising with advancement in the present century. Stress is becoming a global phenomenon affecting every country, professions and all categories of workers. Technological and information revolution, fast materialistic life, innovation and growing competition have generated in man a feeling of powerlessness, helplessness, meaninglessness and in turn a source of consequent stress/burnout. As a result, today man experiences unprecedented turmoil’s, traumas and psychological conflicts .In this theoretical article researcher tried to focus on the concept of burnout, three approaches to knowing the burnout, process of burnout, causes of burnout and strategies to prevent burnout among individual were dealt in briefly

KEYWORDS: Stress, Burnout, Strategies and Preventive Measures

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a normal part of our daily lives and each one of us reacts to stress in different ways. Stress produces physical, hormonal and chemical changes in the body to accelerate the functioning of the heart, lungs and muscles. Not all stress is bad for us. We all need a certain degree of stress in our lives to function and to achieve things. Excessive amounts of stress however over a prolonged period of time, results in loss of well being or illness. Excessive stress generally leads to burnout.

If constant stress has you feeling disillusioned, helpless, and completely worn out, you may be suffering from burnout. When you’re burned out, problems seem insurmountable, everything looks bleak, and it’s difficult to muster up the energy to care—let alone do something about your situation. The unhappiness and detachment that burnout causes can threaten your job, your relationships, and your health. But burnout can be healed. You can regain your balance by reassessing priorities, making time for yourself, and seeking support

CONCEPT OF BURNOUT

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give. Most of us have days when we feel bored, overloaded, or unappreciated; when the dozen balls we keep in the air aren’t noticed, let alone rewarded; when dragging ourselves out of bed requires the determination of

Hercules. If you feel like this most of the time, however, you may have burnout.

The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life—including your home and social life. Burnout can also cause long-term changes to your body that make you vulnerable to illnesses like colds and flu. Because of its many consequences, it's important to deal with burnout right away.

Three Approaches of Knowing Burnout

- **Recognize:-** Watch For The Warning signs of burnout
- **Reverse:-**Undo the damage by managing stress and seeking support.
- **Resilience:-** Build your resilience to stress by taking care of your physical and emotional health.

The Process /phases of burnout

Psychologists Herbert Freudenberg and Gail North have theorized that the burnout process can be divided into 12 phases, which are not necessarily followed sequentially.

The compulsion to prove oneself:-Often found at the beginning is excessive ambition. The desire to prove oneself in the workplace turns into compulsion.

Working harder:-Because they have to prove themselves to others or try to fit in an organization that does not suit them, people establish high personal expectations. In order to meet these expectations, they tend to focus solely on work while they take on more work than they otherwise would. It may happen that they become obsessed with doing everything themselves to show that they are irreplaceable.

Neglecting their needs:-Since they have to devote everything to work, they now have no time and energy for anything else. Friends and family, eating and sleeping start to be seen as unnecessary or unimportant, as they reduce the time and energy that can be spent on work.

Displacement of conflicts:-They become aware that what they are doing is not right, but they are unable to see the source of the problem. This may lead to a crisis in them and become threatening. The first physical symptoms appear.

Revision of values:-While falling into a state of denial of basic physical needs, perceptions and value system change. Work consumes all energy, leaving none for friends and hobbies. The job is the new value system and people start to become emotionally blunt.

Denial of emerging problems:-People may become intolerant and dislike being social. They may be seen as aggressive and sarcastic. Problems may be blamed on time pressure and all the work that they have to do.

Withdrawal:-Minimal social contact turns into isolation. Alcohol or drugs may be used as a release from obsessive working "by the book". These people often have feelings of being without hope or direction.

Obvious behavioral changes:-Coworkers, family, friends and others in their immediate social circles cannot overlook the behavioral changes in these people.

Depersonalization:-It is possible that they no longer see themselves or others as valuable. Their view of life narrows to only seeing the moment and life turns to a series of mechanical functions.

Inner emptiness:-They feel empty inside and may exaggerate activities such as overeating or sex to overcome these feelings.

Depression:-Burnout may include depression. In that case, the person is exhausted, hopeless, indifferent, and believes that life has no meaning.

Burnout syndrome:-They collapse physically and emotionally and need immediate medical attention. In extreme cases, suicidal ideation may occur, with it being viewed as an escape from their situation. Only a few people will actually commit suicide.

Causes of Burnout:-Generally stress reactions (including burnout, acute stress reactions and posttraumatic stress disorder) are broken down in to five dimensions:

1. Physical

- Sleep disturbance.
- Nightmares.
- Aches and pains.
- Appetite and digestive changes.
- Lowered resistance to colds and infection.
- Persistent fatigue

2. Emotional

- Anxiety, fear of recurrence
- Depression, grief
- Irritability, hostility
- Self-blame, shame
- Fragility, feeling vulnerable
- Numbness, detachment
- Fear of "contaminating" loved ones when sharing difficult experience
- Irritability and lack of resistance to frustration

3. Cognitive

- Intrusive memories
- Reactivation of previous traumatic events
- Preoccupation with the event
- Increased rigidity, resistance to new ideas
- Difficulty making decisions

4. Behavioral

- Avoidance of reminders of the event
- Social relationship disturbances

- Difficulty connecting with “outsiders” and/or colleagues
- Lowered activity level
- Increased use of alcohol, drugs (self medication for depression, anxiety)
- Loss of enthusiasm
- Avoidance of work, frequently late, lower productivity

5. Spiritual

- «Why me» struggle
- Increased cynicism
- Loss of self confidence
- Loss of purpose
- Renewed faith in higher being
- Profound existential questioning
- Loss of belief in cooperative spirit of mankind
- Disillusionment
- Loss of meaning
- Loss of life’s objectives
- Feelings of alienation
- Changes in one’s value system

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BURNOUT

Increase your self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is having the belief in your own ability to accomplish (and exercise control over) personally meaningful goals and tasks. People who have a stronger level of perceived self-efficacy experience less stress in challenging situations, and situations in turn become less stressful when people believe they can cope (Bandura, 1989). The most direct and effective way to enhance self-efficacy is through performance mastery experiences. When you accomplish a goal, your brain asks, “Hmmm, what else can I do?” Another way to build self-efficacy is to find a self-efficacy “model.” Simply observing a friend or work colleague accomplish something meaningful is contagious and increases your ability to meet challenges head on (Bandura, 1997).

Identify what you need from your work. Harvard Business Review recently published in articles identifying the six virtues of a dream company, as compiled from a list of hundreds of executives. The six virtues are as follows:

- You can be yourself
- You’re told what’s really going on
- Your strengths are magnified
- The company stands for something meaningful
- Your daily work is rewarding
- Stupid rules don’t exist

How does your company rate? While few companies meet all of these criteria, use this list as a starting point to create a more rewarding and engaged workplace.

Have creative outlets. Burnout interferes with your ability to perform well, increases rigid thinking, and decreases your ability to think accurately, flexibly, and creatively. Even if you aren't able to flex your creative muscles at work, having some type of creative outlet will keep you engaged and motivated.

Take care of yourself. "There's always something to do," I can still hear my dad saying to me as I sat relaxing at the end of my shift at his plastic injection molding company. "Here's a broom." I find it very hard to just sit and relax because it always feels like there is something to do. It's seductive to think we must always be present, sitting at our desks, in order for our worlds to run right, but our bodies aren't machines (no matter how much caffeine and sugar you pump in). And really, whatever "it" is (work, chores, homework) will still be there after you take a much-needed break.

Get support where you can find it. The number of people who say they have no one with whom they can discuss important matters has nearly tripled in the past two and a half decades. The more I burned out, the more I just wanted to hole up in my office and avoid people, and that was exactly the opposite of what I should have been doing. I didn't want to let people know how awful I was really feeling because I thought it meant I was weak. It takes time and effort to maintain social connections, but supportive people are the best inoculation against burnout.

Get real and go there. I had to have some tough internal and external conversations when I burned out. I had to figure out why I started getting panic attacks at the age of 14, and why they came back. I had to figure out why I thought it was more impressive to become a lawyer instead of following my heart to become a writer. I had to dig deep to uncover why I was a people pleaser, perfectionist, achieve-aholic. I had to reconnect with my values. Getting real isn't always pretty (which is probably why you're avoiding it), but true happiness and burnout prevention depend on it.

Increase your diet of positive emotions. Studies show that increasing our diet of positive emotion builds our resilience, creativity, and ability to be solution-focused, things that are in short supply if we feel like we're burning out. We made it a point to start noticing when people did things well, and we tried to stop being so hard on ourselves. Aim for a ratio of positive emotions to negative emotions of at least 3:1, which is the tipping point to start experiencing increased resilience and happiness.

Start the day with a relaxing ritual. Rather than jumping out of bed as soon as we wake up, spend at least fifteen minutes meditating, writing in our journal, doing gentle stretches, or reading something that inspires us.

- **Adopt healthy eating, exercising, and sleeping habits.** When we eat right, engage in regular physical activity, and get plenty of rest, we have the energy and resilience to deal with life's hassles and demands.
- **Set boundaries.** Don't overextend yourself. Learn how to say "no" to requests on your time. If you find this difficult, remind yourself that saying "no" allows you to say "yes" to the things that you truly want to do.
- **Take a daily break from technology.** Set a time each day when you completely disconnect. Put away your laptop, turn off your phone, and stop checking email.
- **Nourish your creative side.** Creativity is a powerful antidote to burnout. Try something new, start a fun project, or resume a favorite hobby. Choose activities that have nothing to do with work.

- **Learn how to manage stress.** When we're on the road to burnout, we may feel helpless. But you have a lot more control over stress than we may think.

CONCLUSIONS

Work occupies a major portion of one's life, in terms of both time spent and importance. It contains the potential for many forms of gratification and challenge and harm. It is not surprising that many people find work life stressful. Indeed, stress /burnout at work is so common place that one tends to accept it as part of the necessary frustration of daily living. It is often assumed that individual because of the typical nature of their work are more vulnerable to the ravages of stress. Dealing with stress is not easy for anyone. However, we cannot allow it to control our life. Otherwise, we will end up with health issues and bruised feelings. Each person deals with stress differently. Some know how to get relief; others don't care to work it out. They would rather be stressed for the rest of their lives. Stress can be used as a motivator to get rid of your problems as well as stress itself. Using some of these techniques listed in this guide can help you to a better and peaceful life. If you look at it from a positive standpoint, you will be able to tackle it with grace and keep moving. If not, you will continue to allow the stress demons invade your life Thus the above article is very important in coping from stressful/burnout problems in present competetative world.

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