

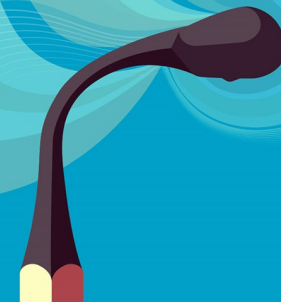


EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE OF THE PACIFIC, LLC

Across Hawaii, and around the world, we have certainly seen an increase in the number of people reporting “burnout” as a concern, especially since the challenges of COVID. Burnout can be from your personal life or from work-related stressors, or a combination of both. Healthcare professionals certainly felt more challenges during and since the pandemic, but so have HR professionals, managers, and all levels of employees and family members. We wanted to share more about what burnout is, the warning signs, what can be done if you’re experiencing burnout or see it in others, as well as what employers can do.

BURNOUT

What it is,
What to do, and
How Employers can Help



What Is Burnout?

Recognized by the World Health Organization as an occupational phenomenon, there are three criteria that indicate burnout:

1. Exhaustion or feelings of depleted energy
2. Negativity, cynicism, or mental distance from your job
3. Lowered effectiveness, efficiency, and competency at your job

If you have one or more of these symptoms, it’s time to take a look at rebalancing your life and your work and consider seeking help. If you have all three, it’s time to do something **now**. A place to start is taking an unofficial burnout self-test. Here are three options: [MindTools](#), [Psychology Today](#), a pdf [Self-Test](#), and a series at [Extinguish Burnout](#). Pay attention to whether these symptoms are persistent, or whether you’re just having a bad day. (Everyone has an occasional bad day!)

What are the Symptoms of Burnout?

People who are burning out typically show signs such as:

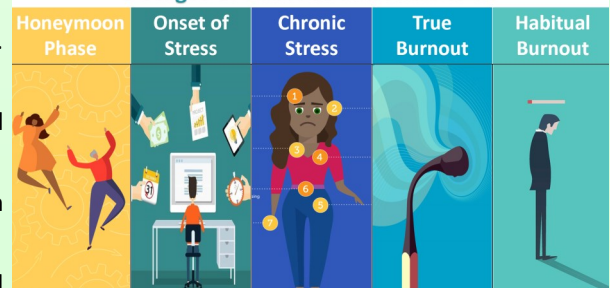
- Emotional exhaustion
- Loss of Sleep
- Unreasonable anger at work or home
- Compassion fatigue (not able to be compassionate on a regular basis)
- Feeling detached and unmotivated
- Here some symptoms of **Job Burnout**:
 - Regularly questioning the value of your work
 - Dragging yourself to work and having a hard time starting your day
- Feeling removed from your work and coworkers
- Losing patience with coworkers, customers/patients/clients
- No energy to do your job well
- Hard to focus on the job
- Feeling little satisfaction from what you get done
- Feeling let down by your job or employer
- Doubting your skills and abilities
- Using food, alcohol, or drugs to feel better or numb out
- Sleep habits have changed
- Headaches, stomach aches, bowel problems, or other physical complaints with no known cause

How Does Burnout Change Over Time?

Burnout changes over time, typically getting worse if it is not addressed. Here are the typical stages:

1. **Honeymoon Phase:** Feeling motivated, energetic, excited about, and dedicated to their work.
2. **Onset of Stress:** Signs of stress start showing up as you notice an increase in work hours, responsibilities, and pressure.
3. **Chronic Stress:** Stress symptoms have been ongoing, and you may feel overwhelmed, tired, and have more physical symptoms. *(Continued on page 2)*

5 Stages of Burnout and what to do





4. **True Burnout:** Physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion. No longer interested in your work, you're less productive and becoming cynical toward your job.
5. **Chronic or Habitual Burnout:** A significantly impaired ability to function at work and home develop if the initial burnout is not addressed. Physical and mental health issues may worsen.

How Can I Address Burnout?

1. **Acknowledging burnout** is the first step in getting back on track and feeling better.
2. **Reset your priorities** toward combatting burnout. Take a look at what you do that's important in your life, and where you get support, and start spending more time on positive influences.
3. **Set boundaries.** It's time to make choices about what you can and can't handle, to say "no" to energy-draining and unimportant tasks or non-important things you have said "yes" to.
4. **Take a look at how you manage stress.** Examine what triggers you and avoid these things, accept help on projects rather than doing it yourself, find coworkers you enjoy spending time with and who lower your anxiety, take appropriate breaks during your workday, and avoid work-related emails/texts after hours. Work on improving your work/life balance.
5. **Do what you CAN do to combat burnout.** Perhaps you could gain more control over your schedule, cut back on 60-hour workweeks, apply for a promotion if you're bored, clarify your job expectations with your supervisor, transfer to another job within your company, take a PTO day or a mental health day to regroup, use your vacation time, report a workplace bully or harassment, or take a look at whether another job or employer might be a better fit.
6. **Practice extreme self-care** by doing one percent more to take care of yourself. Read a book, watch your balanced diet, stay hydrated, and do more activities that bring you joy and improve your energy and mood.
7. **Exercise and sleep** are always important to re-regulating your body.
8. **Seek support to help you.** If it's work-related burnout, talk with your supervisor and HR about what kind of changes are possible and put a plan in motion. Seek support from trusted friends and family members—you'll need their help to make a change, especially if the change involves reduced income, changes in routines, or a change in commitments you have made. Call your EAP for some confidential, free counseling support or coaching. If it's a legal, financial, or eldercare challenge that's burning you out you can get some help from your EAP as well.

If your coping mechanisms no longer help, if your exhaustion isn't improving with rest, if your stress starts manifesting as physical symptoms in your body, please call the EAP and/or talk with your physician. If you start experiencing signs of clinical depression (e.g. feeling hopeless, low self-esteem, or any suicidal thoughts) call the EAP and talk with your physician now. These symptoms are not the same as burnout (although it may feel that way in Chronic Burnout) and may point to something else that is more treatable by medication and counseling.

What Can Employers Do?

Many businesses these days are all dealing with challenges from a changed workforce and doing more with less people to survive. There are many things that organizations can do to reduce the strain on their teams. Here is a link to a great article in Forbes:

[20 Practical Solutions To Combat Employee Burnout.](#)

Additional Links for helpful articles:

[How to Combat Burnout](#), Business News Daily, June 2024

[7 Strategies to Help Prevent Burnout](#), Medical News Today, August 2023

[Burnout: Symptoms, Treatment, and Tips on How to Deal](#), Melinda Smith and Sheldon Reid, May 30, 2024