

Preventing Professional Burn-Out: Putting Wellness Research into Action

Erri Hewitt, PhD

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echewitt@wisc.edu

Learning objectives

- Review research on professional burn-out.
 - particularly in academic and medical settings
- Identify ways you may be impacted by professional burn-out.
- Develop a personalized plan for applying research-based wellness interventions to current professional practices by setting SMART goals.

What is professional burn-out?

- Burn-out is defined in ICD-11 as:
 - A syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that's not been successfully managed. Characterized by 3 dimensions:
 - **feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion**
 - **increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job**
 - **reduced professional efficacy**
- Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.
- Different from depression.

Burn-out: Warning signs

- Loss of pleasure in work
- Persistent thoughts about work
- Problems focusing attention
- Increased cynicism
- Social withdrawal
- Irritability or agitation
- Substance abuse
- Negative feelings about patients
- Increased errors/reduced quality of care

Ways to measure burn-out

- Self-report measures
 - Maslach Burnout Inventory
 - 22 questions, The first and most recognizable of all burnout inventories
 - Requires a fee for each use
 - Oldenburg
 - 16 questions assessing physical, cognitive, and emotional aspects of burn-out.
 - Can be used to measure burnout irrespective of occupation.
 - **ProQOL <https://www.proqol.org/>**
 - 30 questions assessing burnout, job satisfaction, and compassion fatigue
 - May be too stringent.
 - Free!
- Assemble a group of trusted colleagues who can help monitor each other for burn-out or other signs of waning competence

Measure your
professional burn-out

How common is burn-out?

- Burnout is common among health care workers.
 - 10%–70% among nurses
 - 30%–50% among physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

US Dept of Health and Human Services
Lyndon, A. Perspectives on Safety. 2016; February

- High, and increasing, levels of stress in academic settings.
 - Academics: overload and work-life balance particularly stressful
 - Non-academics: work conditions/unnecessary change, work relationships, and pay/benefits particularly stressful

Johnson, Wills, & Evans, 2019

What causes burnout?

- Characteristics of the environment:
 - time pressure
 - lack of control over work processes
 - work overload
 - poor relationships between groups and with leadership
 - job security
 - pay/benefits
 - emotional intensity of clinical work
- Personal factors
 - High levels of empathy
 - Being part of marginalized groups/communities

Ways to treat burn-out

- Treatments most often have focused on a combination of principles, drawn from mindfulness, positive psychology, and self-determination theory.
- Coaching programs often consist of clarification of values, professional, and personal goals, along with strategies for accessing individual strengths and reframing negative thinking.
- Focus is often in individual/personal rather than systematic factors.

Translating research into action

- Examine one model of wellbeing:
 - The Professional Fulfillment Model.
- Overview of factors associated with successfully changing workplace culture and efficiency of work.
 - Direction toward resources to help make changes
- Review research on ways to build personal resilience.
 - Direction toward resources to promote resilience
- Set goals for change!

Professional Fulfillment Model

- **Culture of Wellness**

Shared values, behaviors, and leadership qualities that prioritize personal and professional growth, community, and compassion for self and others.

- **Efficiency of Practice**

Workplace systems, processes, and practices that promote safety, quality, effectiveness, positive patient and colleague interactions, and work-life balance.

- **Personal Resilience**

Individual skills, behaviors, and attitudes that contribute to physical, emotional, and professional well-being.

Professional Fulfillment Model



Culture of wellness

- **Key Success Factors:**
 - Leadership support, commitment, and accountability for wellness
 - Infrastructure and resources to support wellness
 - Regular measurement of wellness/professional fulfillment
 - Recognition and appreciation
 - Fairness and inclusiveness
 - Transparency and values alignment

Culture of wellness

- American Psychiatric Association toolkit for ways to take action to promote wellness in your workplace
 - <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/well-being-and-burnout>
- UW Madison Wellness Programs
 - UWell - <https://uwell.wisc.edu/>
 - Wellbeing resources at UW Madison
<https://hr.wisc.edu/well-being/>
- Quartz insurance wellness programs
<https://quartzbenefits.com/members/members-health-insurance-services-wisconsin/health-wellness-wisconsin/wellness-prevention-resources-wisconsin/wellness-rewards/wellness-rewards-points>

Efficiency of practice

- **Key Success Factors:**

- Identification and redesign of inefficient work
- Design of workspace for interpersonal proximity for improved communication
- Use of efficient communication methods to minimize e-mail time burden
- Involvement of providers in redesign of clinical processes and work flows
- Teamwork models of practice
- Realistic staffing and scheduling that recognizes predictable absences
- Designing roles to practice at top of licensure
- Streamlining EMR and other IT interfaces

Efficiency of practice

Resources:

- Evidence-based models for enhancing teamwork
 - <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-amp0000295.pdf>
- Practice management tools for medical profession
 - <https://www.apaservices.org/practice/business/management/tips/tools>
- UW Tools
 - Learning space improvement
 - <https://teachlearn.provost.wisc.edu/documents/learning-space-improvement-report/>
 - Improving workspace through ergonomics
 - <https://wholehealth.wisc.edu/tools/improving-work-surroundings-through-ergonomics/>

Personal resilience

- **Key Success Factors:**
 - Self-care assessment and support systems*
 - Safety net systems for crisis interventions
 - Worksite evidence-based health promotion
 - Encouragement of peer support
 - Financial management counseling
 - Life-needs support mechanisms (e.g. Child and Elder Care, After hours meals etc.)

Aspects of Self-Care

- Sleep*
- Healthy eating** (in resource guide)
- Exercise*
- Intellectual challenges
- Activities – social and solitary
- Spiritual practice
- Gratitude*
- Compassion*
- Mindfulness** (in resource guide)
- Others?

Sleep

- Adults should sleep 7 or more hours each night for optimal health.
- Insufficient sleep (or short sleep) is defined as less than 7 hours of sleep daily.
- More than a third of U.S. adults report insufficient sleep.
- In 2014, 32% of Wisconsin adults reported usually sleeping < 7 hours/day.

Watson, Badr, Belenky, et al. (2015). *Sleep*, 38:843–844

Liu, Wheaton, Chapman, et al. (2014). *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*, 65:137-141.

https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/pdf/states508/FS_ShortSleepByState_WI_508tagged.pdf

Sleep

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep; ideally 7-9 hours/night.
- Don't go to bed unless you are sleepy.
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 min, get out of bed.
- Establish and maintain a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing.
- Keep bedroom at a comfortable, cool temperature.

American Academy of Sleep Medicine, February, 2017

<https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html>

Sleep

- Limit exposure to bright light in the evenings.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime. If you are hungry at night, eat a light, healthy snack.
- Exercise regularly and maintain a healthy diet.
- Avoid consuming caffeine in the late afternoon/eve.
- Avoid consuming alcohol before bedtime.
- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.

American Academy of Sleep Medicine, February, 2017

<https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/index.html>

Exercise

- Relationships between physical activity, cardiovascular, metabolic, neurological, immunological and bone health have been well-established.
- Exercise has been shown to mediate the impact of stressors on health and wellbeing
- Meta-analyses show exercise consistently benefits mood, depression, and anxiety.

Cooney, et al. (2013). Cochrane Database Systematic Review, Sep 12(9)

Schuch et al (2016). Journal of Psychiatric Research, Jun;77:42-51

Exercise

- Resources

- Associations between exercise and mental health

- [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(18\)30227-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(18)30227-X/fulltext)

- Exercise as a treatment for mental health issues

- <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/12/exercise>

- How much activity (and what kind) is most beneficial to wellness?

- <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/05/29/727943418/do-you-really-need-10-000-steps-per-day>

Gratitude

- People who express gratitude on a regular basis have better physical health, optimism, progress toward goals, well-being, and help others more.

– Martin Seligman's Happiness Exercise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwkDEM4gFBA>

Compassion

- Compassion, like physical and academic skills, appears to be something that is not fixed, but rather can be enhanced with training and practice.

- Compassion training exercise

- <https://centerhealthyminds.org/well-being-tools/compassion-training/access>

Summary

- Professional burn-out is common.
- Professional burn-out is NOT inevitable.
- Structural factors – culture of wellness and efficiency of practice play a role in wellness (and burn-out).
- Personal resilience is part of professional wellness

Summary

- Self-care promotes personal resilience
- Monitoring your wellness and self-care will enhance your professional practice.
- Daily activities that include things such as regular and adequate sleep, exercise, and gratitude and compassion may impact burn-out, improve wellness, and support professional competence.