

Banishing Burnout: 3 Keys to Reducing Stress and Increasing Satisfaction

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines burnout as “a syndrome resulting from workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” It can include feelings of exhaustion, mental distance from your job, negative feelings about your job, and reduced professional efficacy. Employees in healthcare are especially prone to burnout because of staffing shortages, having no work-from-home option, and the need for 24-hour coverage.



Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Approaches

Extrinsic approaches, such as pay differentials, increased PTO, bonus pay, etc., may seem like the obvious answer to mitigating burnout. However, a recent study suggested that pay and benefit enhancements didn't affect stress levels or compensate for working conditions that were less than satisfactory. To be successful, organizations need to combine extrinsic tactics with intrinsic approaches that address values, communication, and mindfulness.

- **Values**

Values shape the organization and define what's important at both the corporate and individual level. They drive the organization's culture and help attract prospective employees. Alignment is key: staff who share common work-related values with their employer and their leaders are more satisfied and more loyal. Investing time in helping staff

balance their work and life values prevents conflict, one of the factors that can lead to stress and burnout, and provides a “north star” in times of uncertainty.

According to the American Institute of Stress, 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress, a key contributor to burnout. A quarter of those respondents stated that their jobs were the number one stressor in their lives.

- **Communication**

Numerous studies have found a direct link between the quality of communication and the level of burnout among staff. Succinct and consistent communication increases transparency, builds trust, and makes employees feel valued. Communication is critically important when

corporate-level decisions are made because staff want and need to understand the rationale behind it, not just that a decision was made. Consider communication training for all staff, which could include tools like Myers-Briggs or Structural Framing, to make communication among staff and between staff and leaders more effective.

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- **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness can help change the way a team perceives their surroundings and increases resilience when things don't go according to plan. It helps staff and leaders focus on the positive and see opportunities to work through problems and improve their working environment. Mindfulness can be achieved through a number of different practices, including meditation, positive affirmation, gratitude, and reframing thoughts and words.

When staff feel that the organization cares and shares their values, they are more productive and fulfilled. By taking a holistic approach that includes both extrinsic and intrinsic tactics, organizations can build a loyal, satisfied workforce who are working toward a shared goal. There are numerous benefits for the organization, like increased efficiency and decreased costs, as well as for residents who receive optimal care from focused, positive caregivers.

