

Causes and prevention of burnout in human services staff

[Health & Medicine](#)



Burnout is a condition that can affect people in different ways and in all career choices. Burnout is also a condition that is brought on by stressors that have built up in an individual's professional and personal life. Burnout can cause employees to become disillusioned and develop a non-caring attitude about work-related and personal issues. This paper will explore the definition of burnout, factors that cause burnout and methods to prevent burnout. The writer will also examine his own personality and share how to react and respond to personal and work-related stress.

Lastly, the writer will discuss how a human service manager will be alert and assist staff with burnout. Burnout Helpguide (2010) describes burnout as a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress, which occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. In a situation where an employee used to display extreme high energy towards a job along with motivation and commitment, burnout causes them to lose interest, feel useless, and incompetent.

This condition is found in individuals who work in high-stress workplace environments. Lewis, Lewis and Packard (2007) describe three major factors of burnout as emotional exhaustion, a feeling of low personal accomplishment with clients, and a sense of depersonalization. When this occurs human service workers have a dehumanizing, uncaring attitude toward clients (Lewis, Lewis and Packard 2007). When the human services worker's attitude toward the client is affected, then his productivity within the organization is affected also. Burnout affects the workers as well as the organization. An organization suffers from burnout by having high turnover rates, employees calling in sick and low productivity. If an employee

<https://assignbuster.com/causes-and-prevention-of-burnout-in-human-services-staff/>

quits a job due to burnout, the organization has to then shovel out more time and funds to train new employees. This behavior can then cause burnout or anxiety among the other employees because their workload has increased due to an employee quitting and training of a new employee. An organization's awareness of burnout can eliminate the problems that are caused by burnout.

Causes of Burnout Lewis, Lewis and Packard (2007) wrote that it wasn't until 1974 when Herber Freudenberger posited the concept of burnout as an occupational disease. The author also believes that possible causes of burnout happen at the individual, organizational, and cultural levels. Individual burnout occurs when a human services worker sets unrealistic high career goals. A human services worker burnouts trying to reach the goals. At the organizational level, burnout occurs when competition is present along with conflict.

Lewis, Lewis and Packard (2007) states burnout occurs at this level when the norms are bureaucratic rather than flexible management philosophies. An individual will also experience burnout at this level when he or she is overloaded with work. Supervisors have to show support to employees otherwise burnout will occur. Cultural differences within an organization can cause burnout in employees. The workplace environment has to be staged in a manner that respects all cultures to avoid burnout.

Avoidance of burnout takes some serious organizational and people skills for the upper level management team, supervisory staff, and employees.

Awareness and Prevention of Burnout If the warning signs of burnout are

<https://assignbuster.com/causes-and-prevention-of-burnout-in-human-services-staff/>

present, they will only worsen if avoided. Careful observation of self and from supervisory staff will prevent total burnout. An individual can start his or her day with a relaxation ritual such as meditation, inspirational writing or reading. Healthy eating and boundaries are also ways an individual can prevent burnout. Supervisors can reduce caseloads by welcoming volunteers into the organization to assist with the work. Flextime, part time and job sharing can also provide relief from demanding jobs (Lewis, Lewis and Packard 2007). The individual and supervisors have to work together to make the workplace environment non-stressful as possible. The work the employees complete is beneficial to the organization and clients. Without the employees in the right state of mind, the productivity will be low quality. Personal Observation After careful evaluation of the writer's personality, she reacts to work-related stress by talking about the issues at hand.

Communication is a key element for the writer when dealing with work-related stress. Evaluation of an issue with a plan for organization is one of the first steps the writer takes in finding a solution. At different times of the year, beginning and end of school year, the writer experiences a high stress level at work due to the high demand of productivity at these times. The writer works on weekends when the other staff is not in weekends when the other staff is not in to take advantage of the quiet work environment.

At different intervals during the school year, the writer has to re-evaluate the situation, reorganize and re-group to gain control and calm in order to be a productive employee. The writer never allows a total burnout to occur. The situation always comes to a halt when the need is recognized through careful

observation. Staff Burnout Assistance Human services managers can intervene with staff burnout by offering assistance to reduce caseloads and provide in-service training on topics such as time management and organizational skills.

Organizations can offer peer support groups that are common in some high-stress level jobs that have an increased number of caseloads. Peer support groups give employees an opportunity to share ideas and solutions.

Employee counseling programs can offer employees an opportunity to talk about their problems with a professional before the burnout level is reached.

Manager assistance with burnout is an important part of a supervisor's responsibilities. A trickling effect of burnout can occur without positive support from supervisors. Conclusion

With the recent changes in the workforce, this has contributed to the burnout of employees. Organizations laying off employees. Organizations laying off employees has caused an increased workload on the remaining employees. In turn, this can cause increased stress on employees. Managers should be aware of the signs of burnout and be ready to assist employees in whatever way necessary. Burnout can play a major role in the decrease of productivity in an organization. The writer has discussed pertinent information that can help employees and organizations become aware of and prevent burnout among employees.