

Burnout and Restoration in the Raging 2020's

First you are seasoned, then you are fried!

November 9th (via Zoom) & 10th (Blue & Gray Room)

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History and Research in Burnout

- This is an area of concern and inquiry that has been established in the helping professions for decades, most affecting those battling on the front lines of disease and social dysfunction
- The Department of Social Work offered a workshop by this same title in the last century for social workers and other allied helping professionals, who have long been vulnerable to burnout, compassion fatigue and vicarious (secondary) trauma
- In the seminal work published nearly 50 years ago, by the “Father of Burnout” Herbert Freudenberger, it was asserted that it was primarily, “the dedicated and committed” who were the most likely to burn out (Heineman & Heineman, 2017)

3 levels contribute to Burnout

Macro

Mezzo

Micro

Large Social Forces & Archetypal Shadows

“the low hum of menace”

THE ROARING 1920'S

- Anti-evolution movement
- Prohibition
- Tulsa Race Massacre
- The Great Migration
- Mass production of automobiles

THE RAGING 2020'S

- Anti-vaccination movement
- Pandemic
- Killing of George Floyd & other racially motivated attacks
- Immigration across southern border
- Global Climate Crisis

At the 2017 National Women's March following the elections and inauguration , Gloria Steinem remarked

- “I've been thinking about the uses of a long life, and one of them is you remember when things were worse.”

Organizational Culture & Constraints

- Loss of colleagues to death and other kinds of departures
- Dwindling resources in the face of dropping enrollments
- The demand that we do “more and more” with “less and less”
- Gap between expectations and reality
- as one wise woman said to me recently-
 - “We are in a mess!”

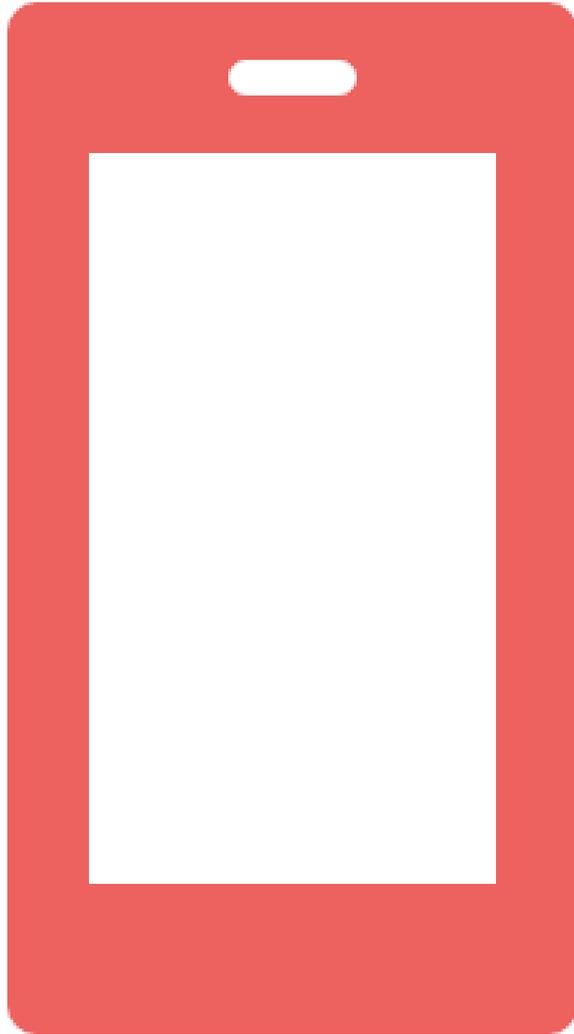
Assessment of Burnout

A brief unscaled measure was sent out with the announcement for this workshop

- https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm

There are other more sophisticated measures also available online, such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory

- [https://monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk/free-downloads/Burnout-Self-Test-Inventory\(MBI\).pdf](https://monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk/free-downloads/Burnout-Self-Test-Inventory(MBI).pdf)
- But if you are here today you probably have a sense that you are suffering from burnout and that the online sources offered to avoid or recover from burnout did not seem adequate.



Tuning In and Tuning Out

- Please turn ON your cell phones and turn up the volume all the way for 1 minute
- Now for the usual announcement
- Please silence your cell phones
- Let's do just one moment of diaphragmatic breathing

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Critical vs. Chronic Stress

- **Crisis situations**

- Short duration – approximately 6 weeks
- Disequilibrium caused by demands exceeding resources
- Goal is to achieve restoration to pre-crisis level (this may or may not have been a healthy level of functioning)

- **Chronic Predicaments**

- No clear end in sight
- Diminishing resources in the face of increasing demands
- Spiral of depletion and stress
- Leads to reactions stored in the body, brain and psyche

Effects of Prolonged Stress

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuyPuH9ojCE>
- One thing I wanted to highlight is that, as the clip points out, our early socialization and exposure to trauma sets the stage for how vulnerable we may be to stress
 - Leading to BURNOUT-
“emotional depletion and lack of motivation” (Leiter, Maslach & Frame, 2015)

Physical & Behavioral Symptoms of Burnout

Freudenberger (1974)

exhaustion, fatigue, frequent
headaches

and also

gastrointestinal disorders,
sleeplessness, and shortness of
breath.

frustration, anger, a suspicious
attitude, a feeling of omnipotence or
overconfidence

excessive use of tranquilizers and
barbiturates, cynicism, and
signs of depression.

Elements of burnout vary from one individual to another but may include

Inability to listen to others

Defensiveness- being reactive rather than responsive

Rigidity- in both thought and body- limited emotional range

Loss of ability to compartmentalize

Lack of capacity to prioritize

Limited self- awareness

Being oblivious to how you are seen by others

Self-absorption

Feeling under-resourced

The Formula for Burnout

Pressures and demands exceed inner and outer resources over a sustained period of time.



The most commonly prescribed antidote

- A sustained period of rest or long break- perhaps a semester break or planned vacation days
- But this is not always possible or adequate to dispel burnout
- Instead, we can strive to create some smaller sense of spaciousness for ourselves

Breakout

What is your greatest pressure point ?



OR



Biggest gap in resources?



Self-compassion

- Give us compassion for confusion, especially our own~ a Celtic Prayer
 - And as the saying goes – If you are not confused, you don't understand what is going on here!
- The first step toward recovery is **RECOGNITION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

How burnout affects our perception and ability to plan and engage with others

- Our reserve of psycho-emotional energy is sapped and therefore not available for use
- Negativity bias- we are programmed to notice and pay attention to what is wrong or likely to go wrong.
- The resources of time, energy, creativity are diminished
- Cynicism is a commonly cited component of burnout

Stress and Emotions are in the body

- Avenues for addressing stress must be incarnated
- If you are always in your head, and seated in a chair, you will not be able to discharge the **cumulative** effects of stress
- Stress accumulates in the body and must be discharged physically – see *The Body Keeps the Score*
 - [EuroSpa Aromatics](#)- products for at-home body care
 - Holistic Health Associates of Boonsboro- practice of acupuncture, Chinese medicine and other alternative therapies <https://hhamd.com/hhaboonsboro/>
 - Touch of Grace Spa and Salt Cave- Martinsburg <https://www.touchofgracespa.com>

Interventions on the Individual Level—All the Usual Things- A few of my favorites

Movement

- “Get out of your head and into your body”
- This does not have to be mountain climbing or extreme sports
- Even 30 minutes a day (it can be in 10- minute increments) has been demonstrated to have positive effect
- Yoga with Adriene - YouTube

Meditation

- There is clear documentation of the physical and psycho-emotional benefits
- Introverted and extraverted approaches – anything that “makes time disappear”
- Mindful Mondays

Music

- Any kind – you know what you like!
- OR
- If you are a words person – podcasts & webpages
- Tara Brach
- Krista Tippett – On Being
- Rick Hanson

Murderous Fantasies

- – which is to say – you can FEEL anyway you want, but.... If there is a body to be buried in the basement, we have a problem

Different types of assistance or guidance offered for those seeking advice or direction.

Counseling

- Though we do not have an Employee Assistance Program- insurance does cover sessions
- There are currently long waiting lists for mental health services.
- We may be uncomfortable with the idea of seeking counseling (I would never have known that YOU were in therapy)

Online self-help resources-

- Headspace
- Craving to Quit!
- Eat Right Now
- Support groups (see resources)

Ombuds consultation-

- Confidential
- Informal
- Neutral
- Independent

Peer support -The buddy system –

- enlisting at least one other person to be a sounding board
- giving permission to another person to give you honest feedback
- Or alert you if you exhibit signs of being off balance

“When to hold and when to fold”

Making important life decisions during times of prolonged stress.-

If in doubt- why not wait?

If what you have always done is no longer working – it’s time for a change.

It also depends on where you are in the trajectory of your life and career.

It may be time to “get out” or move on

Making a planned exit rather than “going screaming into the night”!

Individual Restoration

“learning to care and not to care”

Setting boundaries – e.g. intermittent screen “fasting” from various devices - even Tik-Tok asks – “Haven’t you been doing this long enough?”

Saying “No” in order to make your “Yes” meaningful

Identifying what energizes you and what drains your energy-doing more of the first!

Recognizing what perhaps has been gained as well as lost – the introversion advantage

Holding an attitude of gratitude- consider utilizing a journal/blog to record just a few things each day for which you are thankful.

Consolations and Inspirations

- If you are consoling yourself mostly with sugar, alcohol and other drugs- you will feel better in the short term and worse over the long haul
- The company and care of “fur persons’ who are symbols of our instinctual selves can provide grounding
- Do or plan something you can
 - Control- e.g. gardening, cooking
 - Create- expressive arts
 - Anticipate- this has both immediate and future benefits



Any Plan for Restoration

Must be organizational as well as individual

Faculty and staff live their lives in departments or other organizational units

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Organizational Restoration

Promoting a “Family First” Environment

recognizing that many people are motivated to work for their families and if that is not recognized and supported they are likely to declare –“You can take this job and shove it”

Establishing a Culture of Kindness-

treating others as they would prefer to be treated
offsetting negative comments by positive ones (ratio 1:5)
Asserting that yelling is NOT professional behavior

Setting Boundaries of time and access- e.g. closing office during the lunch hour- or early one afternoon for an hour of “staff repair”



Servant Leadership

Saying “Yes” to requests for flexibility and other resources whenever possible

Reasonable accommodation without appeasement

Modeling leadership committed to a work-life balance- if you are sending emails at odd hours, at the least don’t expect an immediate response.

Realizing that the more stature and status we have, the fewer people there are who will tell us the truth

Therefore, it becomes imperative to enlist at least one person who can “speak truth to power”

Breakout

- Commitment to just one thing that you can see yourself doing to help yourself
 - Keep it small
 - Make it specific
 - Plan to report progress to one other person



Commitment to Self-Care

- One of the things we can do for others is to care for ourselves
- Do not allow others to mistreat you
- It is important to “go to the source” and prepare in advance for potentially conflictual conversations (See Karen Green presentation)
- Avoiding conflict can escalate a situation which may be reduced by early intervention

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**Let us light a candle
against the darkness,
especially our own**

I am willing to help illuminate the darkness with you

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Virtual and in person appointments by request*

Some Re/Sources

- **Betterhelp.com (<https://betterhelp.com>)** – a helpful site for referral to counseling resources, utilizing brief information screens to tailor suggested referrals to your needs
- **Burnout support groups online**
 - <https://www.antoneliness.com/burnout-support-group.html>
 - <https://www.meetup.com/topics/burnout-recovery-prevention/>
- **Heinemann & Heinemann. (2017) *Burnout Research: Emergence and Scientific Investigation of a Contested Diagnosis*. Sage Publications**
- **Karen Green (2021). “Let me tell you something” – presentation on conflict and how to express frustration and other emotions on October 22nd** available on the Faculty Affairs webpage <https://www.shepherd.edu/communication-resources/>
- **Rick Hanson- The Positive Science of Brain Change <https://www.rickhanson.net/>** - extensive exploration of research and resources on brain science and techniques to achieve more happiness, love and wisdom in your life.

Some More

- **Shell Fischer** - <https://mindfulvalley.com/> provides retreats and mindfulness training in the local area.
- **Tara Brach**- <https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/> Buddhist teacher and clinical psychologist blending Eastern and Western traditions to support health and well-being
- **thejuicemedia**- film company that creates film about the climate catastrophe and other topics- raw language conveys desperate concerns about the planet <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FqXTCvDLeo->
- **The On Being Project** <https://onbeing.org> - a public radio production offering conversation, poetry, movie reviews and more, examining issues related to civility and community to promote social and personal transformation.
- **Van der Kolk, B. (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York: Penguin Books.**