

Leading with Resilience: Navigating Staff & Leadership Burnout

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Define Stress

Stress is a natural response that prompts one to address the challenges and threats in our lives.

Everyone experiences stress to some degree and the way we respond to stress makes a big difference in our overall wellbeing.

Define Burnout

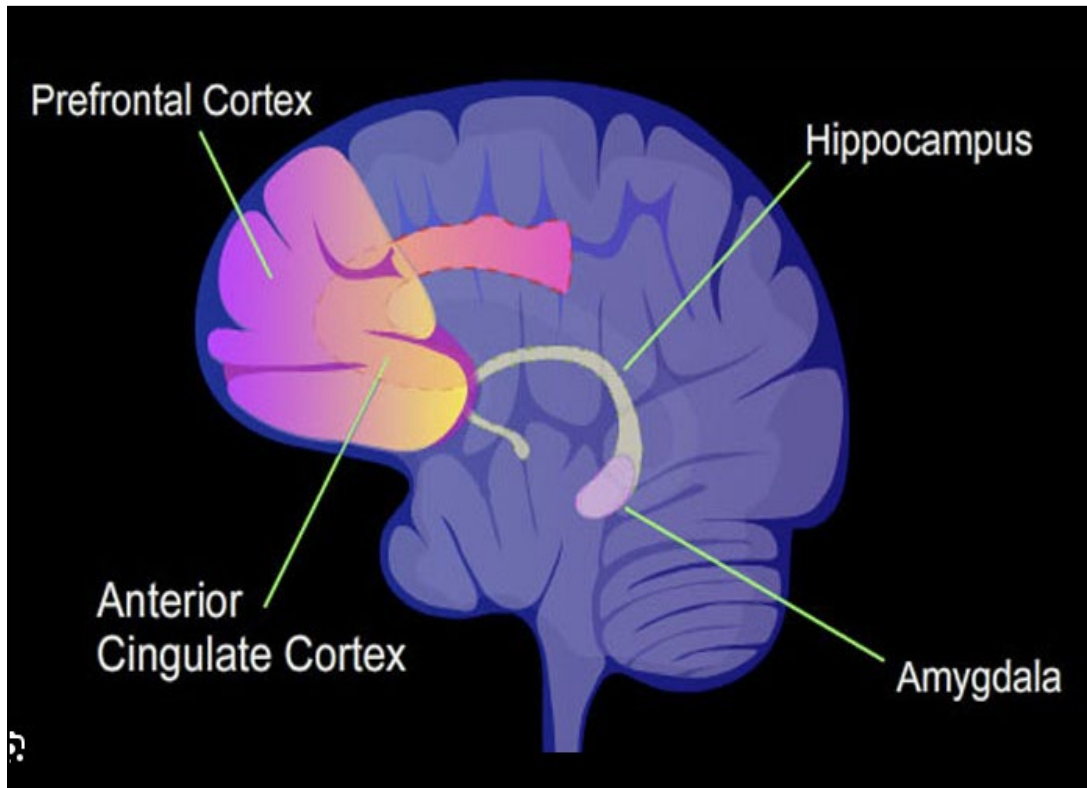
- The World Health Organization defines burnout:
 - ***Syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.***
- This definition implies the responsibility of burnout is on the individual.
- Burnout is not the sole responsibility of the person experiencing it.
- It does not include the responsibility of the employer who may have created the systemic issues within the organization.



How Do We Experience Burnout?

- Lack of support or recognition from leadership
- Unrealistic deadlines or results expectations
- Often working long hours or on weekends
- Saying yes to most requests given by others because you did not want to disappoint them

Powerful Effects of the Brain in Burnout

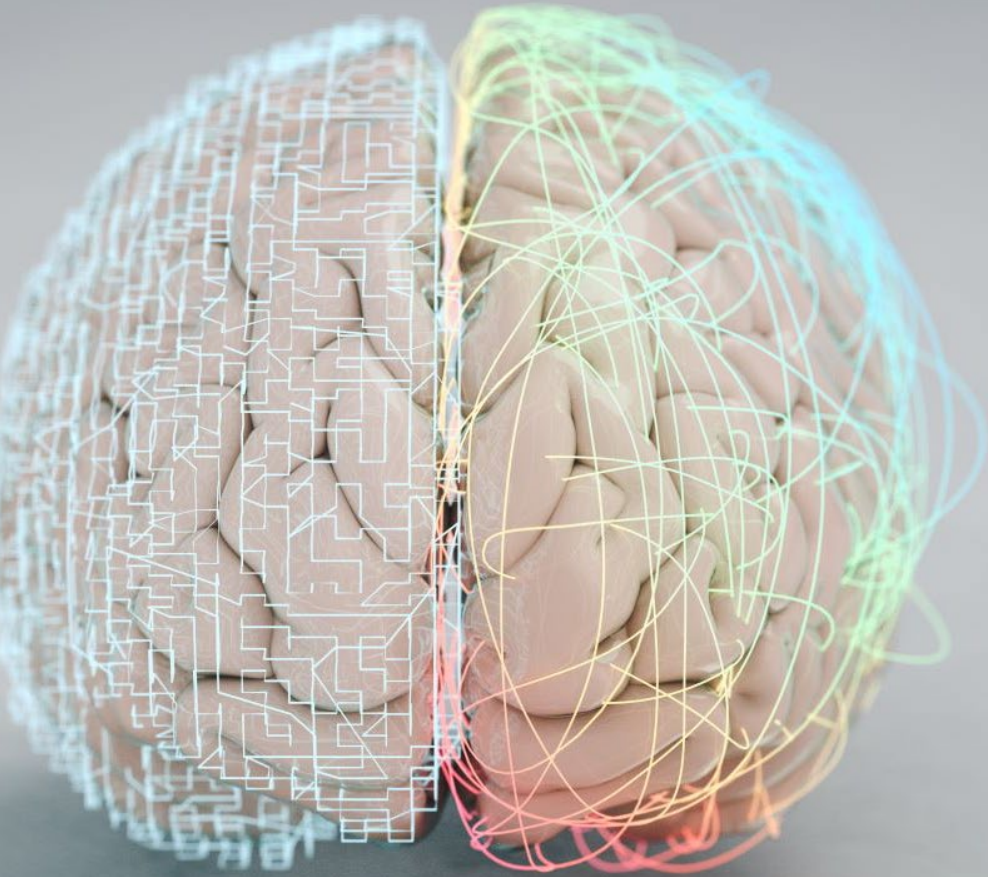


- **Amygdala** is a small part of your brain and serves as the processing center for emotions, including stress.
 - It also links your emotions to many other brain abilities like memories, learning and your senses.
- **Anterior Cingulate cortex**, is the region of the brain that is pivotal for problem solving and navigating social situations.
- **Medial prefrontal cortex**, is the part of the brain which plays essential roles in cognitive process, regulation of emotion, motivation, and sociability.
- **Hippocampus**, is the region of the brain that is pivotal for memory.

Powerful Effects of the Brain in Burnout

- In research study *“The Influence of Work-Related Chronic Stress on the Regulation of Emotion and on Functional Connectivity in the Brain”* found:
 - the burnout group had an **enlarged amygdala** and a **weaker correlation and connectivity** between the amygdala and the anterior cingulate cortex, which is the brain region pivotal for problem solving and navigating social situations.
 - The burnout group had a **weaker connection** between the amygdala and the medial prefrontal cortex, which is the part of the brain which plays essential roles in cognitive process, regulation of emotion, motivation, and sociability.





Powerful Effects of the Brain in Burnout

- Epinephrine and dopamine are responsible for providing drive, motivation, and pleasure.
- High levels of cortisol can deplete dopamine which decreases activity in the pleasure pathways of the brain, leading to a lack of motivation and alertness.
- High levels of cortisol can decrease hippocampus volume which will impair memory.

Burnout between Men and Women

Men experiencing burnout tend to:

- feel detached from their work
- withdraw from social interactions
- avoid emotional engagement
- have reduced empathy toward others (depersonalization)

Women experiencing burnout tend to:

- feel emotionally drained and depleted (emotional exhaustion)
- have higher levels of hormone cortisol, which is released in response to stress and may be less able to regulate their stress



Long-Term Effect of Stress on the Body

- Deloitte's burnout survey found:
 - Even people with a passion for their job (87% of those in the survey)
 - 64% were frequently stressed
 - 25% of employees never or rarely take all their vacation days
 - 66% of respondents often skip at least one meal a day due to being too busy or stressed about work.
- Common effects of chronic stress on the body:
 - Mental health
 - Cardiovascular health
 - Digestive health
 - Immune health
 - Reproductive health

Staff Burnout – Post Pandemic

Staff Burnout – Post Pandemic

- A survey of college leadership (presidents, deans, and other leaders) conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education confirmed that colleges and universities are having a hard time filling open positions.
- Nearly 80% of respondents said that their institution had more open positions in 2022 than in 2021
- 84% said that they were having a difficult time hiring (Zahneis 2022).

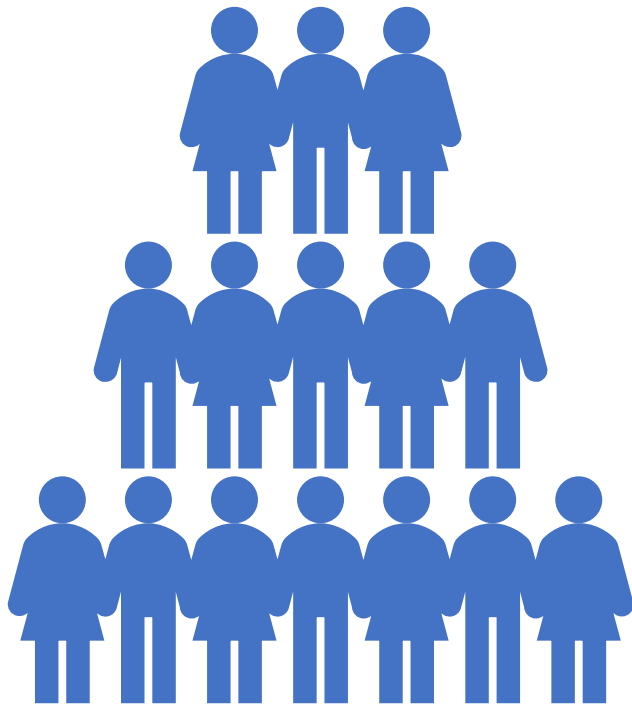




Staff Burnout – Post Pandemic–

- **Increasing Workload and Unfilled Positions**
 - Many colleges and universities were not always able to fill positions due to budget shortages.
 - Nearly two-thirds of staff respondents to one survey indicated that they have absorbed additional responsibilities from those who left their positions, while 73% stated that they have taken on more responsibilities created because of the pandemic (Bichsel et al. 2022).
 - Moreover, higher education is now facing an additional challenge; even when institutions can post a position, they are receiving far fewer applicants (Zahneis 2022).

Staff Burnout – Post Pandemic



- **Opportunities for Advancement:**

- Higher education staff roles are often bottom-heavy meaning the field requires more people in entry-level service roles with fewer mid- and senior-level positions.
- Although some institutions provide job coaching to help prepare employees for the next step, many employers leave identifying pathways forward in a career to the individual.

Staff Burnout – Post Pandemic

Working Remotely

- 43% of respondents to the CUPA-HR survey suggested that the opportunity to work remotely would be a factor in their job decisions (Bichsel et al. 2022).
- 58% of respondents to one survey of 25,000 Americans in the workforce responded that they are able to work at home at least part time, while 35% can work at home full time (Dua et al. 2022).
- Contrast to many higher education institutions that have seen a significant push to return to business as usual.



Staff Burnout – Post Pandemic

Lack of Meaningful Work

- Many people choose work at colleges and universities because they are inspired by the mission and values of higher education.
- Similarly, 77% of respondents to CUPA-HR's survey of staff stated they believe that their work has purpose (Bichsel et al. 2022).
- The constant interruptions from the various online chat programs makes it difficult to focus on the work at hand.



What Can Campus Leaders Do?

Be	Offer	Adjust	Explore and promote
Be upfront with the salary ranges for vacant positions.	Offer competitive pay.	Adjust for cost of living.	Explore and promote all benefits.



What Can Campus Leaders Do?

- **Identify career paths.**
 - Share with employees the skills and competencies that are needed to advance in a given career path (for example, entry-level coordinator assistant director associate director director).
 - Provide the training and support for employees to acquire the skills to be prepared to assume a new position.
- **Reclassify positions for additional skillsets that are needed for the office.**
 - Doing so will compensate employees for their work and provide them with an identifiable career path at the institution, instead of having to look elsewhere for advancement.
- **Provide career coaches and counselors.**
 - The human resources office can help staff understand how to build a career on campus.

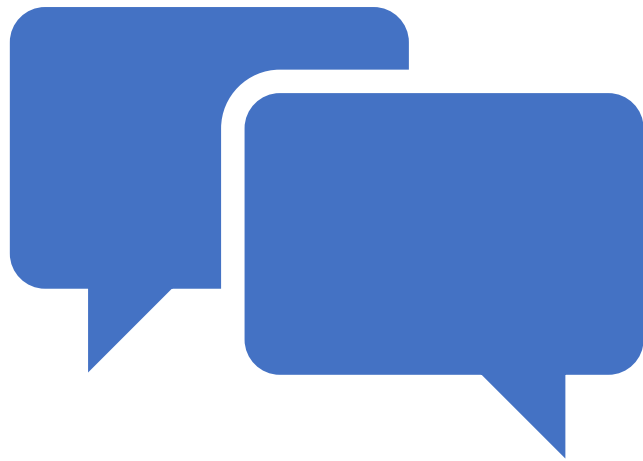
What Can Campus Leaders Do?

Create hybrid schedules to allow interested staff to work both in-person and remotely.

- If offices are concerned about having an in-person presence five days per week, arrange schedules so that the appropriate number of employees are on campus throughout the week, leaving other employees available for student meetings via Zoom.

Explore flexible schedules that work for each office.

- Some units ask that all staff are in the office the same day each week to allow for full-team meetings, and staff then rotate other days in and out of the office.
- Unit leaders might also consider letting employees use flexible work schedules, perhaps performing their work on a shifted schedule, such as from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. .



What Can Campus Leaders Do?

- **Reduce the use of chat programs in the office.**
 - Many offices have their teams constantly connected through chat programs and being constantly available comes at a price to productivity and deep-thinking.
- **Sending an email versus another meeting.**
 - Email can be less disruptive, particularly if employees occasionally close their email programs to work on projects that require focused attention.
 - Unnecessary meetings can absorb a lot of working time from staff. Respect each others time and when appropriate send an email.

How Can Managers Reduce Burnout?



Preventing Burnout within the Team

- **Promote Efficient Work Practices:** streamline, simplify, and automate repetitive tasks to reduce workload
- **Foster a Supportive Environment:** Open communication and offer emotional support and encouragement. Acknowledge their efforts.
- **Flexible Working Conditions:** Adjust work hours and/or remote work options.
- **Hire Temporary Assistance:** Assess where this type of assistance could offer the most relief to the team.
- **Encourage Breaks and Annual Leave:** Ensure staff take breaks and encourage taking vacations and making medical appointments.
- **Monitor Workload:** Conduct check-ins to assess productivity and stress levels of the team.
- **Planning:** Work with your leadership to develop long-term plans and succession plans.

Share Goals & Objectives

What are your departmental or divisional goals/objectives?

Have they been clearly defined and articulated to staff?

Do they understand how they FIT in with fulfilling these goals/objectives?

- How many emails are answered daily?
- How many appeals should your team review and complete weekly?
- What role does your team have with assisting students?
- What steps are you taking to move the university/division goals and objectives forward?
- Does your team feel part of that process?

Effectively Communicate Expectations

Have staff expectations been established early in the process?

Are we reacting to an unforeseen challenge, problem, or glitch?

Does your team understand their exact role in meeting the expectations?

- Do you have regular meetings to check-in on where staff are in the process and any challenges they are experiencing?
- Do you request their feedback (informal or formal)?

Do you provide meaningful feedback?

- Employees internalize and implement management feedback when it's relevant.
- Provide messaging supported by examples.
- Illustrate how they fit in this process and why their efforts make a difference.

Steps for Establishing Expectations

1. Determine what your realistic expectations are.
 - Complete projects within the given timeframe.
 - Have a positive attitude.
 - Take initiative on starting new projects and coming up with new ideas
 - Remain professional at all times when communicating with students and other staff members.
 - Follow up with students within the prescribed time.
2. Make sure the expectations are clear, obtainable, and allow staff to ask questions.
3. Align the expectations to the person's abilities and/or skillset.
4. Get agreement and commitment.



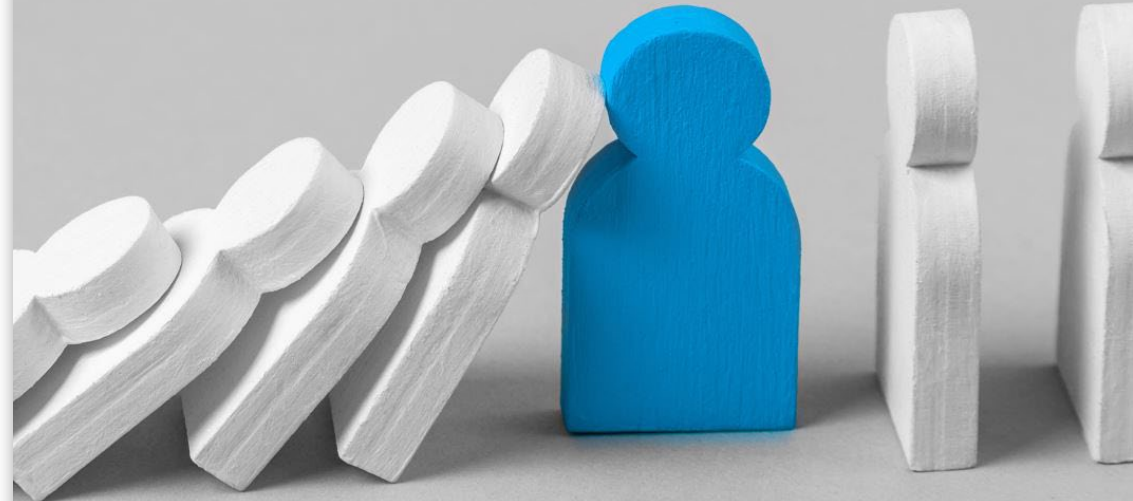
Genuine Leadership

- **Self-Awareness** – knowing your own strengths and weaknesses
 - Surround yourself with individuals with talents different from yourself
 - View delegation as an opportunity to empower and develop your team
 - Know your own personal bias regarding delegation and share the “love”.
- **Stewardship** – taking responsibility and accountability.
 - Blame is an easy route to take but it’s detrimental to the success of the individuals involved and the overall office.
 - Staff will eventually disengage, performance will decrease, and you will have staff turnover.

Genuine Leadership

Motivation - represents the passion for the drive of the work.

- It's demonstrated by the need to raise the bar or status quo continuously.
- Requires you to understand your team & their level of engagement:
 - **Highly engaged** – open for change and innovation. Always working towards the end goal and for opportunities of growth.
 - **Engaged** – consistently provide good work. Worker bees. Followers of the direction you set and not active participants in evolving the model.
 - **Disengaged** – not aligned to the position, team, underperformers. Require much of your attention and management. They distract from the end goal.





Genuine Leadership

- **Persuasion** - your ability to lead people in a specific direction on your behalf, regardless of your position.
 - Your leadership must appeal to a diverse group of individuals.
 - Know your audience. You convey a different message when addressing different groups.
 - Address the ***“What’s in it for me?”*** questions or concerns:
 - Reduction in process steps
 - Elimination of duplicate work
 - Creating automated process to eliminate manual work
 - Meeting compliance
 - Status and/or recognition



Genuine Leadership

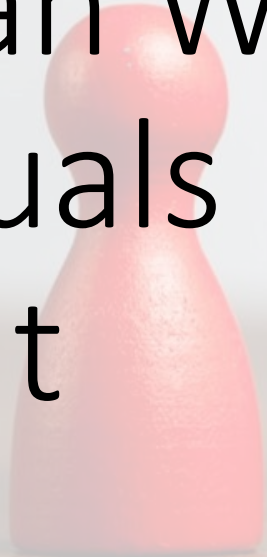
- **Empathy** is the ability to understand someone else's feelings.
 - creates a sense of trust your team will develop with you and it will lead to greater collaboration and engagement.
- Empathy will also lead to:
 - Your ability to understand the root cause of disengaged team members and poor performance
 - Your ability to support struggling individuals to succeed
 - Your enhancement of professional relationships
- Empathy begins when you listen beyond the words and more how they are being said.

Genuine Leadership

- **Mentoring** - Our mission is to create other high-quality leaders.
- Mentoring requires:
 - Open-mindedness
 - Inquisitive
 - Honesty
- **Coaching** is designed for behavioral changes. Performance and skill enhancements are primary reasons someone would need coaching.



How Can We as
Individuals Reduce
Burnout





Reducing Burnout – Recognize it For What It Is

- Burnout is a form of exhaustion, caused by excessive and extended physical, mental, and emotional stress.
- If you are experiencing it now, you are thinking more about curing it rather than preventing it.
- Recognizing the problem allows you to find ways to prevent it.



Reduce Burnout – Don't Hide It or Deny It

Some people seem to wear burnout like a badge of honor (Look how hard I've worked now, I am so burnt out!), but far more people hide, deny, or downplay it.

Denial won't prevent it in the future but will likely make it worse.

Be willing to admit that you get burnt out, and you will be more proactive in preventing it.



Reducing Burnout – Disconnect from Technology Before Bed

- Checking your emails late into the night can prevent you from getting enough sleep.
- This leads to daytime exhaustion which means you won't function at the top of your game – affecting your productivity and ability to stay focused.
- Try putting your phone across the room or in another room entirely at bedtime.

Reducing Burnout – Schedule Breaks Throughout the Day

- Regardless of what type of work you do, it's important to remain focused so that you don't waste your time on distractions.
- To help you get going, pour your energy into a block of work and then take a 15-minute break.
- Continue this throughout your day. These breaks will energize you and help prevent burnout.



Reducing Burnout – Take Vacations

- In order to truly unplug, it's a wise idea to get away from work and take a vacation ***at least once a year.***
- Time away from work helps you re-energize, enabling you to return with renewed focus and passion for your job.
- Here's another suggestion: Try a Staycation. Go to a hotel in town or stay home but tell your friends and family you went out of town. 😊





Reduce Burnout – Be Mindful & Grateful

- Perhaps try short meditation breaks into your workday.
 - Try downloading an app like Calm or Headspace.
- Build the practice of gratefulness in your life is one of the best ways to lower stress, prevent burnout and create more happiness.
 - It is incredibly simple to start – you can do it right now. Identify three things you are thankful for.
 - Whether big or small things, every time you do this you are helping prevent or reduce your burnout.

Reduce Burnout - Exercise

- When do you have time to exercise? Here's the truth: You probably don't have time. You've got to make the time.
- It's important to add physical fitness into your schedule because a lack of exercise can make you feel run down.
- Increased exercise, on the other hand, helps to reduce anxiety and depression, according to the American Psychological Association.





Reduce Burnout – Set Boundaries

- This is key as your health and sanity depends on declaring an end to your workday and a start to your personal time.
 - This takes discipline and requires setting boundaries.
- Have a talk with your direct manager. Most employers recognize the importance of work-life balance and will respect you for speaking up.

Reduce Burnout – Find Meaning in Your Work

Finding meaning in your work doesn't mean you will necessarily work harder, but whenever you work you will get more joy from it.

Your joy and satisfaction will counterbalance the onset of burnout.

Meaning alone won't overcome an excessive workload but meaning in your work will always help you in preventing burnout.

Reduce Burnout – See Something, Say Something

- Regardless of your position in the office, be vigilant for the signs of burnout in your office.
 - Speak with compassion and help each other in preventing burnout.
 - Let someone know when you feel the signs of burnout.
 - Take a step back in order to regain yourself.



Army
Questions

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