Side Step Burnout & Tango with Workplace Wellness

A Seminar to Understand Stress leading to Burnout and Strategies for Prevention.

By

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“The last of human freedoms is the ability to choose one’s attitude in a given set of circumstances.”

Viktor Frankl
• Employees work an average of one additional month per year compared to 25 years ago.
• Financial burden for companies in excess of 330 billion annually (NIOSH, 2007).
  • 40% of worker turnover is due to job stress (AIS)
  • Limited financial compensation for clinicians
  • Employee retention, absenteeism, influences on quality of care
  • 1 out of 3 workers overwhelmed with stress in the workplace (NIOSH, 2007)
  • Community Mental Health policies and workplace demands increase workplace stressors
  • Lack of clarity of burnout and stress (Compassion fatigue)
  • Constant job changes and requirements (Maxon, 1999).
6 Myths about Stress

• Stress is the same for everyone
• Stress is bad for you
• Stress is everywhere, so you can’t do anything about it
• The most popular techniques for reducing stress are the best ones
• No symptoms, no stress
• Only major symptoms of stress require attention
• (Miller, Lyle PhD & Smith, Alma, PhD, 1993).
Historical Perspective

• Job Stress/Burnout

  • Herbert Freudenberger (1970) coined the phrase “burnout”
  • Christine Maslach (1976) researcher for burnout and created MBI instrument to measure burnout
  • Cherniss (1980) Psychologist defined specific signs of workers fatigue in the workplace
  • Lazarus & Folkman (1986) Structural relationships between burnout syndromes and sense of employee control
  • Golembiewski & Munzenrider (1988) 8 phase model of burnout
  • Experts believe burnout is a process resulting from inadequate resources and coping skills
  • Development of process based burnout theories with specific symptomology
  • Development of measurement tools for burnout and workplace satisfaction
What is Stress?

• The most commonly accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S Lazarus): “stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize” (MindTools, 1996-2011).
Stressed in America

- Key Findings from the APA 2010 Stress in America Survey:
  - Stress is up!
  - Children are hurting
  - Self-care is not a priority
  - Lack of willpower
Top 10 Causes of Stress

• Money
• Work
• Economy
• Family Responsibilities
• Relationships
• Personal health concerns
• Housing costs
• Job Stability
• Health problems affecting the family
• Personal Safety

(APA, 2011 Stress Survey).
Top Ten Physical Symptoms of Stress

• Irritability or anger
• Fatigue
• Lack of motivation or interests
• Feeling nervous or anxious
• Headache
• Feeling depressed or sad
• Feeling as if to cry
• Upset stomach or indigestion
• Muscular tension
• Change in appetite

(APA, 2011 Stress Survey).
Selye’s Biology of Stress & Burnout
General Adaptation Syndrome

- Alarm Phase
- Resistance Phase
- Exhaustion Phase

Harmful stress is mainly due to our own reactions, perceptions, and emotional reactivity.

GOOD NEWS!! We are in control of these reactions!
What is Burnout?

- Burnout occurs when chronic daily stressors exceed workers resources to cope. Overwork does not cause burnout. Lacking motivation and passion for one’s work contributes to burnout.

- Three stages of Burnout include
  - Emotional exhaustion: Feeling exhausted both physically and emotionally.
  - Depersonalization: Feeling cynical and detached and lacking in empathy toward others.
  - Sense of Personal Accomplishment: Lacking in sense of purpose and meaning in one’s work. (Maslach, Leiter, & Jackson, 1996),
How do you detect Workplace Burnout?

- Helping professionals are more susceptible to stress leading to burnout
- Workplace cynicism
- Lack in happiness and workplace joy
- Irritability and job disillusionment
- Vicarious Traumatization, Compassion Fatigue (Mayo Clinic).

Workplace factors:
- Size and demands of workload
- Personal sense of control in the workplace
- Rewards and incentives
- Office environment
- Workplace fairness
- Worker’s aligned values and organizational philosophies (American Chiropractic Association)
Warning Signs of Burnout

- Have you become cynical or critical at work?
- Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started once you arrive?
- Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers, or clients?
- Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
- Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
- Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep habits or appetite changed?
- Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, backaches or other physical complaints? (Mayo Clinic, 2010).
Health Hazards of Burnout

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Psychological Disorders
- Workplace Injury
- Suicide
- Cancer
- Ulcers
- Immune disorders
- When workers are expending energy to managing stress the less contribution to the team and organization

(Encyclopedia of occupational safety and Health, 1995).
Let’s Talk Shop!

- How does stress & burnout impact the workplace?
- Company legal implications?
- Productivity & Workload?
- Workplace environment?
- Employee Retention?
- Costs?
- Can we afford not to address workplace wellness??
Productivity & Workload

• Research indicates links between productivity and levels of stress. (Gordian Health Solutions) Conducted research with over 65,000 participant’s in diverse occupations and found that stressed out workers reduced their productivity by 4.4% compared to less stressed workers who had 0.7 % productivity loss.

• Employees who are most likely to develop burnout are the best employees. Highly productive employees are most prone to develop burnout because they put more of themselves into their job, spend more time at work, and take work more seriously and personally. In other words, employees who develop burnout are employees who care about their jobs (Gary Vikesland, PhD).

• Stressed out employees cost employers more in health care cost.
Workplace Environments

- Demands at work
- There is disproportion between the workload and the abilities of the employees
- Fear for security of employment
- Ineffective management
- Dealing with reorganizations in the workplace
- Dealing with workplace bullies
- Dealing with sexual harassment
- A poor physical working environment
- Lack of employees recognition

(Hostile work environment, 2007)
What to do if employees experience Burnout

• Encourage balance in the workplace
• Job Diversity
• Employee Control
• Provide fun and sense of humor at the workplace
• Allow for periods of low and high productivity expectations
• Recognize and reward contributions and efforts
  (Vikesland, G).
Strategies for Worker Retention

- Competitive salaries
- Quality supervision
- Respect
- Recognition
- Small perks
- Stay interviews
- Employee training & development
- Increase manager involvement
Workplace Burnout Prevention

• Collaborate with colleagues daily
• Create a sense of control in the workplace
• Have scheduled staff meetings focused on wellness
• Create positive workplace rituals
• Create problem solving sessions geared to focus on main workplace challenges
• Mandate trainings for health and mental wellness; Make it a priority 😊
• Taking a scheduled mental health day
• Create a gratitude list
• Time management tools
Strategies for Managing Workplace Burnout

• Burnout awareness
• Create a committee to address workplace wellness
• Commit to once a month wellness meeting for all staff
• Provide physical and mental wellness strategies to encourage healthier lifestyles
• Create stress management surveys to monitor workplace wellness and identify potential issues in the workplace and to evaluate progress
• Make wellness a priority in the workplace
• Create incentives for workplace wellness
• Conduct a stress audit (PMI) Pressure Mgmt Indicator
• (Workwell & Resources Systems, 2007).
Positive Psychology

- Focuses on happiness and not pathology
- This field of psychology started to emerge in 1998 by Martin Seligman
- Main focus on nurturing strength, resilience, and emotional health
- What influences positive emotions leading to happiness?
Positive Psychology/Stress Management

- Gratitude “wanting what you have”
- Optimism “positive outlook”
- Flow “Lose track of time absorbed in an activity”
- Mindfulness “being in the moment”
- Spirituality” Greater sense of meaning in life
- Laughter 😊
Questions/Discussion
Good Afternoon
Design a Wellness Program

- Make workplace wellness a priority in your organization
- Setup open door brainstorm sessions to identify top 3 stressors within the organization
- Setup a committee to meet monthly to explore 3 stressors and evaluate possible strategies
- Implement 3 strategies to address the top stressor; After 3 months conduct a company wide survey to determine effectiveness
- Redesign strategies or implement new and begin on new next stressor or continue brainstorming previous stressors as determined by survey results
- Share survey results with all employees
Techniques for Making Wellness a Workplace Priority Part 1

• Announcement to workers by management to communicate values of employee contributions and planning strategies for workplace wellness
  – Create a letter and distribute to employees describing importance of workplace wellness and goals for improvements
  – Setup a organizational wide meeting to discuss intent and importance of wellness in the workplace; Brief overview; **This is not a question & answer session!** This meeting demonstrates management is serious about workplace wellness and welcomes critical feedback from employees.
Techniques for making wellness a Workplace Priority Part 2

• Conduct a stress audit to evaluate organizational challenges to include:
  – Workload and productivity expectations
  – Job security
  – Communication
  – Ineffective management styles.
  – Constant change.
  – Employee moral and attitudes.
  – Positive reinforcements and incentives.
  – Organizational climate.

• (Wall, L T, 1999)
Wellness Committee

- Review audit/identify 3 top workplace stressors
- Brainstorm strategies to address these stressors
- Decide on strategies and commit to review progress in 1 month by use of feedback from employees
- If progress is positive continue strategies for 2 more months and review progress; If positive results continue brainstorm another workplace stressor and repeat the process
- Timeline of 6 months evaluate with an employee survey to assess progress toward workplace wellness
The ABCDE (RET)  
Step 1 (A)  

• Activating Event/Trigger: What prompts us to interpret or think about what is occurring?
Step 2
(B)

• Beliefs: Interpretations of activating events. What do you tell yourself?
Step 3 (C)

• Consequences. What we do as results of our beliefs. How did you act & feel?
Step 4
(D)

- Dispute the old belief. See it differently.
Step 5

• Experiences/Visualization
Lets Review & Try the 4 Step Process

- Identify a activating event
- Identify the irrational & incorrect beliefs
- Consequences
- Dispute & look at the event differently
- Visualize and structure the experience
Practice

Remember it takes practice to be successful
Tips to Reduce Stress

- Daily affirmations and apps
- Sign up for daily positive quotes
- Limit technology
- Get out in nature
- Create a gratitude list
- Adopt a pet
- Volunteer
- Smile
- State each morning “What will I do today that takes care of me” (Do it)
- Walk and exercise
- Eat healthier
- Remember your purpose: (Why am I doing what I’m doing?)
- Remember: it is a choice to take care of yourself and to be happy
Where to go from here?

• Why practice workplace wellness?
• What have we learned today?
• Questions/ comments?
Reflections

• When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves

• A human being is a deciding being

• “What is to give light must endure burning”
  — (Viktor Frankl, 1959).
References & Resources

• The national institute for occupational safety and health. (CDC) 2007. www.cdc.org
References

References

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References

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