

Let's Talk: Burnout

Presenter – Erica Hanlon, Clinical Counselor

Hey, everybody. My name is Erica Hanlon. And today, we're going to talk about burnout.

So burnout doesn't discriminate. It doesn't care if you're a manager or an employee, and lots of people get confused about what burnout exactly is. So let's just kind of get that out of the way. Burnout is basically a state of exhaustion. It's physical, mental, emotional exhaustion that's caused by too much stress that lasts for too long. Now this is where people get kind of mixed up, because burnout is not stress, even though it's caused by stress.

Recognizing burnout

So what does burnout look like exactly? It's basically a state of being checked out from work. You're exhausted all the time. You're unmotivated. You have a hard time just getting basic stuff done that should be easy to do. So let's talk about some clear indicators that might signal that somebody has a burnout episode coming on. The person might feel exhausted all the time. They might have physical complaints like aches and pains. They might seem really unmotivated, or even express that they feel like their job isn't going anywhere. You might see a lot more procrastination and reduced work performance, and it might seem like, you know, the person just has nothing left to give at work.

Causes of burnout

So let's talk about what can contribute to burnout, and we're going to break these into three categories. One is lifestyle. So you're looking for somebody who has maybe a poor work-life balance. They just sort of work all the time, and they're always doing things for other people. Workplace wise, you're looking for an employee who maybe doesn't feel like they have a lot of control over the work that they do, or they're expressing that maybe their work is feeling boring. They need new challenges. And then finally, personality types. Some personality types are more prone to burnout. These are people who are really high achievers. They're perfectionists, and they just simply are not forgiving of mistakes, either in themselves or in others.

Preventing burnout

So when it comes to either preventing burnout or dealing with it after you're already into a burnout episode, self-care is key. So you want to encourage your employees to start instituting healthy habits to make sure that they have an opportunity to recharge their batteries. Maybe that looks like taking time off when they have it, taking their breaks, and at the workplace, things that you can do there is

meet with the employee. Find out what can you do with their work to make sure that it's interesting and enjoyable, and challenging them in new ways, while still keeping that stress in check. Because remember, when it comes to self-care, it's not like one and done. You don't take one day off and low and behold your burnout is solved. You want to institute those nice, healthy habits on a consistent basis.

Managing burnout

So for a lot of people, acknowledging burnout can feel like, hmm, maybe you're acknowledging some kind of personal weakness. Make sure that you are helping your employees understand what burnout looks like, how to prevent it, and then encouraging them to not just power through it, but ask for help, and make self-care a priority.

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