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THE 12 STAGES OF BURNOUT

Managing burnout, understanding the
active and passive signs

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION DEFINES BURNOUT AS THIS:

Burnout is a syndrome conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterised by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.

Data from the Labour Force Survey 2022/23 indicates a significant number of cases relating to work-related stress, depression, or anxiety in the UK. There were approximately 875,000 reported cases of these conditions among workers, resulting in an estimated 17.1 million days of lost productivity.

Burnout is becoming a serious threat to the welfare of teams and to the culture of the companies in which they work. One difficulty in managing burnout is knowing what to look out for; what are the signs, passive and active, of burnout and when does stress become more serious?

There are 12 stages of burnout as identified through the work of psychologists Gail North and Herbert Freudenberger. Let's talk through each of those 12 stages of burnout so you'll know what to look for in yourself, your teams and those around you.

Please note: Burnout is a serious and crippling condition, and you do not have to go through that alone. If you're feeling burned out or are suffering the effects of chronic stress, **reach out to someone!**

875,000

Incidents of stress, anxiety or depression relating to work

17,100,000

Days of lost productivity

COMPULSION TO PROVE ONESELF

Working harder and taking on more to demonstrate your worth.

1

WORKING HARDER

Doubling down on work and pushing yourself.

2

NEGLECTING NEEDS

Skipping exercise sessions, meditation, taking breaks and so on.

3

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF THIS IS YOU

- Determine what your 1-3 daily non-negotiables are for your health
- Defend your personal time as though it was an important business meeting
- Make a list of things you do well to bring balance to your sense of self-worth

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF THIS IS YOUR TEAM MEMBER

- Give praise and measured feedback to the person
- Role model the behaviours you wish to see in them
- Gently explain that self-care is an important part of their personal development

DISPLACEMENT OF CONFLICT

Blaming others or your situation for your problems, including your stress levels.

4

REVISION OF VALUES

Work becomes your main priority to the detriment of friends and family.

5

DENIAL OF EMERGING PROBLEMS

Blaming others, avoiding responsibility, denial.

6

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF THIS IS YOU

- Reconnect with what's important to you
- Talk to family and friends and ask them for their feedback
- Identify one thing outside of work that you can make a priority

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF THIS IS YOUR TEAM MEMBER

- Spend time with the individual going through their workload
- Help them to prioritise their workload and delegate if appropriate
- Coach them into understanding how taking time for themselves could improve their situation

WITHDRAWAL

Avoiding or dreading social interaction and possibly using alcohol or drugs to try to feel relief from stress.

7

ODD BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

For example, impatience, aggression or uncharacteristic sadness.

8

DEPERSONALISATION

Low self-worth, detached from others and society, life lacks value.

9

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF THIS IS YOU

- Share how you feel with a friend, colleague or HR professional
- Consider working with a coach or therapist who specialises in burnout
- Use movement, good nutrition and natural light to lift your mood

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF THIS IS YOUR TEAM MEMBER

- Approach them with sensitivity and empathy and let them know that you wish to help
- Encourage them to talk to a professional who can provide appropriate support
- Having the conversation during a walk or over the phone can be less intense than in person

INNER EMPTINESS

Avoiding or dreading social interaction and possibly using alcohol or drugs to try to feel relief from stress.

10

DEPRESSION

Feeling lost and unsure, exhausted, future feels bleak and dark.

11

BURNOUT SYNDROME

A total mental and physical collapse or breakdown.

12

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF THIS IS YOU

- Seek the help of a professional immediately
- Share how you feel with a family member of someone you can trust
- Arrange for time out from work to focus on your recovery

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF THIS IS YOUR TEAM MEMBER

- Arrange for them to get professional help immediately
- Ask what else you can do to help
- Ensure that they can take time out of the business and that this process is handled sensitively and discretely



YOU CAN RECOVER

Burnout is usually something that you can reverse, and you can recover from it. No matter which of the 12 stages of burnout you feel you or your team members may be at. It is our belief that by focusing on the main areas of health, you can mitigate your risk of burnout and improve your resilience. We do this by practising cadence.

The Cadence Approach

Today's business environment is fast-paced and demanding. The ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances is a vital skill, and one which we can learn from some of the most resilient people in society – athletes. Even at the most elite level, an athlete will not expect to be operating at peak performance all year round. They will look ahead to the schedule, get ready, perform to the best of their ability and then rest. This is the Cadence Approach and it's a simple, four-step process:

First, identify the big events coming up in your professional and personal life; then prepare by making small improvements in sleep, mental health and energy; complete the task or event, and then allow your nervous system to recover by prioritising slivers of recovery into the day.

Cadence is the key to high performance

Cadence is about managing energy and minimising the risk of chronic stress and burnout. Find out more exploring our website or check out the bestselling mini-book [Cadence](#) on Amazon or follow Leanne for tips and advice on social media at [@leannespencerkeynote](#).



ABOUT LEANNE SPENCER

Voted Speaker of the Year in 2022, Leanne Spencer is a global keynote speaker and author, with over 12 years' experience in wellbeing and 13 qualifications in exercise and nutrition. Leanne began her career in sales and spent over 15 years working in the City of London before leaving in 2012 to set up a wellbeing company, after suffering from burnout. Leanne is the bestselling author of three books, including her latest mini-book, [Cadence](#), and is a Bear Grylls Survival Instructor. Leanne's keynotes show your teams how to beat burnout and have more fun using her unique Cadence Approach and benefit from the new frontier of wellbeing – belonging, social relationships and human connection.



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