Avoiding Educator Burnout: Who Ya Gonna Call? Stress Busters!
David M. Schwartz, Ph.D., ABPdN

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Stress is your reaction to stressors and consequence of that reaction.
- Impact of stress varies from person to person.
- Stress originates at all different levels in the system.
- Outcomes of stress include physical and physiological problems, increased absenteeism and reduced productivity.
- Burnout is the consequence of prolonged exposure to stress.
- There are strategies to cope with stress.
- Stress is negatively related to performance.
A Model of Occupational Stress

Attitudinal Characteristics of Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatalism</td>
<td>A feeling that you lack control over your work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>A lack of interest in doing your job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discontent</td>
<td>A sense of being unhappy with your job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>A tendency to undervalue the content of your job and the rewards received.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequacy</td>
<td>A feeling of not being able to meet your objectives.</td>
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<td>Failure</td>
<td>A tendency to discredit your performance and conclude that you are ineffective.</td>
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<td>Overwork</td>
<td>A feeling of having too much to do and not enough time to complete it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nastiness</td>
<td>A tendency to be rude or unpleasant to your co-workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>A feeling that you are not being justly rewarded for your efforts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>A desire to give up and get away from it all.</td>
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A Model of Burnout

Stress
- The person feels fatigued
- The person is anxious
- The person is dissatisfied with his or her job
- The person’s job commitment has dropped off
- The person feels moody
- The person feels guilty
- The person is having difficulty concentrating
- The person tends to forget things at times
- The person undergoes physiological changes

Burnout
- The individual encounters chronic exhaustion.
- The individual is hypertensive.
- The individual is bored and cynical about the work.
- The individual’s job commitment is virtually nil; he or she is mentally detached.
- The individual feels impatient, irritable and unwilling to talk to others.
- The individual encounters mental depression.
- The individual does not seem to know where he or she is; forgetfulness is becoming more and more frequent.
- The individual begins to voice psychosomatic complaints such as increased blood pressure and heart beat.
Stress Overload vs Burnout

**Stress Overload**
- Over-engagement
- Over-reactive emotions
- Urgency and hyperactivity
- Loss of energy
- Primary damage: physical
- Primary damage: physical

**Burnout**
- Disengagement
- Blunted emotions
- Helplessness/hopelessness
- Loss of motivation/ideals/hope
- Primary damage: emotional
- Primary damage: emotional
- Makes life not seem worth living

Signs of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Signs</th>
<th>Emotional Signs</th>
<th>Mental Signs</th>
<th>Relational Signs</th>
<th>Spiritual Signs</th>
<th>Behavioral Signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appetite changes</td>
<td>Bad temper</td>
<td>Lacking humor</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>A feeling of emptiness</td>
<td>Pacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Dull senses</td>
<td>Defensive</td>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>Sweating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Nightmares</td>
<td>Lethargy</td>
<td>Intolerance</td>
<td>Inability to forgive</td>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Resentment</td>
<td>Cynicism</td>
<td>Nail biting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigestion</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Indecisiveness</td>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>Loss of direction</td>
<td>Slumped posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colds</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Forgetfulness</td>
<td>Nagging</td>
<td>Doubt</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight change</td>
<td>Oversensitivity</td>
<td>Poor concentration</td>
<td>Lower sex drive</td>
<td>Need to prove self</td>
<td>Risk aversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teeth grinding</td>
<td>Mood swings</td>
<td>Personality changes</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Negative outlook</td>
<td>Eating disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension</td>
<td>Fearfulness</td>
<td>Stuck in past</td>
<td>Abuse</td>
<td>Gloom</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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What Is Stress?

- inborn biological mechanism existing in all living creatures
- purpose is to protect the organism to ensure its’ survival and to ensure the survival of its’ species
- this stress mechanism, (survival instinct) operates through the concept “fight, flight or freeze”

(Source: Stress vs Distress by Hans Selye)

Physiological Response

- Increased:
  - muscle tension
  - blood pressure
  - breathing rate
  - heart rate
  - mental alertness
  - emotional anxiety
  - blood sugars and fats
  - metabolism

- Decreased:
  - digestion
  - immune system
  - mental creativity
  - emotional stability
  - sex hormones
Stress Overload Leads to Illness

Stages of Stress Overload
1. Fatigue
2. Relationship problems
3. Negative Emotions
4. Aches/Pains
5. Illness

(Source: Canadian Institute of Stress)

Chronic Stress-Related Disorders & Diseases

- Heart Disease
- Hypertension
- Lowered Immunity
- Gastrointestinal
- Reduced sex drive
- Substance abuse
- Sleep disorders
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Asthma
- Reproductive issues
- Migraines
- Musculoskeletal
- Type II Diabetes
Risk Factors For Stress Overload

• Negative perception/outlook (pessimist)
• Family pressure
• Having a “helper” mentality
• Work problems
• Negative coping patterns
• Undeveloped stress management skills
• Broken inner “compass”
• Personal tragedy
• Limited support system

(Source: Canadian Institute of Stress)

Strategies to Eliminate Stress

• Improvements in the physical work environment
• Job redesign to eliminate stressors
• Changes in workloads and deadlines
• Structural reorganization
• Changes in work schedules, more flexible hours and sabbaticals
• Management by objectives or other goal-setting programs
• Greater levels of employee participation, particularly in planning changes that affect them
• Workshops dealing with role clarity and role analysis
The Power of Positivity: How can Teachers Manage Stress?

Imagination is more important than knowledge

Job Enjoyment

- People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing.”
  
  Dale Carnegie

- Seven Deadly sins
  - Wealth without work
  - Pleasure without conscience
  - Science without humanity
  - Knowledge without character
  - Politics without principle
  - Commerce without morality
  - Worship without sacrifice.”

  Mahatma Gandhi
### Twelve Ideas for Boosting Creativity and Decreasing Stress

- Listen to Bach, Stravinsky or the Grateful Dead
- Go to work a different way every day
- Always carry a small notebook and a pen
- Define your problem or opportunity before you try to solve it.
- Go for a walk
- Take the other side
- Turn off the TV!
- Read as much as you can about as many different things you can. You’ll become active, not passive.
- Plant, cook, paint, play music- doesn’t really matter how well!
- Play with Legos/Playdoh
- Get Lost!
- Say "What if I?"

### Definition of Burnout

- “Burnout is a painful affliction of good people who are trying to give their very best.”

- “Burnout is the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one’s devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce”

Understanding Burnout

- Burnout is poorly understood
- Physicians misdiagnosis it and hand out antidepressants
- Underlying traits predispose people to burnout
- Burnout is inevitable if stress overload is unmanaged
- Burnout includes a component of depression
- Burnout affects thinking, behavior, emotional experiences, relationships and work
- Recovery involves changing one’s orientation to life and to work
  (Source: Joan Borysenko, PhD. 2011. Fried: Why You Burnout & How to Revive)

Burnout Risk Factors

- Personality
- Personal values system
- Expectations (self and others)
- Individual’s relationship with work \( (identity, \text{passion}) \)
- Attitude
- Habits
- Situational context
- Stress overload
Structural Model of Burnout

Increased Demands:
- Work Overload
- Personal Conflict

Diminished:
- Coping
- Social Support
- Autonomy
- Decision interest

Burnout Syndrome:
- Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Diminished Personal Accomplishment

Costs:
- Diminished Turnover and Physical organizational absenteeism Illness commitment

Stage 1 - Driven by an Ideal
  - [Insight: Be clear about what motivates your work]
Stage 2 – Working like a Maniac
  - [Insight: Be clear about when your best work occurs]
Stage 3 – Putting Your Own Needs last
  - [Insight: Assess your joy-in-life score]
Stage 4 – Miserable and Clueless as to Why
  - [Insight: Take a sabbatical to evaluate your life]
Stage 5 – The Death of Values
  - [Insight: Recall how you lived in earlier years]
12 Stages of Burnout

Stage 6 – Frustrated, Aggressive and Cynical
   – [Insight: Identify your energy drains and do something about them]
Stage 7 – Emotionally Exhausted and Disengaged
   – [Insight: Who are you truthful with?]
Stage 8 – I’ve Morphed into What?
   – [Insight: What, Who and Why?]
Stage 9 – Get Away From Me!
   – [Insight: How are you compassionate with yourself?]
Stage 10 – Inner Emptiness
   – [Insight: Find something that feels better]

12 Stages of Burnout

Stage 11 – Who Cares and Why Bother?
   – [Insight: Do you need professional help?]
Stage 12 – Physical and Mental Collapse
   – [Insight: What means the most to you and how can you bring more of it into your life?]
12 Stages of Burnout

Resilience

Four Adult Protective Factors Related to Resilience

- **Relationships**
  The mutual, long lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives

- **Initiative**
  The ability to make positive choices and decisions and act upon them.

- **Internal Beliefs**
  The feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives and how effective we think we are at taking action in life.

- **Self-Control**
  The ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using the words and actions that society considers appropriate.
Prevention Strategies For Stress Overload & Burnout

• Manage Perfectionism/Idealism/Drivenness
• Work From Your Strengths
• Maintain Strong Boundaries
• Monitor Your Energy Investment
• Use a Stress Management Model
• Ask for Help
• Practice X-treme Self-Care

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SUMMARY

15 Styles of Distorted Thinking

1. Filtering: You take the negative details and magnify them while filtering out all positive aspects of a situation.

2. Polarized Thinking: Things are black or white, good or bad. You have to be perfect or you're a failure. There is no middle ground.

3. Overgeneralizations: You come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something bad happens once you expect it to happen over and over again.

4. Mind Reading: Without their saying so, you know what people are feeling and why they act the way they do. In particular, you are able to divine how people are feeling toward you.

5. Catastrophizing: You expect disaster. You notice or hear about a problem and start "what ifs:" What if tragedy strikes? What if it happens to you?

6. Personalization: Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. You also compare yourself to others, trying to determine who's smarter, better looking, etc.

7. Control Fallacies: If you feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless, a victim of fate. The fallacy of internal control has you responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone around you.

8. Fallacy of Fairness: You feel resentful because you think you know what's fair but other people won't agree with you.

9. Blaming: You hold other people responsible for your pain, or take the other track and blame yourself for every problem or reversal.

10. Shoulds: You have a list of ironclad rules about how you and other people should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.

11. Emotional Reasoning: You believe that what you feel must be true—automatically. If you feel stupid and boring, then you must be stupid and boring.

12. Fallacy of Change: You expect that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure or cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.

13. Global Labeling: You generalize one or two qualities into a negative global judgment.
14. **Being Right:** You are continually on trial to prove that your opinions and actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable and you will go to any length to demonstrate your rightness.

15. **Heaven's Reward Fallacy:** You expect all your sacrifice and self-denial to pay off, as if there were someone keeping score. You feel bitter when the reward doesn't come.