**Burnout PD activity**

Goals of activity

1. Be able to describe several types of burnout and their symptoms
2. Be able to identify the causes of your own burnout
3. Generate some approaches to address the cause of burnout and start on the path of recovery

Assessment strategy: We will follow up at the end of the semester with fellows to see if they were able to implement any strategies.

**1. Discuss categories of burnout.** Source: <https://bootcamp.berkeley.edu/blog/mental-health-resources-to-help-prevent-creative-and-professional-burnout/>

1. Creative Burnout: This is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion around creative work, according to mindful productivity site [NessLabs](https://nesslabs.com/creative-burnout). The symptoms of creative burnout can include constant exhaustion, inexplicable stress, morning dread, harmful habits, irritability, self-doubt and struggling to do basic work, among other symptoms.
2. COVID-19 Burnout: Burnout is no longer exclusively tied to job-related stress. According to a recent [State of Burnout: Covid-19 survey](https://usblog.teamblind.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/StateofBurnoutCovid19.pdf) of 7,000 American professionals, over 70 percent of participants were feeling burned out due to the pandemic. The top reasons included a lack of separation between work and home, unmanageable workloads and worries over job security.
3. Professional Burnout: This is a unique type of stress syndrome that is characterized by emotional exhaustion, according to a [stress management research report](https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2016/06/shsconf_rptss2016_01132.pdf). According to psychiatric nurse practitioner [Dr. Melissa DeCapua](https://www.bartonassociates.com/blog/professional-burnout), risk factors for professional burnout are sometimes referred to as the “big four”: lack of control over work conditions, time pressure, chaotic workplaces and lack of alignment on values.
4. Technical Burnout: The tech industry can be rewarding, but it can come with a fast-paced work environment, high expectations and immense pressure on employees. According to survey data from [Spiceworks](https://community.spiceworks.com/topic/1288573-it-staffing-survey-tech-work-hours-analyzed-finding-an-ideal-it-staff-ratio), an IT social network, most full-time tech pros work in excess of 50 hours per week. Over time, these long hours can contribute to employee unhappiness and burnout.
5. Personal Burnout: Unlike professional burnout, personal burnout is often caused by non-work related stressors, and is evaluated separately. [It can result in a combination of](https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=9912&context=dissertations)emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal accomplishment and a feeling of detachment from others.

Some common symptoms of burnout are

* exhaustion (a depletion of mental or physical resources)
* cynical detachment (a depletion of social connectedness)
* a reduced sense of efficacy (a depletion of value for oneself)

**2A. Do any of these descriptions resonate with you currently or at some time in the past?** (5-10min discussion)

**2B.** Despite common symptoms and categories of burnout triggers, every burn-out is unique. **Reflect for 3 min on what factors about your current (or past) environment might cause feelings of burnout.** Keep in mind that burnout is most commonly generated by the work environment and does not reflect that something is wrong with you. Here are some common stressors to get you started.

* Work overload
* Lack of control
* Insufficient rewards
* Breakdown of community
* Absence of fairness
* Value conflicts

**2C. Group discussion about causes.** (10min)

**3. How can you or your employer address any of these causes? Can you make/request any changes to your job environment? Create a plan that fits your unique burnout situation.** (10min)

Symptoms of burn-out can be reframed as goals to work towards (both from the employer and employee)

* Sustainable workload
* Choice and control
* Recognition and reward
* Supportive work community
* Fairness, respect, and social justice
* Clear values and meaningful work

Some starting suggestions

* Directly address the causes you identified
* find joy again by…
  + New hobby
  + Focus on doing aspects of work that \*you\* (not others) benefit from
  + Practicing small acts of daily gratitude or compassion towards others and towards yourself
* Some common practices: exercise, saying no, taking a vacation
* Good time journal. Take a pause after each activity during your school/work day and reflect on your experience. It's useful to record the experience, the surroundings/environment, its effect on your energy level (energizing/draining/neutral?), your engagement (positive/negative/neutral), and any other things like anxiety level, etc. This can help in identifying tasks/activities that are especially contributing to burnout and to structure a reward system for getting through mandatory activities that are especially difficult.
* Pomodoros. I think we discussed this technique, but the gist is to break your work activities into small time increments and to schedule frequent breaks to rest and reset. Maybe take 5 minutes to look away from a screen, stretch, play your ukelele, etc.
* Finally, here's a timely suggestion from my kids' daycare that I wanted to pass along:

How to be more compassionate with yourself

By Maria Gehl

When we are compassionate with ourselves, we spend less time caught up in our own emotions. We are more available to be there for others. We feel more peace and are more able to respond with warmth and care towards our children (or our students/family/teachers/professors etc.!).

Try this the next time you notice you are being critical with yourself.

1. Pause.
2. Take a long breath.
3. Identify the emotion you are feeling - anger, fear, shame, frustration, sadness, etc.
4. Notice one sensation in your body that is helping you recognize this emotion—My chest is tight, I feel nauseous, my hands are tingling.
5. Gently give yourself a gesture of comfort—place your hand on your heart or chest, hold your hands together or give yourself a hug. If you notice your chest is tight, you might, for example, place your hand on your heart. This gesture acknowledges the stress or hurt you are feeling. It also recognizes the intention to show yourself compassion.
6. Finally, give yourself support by saying or thinking an encouraging phrase. Come up with one that feels supportive to you.

* May I care for myself in this moment?
* I can give myself what I need.
* I’ve done my best, I let go of the rest.
* I’m okay just as I am.

**Sources for this lesson and additional resources**

* A list of books about burnout: <https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/what_we_do/event/the_science_of_burnout_what_is_it_why_it_happens_and_how_to_avoid_it/continuing_education#tab-books>
* Much of the content here was based on this recorded Lecture: "Understanding Burnout," Prof. Christina Maslach (U.C. Berkeley) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kLPyV8lBbs>
* Personal agency is restorative: <https://hbr.org/2021/04/your-burnout-is-unique-your-recovery-will-be-too>
* Role of gratitude: <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_can_reduce_burnout_in_health_care>
* Suggested approaches to recovery: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/recovering-from-burnout.htm>