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The Risks of **Burnout** and How to Stay Safe

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Outline

In this presentation we will:

- Identify the difference between manageable stress and burnout
- Learn how to identify the signs and symptoms of burnout
- Explore strategies to recharge and stay safe

What is burnout?

Symptoms of Burnout

- Having a negative and critical attitude at work.
- Dreading going into work, and wanting to leave once you're there.
- Having low energy and little interest at work.
- Having trouble sleeping.
- Being absent from work a lot.
- Having feelings of emptiness.
- Experiencing physical complaints such as headaches, illness, or backache.
- Being irritated easily by team members or clients.
- Having thoughts that your work doesn't have meaning or make a difference.
- Pulling away emotionally from your colleagues or clients.
- Feeling that your work and contribution goes unrecognized.
- Blaming others for your mistakes.
- Thinking of quitting work or changing roles.

Stress vs. Burnout

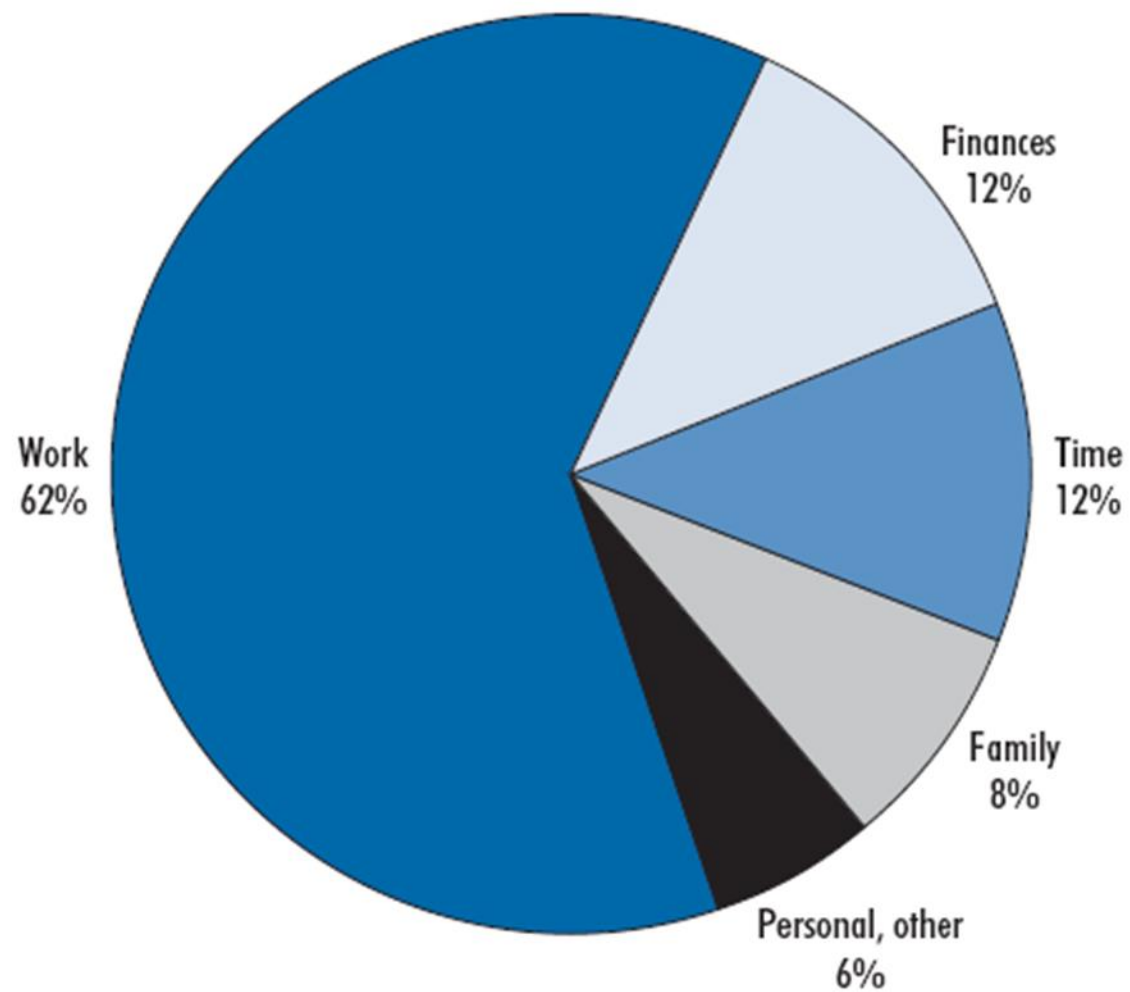
Stress

- Characterized by over engagement
- Emotions are over reactive
- Produces urgency and hyperactivity
- Loss of energy
- Leads to anxiety disorders
- Primary damage is physical
- May kill you prematurely

Burnout

- Characterized by disengagement
- Emotions are blunted
- Produces helplessness and hopelessness
- Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope
- Leads to detachment and depression
- Primary damage is emotional
- May make life seem not worth living

percentage of highly stressed employed population aged 20 to 64



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010.

Stress isn't all bad

Optimal Level of Stress

No Stress: Rustout

- ❖ Disengaged
- ❖ Procrastination and demotivation
- ❖ Not interested
- ❖ Emotionally flat: bored, careless
- ❖ Apt to quit work

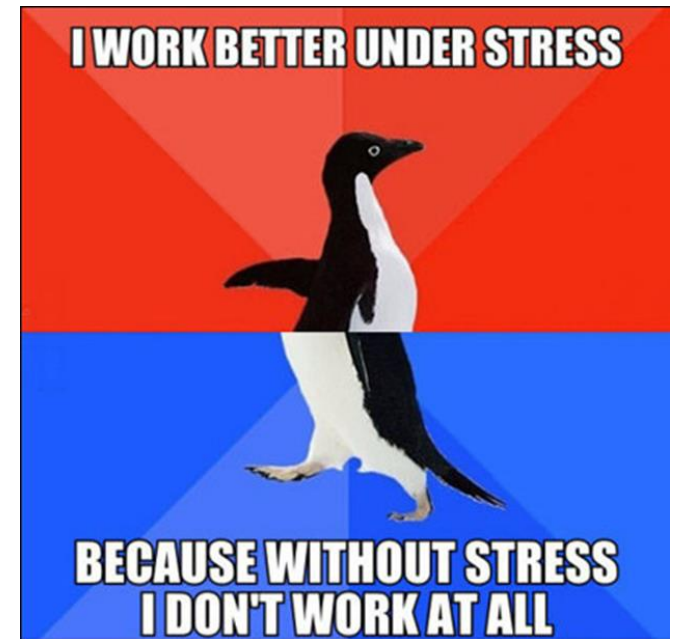
Too Much Stress: Burnout

- ❖ Lack of concentration
- ❖ Procrastination and demotivation
- ❖ Anxiety and/or insomnia
- ❖ Emotional: irritability or tearfulness
- ❖ Apt to take a leave of absence from work

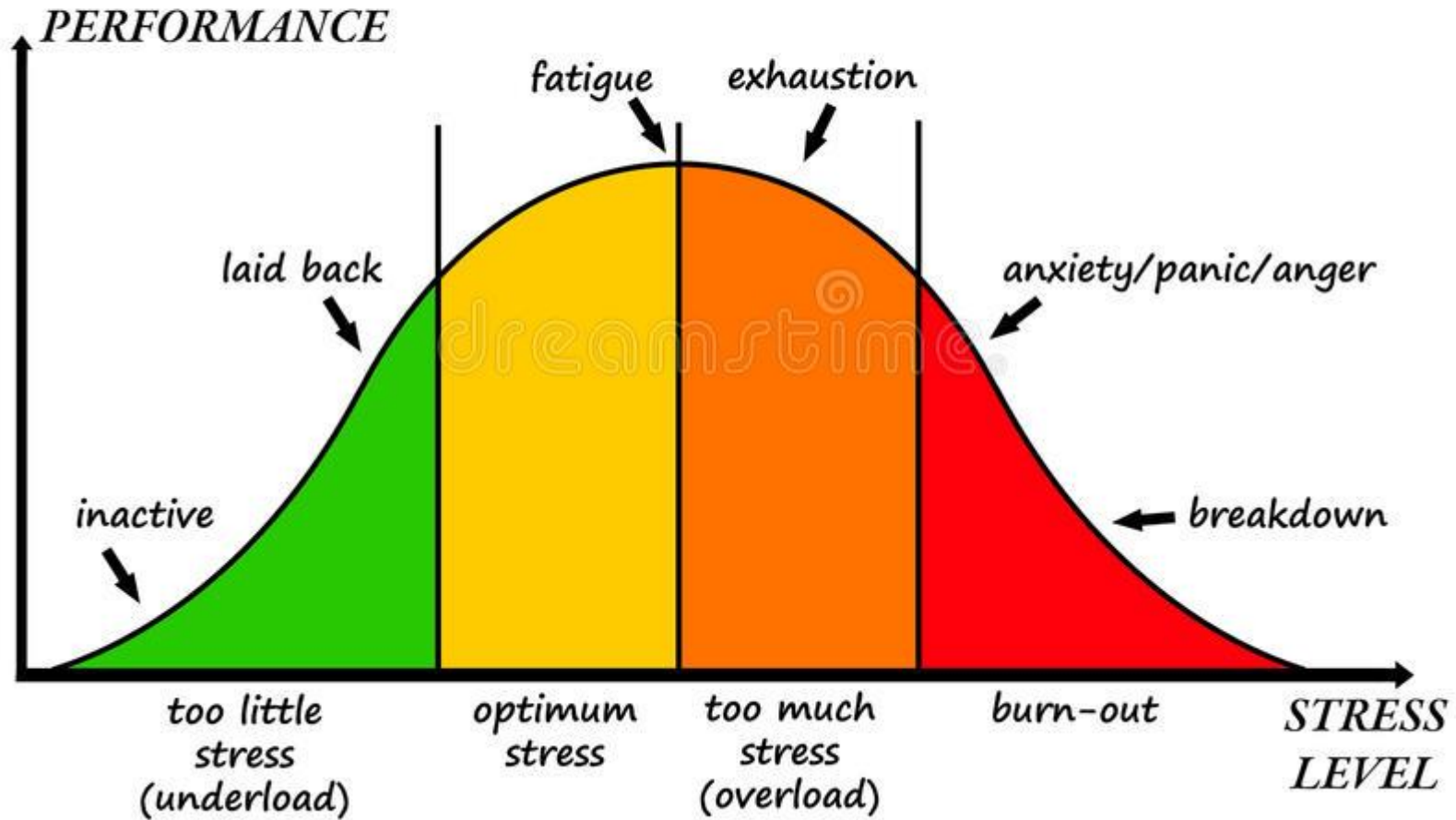
What's your optimal level of stress?

Optimal Level of Stress

- 🍃 Motivation to start new projects
- 🍃 Motivation to finish them on time
- 🍃 Motivation to produce higher quality work



STRESS CURVE



Why is it important?

- 🍃 When we're near the point of burnout, we're already in rough shape.
- 🍃 Burnout is a leading cause of work-related mental health impairment.

Safety Concerns

- 🍃 Burnout increases the rates of **severe injury**, both on and off the job.
- 🍃 Burnout affects **every aspect of the sufferer's life** - physical, social, emotional, professional, relationships...

Burnout does not occur “overnight”

... it’s a result of a **prolonged and slow process** that may take place of the course of *years*.

Hostage and hostage taker

If your nervous system is chronically overstimulated during the day, it will impact sleep and ultimately every aspect of your life. In burnout, you become a hostage to your nervous system. **Physical, Emotional, Mental effects.**

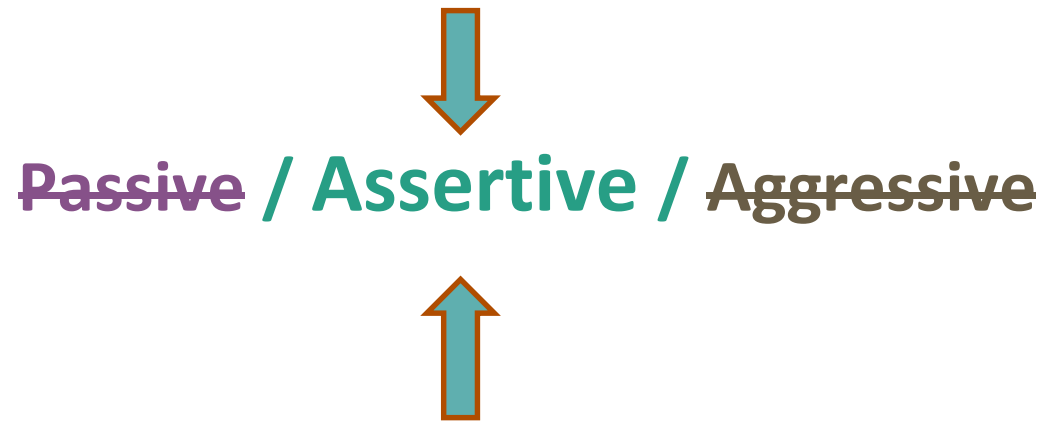
Is everyone at risk of burnout?

Some people are more burnout prone than others

- 🍃 Employees who attribute life events and achievements to **powerful others** or **chance** rather than their own ability and effort experience higher levels of burnout.

Passive coping style

- Employees with a **defensive, passive way of coping** rather than coping by confronting situations tend to have higher levels of burnout.



Personality characteristics such as

- Low self-esteem
- Hostility
- Depression
- Vulnerability
- Competitiveness and
- Excessive need for control

are also related to higher levels of burnout.

Great expectations

Those with **higher job expectations** are also more prone to burnout because they **tend to work too much**.

- 🍃 Challenging
- 🍃 Fun!
- 🍃 Getting everything done
- 🍃 Successful

Burnout has consequences for the individual as well as for the organization.

Some negative effects on the organizational level are:

- 🍃 reduced job performance and organizational commitment,
- 🍃 lower job performance,
- 🍃 Greater likelihood of LOAs/sick leave,
- 🍃 higher intention to leave the job.

Job characteristics consistently related to burnout

- Excessive job demands
- Lack of job resources (e.g., lack of social support)
- Excessive time pressure
- Role conflict and role ambiguity
- Unable to meet the conflicting demands of the job
- Not knowing what the exact job responsibilities are
- Physical environment (e.g., noise, heat)
- Shift work
- Absence of job autonomy / overall lack of decision freedom in a job
- Lack of feedback on work performance
- Lack of meaningful rewards
- Lack of job security

How to Avoid Burnout

- Get enough **sleep**.
- **Eat** right and take you **lunch break**.
- Keep the lines of **communication** open with your spouse or partner. As busy as you may be, don't forget they are there for moral support and to help out when you need it.
- Take some **time off**. Spend some time thinking about what your needs are and be up front with them. Don't feel guilty about devoting some time to hobbies and your own friends.
- Take a deep breath and **appreciate the small pleasures**.
- **Ask for help** from family and friends.

How to Avoid Burnout

Take **15 minutes a day** for yourself to commit to self care:

- 🍃 Slow Down
- 🍃 Rest
- 🍃 Recover

“**Step by step**, rebuild new habits on a **daily basis** to reverse the biological process in your brain because of chronic stress.”

Dr. Paul Koeck. Worth watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uk3OAGcjQPA>

Work with Purpose

- 🍃 Look at the deeper impact of what you do every day.
- 🍃 How does your work make life better for other people?
- 🍃 How could you add more meaning to what you do every day?

Perform a Job Analysis

- 🍃 Clarify what's expected of you, and what isn't.
- 🍃 Cut out or **delegate** tasks that aren't essential.
- 🍃 Learn how to manage conflicting priorities and deal with unreasonable demands.

Exercise Regularly

- ✦ Exercise can help alleviate stress and create a sense of well-being. You will also experience increased energy and productivity when you exercise regularly.

Build Resilience

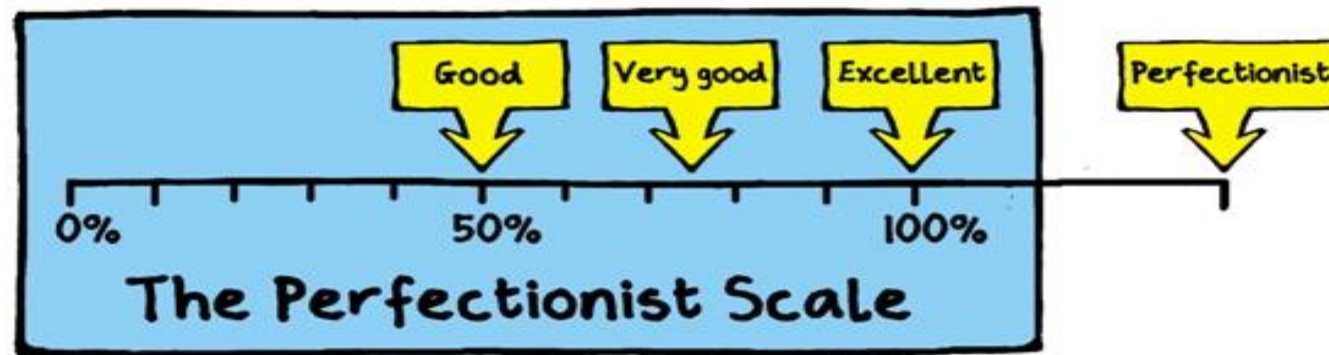
- Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves **behaviours, thoughts and actions** that can be learned and developed in anyone.



The vicious cycle of negative thinking impacts the brain, stimulating cortisol and other stress hormones.

Resist perfectionism

- Trying to maximize every task and squeeze every drop of productivity out of your creative work is a recipe for exhaustion and procrastination. Set yourself boundaries for acceptable work and stick to them.



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Learn to Manage Stress

- 🍃 Keep a stress diary to document what routinely causes you stress.
Practicing deep breathing, meditation, and other relaxation techniques
- 🍃 Reconnect with others
- 🍃 Manage the way you think – this can contribute to stress.



Saying No

- Cut down and start saying “no”
- Every “yes” you say adds another thing on your plate and takes more energy away from you
- Turn off and **do nothing** for a few minutes each day

Talk to Someone

- 🍃 Talking face to face with a **good listener** is one of the fastest ways to calm your nervous system and relieve stress.
- 🍃 The person you talk to doesn't have to be able to "fix" your stressors; they just have to be someone who'll listen attentively without judging you.
- 🍃 Talking with a professional counsellor can help to identify your stressors and ways to reduce them.



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I welcome your comments and questions.

Thank you for your time.

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~ Tara A. Hope, MA, RCC ~

References and Resources

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