

Wellbeing Literacy Bite #1

Identifying & addressing burnout Strategies for Leaders



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What is burnout?

Burnout is a critical issue that can quietly undermine your team's performance and wellbeing. It's a state of emotional, mental, & physical exhaustion caused by prolonged & unmanaged work stress. If left unchecked, burnout can lead to disengagement, reduced productivity, & increased turnover. Key indicators include: Persistent fatigue, even after rest/ growing cynicism or detachment from work/ a noticeable drop in performance & enthusiasm.

Why does it happen?

Burnout often results from a combination of excessive work demands, insufficient control, and lack of recognition. However, it's not just the job; personal factors like perfectionism or a lack of support at home can contribute. As a leader, understanding these triggers is crucial to creating a balanced & supportive work environment.

6 warning signs to spot burnout in your team

- 1 Decline in Energy & Motivation**
Notice if someone who was once enthusiastic is now consistently low-energy or unmotivated.
- 2 Increased Absenteeism or Isolation**
Employees may take more sick days or withdraw from team interactions.
- 3 Cynicism or Disengagement**
Watch for a shift in attitude - previously engaged employees might become increasingly negative or detached.
- 4 Drop in Productivity**
Tasks that were once completed efficiently may now be delayed or done with less care.
- 5 Physical Complaints**
Employees might frequently mention headache, back pain, or other physical symptoms related to stress.
- 6 Emotional Withdrawal**
Employees might start avoiding social interactions or become less communicative.

Not every employee will exhibit all these signs, but if you see a pattern, it's essential to take action before burnout sets in.

Preventing burnout your roles as a leader

- 1 Conduct Regular Check-ins**
Create a culture of open communication where employees feel comfortable discussing their workload & stress levels.
- 2 Psychosocial Risk Assessment**
Proactively identify & manage psychosocial hazards in the workplace that could contribute to burnout.
- 3 Promote Work-Life Balance**
Encourage your team to take breaks, use their vacation time, and disconnect after work hours.
- 4 Recognise & Reward Effort**
Acknowledge your team's hard work. Feeling valued can significantly reduce burnout risk.
- 5 Encourage Professional Development**
Invest in your team's growth, helping them find meaning and purpose in their roles.
- 6 If burnout is already present**
 - Offer Access to Support Services:**
encourage EAP awareness & use.
 - Facilitate Time Off:**
encourage time off & support employees when they take it.
 - Adjust Workloads:**
reassign tasks or offer flexible working arrangements.
 - Provide External resources:**
Lifeline (13 11 14) / Beyond Blue (1300 224 636)

As a leader, your approach to burnout can make all the difference. By staying vigilant and proactive, you can help your team navigate stress, maintain their well-being, and continue to thrive.