

**Understanding Career Burnout: What Are the facts and what are the myths about career
burnout?**

Anonymous

Anoka Ramsey Community College

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Prof Chris McCarthy

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Picture this, after long four years of hard work and dedication to your college studies, completed internships, sent countless job applications, you've finally found yourself in a position in an organization. After your first few months in the job, you find yourself tired, overloaded, unmotivated and irritable. While some may say that this is a normal feeling in a job, the fact is that you are experiencing some form of career burnout. Though there are misconceptions about how burnout affects individuals, the truth is burnout is increasingly prevalent among young people. This essay will find the truths and the facts about career burnout and provide information about ways to prevent burnout going into your career. This topic is important to me because I have personally seen instances of friends and co-workers face burnout at work.

When feeling the effects of job burnout, one might go to a coworker, friend or family member that can help them discuss their work issues. Commonly, a coworker or boss may say something like “suck it up” or “yeah, that’s normal.” It is worth mentioning that everyone at some point feels the effects of job burnout. Some people have suggested that career burnout doesn’t affect them, it’s not serious or even that it doesn’t exist! In some cases, people believe that laziness is the cause of career burnout. The truth is that burnout is seen as a serious occurrence in the workplace, and that it should be addressed. According to the World Health Organization, career burnout is recognized as an occupational phenomenon, a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that hasn’t been successfully managed. Burnout is characterized feelings of energy depletion and exhaustion and decreased professional efficacy.” According to the Kevin Draper Mayo Clinic article (2021), job burnout is related to a special type of work-related stress. Researchers point out that individual factors such as personality traits and family

life influence who experience job burnout. Possible causes of burnout can include lack of control and work life imbalance. While some may argue that job burnout alone is not a serious condition, it is also true that ignored and unaddressed burnout can lead to serious health conditions, which we will explore further in the following examples.

It is common that some students may say, “I don’t need to worry about burnout, that only affects older employees.” The reality is that burnout significantly affects young professionals at a rate just high or higher than employees of varying ages. According to the Thrivemyway Study in the article “The Science of Burnout: Understanding Its Causes, Symptoms, And Impact On Work Performance. (2021), as of February 2021, Millennials (59%), Gen Z (58%), and Gen X (54%) had consistent rates, Baby Boomers (31%) had much lower rates of burnout in their career. Moreover, the Mayo Clinic article does not mention that burnout is an age-related issue. This misconception that burnout can only occur as an old-age problem is false. This misconception likely stems from the belief that younger workers are supposed to have limitless energy to start their career. In one case, I had a work friend that works sixteen-hour shifts and many hours of overtime weekly. The truth here was that there is a balance where everyone must find. His work left him with much less time for going to the gym and doing things he enjoys. It is worth noting some of the pressures some young workers face at the start of their career. High expectations of performance and pressure coupled with a need to prove themselves in their position contribute to an employee’s likelihood of burnout.

It has been said that job burnout is common amongst all workers. That a worker’s best solution to feeling the negative effects of burnout is to simply “power through it.” Recent studies and personal experience show that this is not the best way to handle the effects of burnout. According to the American Psychological Association, and research published in May’s

Psychological Bulletin (Vol. 132, No. 3). Burnout increases likelihood of developing heart disease, stroke and sudden cardiac death, through the increasing risk factors as body mass index and lipid levels. Studies also show a higher likelihood of type II diabetes, male infertility, sleep disorders and mental and emotional fatigue. These health conditions are worsened over time if the causes are ignored. This proves that it is in the best interest of a student to be concerned about career burnout. In certain companies, employees are tested for burnout, stress and health conditions. Having motivated and healthy employees is a priority for many companies, some providing solutions and resources for their employees like health club memberships or increased wellness benefits.

When someone is burned out from their work, it is very easy for someone to say that they are just lazy in their work. While I can see why someone may think this, the truth is that high engagement with work is a greater cause of job burnout. When someone feels more connected to their work or projects around the office, they are more likely to feel overwhelmed and exhausted. The WGU article explains how millennials tend to have an increased risk of feeling job burnout because they are highly driven in the workplace. It is easy to mistake younger generations need for flexibility in business for laziness. For Generation Z, studies () have shown that this generation is willing to put in the hours and hard work in exchange for a greater benefit.

When experiencing job burnout, some might try to shift focus off work and on to improvement of their life outside of work. Instead of addressing problems they have in their workplace, one may try to turn to drugs or alcohol to get through the day and take less interest in their work. The truth is, the only way to deal with burnout is to address issues with work.

According to the Web MD Article (Web MD Editorial Editors) and Dan Brennan, MD, Burnout lowers energy and productivity in your personal life. According to the article, lack of control and

lack of social support at work is a common cause of burnout. Brennan explains how critical it is to differentiate stress from burnout. When an employee sets good boundaries, with work hours, the employee can prevent burnout. Lacking interest in your work is a critical sign of burnout and should be addressed at work. The article shows how there are different changes, some of the most important include: setting boundaries at work, socializing with coworkers, trying to find value in your work. Try to find the strategy that works for your work experience.

As students, it is our responsibility to evaluate companies on wellness benefits that the company includes in considering their job offers. It has often been ignored as to what kind of benefits employers have in a job offer that are related to wellbeing. From personal experience, I have worked in a fitness health club that has extensive corporate partnerships that help their employees receive waived initiation fees and competitive monthly dues. After speaking with an Human Resources director at my health club, I have figured out that many of these benefits are underused by their employees. According to a World Economic Forum article Why Companies must prioritize wellness in the workplace (Puravankara, 2021), some companies are seeing success building a holistic approach to wellbeing with their employees. Puravankara mentions the importance of getting information out to employees on wellness programs. The article also mentions a 2020 global talent mobility platform study that found that self-directed work teams helped employees develop more engagement and helped firms' profitability. Overall, when companies' leadership team values balance in the workplace and wellness, companies taking steps and listening to employees see lower turnover rates, retaining talent, especially among younger employees. Most of all, as an employee, you must remain engaged with your work, retain a feeling of importance in the work you create. Knowing the difference between being stressed and feeling the effects of burnout are critical.

Stressful situations at work will be unavoidable in our work futures. It is the knowledge of what each of us should do when we encounter these situations that will prevent us from burnout. Reduced health risks, lower stress levels, higher energy levels, higher work engagement, elevated work performance are just a few of the benefits associated with avoiding burnout. In summary, some of the steps an employee feeling unmotivated, dealing with low energy can do are stress reducing activities, sick and vacation time, group wellness, accommodating work schedules and workspaces and increased recognition for work well done by leader and managers. I plan to take time to find out what solutions work best for myself in preventing burnout at work. For example, for some, exercise may help greatly, and for others, social interaction at work can improve work experience. As students, it is in our best interest to find out how to prevent burnout, and help others understand the serious physician and mental health consequences associated with such a common issue in our generation. I hope all readers are aware of the negative effects of burnout, taking in consideration as to ways employees can prevent workplace burnout.

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