



We all know someone who has experienced burnout; perhaps you have experienced it yourself. While burnout isn't a medical condition, it has recently been classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an occupational phenomenon, and research—both scientific and anecdotal—shows it can severely impact not only the employees who suffer from it, but their workplace as well, including their colleagues. This month, we spoke with Sheri Mooney, Esq., HR Expert and President and CEO of MindSquad HR, to discuss what burnout is and provide some tips to avoid burnout before it happens — or address it positively if you're already experiencing it.

What is Burnout?

Burnout in an employment context refers to the exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation. Employees experience burnout as a result of job stress, and the reasons for that stress are numerous, including:

- Overwork
- Job instability
- Workplace conflict
- Frustration over work assignments or workload
- Lack of recognition or promotion
- Not feeling valued

The first step you should take is to examine yourself for the signs of burnout. According to the WHO, you may be feeling burned out if you can answer yes to one or more of the following questions:

- Do you feel depleted or exhausted?
- Do you feel distant from, negative, or cynical towards your job?

- Are you less productive when you are at work?

Sometimes burnout can result from issues that are going on at the organizational level, but it can also stem from employee choices, according to Mooney. "If you're working very long hours or saying yes to too many projects, don't ignore it when you're overwhelmed—take a step back and figure out how you can take care of yourself and do your job."

3 Tips for Handling Burnout

Mooney emphasizes that while it's never too late to address burnout, the best time is when you first recognize the signs. Whether you feel like you're close to being burned out or you already recognize the signs, don't avoid dealing with it, Confronting your burnout is always more helpful than denying it exists or focusing on what you can't control.

1. Make the most of your time outside of work. One of the most important things you can do to turn around burnout in the early stages is relaxing in your off-hours, Mooney says. "Do something that helps you unwind—rent a movie or read a good book," Mooney suggests. "When you're burned out, you may feel frazzled and unable to focus on what may be in your best interest, so take some time and decide what activities or habits would be best to get you through stressful times."

2. If there is an issue with your organization, do what you can to address it. "When you're facing circumstances that might seem out of your control, focus on what you can control," Mooney advises. For example, if you're dealing with an unsupportive supervisor, consider sitting down with your manager to discuss your relationship moving forward. Until an issue is addressed, you won't know whether there may be a possibility for individual or organizational change.

3. Reach out to EAP. Whether you are addressing workplace stress, or trying to reduce stress outside of work in order to feel less overwhelmed, you can always reach out to EAP for support. When you call our general number, your can schedule an appointment with a Masters Level counselor, who can help you walk through why you may be feeling burned out and help you create a plan to feel more positive, energetic, and in control.