



Coffee Chat: Mental Health Matters

2/11/25

Thank you for attending this quarter's Coffee Chat! And thank you to our panelists, Blanca Bradley and Tony Benavides, for participating in this important conversation. We hope you were able to take away some good nuggets for yourself and your team. Below are the resources that were discussed throughout the conversation, along with some helpful links and how you can contact Blanca and Tony if you would like to reach out to them.

Panelist Contact Information:

- **Blanca Bradley** - LCSW, Trauma & EMDR Therapist
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- **Tony Benavides** - Retired Law Enforcement and Mental Health for First Responders Advocate, Mindfulness and Meditation Instructor, Director of Training at Guardian Security Agency
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[Click here](#) for an additional website resource suggested by Tony Benavides!

THE 4 F'S OF TRAUMA

EXPERIENCES - BEHAVIOURS - RECOVERY

Common Experiences

- Tense muscles
- Increased heart rate
- Increased body temperature
- Angry
- Embarrassed
- Threatened
- High energy
- Faster/ shallow breathing

Common Behaviours

- Rage outbursts
- Bullying
- Intimidation
- Criticizing
- Controlling
- Incessant monologuing
- Acts of entitlement
- Exertion of power

Recovery Strategies

- Self-initiated time outs
- Accept support
- Safe space
- Physical movement
- Have gratitude
- Offer forgiveness
- Healthy communication

FIGHT



FLIGHT



Common Experiences

- Anxiety
- On edge
- Tense limbs
- Obsessive thoughts
- Difficulty relaxing
- Easily distracted
- Difficulty focusing
- Tunnel vision
- Excessive sweating

Common Behaviours

- Worry/ Rumination
- Perfectionism
- Hypervigilance
- Micromanaging
- Overachieving
- Escape route planning
- Use of safety behaviours
- Avoidance
- Repetitive compulsions
- Always on the go

Recovery Strategies

- Decrease habitual responses/ rituals
- Being with, not fighting anxiety
- Introspection
- Shrink the inner critic
- Pace yourself

Common Experiences

- Numb/ dissociated
- Low energy
- Reduced heart rate
- Stiff, heavy, cold
- Terror
- Stuck/ paralyzed
- Breath holding

Common Behaviours

- Isolation
- Avoidance of decisions or situations
- Rumination
- Over sleeping
- Day dreaming
- Self-deprecation

Recovery Strategies

- Understanding the needs of your 'inner parts'
- Coping skills for dissociation
- Mindfulness/ grounding
- Self acceptance & compassion
- Relational healing
- Start saying 'yes'
- Somatic or energy focused therapies

FREEZE



FAWN



Common Experiences

- Overwhelm
- Emotional burnout
- Shame
- Dissatisfied with self
- Chronic pain/ illness
- Depression
- Lack of authentic self

Common Behaviours

- Difficulty saying 'no'
- Acceptance seeking
- Over caring
- Exploited by others
- Lack of boundaries
- Codependance
- People pleasing
- Flatters others

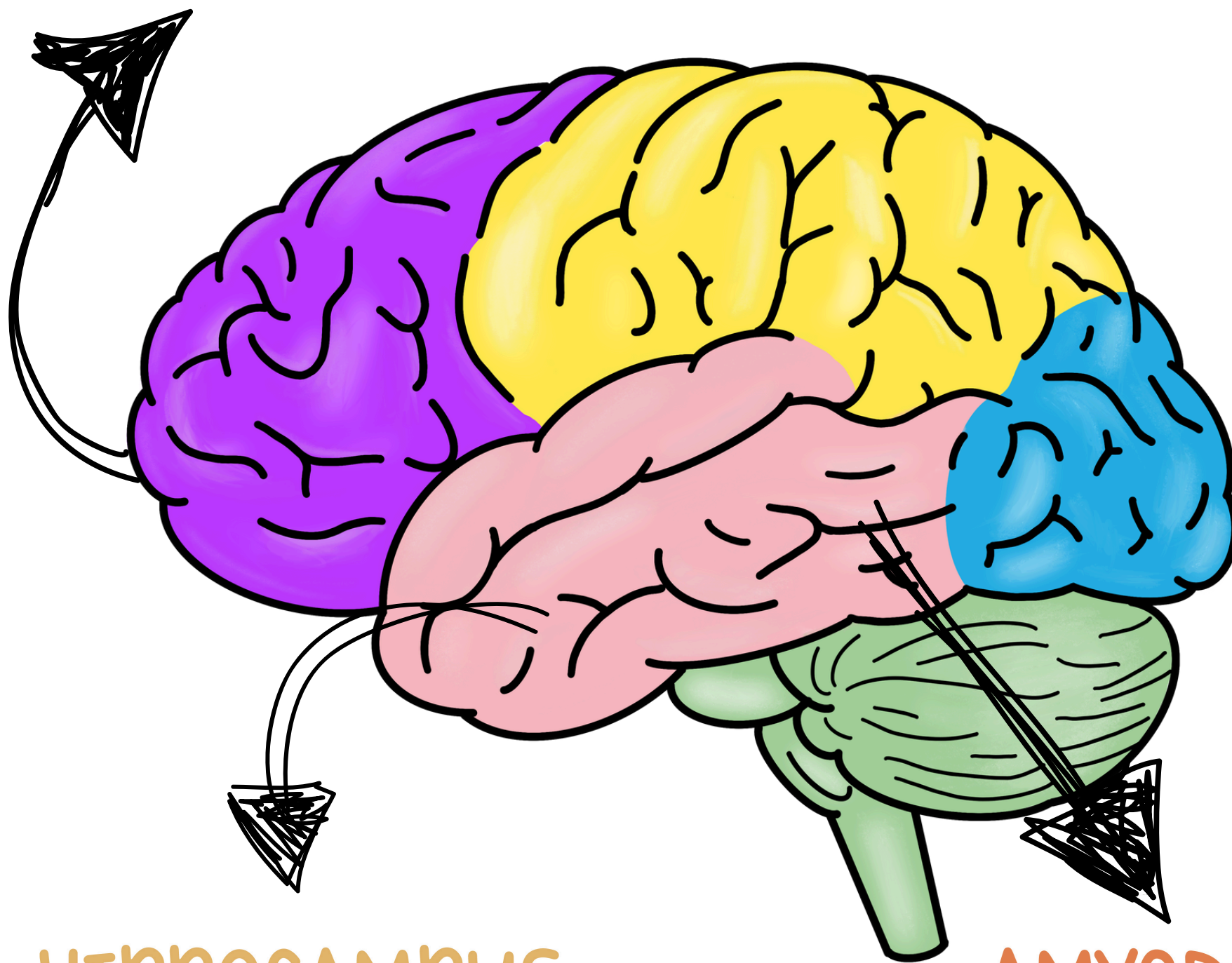
Recovery Strategies

- Build healthy, authentic relationships
- Challenge limiting beliefs
- Self-acceptance and self-love
- Journaling/ talking in a safe space
- Self-validation
- Strengthen assertiveness
- Start saying 'no'
- Creative outlets

How Trauma Affects The Brain

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Manages rational thinking and behavior. Regulates emotions that come from the Amygdala, like fear responses. Trauma can weaken signals from this area, which reduces rational thinking and allows fear to take over.



HIPPOCAMPUS

Associated with memory and learning. Trauma can cause the Hippocampus to shrink. Hard to differentiate the past from the present.

AMYGDALA

The emotional response center of the brain. Trauma causes the Amygdala to become more active and increases fear when exposed to triggers.

BURNOUT

BEATING BURNOUT AT WORK

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Burnout results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:



Exhaustion:

Physically, emotionally, and cognitively, described as feeling like the tank is empty.



Negative & Cynical:

Feeling negative and cynical toward work, co-workers, and others in one's life.



Ineffective at Work:

Reduced effectiveness or ability to perform one's work.

THE IMPACTS OF BURNOUT



All aspects of people's lives at work, home, and socially.



Workplace productivity, performance, retention, and more.



Health and well-being because of excessive levels of stress.



Risk of developing mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance use.

HOW COMMON IS BURNOUT?

77% of professionals

reported experiencing burnout at work.

2018 Deloitte survey

76% of employees

reported experiencing burnout on the job at least sometimes.

2020 Gallup survey

88% of workers

experienced some burnout, with 60% reporting high levels of burnout.

2021 Catalyst survey

WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO TO TACKLE BURNOUT AT WORK?

Small changes can lead to big results in reducing and preventing burnout by addressing six key workplace factors (Maslach, 2016). Here are those factors and tips for addressing them:



Workload

Ensuring people have the time and tools needed to get the job done.

Tip: Remind people managers to check-in on workload, and openly communicate about expectations and deadlines.



Autonomy and Control

Offering people the chance to have some control over how they perform their work?

Tip: Explore ways to give team members more autonomy & control over tasks while still meeting deadlines.



Reward and Recognition

Ensuring people are recognized and rewarded for a job well done.

Tip: Remind everyone of the need to recognize and reward wins and achievements, both big and small.



Community and Sense of Belonging

Creating opportunities for people to feel like there is trust & mutual support with colleagues.

Tip: Find ways for people to connect with peers, supervisors, and across teams, through ERGs, mentorship programs, and in virtual settings.



Fairness

Offering opportunities for people to be promoted and feel like they are treated fairly at work.

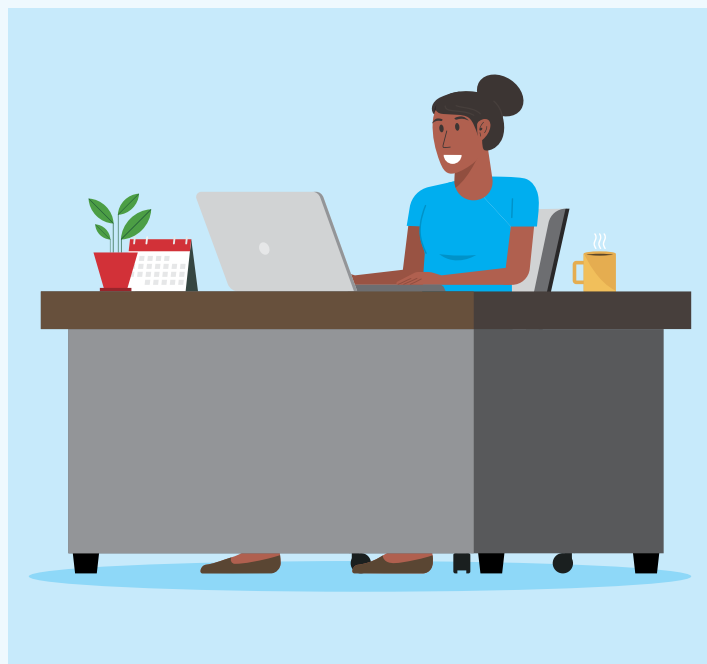
Tip: Review opportunities for advancement to ensure alignment exists between performance and promotion.



Values and Purpose in Work

Supporting people in feeling good about their work and proud of their contributions.

Tip: Find ways to relate the meaning of work tasks to organizational purpose and mission and communicate employee contributions to both.



Employers can also help reduce and prevent burnout by:

- ✓ **Supporting People Managers:** Remind managers about leading with empathy, scheduling regular check-ins, and encouraging open dialogue with their teams around the factors that contribute to burnout.
- ✓ **Offering Training:** Offer an interactive training with people leaders that informs them about the six (6) factors and how to effectively address them to reduce or eliminate burnout on their teams.
- ✓ **Surveying Employees:** Develop a simple survey to assess and prioritize the factors that may be impacting burnout in the workplace. Better understanding how burnout is impacting your organization is key in tackling it.
- ✓ **Developing an Action Plan:** Work with a small group of thoughtful employees to create an action plan that addresses the issues uncovered in the employee survey. Be sure to address organizational culture, as it impacts performance, productivity, retention, and more.

WHAT CAN EMPLOYEES DO TO REDUCE AND PREVENT BURNOUT?

Employees can also take steps to reduce burnout and enhance their mental health and well-being by:



Connecting with support through an EAP, or by talking with a mental health or primary care professional.



Taking time off and addressing sleep issues.



Focusing on self-care by scheduling time for exercise, social connections, and joyful activity.



Making changes that reduce or eliminate factors contributing to excessive levels of stress.



The Center provides training, consultation, and support for organizations working to prevent and reduce burnout.

To learn more contact us at workplacementalhealth@psych.org.

REFERENCES

World Health Organization: defining the three elements of occupational burnout:

<https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases>

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World psychiatry: official journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)*, 15(2), 103-111.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311>.

Links to Burnout Survey Reports:

Gallup: Accessed at: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/282659/employee-burnout-perspective-paper.aspx>

Catalyst: Van Bommel, T. (2021). Remote-work options can boost productivity and curb burnout. *Catalyst*. Accessed at: <https://www.catalyst.org/reports/remote-work-burnout-productivity/>

Deloitte: Accessed at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/burnout-survey.html>

To learn more,
visit workplacementalhealth.org



CENTER FOR
**WORKPLACE
MENTAL HEALTH**

RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMATIC STRESS

Physical responses:

- Change in sleep patterns
- Change in appetite
- Shallow or rapid breathing
- Headaches
- Muscle tension & soreness
- Increased heart rate, palpitations
- Stomach upset

Emotional responses:

- Shock or numbness
- Anger toward others involved
- Fear
- Depression or low mood
- Guilt/frustration
- Sadness/tearfulness
- Feeling unsafe or vulnerable
- Loneliness

Mental/Cognitive Responses:

- Confusion
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering details of event
- Feeling mentally 'foggy'
- Impulsivity
- Over focused on an activity

Behavioral Responses:

- Withdrawal from others
- Angry outbursts, irritability
- Crying
- Decreased energy/ambition
- Marital/relationship conflict
- Increased use of alcohol or medications
- Fear of being alone

TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS

1. **Stick to the basics:** eat well, exercise consistently especially cardio workouts, rest & sleep.
2. **Avoid** over use of stimulants: caffeine, chocolate, nicotine. Avoid over use of depressants; alcohol, sleeping pills.
3. **Gravitate towards what is comfortable:** familiar surroundings, balance your time with others and alone time. Humor is good!
4. **Talking is good for the mind & body!** Tell your story, share your thoughts & feelings with those who are supportive. No need to block recollections. Feel free to set boundaries with those who are not helpful or who are draining.
5. **Don't be surprised by memories.** Thoughts of past experiences may emerge. This is normal.
6. **Give yourself time to recover.** Difficulties like the ones listed on the left are common but short-term. Seek help if reactions interfere with job responsibilities or last too long.
7. **Slow down!** Doing less is better for a short time. You aren't yourself right now. Your brain needs rest & time to heal and re-organize.
8. **Communicate your feelings clearly.** Others may not know how to respond so let them know what is helpful & what is not.
9. **Do not compare yourself with others.** Don't take responsibility for others. Each person's experience is unique & personal.