



EAP SUPERVISOR ENHANCEMENT NEWSLETTER

February 2023



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DEER OAKS PRESENTS

Supervisor Excellence Webinar Series

Advanced Communication Skills that Improve Employee Motivation

This practical session covers several advanced interpersonal skills that can help managers to strengthen relationships with employees to improve their motivation.

When: April 10th at 1:00PM CST

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JOB BURNOUT: HOW TO SPOT IT AND TAKE ACTION

Job burnout is a special type of work-related stress — a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.

"Burnout" isn't a medical diagnosis. Some experts think that other conditions, such as depression, are behind burnout.

Researchers point out that individual factors, such as personality traits and family life, influence who experiences job burnout.

Whatever the cause, job burnout can affect your physical and mental health. Consider how to know if you've got job burnout and what you can do about it.

Job burnout symptoms

Ask yourself:

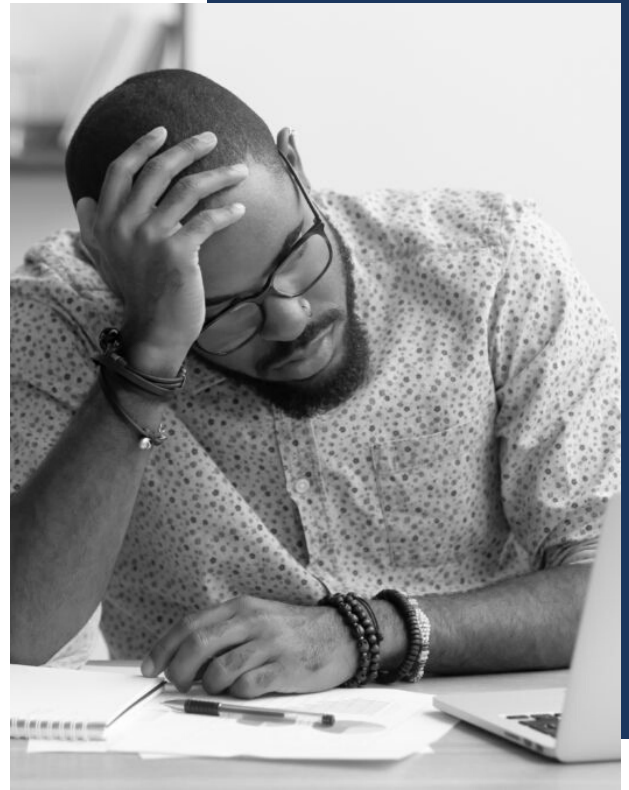
- Have you become cynical or critical at work?
- Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started?
- Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients?
- Do you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
- Do you find it hard to concentrate?
- Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
- Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep habits changed?
- Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be experiencing job burnout. Consider talking to a doctor or a mental health provider because these symptoms can also be related to health conditions, such as depression.

Possible causes of job burnout

Job burnout can result from various factors, including:

- **Lack of control.** An inability to influence decisions that affect your job — such as your schedule, assignments or workload — could lead to job burnout. So could a lack of the resources you need to do your work.



- **Unclear job expectations.** If you're unclear about the degree of authority you have or what your supervisor or others expect from you, you're not likely to feel comfortable at work.
- **Dysfunctional workplace dynamics.** Perhaps you work with an office bully, or you feel undermined by colleagues or your boss micromanages your work.
- **Extremes of activity.** When a job is monotonous or chaotic, you need constant energy to remain focused — which can lead to fatigue and job burnout.
- **Lack of social support.** If you feel isolated at work and in your personal life, you might feel more stressed.
- **Work-life imbalance.** If your work takes up so much of your time and effort that you don't have the energy to spend time with your family and friends, you might burn out quickly.

Job burnout risk factors

The following factors may contribute to job burnout:

- You have a heavy workload and work long hours
- You struggle with work-life balance
- You work in a helping profession, such as health care
- You feel you have little or no control over your work

Consequences of job burnout

Ignored or unaddressed job burnout can have significant consequences, including:

- Excessive stress
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Sadness, anger or irritability
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes
- Vulnerability to illnesses

Handling job burnout

Try to take action. To get started:

- **Evaluate your options.** Discuss specific concerns with your supervisor. Maybe you can work together to change expectations or reach compromises or solutions. Try to set goals for what must get done and what can wait.
- **Seek support.** Whether you reach out to co-workers, friends or loved ones, support and collaboration might help you cope. If you have access to an employee assistance program, take advantage of relevant services.
- **Try a relaxing activity.** Explore programs that can help with stress such as yoga, meditation or tai chi.
- **Get some exercise.** Regular physical activity can help you to better deal with stress. It can also take your mind off work.
- **Get some sleep.** Sleep restores well-being and helps protect your health.
- **Mindfulness.** Mindfulness is the act of focusing on your breath flow and being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling at every moment, without interpretation or judgment. In a job setting, this practice involves facing situations with openness and patience, and without judgment.

Keep an open mind as you consider the options. Try not to let a demanding or unrewarding job undermine your health.

Source: 1998 - 2021 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER) from www.advantageengagement.com



JOB SATISFACTION: HOW TO MAKE WORK MORE REWARDING

Do you find yourself dreading the start of the workweek? Or wishing the workday away? Are you no longer enthusiastic about your job? You might feel unable to simply change jobs. Consider ways to improve your job satisfaction by changing how you think about your work. Understand the link between work approach and job satisfaction.

If you've gone sour on your job, think about what motivates and inspires you – and how you approach your work. For example:

- **It's a job.** If you approach work as a job, you focus primarily on the financial rewards. The nature of the work might hold little interest for you. If a job with more pay comes your way, you'll likely move on.

- **It's a career.** If you approach work as a career, you're likely interested in advancement. Your current job might be a steppingstone to your ultimate goal. What's important is to be regarded as a success in your field.
- **It's a calling.** If you approach your job as a calling, you focus on the work itself. You're less interested in financial gain or career advancement, preferring instead to find a sense of fulfillment from the work itself.

One approach isn't necessarily better, and you might find elements of all three perspectives important. Still, if you're unsatisfied with your job, it's helpful to reflect on why you work.

Think about what drew you to your current job and whether it might be a factor in your lack of satisfaction. Understanding what motivates you in your work can help you reframe your expectations and make choices to increase your satisfaction.

Consider strategies to improve job satisfaction

Regardless of why you work, there are strategies that might help breathe new life into your job. For example:

- **Understand your work's significance.** Think about how whatever you do helps other people or contributes to society. Perceiving the value of your work can increase your job satisfaction.
- **Help others at work.** Making extra efforts to help clients or co-workers can make your work feel more meaningful and increase your job satisfaction. Think about taking on a new project for a client, or mentoring a colleague.
- **Change tasks.** If possible, try to focus on the parts of your job that you find most meaningful. Ask your supervisor if you can have additional training or take on new tasks. If your company is launching a new project, volunteer for the team.
- **Collaborate with valued colleagues.** Spending time with toxic co-workers can lower your job satisfaction. Spending time with positive colleagues, to the extent you're able, can re-energize you.
- **Practice self-care.** Behavior that promotes your physical health — such as exercise, good nutrition and stress management — can help you feel positive at work and increase your job satisfaction.
- **Be grateful.** Gratitude can help you focus on what's positive about your job. Ask yourself, "What am I grateful for at work today?" If it's only that you're having lunch with a friendly colleague, that's OK.
- **Look for silver linings.** Looking for benefit in a negative situation can help you get through it. If possible, focus on the temporary nature of a stressful period at work. Focus on the potential payoffs, such as higher pay or more opportunities.



- **Nurture your passion.** If your job satisfaction has waned, but seeking a new job isn't a realistic option, you might consider your current job as a welcome paycheck that allows you to focus your energy on interests outside of work. Sometimes work is simply a means to enjoy those things you're truly passionate about.
- **More job satisfaction can mean less stress.** Whether your work is a job, a career or a calling, you can take steps to restore its meaning. Make the best of difficult work situations by maintaining a positive attitude.

Be creative as you think of ways to change your circumstances — or how you view your circumstances. Doing so can help you manage your stress and experience the rewards of your profession.

Source: 1998 – 2020 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER) from <https://www.advantageengagement.com>

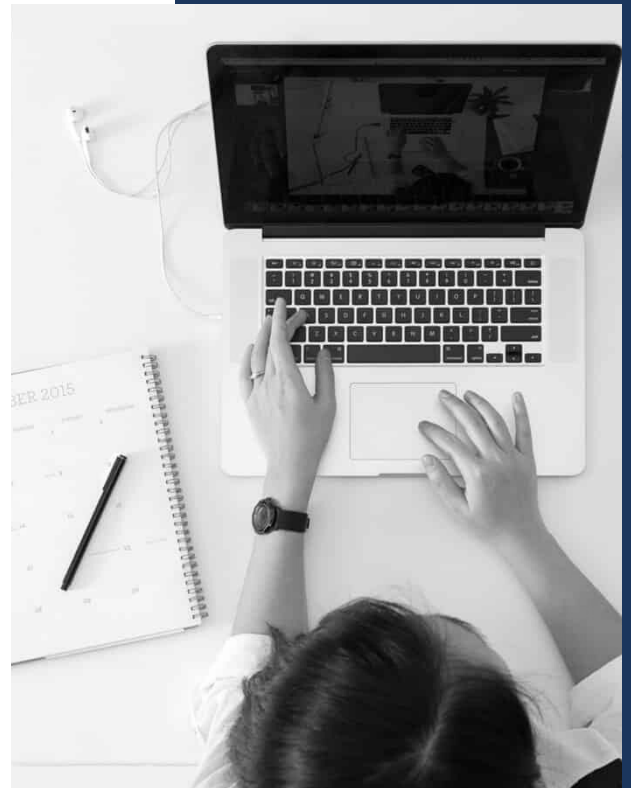
ASK YOUR EAP!

Q. My employee was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for depression. The doctor phoned to discuss the employee's return to work. I suppose I can do it, but would it be better for the EAP to play this role? I gave the EAP phone number to the employee, but I'm not sure there was follow-through.

A. Provide the phone number of the EAP to the doctor so the program can be contacted regarding back-to-work issues. Also provide the doctor's phone number to the EAP. Explain the circumstances. The EAP will contact the doctor, who will in turn engage the worker and arrange a back-to-work conference. The employee will then likely become an EAP client with proper consent forms signed so appropriate information can be released to you. The above process will allow the EAP to discuss clinical matters with the doctor without your involvement. Later, the EAP will monitor the employee and follow any discharge instructions. Reasonable accommodations, if necessary, will be shared with you for your consideration. Supervisors are less burdened when they rely on the EAP to manage communication issues like the one discussed here. And of course, recovering employees are better managed, and the reputation of the EAP as a helpful service to all is enhanced.

Q. I have referred many employees to the EAP over the years. I often notice the personal problem gets resolved, but performance also improves. This is expected, but it is often beyond what even I anticipated. What explains this surprising level of performance improvement after employees visit the EAP?

A. When employees participate in the EAP, they are not only assisted in resolving a personal problem, but may also need to participate in ongoing activities or personal efforts to maintain and improve mental and physical wellness. Preventing relapse of a substance use disorder especially requires a lot of self-care for the patient/employee. This may include focusing on improving one's diet, attention to health needs, better stress management, chronic disease education, better problem-solving, psychotherapy, goal setting, work-life balance, and attending to relationship problems at home, the continuation of which would jeopardize recovery. It is sometimes said that employees who visit the EAP for help with a personal problem get "better than well." This is the phenomenon you are witnessing.



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