

How to Prevent Burnout at Work

According to a 2019 Gallup study, 76% of full-time employees reported feeling burned out at work at least sometimes, and 28% “very often” or “always.” There is little doubt that employee burnout is a symptom of modern workplaces that are increasingly fast-paced, complex and demanding.

At work, many employees feel overwhelmed by competing demands and conflicting expectations. And technology — especially mobile technology — has blurred the lines between home life and work life. Prevent burnout with the following tips:

Five Factors Highly Relate to Burnout

The Root Causes

Five factors correlate most highly with employee burnout. We call these the “root causes” because they have the greatest effect on burnout.

1

Unfair Treatment at Work:

When employees strongly agree that they are often treated unfairly at work, they are **2.3x** more likely to experience a high level of burnout. Unfair treatment can include all kinds of workplace issues, including bias, favouritism and mistreatment by a coworker. When employees are treated fairly and feel respected, strong relationships form quickly and employees are more resilient.

2

Unmanageable Workload:

Employees who strongly agree that they always have too much to do are **2.2x** more likely to say they experience burnout very often or always at work. Having too much to do can take different forms. While some think about long hours, others are affected by multitasking or difficulty. The right question for leaders and managers to ask is: What causes work to become unmanageable for my team, and what can be done about it?

3

Unclear Communication From Managers:

When managers don't provide employees with the information they need to do their job effectively, work becomes difficult and frustrating. The best managers regularly discuss responsibilities, performance goals and priorities with their employees. They also collaborate with the team to ensure expectations are clear, proactively share information and encourage employees to share their thoughts.

4

Lack of Manager Support:

Manager support is central to preventing burnout. Manager support provides a psychological buffer, so employees know that their manager has their back — even when challenges arise or something goes wrong. Supportive managers are there for their team members, listening to their needs and encouraging them.

5

Unreasonable Time Pressure:

Unreasonable deadlines and pressure can create a snowball effect: When employees miss one overly aggressive deadline, they fall behind on the next thing they are scheduled to do. Leaders must ensure that their role expectations and performance standards are fair and inspire excellence. And when employees step up to work overtime or accomplish tasks under tight deadlines, leaders should recognize their willingness to go the extra mile.



Use the self-assessment to rate yourself on the continuum and the questions below to have a dialogue with your manager.

Unfair Treatment at Work:

Unfair



Fair

1

What does fair treatment look like for you?

How can we build our relationship to be even more respectful?

Unmanageable Workload:

Unmanageable



Manageable

2

Based on my strengths, what do you think is a manageable workload for me?

When things do feel unmanageable, how should I deal with that?

Unclear Communication From Managers:

Unclear



Clear

3

How often should we discuss my responsibilities, performance goals and priorities?

What's the best way for me to let you know when work becomes difficult and frustrating?

Lack of Manager Support:

Lack



Full

4

What's the best time of day for me to get in touch when I need your support?

How do I know you have my back?

Unreasonable Time Pressure:

Unreasonable



Reasonable

5

What does reasonable time pressure look and feel like to you?

What's the best way/(s) for us to handle this together?