



*Optimal Treatment  
for Anxiety  
& Mental Health*

# Burnout and Self Care

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# Made in Partnership with Northern Kentucky Health Department



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# Overview

- Understanding Burnout
- Recognizing and Differentiating Burnout from Stress
- Coping with Burnout

# Burnout is not new...and not unique

- Burnout studied in scholarly literature throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Recent studies suggest burnout among teachers is not significantly different from other high stress sectors (e.g., healthcare)
- COVID did exacerbate burnout among teachers
- Ranges for teacher burnout run from 5% to 20% to up to 60% depending on source, methodology, and timing

# So, what IS burnout?

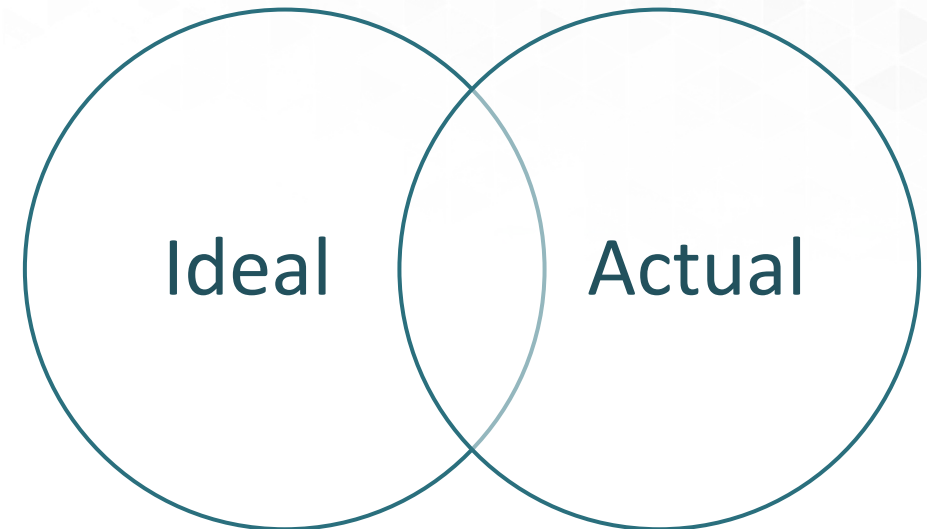
- Maslach's definition from 1982 identified 3 components still used:
  - *Emotional exhaustion*
  - *Depersonalization*
  - *Diminished sense of personal accomplishment*

# Let's try an exercise

- Close your eyes
  - Imagine your 'perfect' day as a teacher
  - What are you doing?
  - Who are you interacting with?
  - What goes well?
- 
- Now...let's think about your last day on the job...

# There is often a disconnect!

- When this occurs, the risk for burnout can be greater, but is not guaranteed
- Our ability to recognize this risk, allocate factors that are controllable and uncontrollable and engage proactively can make a difference!





# Recognizing and Differentiating Burnout

# Emotional exhaustion

- Feeling few emotions
- Limited range of emotions
- Higher (and lower!) reactivity in emotions
- Fatigue – emotional, physical, and mental (cognitive slowing)

# Depersonalization

- Detached from present
- Feeling out of touch or out of body
- Lack of empathy

# Diminished sense of personal accomplishment

- Feeling like a failure at work
- Good things loom small, bad things loom large
- Imposter syndrome can also occur here

# What burnout isn't...

- Being tired (alone, and/or with clear causes)
- Feeling “stressed”
- Not enjoying work (especially the boring parts!)
- Having strong reactions to work experiences
- Imposter syndrome (at least not exclusively...)
- Reacting to a truly toxic work environment (can be hard to distinguish at times)

# Let's try another exercise

- Jot down 3 reasons why you started teaching in the first place
- Name 3 things you love about teaching
- Text these 3 things to your partner, family, colleagues, or friend!

# So, What Can We Do About Burnout?

# Remember, burnout is a systems issue!

- Do not place responsibility for solving burnout solely on yourself
- If you are a leader, **take responsibility** for your environment
  - *Bosses have a significant impact on burnout in the environment*
- Practice the duality of life
  - *Burnout is a systems issue **AND** you can do something to cope more effectively!*



# First, assess the situation...then your role

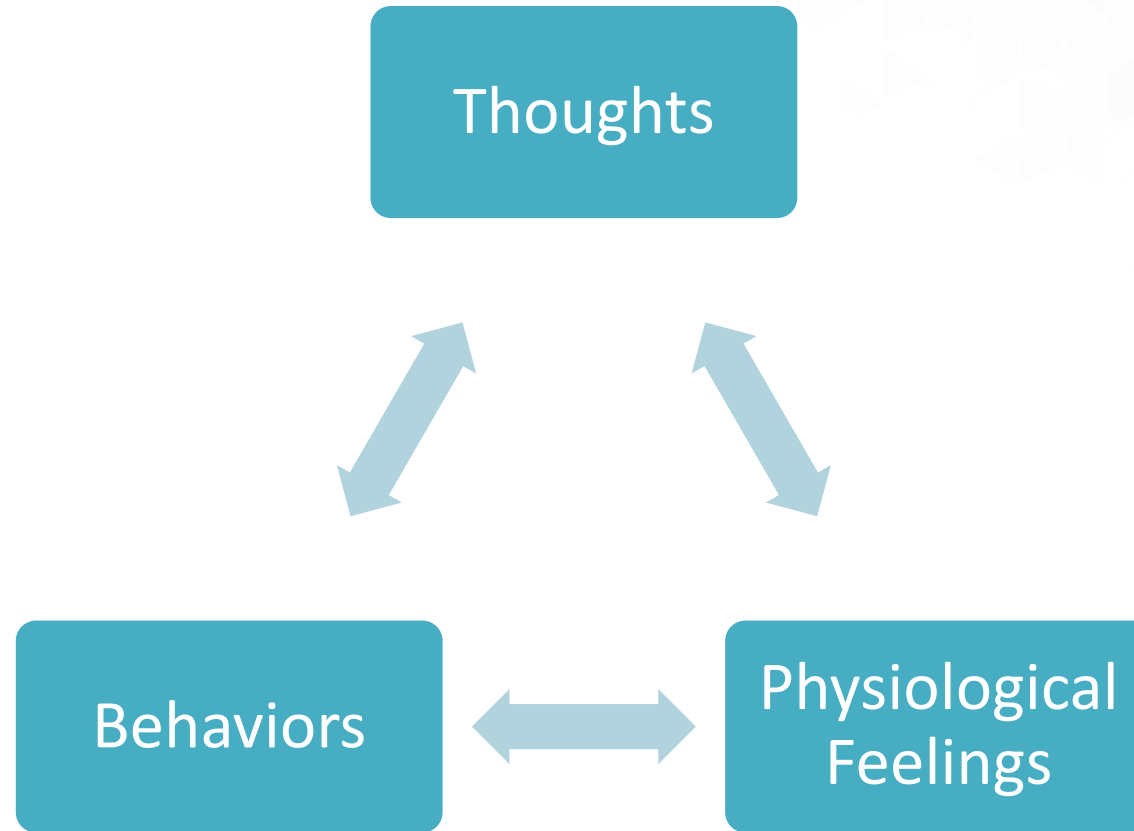
- Is this burnout or something else?
  - *Temporary, situational dependent, solve-able?*
  - *Is this a toxic environment?*
  - *Is this a realignment in values?*
- What is your role?
  - *Are you in a position to **make, advocate or highlight** a systems-level change?*
  - *Do you have psychological (and physical) **safety**?*

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Think about what this looks like across different environments (e.g., home, work...)
- Take a few moments to jot down needs at each level in the major places of your life...



# Next, understand your emotions

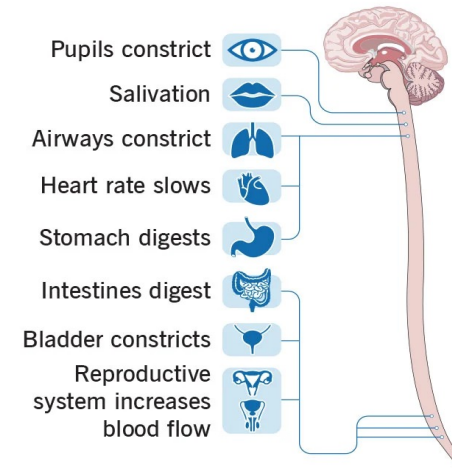


# Physiological Feelings

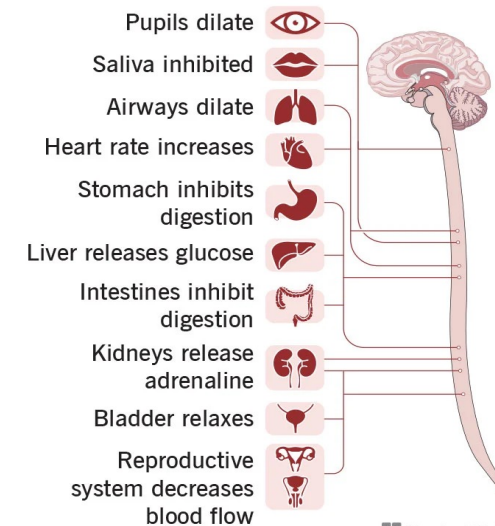
- Any activity that promotes parasympathetic activation (yoga, meditation, deep breathing)
- The key is **regular practice**
- Let's walk through a few examples...

## Autonomic Nervous System

### Parasympathetic Division



### Sympathetic Division



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# Behaviors



- Leon Festinger pioneered research in 1950's on ***cognitive dissonance***
- Subjects completed mind-numbingly boring task in a laboratory
- Subjects then asked to tell future subjects the experiment was enjoyable
- Randomly assigned to receive \$20 or \$1 for the agreement to lie

***After, which group of subjects rated the task as more enjoyable?***

# Differentiating Self-care from Self-ish

- Avoiding “wellness shaming”
- Recognizing validity of sources (social media impression management and algorithm approaches)
- Putting on your own oxygen mask....but not ordering a cocktail and watching the in-flight movie
- Viewing self-care as **goal-directed behavior**

# Thoughts

**A**ntecedents – *Something Happens*

**[B]**eliefs] – *Why did this happen?*

**C**onsequences – *I feel...*

Negative – *Something bad happened*

Internal – *It's my fault*

Stable - *It's always my fault*

Global – *Everything is my fault*

What's the evidence?



*Sometimes our thoughts are “right” or “wrong”, “good” or “bad,” but are they consistent with what we value?*



# Gratitude Exercise

Simple, yet effective exercise to promote resilience:

“Three Good Things” - Use your senses (three things you see, touch, hear)

Can help with **values alignment**



# Conclusion

- Burnout is a systems problem
- Burnout is not uncommon, is increasing, and teachers as a profession at risk like other vulnerable populations
- Burnout is less common than stress and should be distinguished from toxic situations
- Understanding and differentiating burnout is important
- Practicing “both/and” over “either/or” – burnout is a systems problem AND I can manage my response to it
- Simple exercises, done regularly, are an effective tool and resource

# References and Resources

For more reading, see...

Mijakoski, D. et al., (2022). Determinants of Burnout among Teachers: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies, *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 19, 5776. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095776>

Walker, T. (2021). Getting Serious About Teacher Burnout. *neaToday*. <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/getting-serious-about-teacher-burnout>

Gratitude exercises available at <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/gratitude-exercises>



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Thank you