

HR Insights

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Preferred Benefits Services Agency Inc.

Preventing Employee Burnout

The World Health Organization (WHO) now considers burnout to be a syndrome. In previous editions of the WHO's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), burnout wasn't considered a serious condition, and its only listed symptom was exhaustion.

The WHO's decision to upgrade burnout to a syndrome and provide a detailed set of symptoms communicates its serious stance on the dangers of burnout. Additionally, the WHO clarified in a public statement that burnout is an "occupational phenomenon" resulting "from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed."

What is burnout?

According to the WHO's ICD-11, doctors can diagnose an employee with burnout if they exhibit the following symptoms:

- Exhaustion or energy depletion
- Decreased engagement at work, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job
- Reduced productivity or efficacy

For some employees, the negative effects of burnout extend beyond their work life and into their home and social life. Moreover, burnout can increase an employee's risk for getting sick or developing a chronic condition.

How to Prevent Burnout at Your Organization

Since burnout is the result of prolonged and chronic workplace stress, it's important to know how to recognize the signs of workplace stress.

While it may not be possible to eliminate job stress altogether for your employees, you can help them learn how to manage it effectively. Common job stressors include a heavy workload, intense pressure to perform at high levels, job insecurity, long work hours, excessive travel, office politics and conflicts with co-workers.

You can implement various activities to help reduce employee stress, which can improve health and morale—and productivity.

- Make sure that workloads are appropriate.
- Have managers meet regularly with employees to facilitate communication.
- Address negative and illegal actions in the workplace immediately. Do not tolerate bullying, discrimination or any other similar behaviors.
- Recognize and celebrate employees' successes. This contributes to morale and decreases stress levels.
- Encourage a positive work-life balance.
- Promote exercise at your organization, as it's a proven stress reliever.



- Encourage employees to utilize their paid time off.
- Incorporate company-sponsored activities to give employees a reason to leave their desks and take a break.
- Train managers on how to keep employees engaged and motivated at work, and how to address burnout with employees.

For More Information

Burnout is a serious syndrome that may be affecting your employees. As such, it's important that you recognize the signs of burnout and take steps to prevent it at your workplace.

For more information on stress reduction resources for employees, contact Preferred Benefits Services Agency Inc. today.