

# Activity Plan



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NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: COOL OFF BEFORE BURNOUT

## OVERVIEW

IN THIS WORKSHOP, PARTICIPANTS GAIN AWARENESS IN RISK FACTORS OF 'BURN OUT' AND HOW TO PREVENT IT BEFORE IT HAPPENS. THROUGHOUT PRESENTATIONS AND CASE STUDIES, THEY LEARN ABOUT HOW TO DETECT THE TRIGGERS AND ALTER THEIR WORK LIFE TO BETTER CONDITIONS.

## OBJECTIVES:

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- IDENTIFY TRIGGERS OF BURNOUT
- DEVELOP BETTER WORKING-LIFE BALANCE IN LIFE
- EMPOWER PARTICIPANTS TO TAKE ACTION FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR WORK COLLEAGUES.

## COMPLEXITY AND TIME:

REQUIRES SELF-REFLECTION AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION, BUT NO PRIOR EXPERTISE IN MENTAL HEALTH IS NEEDED.

TOTAL DURATION: APPROXIMATELY 90 MINUTES

- ICEBREAKER: 10 MIN
- DISCUSSION: 15 MIN
- CASE STUDIES: 20 MIN
- WORK-LIFE MAP: 20 MIN
- ACTION PLAN: 20 MIN
- REFLECTION: 10 MIN

## GROUP SIZE:

10-20 PARTICIPANTS

THIS SIZE SUPPORTS MEANINGFUL GROUP INTERACTION WHILE ENSURING EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE.

## TARGET GROUP:

18 – 30 YEARS OLD

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, STUDENTS, OR EARLY CAREER INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HIGH STRESS AT WORK OR SCHOOL.

## THEMES ADDRESSED:

BURNOUT PREVENTION  
WORK-LIFE BALANCE  
SELF-CARE AND PROACTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT

## RESOURCES:

FACILITATORS: 1-2 (FOR LARGE GROUPS).

SPACE: FLEXIBLE SEATING FOR CIRCLES/SMALL GROUPS.

SOURCES USED

EVIDENCE-BASED THERAPIES – CBT, DBT, ACT, MINDFULNESS, PSYCHODYNAMIC, AND SOLUTION-FOCUSED TECHNIQUES.

REPUTABLE GUIDELINES – APA, NIMH, WHO, AND PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH.

## MATERIALS:

STICKY NOTES, PENS, AND MARKERS

BLANK PAPER OR WORKSHEETS FOR MAPPING WORKDAYS

SCENARIO CARDS FOR CASE STUDIES

FLIP CHARTS/LARGE PAPER FOR RECORDING GROUP ACTION PLANS

OPTIONAL: A PROJECTOR OR PRINTED HANDOUTS SUMMARIZING KEY BURNOUT TRIGGERS AND STRATEGIES

MARKERS, PENS, AND STICKY NOTES FOR TRIGGER MAPPING

HANDOUTS OR WORKSHEETS FOR THE PERSONAL COPING TOOLKIT

ANY SIMPLE PROPS NEEDED FOR ROLE-PLAY SCENARIOS

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## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. ICEBREAKER – “ENERGY CHECK” (10 MINUTES)

- SETUP:
  - ARRANGE CHAIRS IN A CIRCLE IN A QUIET ROOM.
  - PROVIDE EACH PARTICIPANT WITH A STICKY NOTE AND PEN.
- PROCESS:
  - ASK EACH PARTICIPANT TO WRITE DOWN A WORD OR PHRASE DESCRIBING HOW “ENERGIZED” OR “DRAINED” THEY FEEL AT THE MOMENT.
  - GO AROUND THE CIRCLE AND HAVE EVERYONE SHARE THEIR WORD/PHRASE BRIEFLY.
  - USE THIS MOMENT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT FEELING DRAINED IS COMMON AND CAN BE A SIGN OF EARLY BURNOUT.

### 2. DISCUSSION – “UNDERSTANDING BURNOUT” (15 MINUTES)

- SETUP:
  - PREPARE FLIP CHART WITH KEY POINTS ON BURNOUT (E.G., DEFINITION, RISK FACTORS, COMMON TRIGGERS).
- PROCESS:
  - BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHAT BURNOUT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS IN TODAY’S FAST-PACED WORK ENVIRONMENTS.
  - ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS SUCH AS:
    - “WHAT DOES BURNOUT LOOK LIKE IN YOUR DAILY WORK LIFE?”
    - “CAN ANYONE SHARE A TIME WHEN THEY NOTICED SIGNS OF BURNOUT?”
  - ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO RELATE THE INFORMATION TO THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITHOUT GETTING TOO ACADEMIC—FOCUS ON REAL-LIFE IMPACT.

### 3. ACTIVITY – “BURNOUT TRIGGER CASE STUDIES” (20 MINUTES)

- SETUP:
  - DIVIDE PARTICIPANTS INTO SMALL GROUPS (3-4 PEOPLE PER GROUP).
  - DISTRIBUTE CASE STUDY CARDS THAT DEPICT REALISTIC WORKPLACE SCENARIOS WITH POTENTIAL BURNOUT TRIGGERS (E.G., PROLONGED OVERTIME, LACK OF CONTROL, POOR WORK RELATIONSHIPS).

## EXAMPLES

### CASE STUDY 1: THE ALWAYS-ON INTERN

#### BACKGROUND:

ECE IS A 23-YEAR-OLD INTERN AT A FAST-PACED NGO. SHE FEELS THE NEED TO PROVE HERSELF BY ALWAYS SAYING “YES.” AS A RESULT, SHE ANSWERS EMAILS LATE AT NIGHT, SKIPS LUNCH TO FINISH TASKS, AND HASN’T TAKEN A DAY OFF IN TWO MONTHS. ALTHOUGH SHE FEELS EXHAUSTED, SHE FEARS BEING SEEN AS “NOT MOTIVATED.”

#### GROUP QUESTIONS:

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT ECE IS ON THE ROAD TO BURNOUT?

WHAT CHANGES COULD ECE MAKE TO BETTER PROTECT HER MENTAL HEALTH?

HOW COULD HER SUPERVISOR OR TEAM PROVIDE BETTER SUPPORT FOR HER?

### CASE STUDY 2: THE OVERCOMMITTED VOLUNTEER

#### BACKGROUND:

YUSUF VOLUNTEERS WITH THREE DIFFERENT YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS, STUDIES FULL-TIME, AND ALSO HELPS OUT WITH CHILDCARE AT HOME. HE FINDS IT HARD TO SAY “NO” WHEN ASKED FOR HELP. RECENTLY, HE HAS BEEN FORGETTING MEETINGS AND MISSING DEADLINES. YUSUF FEELS ANXIOUS AND GUILTY FOR NOT DOING ENOUGH, WHICH INCREASES HIS STRESS.

#### GROUP QUESTIONS:

WHAT TRIGGERS MIGHT BE CONTRIBUTING TO YUSUF’S STRESS AND RISK OF BURNOUT?

HOW CAN YUSUF SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES WITHOUT NEGATIVELY IMPACTING HIS RELATIONSHIPS?

WHAT WOULD A MORE REALISTIC AND BALANCED SCHEDULE LOOK LIKE FOR HIM?

### CASE STUDY 3: THE PERFECTIONIST PROJECT LEADER

#### BACKGROUND:

SOFIA IS LEADING A NEW COMMUNITY PROJECT WITH A STRONG SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND A DESIRE FOR PERFECTION. SHE TENDS TO MICROMANAGE TASKS AND STRUGGLES TO TRUST OTHERS WITH RESPONSIBILITIES. EVEN WHEN THINGS GO WELL, SOFIA FINDS IT HARD TO RELAX OR FEEL SATISFIED BECAUSE SHE’S CONSTANTLY WORRYING ABOUT WHAT COULD GO WRONG.

#### GROUP QUESTIONS:

WHICH PATTERNS OR THINKING STYLES ARE PUSHING SOFIA TOWARD BURNOUT?

HOW MIGHT DELEGATION AND COGNITIVE REFRAMING BE BENEFICIAL FOR HER?

WHAT MINDSET SHIFTS COULD SUPPORT HER WELL-BEING AND REDUCE HER STRESS?

## INSTRUCTIONS

### CASE STUDY 4: THE BURNT-OUT TEAM PLAYER BACKGROUND:

AHMET USED TO LOVE WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE YOUTH CENTER, BUT LATELY, HE DREADS GOING TO WORK. HE FEELS UNDERAPPRECIATED AND OVERWHELMED BY AN ENDLESS STREAM OF TASKS. AS A RESULT, HE HAS BECOME EMOTIONALLY DISTANT FROM HIS COWORKERS AND AVOIDS PLANNING NEW ACTIVITIES. AHMET HASN'T SHARED HIS FEELINGS BECAUSE HE ASSUMES "EVERYONE'S TIRED ANYWAY."

#### GROUP QUESTIONS:

- WHAT EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN AHMET'S CASE?
- IN WHAT WAYS COULD AHMET BE SUPPORTED BY HIS PEERS OR SUPERVISORS WITHOUT PLACING BLAME?
- WHAT ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES MIGHT HELP REDUCE BURNOUT RISKS SIMILAR TO AHMET'S SITUATION?

#### • PROCESS:

- INSTRUCT EACH GROUP TO DISCUSS THEIR ASSIGNED CASE STUDY. ASK THEM TO:
  - IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC TRIGGERS OF BURNOUT IN THE SCENARIO.
  - CONSIDER HOW THESE FACTORS MIGHT AFFECT BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS.
- HAVE GROUPS RECORD KEY POINTS ON A FLIP CHART OR LARGE PAPER.
- AFTER 15 MINUTES, BRING EVERYONE BACK TOGETHER AND ASK EACH GROUP TO SHARE ONE MAIN TAKEAWAY FROM THEIR DISCUSSION.

### 4. PRACTICAL EXERCISE – “WORK-LIFE BALANCE MAP” (20 MINUTES)

#### • SETUP:

- PROVIDE EACH PARTICIPANT WITH A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER AND COLORED MARKERS.

#### • PROCESS:

- ASK PARTICIPANTS TO DRAW A “MAP” OF THEIR TYPICAL WORKDAY.
- INSTRUCT THEM TO MARK ACTIVITIES AND MOMENTS WHERE THEY FEEL ENERGIZED VERSUS THOSE WHERE THEY FEEL DRAINED.
- PROMPT THEM TO HIGHLIGHT ANY PATTERNS OR RECURRING TRIGGERS OF STRESS AND OVERWORK.
- ONCE COMPLETED, INVITE VOLUNTEERS TO SHARE THEIR MAPS WITH A PARTNER OR THE WHOLE GROUP, DISCUSSING INSIGHTS AND SURPRISES THEY DISCOVERED ABOUT THEIR ROUTINE.

### 5. GROUP WORK – “ACTION PLAN FOR A HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT” (20 MINUTES)

#### • SETUP:

- RETURN TO THE SAME SMALL GROUPS USED EARLIER.
- PROVIDE PAPER, PENS, AND STICKY NOTES.

#### • PROCESS:

- CHALLENGE EACH GROUP TO BRAINSTORM PRACTICAL ACTIONS THAT CAN HELP PREVENT BURNOUT—BOTH AT AN INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM LEVEL.
- ENCOURAGE IDEAS SUCH AS:
  - SETTING CLEAR WORK BOUNDARIES
  - TAKING REGULAR BREAKS
  - CREATING PEER SUPPORT SYSTEMS
  - ADVOCATING FOR MORE FLEXIBLE WORKING CONDITIONS
- ASK EACH GROUP TO DEVELOP A SHORT ACTION PLAN THAT OUTLINES 3-4 SPECIFIC STRATEGIES.
- AFTER 15 MINUTES OF DISCUSSION, HAVE EACH GROUP PRESENT THEIR PLAN TO THE ENTIRE WORKSHOP.

### 6. REFLECTION – “COOL DOWN REFLECTIONS” (10 MINUTES)

#### • SETUP:

- GATHER EVERYONE IN A CIRCLE AGAIN.

#### • PROCESS:

- INVITE EACH PARTICIPANT TO SHARE ONE KEY INSIGHT OR COMMITMENT THEY'RE TAKING AWAY FROM THE SESSION.
- USE GUIDING QUESTIONS LIKE:
  - “WHAT IS ONE CHANGE YOU WILL IMPLEMENT TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BURNOUT?”
  - “HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT A COLLEAGUE WHO MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING BURNOUT?”
- END WITH A COLLECTIVE AFFIRMATION, SUCH AS “WE COMMIT TO A HEALTHIER, BALANCED WORK LIFE,” REINFORCING THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR WELL-BEING.

## DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION:

FACILITATORS LEAD A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON WHICH TECHNIQUES RESONATED MOST AND HOW THEY CAN BE APPLIED IN DAILY LIFE.

FACILITATORS CAN ALSO ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES MORE EASILY.

- “HOW DID TODAY'S ACTIVITIES HELP YOU UNDERSTAND BURNOUT TRIGGERS?”
- “IS THERE ANY PART OF THE WORKSHOP YOU WOULD CHANGE OR ADD TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE?”
- “WHAT ADDITIONAL TOPICS RELATED TO BURNOUT PREVENTION WOULD YOU LIKE TO EXPLORE IN FUTURE SESSIONS?”

ADDITIONALLY, PARTICIPANTS CAN FILL OUT A SHORT FEEDBACK FORM AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP.

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## TIPS FOR FACILITATOR

- KEEP THE SESSION INTERACTIVE AND FLEXIBLE TO ALLOW FOR PERSONAL INSIGHTS.
- USE ENCOURAGING, REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES AND OCCASIONAL HUMOR TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD.

## FOLLOW UP

- ORGANIZE MONTHLY MEET-UPS OR ONLINE FORUMS WHERE PARTICIPANTS CAN UPDATE EACH OTHER ON THEIR PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES.
- SET UP A FOLLOW-UP SESSION TO REVIEW TOOLKIT USAGE AND SHARE SUCCESS STORIES.