

Burnout

What is burnout?

Burnout refers to a response to chronic emotional and interpersonal work-related stressors. It has been defined by three key dimensions; exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. The experience can impair personal and social functioning, which typically contributes to a decline in the quality of work and interpersonal relationships.

- Common issues and experiences:
 - Emotional and physical exhaustion.
 - Depersonalisation (low sense of belonging and opinion of self)
 - Perceived low accomplishment.
 - Start to invest less in job.
 - Accomplish fewer tasks.
 - Become less effective.
 - Gain less pleasure from work.
 - Become more cynical.
- It is **not** an indication of;
 - a lack of skills/qualities
 - an issue around work ethic.
 - a lack of resilience
 - a lack of confidence

Burnout is caused by interacting factors

- Burnout is caused by an interaction between the environment, the person and the task(s) demands placed upon them.
- Mismatch between task demand, environment and person's skillset (demands & expectations too high)
- Mismatch between task and person's values (asking person to carry out a task that clashes with their principles)
- Mismatch between task and the person's perceived value of the task (asking a person to carry out a task they perceive as unnecessary, unhelpful or pointless)
- Lack of autonomy, control and/or influence over their work.
- Any of the above issues experienced over a long period.

Burnout is a BIG problem for teachers in the UK

- Teacher Burnout is a global concern. For example, issues raised in Australia, China, Iran, France, USA, Germany, Turkey, Malaysia, UK and many other countries.
- Thought to be more common in new teachers, but teachers at every stage of their career can experience burnout.
- Teachers with a high burnout rating are more likely to leave the profession.
- Teacher burnout and stress impacts on:
 - Physical health and psychological wellbeing
 - Productivity and effectiveness
 - Relationship with children/young people

- Children’s learning and academic performance
- Teacher’s sense of belonging in school
- Extent to which teachers feel prepared and capable.
- Working memory and attentional control.
- In 2011, Nubling et al. reported the following:
 - The UK has the highest level of teacher burnout in Europe
 - Teachers in the UK experience the highest level of demands in Europe
 - The UK ranked 2nd highest in Europe for the experience of cognitive stress (e.g. interfering unhelpful thoughts).
 - The UK ranked 2nd highest in Europe for the amount the job impacted on personal life (in relation to both having to cope with workload and being distracted by thoughts about work at home)
 - The UK considered high for issues around ‘work privacy’ (finding somewhere quiet to work)
 - The UK considered high for ‘lesson disturbance’.
 - The UK considered high for verbal abuse and conflict from parents.
- Teachers in the UK are reported to be more likely to suffer from burnout than any other professional. Suicide rate is 40% higher for teachers than other professionals in the UK. In Denmark, however, teachers are at a lower risk of suicide than other professionals. (Briner et al, 2008).

Suggested further reading:

- Aloe, A., Amo, L., Shanahan. (2014). Classroom management Self-efficacy and burnout: A Multivariate Meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 26, 101 – 126.
- Briner, R. B., Poppleton, S., Owens, S., & Kiefer, T. (2008). The nature, causes and consequences of harm in emotionally-demanding occupations. *Health and Safety Executive*.
- Leiter & Maslach (2015, January). Conquering Burnout. *Scientific American: Mind*, (98), 30 – 35
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 397-422.
- Nübling, M., Vomstein, M., Haug, A., Nübling, T., & Adiwidjaja, A. (2011). European-Wide Survey on Teachers Work Related Stress–Assessment, Comparison and Evaluation of the Impact of Psychosocial Hazards on Teachers at their Workplace. *Brussels: European Trade Union Committee for Education*.
- Whitaker, R. C., Dearth-Wesley, T., & Gooze, R. A. (2015). Workplace stress and the quality of teacher–children relationships in Head Start. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 30, 57-69.