

What first-time managers can do about digital burnout and exhaustion in the workplace

With stress levels at an all-time high, many first-time managers are scrambling to understand how to support employees who are burned out.



LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, August 30, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- All work

and no play; the quick road to burnout. Managers continue to face and navigate some incredibly difficult times in the workplace. With stress levels at an all-time high, many first-time managers are scrambling to understand how to help employees under immense, prolonged stress while also rising to meet the pressures of their new role.

The last stage of chronic stress, burnout, is becoming more and more widely experienced by workers in the UK and worldwide. It doesn't discriminate, impacting people from all industries and backgrounds, from tech to healthcare, retail and hospitality – burnout is affecting workers' mental health everywhere. Gallup reports that an alarming three in four workers say they feel burned out "sometimes," while 29% report feeling it "very often" or "always." This surge is caused by 24/7 workplace access, longer days due to digital availability and remote offices where there's always "just one more" email or task to finish off.

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What does burnout feel like?

Burnout doesn't happen suddenly. An individual doesn't wake up one morning and suddenly "have burnout." There is a common misconception that people with burnout feel overly tired. However, even if you have time off work, go on holiday or start sleeping better, burnout is physical, emotional and cognitive.

The World Health Organization upgraded its definition of burnout last year to "chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." To eliminate burnout, it is necessary to identify and turn off the triggers driving stress—people with burnout report feeling like they can no longer function effectively on a personal or professional level.

What are the symptoms of burnout?

The difference between stress and burnout is a matter of degree. This means that the earlier you recognise the signs of stress, the more control you will have to treat and avoid it becoming burnout.

Burnout can display signs of both physical and emotional exhaustion, which may include any of the following:

Insomnia -

In the early stages, falling or staying asleep may be difficult. If the stress continues untreated, insomnia may become an ongoing nightly ordeal. As exhausting as burnout can feel, they can't sleep it off.

Chronic fatigue -

There may be a lack of energy and feeling tired most days. This can lead to a sense of dread for what lies ahead on any given day.

Physical symptoms -

These may include chest pain, excessive sweating, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, stomach pain, dizziness, fainting, and/or headaches (all of which should be medically assessed).

Loss of pleasure in work and life -

It may seem very mild initially, such as not wanting to go to work or being eager to leave.

Without intervention, though, loss of enjoyment may extend to different areas, including the time spent with family and friends. You may try to avoid projects at work and figure out ways to escape work altogether.

Lack of productivity and poor performance -

Despite long hours, prolonged chronic stress prevents individuals from being as productive as they once were, often resulting in incomplete projects and an ever-growing to-do list. It seems impossible to perform fully, even when working extra hard.

What can first-time managers do to support an employee with burnout?

Becoming a first-time manager is a significant career transition and is often accompanied by a shifting relationship dynamic at work. If managers don't prioritise their mental health, burnout could quickly transfer to their team members.

Here are some ways managers use [mental health training](#) to take care of their own mental health and mental health in the workplace as they start to lead others:

Be realistic about task expectations and allocation:

Carefully monitor workloads and work hours. If issues arise, adjust work demands and expectations accordingly. If an employee raises concerns about their mental health in the workplace, ask how you can alleviate some of their workloads and make a note to check in with them again later.

Model healthy time management behaviours:

Not expecting employees to respond during certain hours of the day or over the weekend and taking the time to eat a proper lunch away from the screen are two examples of setting healthy boundaries. If the team is remote, some audio-only conferencing can help, as being constantly on camera can contribute to burnout.

Be an advocate for continuous learning:

Managers should enable time for learning every week and schedule follow-ups with employees to ensure they are spending time developing new skills. Doing this also shows a direct interest in and commitment to the employee's future.

Have open conversations about mental health:

Managers often worry that bringing up mental health at work could cross personal boundaries. As a means of helping people find the right language for hard conversations, mental health awareness training for managers can lead to more insightful discussions about mental health without feeling like they're overstepping.

Mental health training for first-time managers

First-time line managers play a vital role in the organisation and are often under pressure. Many managers have risen through the ranks and are not all trained in leadership, mental health and people management. Therefore, they require targeted mental health training to help them succeed and thrive in this important role.

Onebright offers mental health training and consultancy services to help organisations build a healthier, more sustainable workforce. Our extensive portfolio of training courses is delivered by seasoned clinicians and academics, enabling you to create a bespoke package that covers precisely what your employees need.

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