



Staying Healthy

and avoiding burnout in the helping process

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Helping Professionals Brill and Levine (2005)

People who strive to use themselves
effectively

in a knowledgeable and disciplined
manner

in relationships with others

Metaphorical Meaning of Burnout

Somebody could only burn out if he or she was “burning” before.

Thus, engagement, enthusiasm and interest in someone’s job are a necessary precursor of burnout.

Maslach, Jackson and Leiter (1996/7)

- emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization,
- cynical attitude toward job and people involved
job
- reduced personal accomplishment

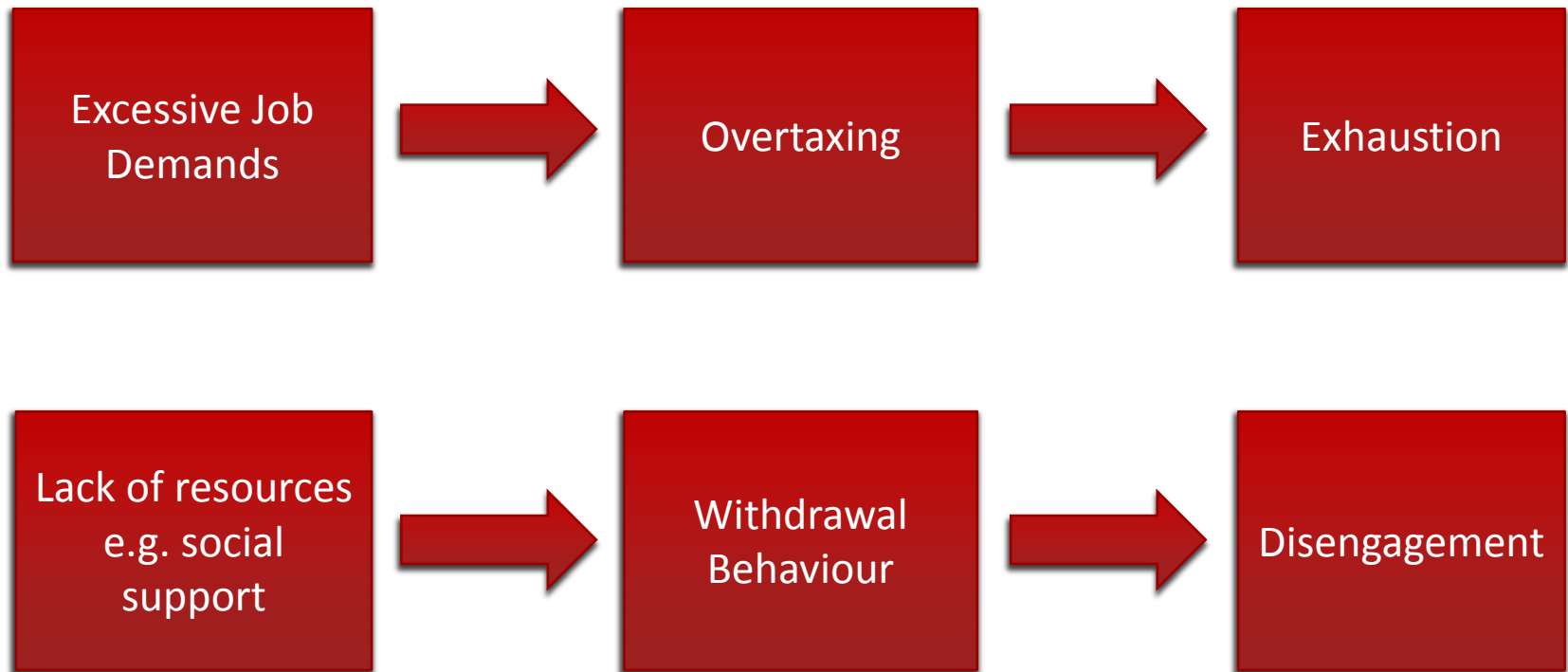
occurs among individuals who work with people in
some capacity

Burnout: Maslach and Leiter (1997)

An erosion in value, dignity, spirit and will
an erosion of the human soul.

a malady that spreads gradually and
continuously... putting people into a
downward spiral from which it's hard to
recover.

An Alternative Viewpoint - Two Separate Burnout Processes: Demerouti et al. (2001)



Burnout: contributory factors

- Insufficient support from supervisors and coworkers
- Excessive workload
- Absence of autonomy, control, decision-making
- Role-conflict
- Role-ambiguity
- Work-family conflict
- Lack of feedback
- Lack of meaningful rewards
- Lack of job security

Burnout can occur when the psychological contract is broken

When workers must give more

- time
- effort
- skills
- flexibility

but receive less

- career opportunities
- lifetime employment
- job security etc.

Who is at risk from burnout?

- Those with low self-esteem
- Those with high expectations about the nature of the job; perceiving work as challenging or fun
- Those with high expectations of job success; getting everything done, developing people
- Those with these personality characteristics:
 - Hostility
 - Depression
 - Vulnerability
 - Competitiveness
 - Excessive need for control

Who is at risk from burnout?

- Younger workers
- The higher educated
- Women – suffer more from exhaustion
- Men – suffer more from depersonalization and cynicism
- Those with External Locus of Control
- Those with ineffective coping skills esp. defensive or passive
- Those who do not acknowledge they are “Wounded Healers”

Compulsive Care Givers: Bowlby (1977)

- Pattern of behaviour seen in people whose early attachments were unsatisfactory
- typical childhood experience is to have a parent who was unable to care for the child but instead welcomed being cared for.

Compulsive Care Givers

- “...the person who develops in this way has found that the only affectional bond available is one in which he must always be the caregiver, and that the only care he can ever receive is the care he gives himself.”
- “...compulsively gives to others what he would like to have for himself, which...leads to a severe deficit in the emotional balance of payments”

Other literature

- Disturbed emotional attachments, notably to their mother. Storr (1979), Prodger (1991)
- Motive is to ablate memory of their own unsatisfactory parents... have an idealized projection of their caring. Rycroft (1993)
- “constructive vengeance” ... a desire to put right the wrongs of the past sublimating a wish for revenge into a conscious wish for reparation. Jacobs (1991)

Tillet (2003)

- Those with particularly disturbed childhood experiences are likely to have high levels of neurotic investment in the professional role and are especially at risk
- Become single-minded, enthusiastic, committed, leading to professional exhaustion and burnout.
- Difficult patients, avoid the patient role by
 - Self-neglect
 - Self-diagnosis and treatment
 - Somatization disorders
 - Behavioral disturbances

Wounded Healer

- One who has acknowledged his or her wounds
- One who has not avoided them e.g. a compulsive care-giver
- Neuroticism is an attempt to avoid legitimate suffering c.f. Ego Defence Mechanisms, Compulsive Care Giving

The Archetype of the Wounded Healer: some examples

- Greek myths - Chiron, Asklepios
- Babylonian myths
- Arthurian legends - Fisher King
- Norse sagas
- Hebrew traditions – Talmudic Aggadah, Rabbi Hiyya Bar-Abba
- Islamic culture - Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Zakriya Al-Razi
- Chinese culture, - Lao Tzu
- Circumpolar regions
- African culture e.g. Xhosa, Swazi
- American literature - Pollyanna

Example of the Archetype of the Wounded Healer: Africa

- Xhosa society
- Training of igqira (healer)
- Initiatory crisis
- Thwasa – a state of illness
- Ngoma in Swaziland

Carl Rogers: example of a Wounded Healer



*What I am is
good enough,
if I could
just be it openly.*

Qualities of Helping Professional

Brill and Levine (2005)

Awareness of self and personal needs, weaknesses, and strengths.

Cognizance of, ability to deal with, own personality patterns, with “garbage” from previous life experiences that cloud ability to relate freely.

Qualities of Helping Professional

Brill and Levine (2005)

Openness and freedom to perceive with clarity and relate with honesty—regardless of how different or similar others may be.

Ability to perceive and evaluate values, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour of the groups of which they consider themselves a part.

Ability to differ and stand alone when necessary.

The Psyche

Conscious

Unconscious



Shadow



...everyone carries a Shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.

If an inferiority is conscious, one always has a chance to correct it.

Furthermore, it is constantly in contact with other interests, so that it is continually subjected to modifications...

Shadow



...But if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected, and is liable to burst forth suddenly in a moment of unawareness.

At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions.

C G Jung, CW 11, para 131

Shadow and Persona

- Realization of the Shadow is possible but difficult – prevented by the Persona
- Shadow and Persona in compensatory relationship
- Conflict between Shadow and Persona is usually present at outbreak of neurosis

Activity, Discussion, Summary, Handouts to Take Away: Bibliography, Further Reading and Articles

➤ Activity:

➤ The Watchword Technique, Michael Daniels