

WHO says burnout is a medical problem

2nd June, 2019



Workers around the world have experienced burnout for decades. Burnout is mental exhaustion due to too much stress at work. This problem has now been defined by the WHO as a medical problem. It says

people have burnout if they often lack energy or feel exhausted; if they feel very negative about their job; and if they have problems finishing tasks in their job. The WHO says doctors should treat patients for burnout. However, doctors are among the highest-stress professions. They get burnout twice as often as average workers. The number of people with burnout has been increasing at a worrying rate. More and more workers are getting ill because of high levels of stress at work.

Burnout was identified as a problem in 1974 by American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger. Since then, hundreds of studies have tried to explain what it is. Researchers have said it is similar to anxiety or mood disorders, and can come from depression. According to the Mayo Clinic website, burnout can cause serious health problems. These can include insomnia, heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. The clinic's website gives advice on how to manage burnout. It suggests talking to your boss to change your workload; reaching out to co-workers, family and friends; and trying relaxing activities like tai chi, meditation, going for a walk in the countryside, and yoga.

Sources: aol.com / treehugger.com / forbes.com

Writing

Schools should teach children how to avoid burnout in later life. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

workers / burnout / stress / WHO / energy / negative / patients / doctors / professions / problems / psychologist / anxiety / depression / health problems / blood pressure

True / False

- The article said workers have been experiencing burnout for centuries. T / F
- The article said burnout is due to too much stress at home. T / F
- Doctors get burnout twice as often as other workers. T / F
- The levels of burnout around the world are decreasing. T / F
- Burnout was first identified by a German psychologist in Berlin. T / F
- Burnout may be more common with people who are depressed. T / F
- A clinic advised people with burnout to talk with their boss. T / F
- The clinic suggested meditating to relieve the effects of burnout. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. experienced | a. bad |
| 2. exhaustion | b. recognised |
| 3. negative | c. sick |
| 4. tasks | d. worry |
| 5. ill | e. sleeplessness |
| 6. identified | f. encountered |
| 7. anxiety | g. deal with |
| 8. insomnia | h. duties |
| 9. manage | i. calming |
| 10. relaxing | j. overtiredness |

Discussion – Student A

- Have you ever experienced burnout?
- What makes you stressed?
- What do you do to relieve stress?
- What do you know about burnout?
- How often do you lack energy?
- How often do you feel negative?
- Why do you think doctors have so much stress?
- What should people do about stress at work?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Workers around the world have experienced | a. as average workers |
| 2. mental exhaustion due | b. activities like tai chi |
| 3. they have problems finishing | c. of high levels of stress |
| 4. They get burnout twice as often | d. pressure |
| 5. workers are getting ill because | e. in the countryside |
| 6. hundreds of studies have tried to | f. burnout for decades |
| 7. high blood | g. out to co-workers |
| 8. reaching | h. tasks in their job |
| 9. trying relaxing | i. to too much stress |
| 10. going for a walk | j. explain what it is |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Do you have mood disorders?
- What do you know about high blood pressure?
- How much does speaking to friends help with problems?
- What do you think of meditation?
- How good is a walk in the countryside?
- What do you think of yoga?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- experienced burnout for sadecde
- Burnout is mental ontuxhiase
- efedidn by the WHO
- they feel very vaiengte about their job
- doctors should treat sttnapei for burnout
- twice as often as areaveg workers
- eiitidnfde as a problem in 1974
- it is similar to ieaxytn
- can come from sirsedpone
- high blood uressper
- type 2 esetadib
- trying relaxing ciitiatevs like tai chi

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. j	3. a	4. h	5. c
6. b	7. d	8. e	9. g	10. i

Role Play

Role A – English

You think English is the most stressful thing in life. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): work, money or the news.

Role B – Work

You think work is the most stressful thing in life. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): English, money or the news.

Role C – Money

You think money is the most stressful thing in life. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): work, English or the news.

Role D – The News

You think the news is the most stressful thing in life. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): work, money or English.

Speaking – Stress

Rank these with your partner. Put the most stressful things at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| • English | • bosses |
| • work | • commuting |
| • studying | • other people |
| • money | • the news |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.