

Preventing Burnout in Healthcare

The Power of Workplace
Breaks



Understanding Burnout in Healthcare Settings



Workplace burnout in healthcare settings is a growing concern.



Impacts: mental, emotional and physical well-being.



HCP's experience long hours, high patient loads and stressful environments.



Leads to exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction and compromised patient care.



Without intervention, burnout can lead to increased staff turnover and lower quality of service delivery.



Regular breaks has been highlighted in research to reduce stress, improve focus and enhance overall well-being.



Breaks provide essential recovery time, improving productivity and mental clarity.

What You Will Learn



The prevalence and impact of burnout in healthcare settings.



Key barriers to taking breaks and how to overcome them.



The role of workplace culture and management in promoting well-being.



The benefits of Active Breaks (ABs) and their positive effects on cognitive and physical performance.



Practical strategies for implementing and encouraging breaks in the workplace.

Understanding Burnout in Healthcare Settings

Prevalence: A systematic review and meta-analysis reported that approximately 52% of healthcare workers experience burnout, with 51% exhibiting emotional exhaustion and 52% showing depersonalization.

Stepanek et al (2023)



Nurses and Physicians: Report higher rates of burnout. A study found that 46.8% of nurses and 36.4% of physicians were experiencing burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Golder et al (2022)



Impact of Work Overload: Research indicates that 49.9% of healthcare staff experience burnout, with higher rates among nursing (56%) and other clinical staff (54.1%). This is often associated with work overload and intent to leave the profession

Sarker et al (2024)

Reported Barriers for Breaks

Inconvenient break room locations – Difficult to access during shifts.

High workload and time constraints – Staff feel they cannot afford to take breaks.

Lack of private and comfortable break spaces – Break areas often exposed to patients and families.

Key takeaway: Improving accessibility and quality of break areas enhances job satisfaction and reduces stress.

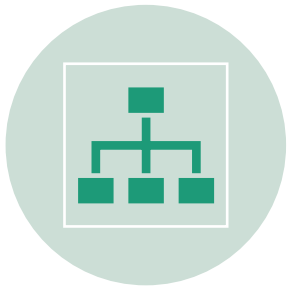
The role of Workplace Culture in Supporting Breaks



Management support: Encouraging break-taking through policy and leadership.



Adequate staffing: Ensuring coverage to allow staff to step away.



Workplace as a recovery space: A place that fosters motivation, rest and balance.



Encouraging regular meal breaks and structured rest periods.

The Science of Active Breaks

Definition: Short, structured physical activities incorporated into work routines.

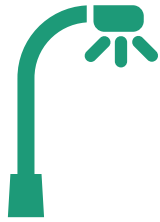
Benefits:

- Reduces musculoskeletal pain.
- Enhances productivity and attention.
- Improves executive function and brain metabolism.
- Boosts neurogenesis, angiogenesis, and catecholamine neurotransmission.

Implementation Strategies:

- Stretching exercises.
- Walking breaks.
- Desk-based movement activities.

Practical Strategies to Implement Breaks



Designing Better Break Spaces:

- Create quiet, comfortable areas with natural light.
- Provide amenities that encourage relaxation.
- Availability of adequate seating.
- Adequate equipment for storing and preparing foods.



Scheduling and Encouraging Breaks:

- Enforce boundaries to protect HCP's times for allocated breaktimes.
- Encouraging team-based accountability for break-taking.
- HCP's to take responsibility to take that break.
- Sit in the allocated break room – don't take your drink & food back to your desk



Leadership Role in Promoting Breaks:

- Management-led initiatives for well-being.
- Creating policies that normalise and prioritise breaks, keeping boundaries as a priority.
- Evaluate toolkits put in place 6 monthly – questionnaires, burnout scales and track absenteeism.

Moving Forward

Burnout is a critical issue in healthcare – but it is Not inevitable.

Fostering a culture valuing and encouraging regular breaks, job satisfaction, well-being and patient care can be enhanced.

Implementing simple changes can have a profound difference.

Taking breaks is not a luxury – it's a necessity for sustaining a resilience and efficiency.

Lets work together to prioiritise well-being in the workplace one break at a time!

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