

# Beyond Burnout: Recovery Through Lifestyle and Career Alignment

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# Learning Outcomes

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- Apply evidence-informed lifestyle strategies to support physical and cognitive recovery from burnout within clinical work constraints
- Distinguish between personal burnout factors and job-fit misalignments that contribute to chronic stress and exhaustion
- Analyze key job-fit domains (e.g., schedule, workload, autonomy, values alignment) that impact burnout recovery and sustainability
- Implement a personalized recovery action plan that integrates healthy habits, job-fit considerations, and boundary adjustments

Chapter 1

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# Foundational Health Behaviors in Burnout Recovery



# Chapter 1 Objective

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- Understand the stages of burnout recovery
- Identify lifestyle habits that support recovery
- Review strategies for practical application

# Burnout Definition

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“Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- Feelings of energy **depletion or exhaustion**;
- Increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or **cynicism related to one's job**; and
- Reduced **professional efficacy**

Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.”<sup>1</sup>

# Phases of Treatment of Clinical Burnout

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- Phase 1: Crisis
- Phase 2: Recovery
- Phase 3: Prevention, learning from the past
- Phase 4: Post-burnout growth

# Healthy Behaviors for Burnout Recovery

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- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Hydration
- Sleep

# Why Lifestyle Habits Matter

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- Maintains physical fitness, health, and mental well-being
- Reduces stress, anxiety, and depression
- Sustained happiness, self-esteem, and optimism
- Healthcare professionals need to be healthy to provide good care to their patients and prevent chronic disease and burnout in themselves

# Why Lifestyle Habits Matter (cont.)

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- Healthcare workers and exercise<sup>1</sup>
  - 56.2% met guidelines for aerobic exercise
  - 30.1% met guidelines for muscle strengthening
  - 25.3% met both
- Healthcare workers and nutrition<sup>2</sup>
  - Less than 40% rated the diet as “very good”
  - 15% eating recommended daily servings of vegetables
  - Inverse relationship between good nutrition and burnout

1. Song et al., 2020

2. Utter et al., 2023

# Why Lifestyle Habits Matter (cont.)

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- Healthcare workers and hydration<sup>1</sup>
  - 36% of workers were dehydrated prior to the start of the shift
  - 45% of workers were dehydrated at the end of the shift
- Healthcare workers and sleep<sup>2</sup>
  - Healthcare workers who slept less than seven hours were 13% more likely to have burnout

1. El-Sharkawy et al., 2016

2. Saintila et al., 2024

# Exercise

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- Relieves tension in muscles
- Releases hormones that improve mood
- Lowers feelings of fatigue
- Reduces depression, anxiety, and burnout

# Exercise (cont.)

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- 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week
  - 30 minutes a day, five days a week
  - Or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity



- Two days of muscle-strengthening activity each week
  - Working all major muscle groups

# Exercise (cont.)

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- Break it down into smaller time amounts
- Get creative
  - Park farther away
  - Have a dance break after meals
  - Walk for five minutes after getting home
  - Get an exercise bike and ride while watching TV

# Nutrition

- Prioritize these foods:
  - Protein
  - Dairy
  - Healthy fats
  - Vegetables
  - Fruits
  - Whole grains
- Avoid: Processed foods, excess sugar, refined carbohydrates



# Nutrition (cont.)

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- Start small
- Block time for lunch
- Commit to meal prep on your day off
- Avoid or reduce treats at work
- Add one extra serving of fruits or vegetables each meal

# Hydration

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- The body is made up of 50%–65% water
- The body needs water to:
  - Help the brain work—improves cognition, mood, and energy
  - Manage body temperature
  - Fuel the body
  - Maintain fluid balance
- Recommended 11.5–15.5 cups of fluid per day
  - Varies based on body type and activity

Mayo Clinic, 2026

# Hydration (cont.)

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- Increasing water intake
  - Increase fruit and vegetable intake
    - Cantaloupe, strawberries, watermelon, cabbage, squash
  - Carry a water bottle during the day
  - Start the day with water before caffeine intake
  - Add flavor to water

# Sleep

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- 7–9 hours per night<sup>1</sup>
- Reduce stimulation prior to sleep<sup>2</sup>
- Have consistent wake and sleep times<sup>2</sup>
- Routine to prepare for bed<sup>3</sup>
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol at night<sup>3</sup>
- Cool temperature<sup>2,3</sup>
- Meal considerations<sup>2,3</sup>

1. Mayo Clinic, Feb 2025

2. Mayo Clinic, Jan 2025

3. Shirane et al., 2023

# Chapter Summary

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- Burnout impacts mental and physical health
- Lifestyle habits support recovery
- Several habits were covered, including:
  - Exercise
  - Nutrition
  - Hydration
  - Sleep
- Sustainability matters more than intensity

## Chapter 2

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# Role and Career Factors That Influence Burnout Recovery



# Chapter 2 Objectives

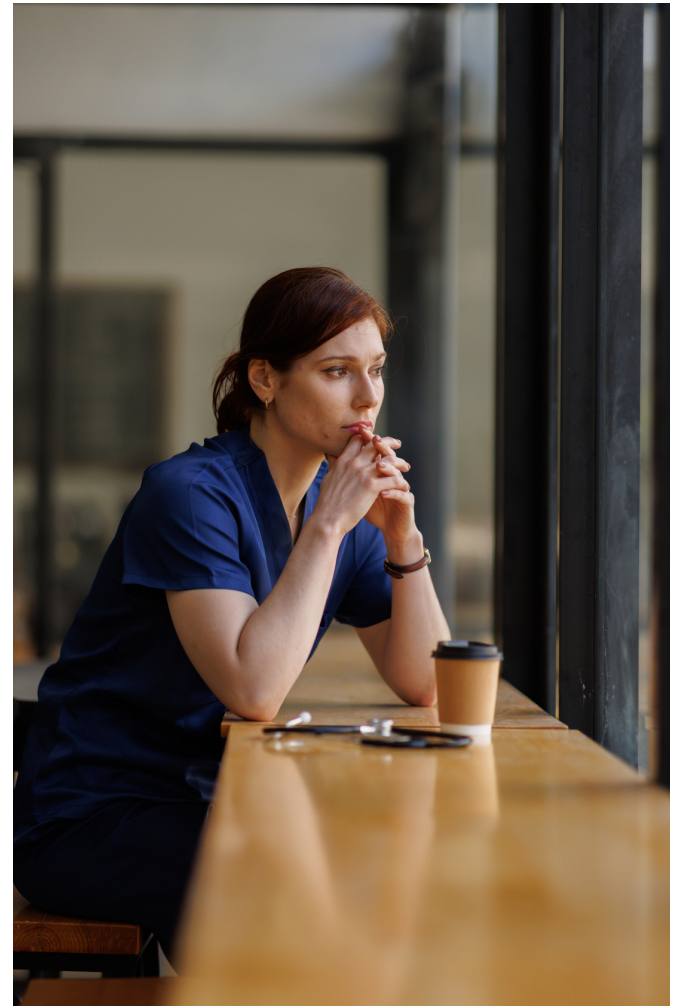
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- Identify job-fit contributors to burnout
- Differentiate personal vs. system factors
- Explore opportunities for job crafting

# When Lifestyle Changes Aren't Enough

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- Healthy habits...without relief
- Persistent exhaustion
- Recovery stalls



# Personal vs. Job-Fit Factors

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- Personal factors:
  - Boundaries
  - Coping style
- Job-fit factors:
  - Schedule
  - Autonomy
  - Values

# Job-Fit Domains

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- Schedule
- Workload
- Autonomy
- Values alignment

# Schedule and Recovery

- Insufficient recovery time
- Unpredictable hours
- Chronic activation



# Workload and Cognitive Demand

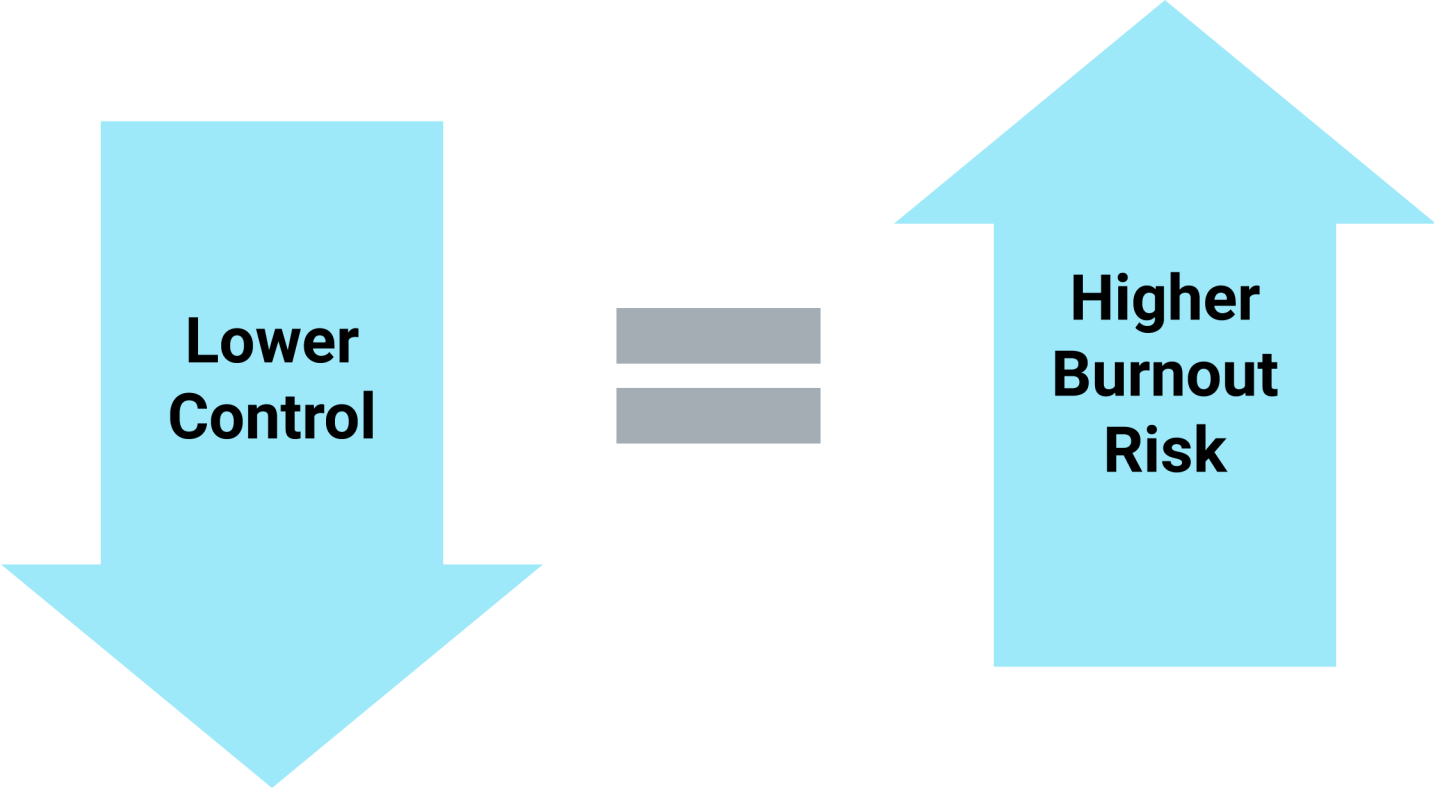
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- Volume
- Complexity
- Pace

# Autonomy and Control

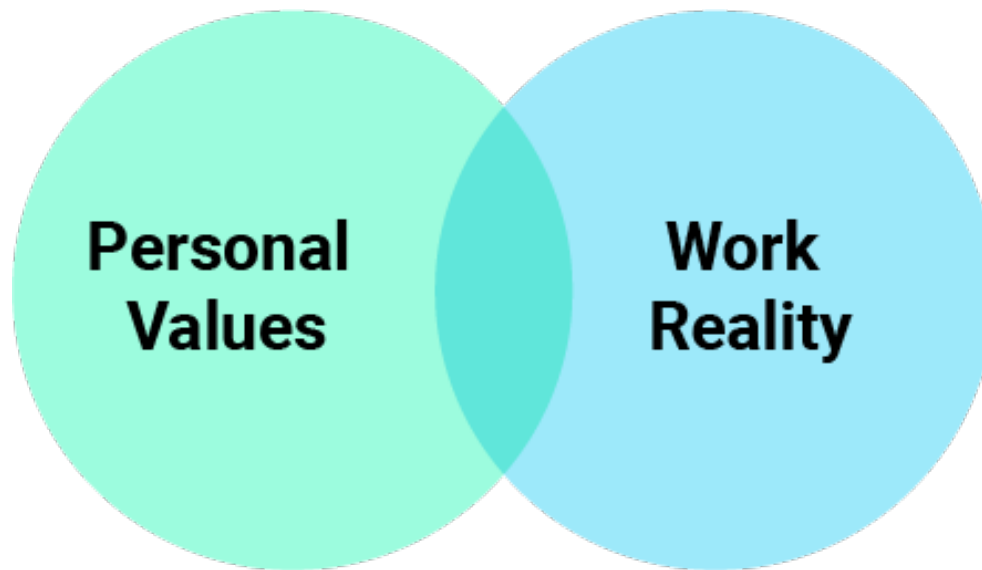
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# Values Misalignment

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- Moral distress
- Ethical fatigue
- Identify conflict



# Job Crafting

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- “Job (redesign) strategy aimed at optimizing job demands and resources that may increase work engagement and work meaning.”

# Job Crafting (cont.)

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- Seeking challenges
- Seeking resources
- Reducing demands

# Seeking Challenges

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- Taking on skill-building or meaningful projects
- Expanding role aligned with strengths or interests
- Participating in quality improvement or mentorship



# Seeking Resources

- Increasing access to clinical or peer support
- Requesting tools, templates, or workflow supports
- Clarifying expectations and feedback challenges



# Reducing Demands

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- Modifying workload or task distribution
- Adjusting schedules or documentation expectations
- Setting boundaries around nonessential responsibilities



# Reflection

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- Which category of job crafting—challenges, resources, or demands—feels most relevant for your current needs?

# Chapter Summary

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- Burnout is influenced by job fit
- Misalignment impairs burnout recovery
- Job crafting makes an impact on burnout recovery
  - Seeking challenges
  - Seeking resources
  - Reducing demands

## Chapter 3

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# Integrating Lifestyle and Career Changes for Sustainable Practice



# Chapter 3 Objectives

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- Identify which lifestyle habits and job-crafting concepts to apply
- Develop an action plan for consistent implementation
- Support long-term sustainability

# Why Recovery Plans Fail

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- Too many changes
- Motivation based
- No reassessment

# Recovery Requires Capacity and Alignment

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- Effective recovery plans include:
  - ✓ Capacity (lifestyle habits)
  - ✓ Alignment (job crafting)
  - ✓ Protection (boundaries)

# Step 1: Identify Primary Drain

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- Energy
- Time
- Emotional labor
- Moral distress

# Step 2: Choose One Lifestyle Habit

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- **Choose one:**
  - Exercise
  - Nutrition
  - Hydration
  - Sleep
- Consider whether this:
  - Supports regulation
  - Fits into your work reality
  - Is easy to sustain

## Step 3: Choose One Job Adjustment

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- Seek challenge
- Seek resources
- Reduce demand

### Examples:

- Start a new certification course
- Documentation support
- Caseload adjustment

## Step 4: Test and Reassess

- Give yourself a trial period
  - 2–4 weeks
- Define 1–2 measurable indicators
- Track trends
- Adjust based on data



# Pause and Plan

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- Write out your plan now

Including:

- Primary issue
- Lifestyle habit
- Job-crafting strategy

# Example Plan

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- Primary issue: Emotional exhaustion and disengagement
- Lifestyle habit: 10 minutes of movement reset each workday
- Job-crafting strategy: Taking on a student supervision role

## Example Plan (cont.)

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- Primary issue: Cognitive overload and decision fatigue
- Lifestyle habit: Improved hydration by increasing water intake when documenting
- Job crafting: Seeking resources—requesting access to documentation templates and treatment resources

## Example Plan (cont.)

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- Primary issue: Persistent physical and cognitive fatigue
- Lifestyle habit: Improving sleep with a structured wind-down routine
- Job crafting: Reducing demands
  - Adjusting caseload to reduce the acuity level of patients and reduce nonessential committee participation

# Reflect

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- Looking at your plan, what might get in the way of implementing it?

# Common Barriers

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- Time constraints
- Guilt or self-judgment
- Low energy or motivation

# Chapter Summary

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- Burnout recovery requires intentional, structured action
- Effective plans combine:
  - Lifestyle habits
  - Job crafting
- Plans should be tested, reassessed, and refined

# Course Summary

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- Burnout recovery is an organized process
- Sustainable recovery requires addressing:
  - Physiologic regulation
  - Ongoing job demands
  - Role and values alignment
- Small, realistic changes compound over time
- Alignment supports career longevity

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