



# **The hidden hazard:** Recognising and preventing burnout.

# Understanding Burnout: What it is and why it matters

**Jayne Morris MCC**

Founder of Balanceology



The Royal College of Pathologists  
Pathology: the science behind the cure



**The hidden hazard:**  
Recognising and preventing burnout.

**BALANCEOLOGY**

# Welcome

- Founder of Balanceology™
- Author of Burnout to Brilliance
- ICF MCC Executive Coach
- ICF UK Associate Board Member
- ICF Bath & Bristol Group Lead
- Post-Graduate Tutor
- Coach Supervisor
- Psychologies Contributor
- BBC Radio & TV spokesperson



# What is Burnout?

Burnout is a stress-related syndrome resulting from chronic and cumulative activation of the body's stress-response systems. Prolonged HPA axis and autonomic dysregulation lead to neuroendocrine, immune, and metabolic imbalances that manifest as emotional exhaustion, cognitive inefficiency, and physical depletion.



# WHO Definition

- Included Burnout in 11<sup>th</sup> Revision of International Classification of Diseases
- Described as ‘Occupational Phenomenon’
- Conceptualised as resulting from chronic workplace stress
- Characterised by three dimensions:  
Exhaustion – Job Cynicism – Reduced efficacy





# Pressure at Work

- 47% of pathologists always or often feel stressed at work
- 54% say there isn't sufficient time to complete daily workload
- 38% report a decline in job satisfaction over the past year



Source: RCPth Workforce Census 2025

# Contributing Factors



Poor Sleep



Financial  
uncertainty



Money



Poor  
health

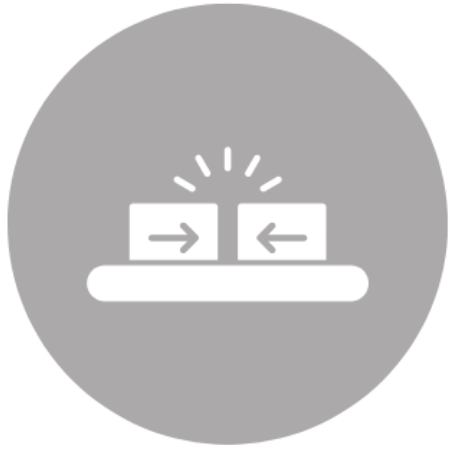


Isolation



Relationships

# Contributing Factors



Midlife  
Collision



Trauma



Value  
mismatch



Othering



Neuro-  
divergence



# Systemic Issue

- Burnout arises when systemic pressure exceed human recovery capacity
- Not personal weakness
- Mismatch between workload, control, reward, fairness, community and values (Maslach & Leiter, 2016)

“Workload is excessive.  
Management are not  
listening...

I am at breaking point and  
constantly stressed.”

Consultant in Haematology,  
*RCP Workforce Census 2025*

# Unaddressed

These changes increase vulnerability to inflammatory and stress-related disease processes and reduce diagnostic accuracy, decision quality, and professional fulfilment.

Over time, the same physiological and psychological depletion spills over into personal life. Impacting on relationships, sleep, mood, and overall wellbeing.



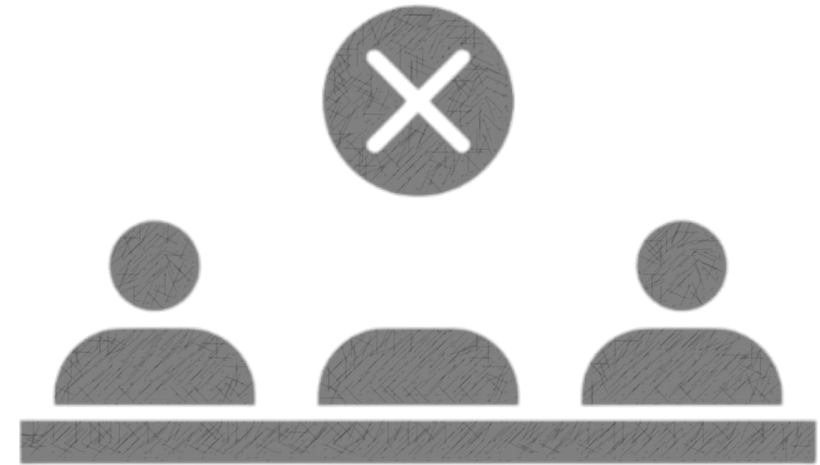
# Impact on Organisations

Burnout is the single biggest contributing factor in absenteeism, presenteeism and leavism.

UK Businesses £700m annually due to employee sick leave.

Average cost to rehire employee £25,000.

The hidden cost is cultural. Burnout drains morale, weakens trust, and fragments the sense of shared purpose across teams.



# Impact on Individuals

- Lost earnings
- Career progression
- Health
- Marriage and family life
- Friendships and social networks
- Confidence and self-worth
- Sense of meaning and purpose



# Unspoken Toll

Over time, the human cost of burnout extends far beyond the workplace. It fragments the very foundations of wellbeing, identity, and connection.

In its most tragic form, the cost of burnout can be that of life. Through the toll it takes on physical health or the silent suffering that can lead to suicide.





# Inviting Self Awareness

Before we move on... how is this content landing with you?

- What has surprised you?
- What is occurring to you?
- What does this mean for you?
- What will you do differently as a result?

# Pathology-Specific Drivers

- Rising clinical demand with static workforce capacity
- Administrative overload and digital infrastructure gaps
- Insufficient time for CPD and reflective practice
- Disconnection between departmental and organisational support

# What is Needed

- Shared accountability - individuals are not the problem; the system design is.
- Prevention requires organisational regulation as much as nervous system regulation.
- Recovery capacity is crucial – next steps are to understand how we spot signs and symptoms, build in prevention and support those in burnout to move beyond it to a place of sustainable success

# Seven Domains of Burnout

- Cognitive
- Behavioural
- Emotional
- Physical
- Environmental
- Energetic
- Intuitive



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