# "What is Burnout?"

Burnout: someone is considered to be burned out when they experience all three of the following factors[1]:

1. High levels of **Cynicism**, or an indifference or distant attitude towards work or school

2. High levels of **Exhaustion**, or emotional and physical fatigue

3. Low levels of **Professional Efficacy**, or social and nonsocial aspects of academic or occupational accomplishment

Burnout is typically experienced as a gradual growing mismatch between the individual and the organization.

People mistakenly believe that burnout is caused by overwork and look to solutions such as working fewer hours, taking time off, learning to say no, taking vacation, or engaging in self-care activities. While the number of hours an employee works does matter (e.g., feelings of burnout increase when someone routinely works 60 hours a week versus 40 hours per week[2]), and self-care is important in preventing or mitigating burnout, in reality, how people experience their work can be a stronger determinant of burnout than the hours worked[3].

CYNICISM · EXHAUSTION · PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY · BURNOUT
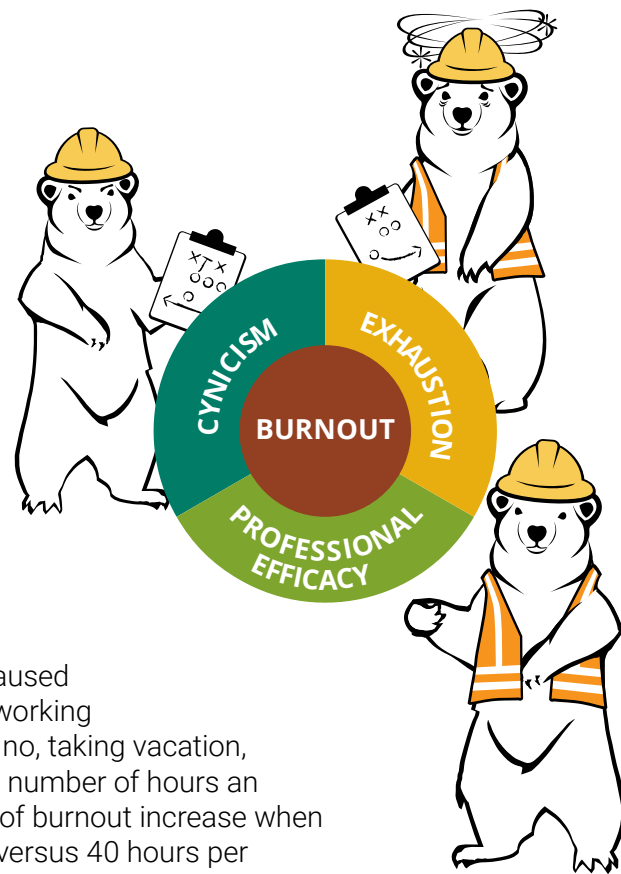
1   Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World psychiatry : official journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), 15(2), 103–111.* https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20311

2   Chen, Jong-Dar and Cheng, Tsun-Jen and Hu, Nien-Chih. The Associations Between Long Working Hours, Physical Inactivity, and Burnout. Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. 2016 May;58(5):514-8.

3   Maslach, Christina and Leiter, Michael. The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It. 1997.

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