

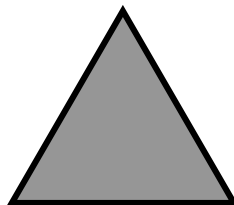
DECISIONAL BALANCE

Regarding Addressing Professional Burnout

MOTIVATORS FOR CHANGE

MOTIVATORS FOR STATUS QUO

<u>Benefits of Change</u>	<u>Benefits of Status Quo</u>
<u>Costs of Status Quo</u>	<u>Costs of Change</u>



Adapted from Janis and Mann's (1968, 1977) construct of decisional balance.

Burnout Self-Test Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is the most commonly used tool to self-assess whether you might be at risk of burnout. To determine the risk of burnout, the MBI explores three components: exhaustion, depersonalization and personal achievement. While this tool may be useful, it must not be used as a scientific diagnostic technique, regardless of the results. The objective is simply to make you aware that anyone may be at risk of burnout.

For each question, indicate the score that corresponds to your response. Add up your score for each section and compare your results with the scoring results interpretation at the bottom of this document.

Questions:	Never	A Few Times per Year	Once a Month	A Few Times per Month	Once a Week	A Few Times per Week	Every Day
Section A:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel emotionally drained by my work.							
Working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort.							
I feel like my work is breaking me down.							
I feel frustrated by my work.							
I feel I work too hard at my job.							
It stresses me too much to work in direct contact with people.							
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.							
Total score – SECTION A							

Questions:	Never	A Few Times per Year	Once a Month	A Few Times per Month	Once a Week	A Few Times per Week	Every Day
Section B:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I look after certain patients/clients impersonally, as if they are objects.							
I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at work.							
I have the impression that my patients/clients make me responsible for some of their problems.							
I am at the end of my patience at the end of my work day.							
I really don't care about what happens to some of my patients/clients.							
I have become more insensitive to people since I've been working.							
I'm afraid that this job is making me uncaring.							
Total score – SECTION B							

Questions:	Never	A Few Times per Year	Once a Month	A Few Times per Month	Once a Week	A Few Times per Week	Every Day
Section C:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job.							
I feel full of energy.							
I am easily able to understand what my patients/clients feel.							
I look after my patients'/clients' problems very effectively.							
In my work, I handle emotional problems very calmly.							
Through my work, I feel that I have a positive influence on people.							
I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with my patients/clients.							
I feel refreshed when I have been close to my patients/clients at work.							
Total score – SECTION C							

SCORING RESULTS – INTERPRETATION

Section A: Burnout

Burnout (or depressive anxiety syndrome): Testifies to fatigue at the very idea of work, chronic fatigue, trouble sleeping, physical problems. For the MBI, as well as for most authors, "exhaustion would be the key component of the syndrome." Unlike depression, the problems disappear outside work.

- Total 17 or less: Low-level burnout
- Total between 18 and 29 inclusive: Moderate burnout
- Total over 30: High-level burnout

Section B: Depersonalization

"Depersonalization" (or loss of empathy): Rather a "dehumanization" in interpersonal relations. The notion of detachment is excessive, leading to cynicism with negative attitudes with regard to patients or colleagues, feeling of guilt, avoidance of social contacts and withdrawing into oneself. The professional blocks the empathy he can show to his patients and/or colleagues.

- Total 5 or less: Low-level burnout
- Total between 6 and 11 inclusive: Moderate burnout
- Total of 12 and greater: High-level burnout

Section C: Personal Achievement

The reduction of personal achievement: The individual assesses himself negatively, feels he is unable to move the situation forward. This component represents the demotivating effects of a difficult, repetitive situation leading to failure despite efforts. The person begins to doubt his genuine abilities to accomplish things. This aspect is a consequence of the first two.

- Total 33 or less: High-level burnout
- Total between 34 and 39 inclusive: Moderate burnout
- Total greater than 40: Low-level burnout

A high score in the first two sections and a low score in the last section may indicate burnout.

***Note:** Different people react to stress and burnout differently. This test is not intended to be a scientific analysis or assessment. The information is not designed to diagnose or treat your stress or symptoms of burnout. Consult your medical doctor, counselor or mental health professional if you feel that you need help regarding stress management or dealing with burnout.*

C. Maslach, S.E. Jackson, M.P. Leiter (Eds.), Maslach Burnout Inventory manual (3rd ed.), Consulting Psychologists Press (1996)

People With These 11 Habits Make Themselves Way More Miserable Than They Have To Be

Alexandra Blogier Last updated on Feb 17, 2026

Happiness has more to do with your mindset than from external sources. Here are 11 habits that can make you more miserable than you have to be:

1. **Focusing on other people's success** It's normal to get caught up in comparing yourself to others. However, the more you compare yourself to others, the more your sense of self-worth will depend on how you believe you compare. Take note when you compare yourself and redirect your thought process. You can applaud other people's success, but also learn to celebrate your own wins.
2. **Staying in your comfort zone** While important to know what makes you feel secure and satisfied, not challenging yourself can lead to feeling stagnant and uninspired. To achieve personal growth, try new things. The more you push yourself out of your comfort zone, the more you realize you can handle hard situations. Trying new things helps prime your brain for learning. Simply being exposed to new things makes your brain "ready to learn." It's called latent learning. With latent learning (as opposed to explicit study), you don't even have to step that far out of your comfort zone. Cook new recipes. Start a conversation with someone you've never spoken to. Trying new things is a small, actionable way to avoid a miserable life.
3. **Blaming your problems on others** Acknowledging your flaws signifies that you accept yourself for who you are: an imperfect person worthy of love, care, and respect. Blame-shifting to protect your self-image is harmful. Break the habit of blaming others for your mistakes.
4. **Negative self-talk** We all have inner critics, but some know how to talk back to their critical inner voice and reinforce their belief in their inherent self-worth. Positive self-talk is rooted in self-respect. Negative self-talk can take various forms – blaming yourself when something goes wrong, magnifying small problems, always anticipating the worst. Practice self-compassion and talk to yourself in a kind and encouraging way, and thus change your self-perception for the better.
5. **Ignoring your health** Pushing your needs to the background and not paying attention to your body and mind can lead directly to burnout, exhaustion, and distress. We can confuse burnout with sleep deprivation, and try to treat it by crashing on the couch, but this won't solve the problem. There are different methods to staying healthy, but we all need restful sleep, exercise, and proper nutrition. Putting your needs first isn't always easy, but not doing so is detrimental to your well-being.
6. **Holding onto the past** It's natural to have regrets, but reliving what you – and others – have done wrong or not forgiving yourself – or others – for past mistakes keeps you unnecessarily miserable. Holding on to the past hinders positive growth or change. While self-reflection is valuable for knowing who you are and what's important to you, there's a difference between self-reflection and punishing yourself for your past. Do the best you can with the tools you have; learn from mistakes. Forgive yourself – and others – for the past and look forward to what the future holds.
7. **Avoiding difficult conversations** Not facing conflicts directly can create resentment and major miscommunication. First, define what you want to say and what you hope to get from the conversation. When the time to talk arrives, ground yourself, stay open-minded, and ask clarifying questions. Come to the conversation from a curious and nonjudgmental place – crucial to working out a solution.
8. **Neglecting your relationships** People who are more connected to family, friends, and community are happier and physically healthier than those less well connected. Neglecting relationships leads to social isolation – detrimental to sense of self and emotional health. To be truly, genuinely happy, phone and tell your friends and family you're thinking of them. Cultivate connections with people in your community.
9. **Feeling ungrateful** Practicing gratitude is powerful. Life isn't always easy or joyful, but even in hard times, there are aspects of our life we can be grateful for: Friends who don't judge, a safe home, a nourishing meal. Having gratitude for the smallest things greatly impacts your happiness. Shift away from worrying about the 'big' things with which you have little to no control and make space to celebrate the 'small' things that you most certainly have some impact to enjoy. The more you give thanks for what you have, the more things that aren't currently in your reality soon materialize. Expressing gratitude is a simple, accessible way to a happy life.

10. **Going with the flow** Without clear goals, it's easy to go with the flow right into boredom. A sense of purpose can guide you toward a fulfilling life. Goals don't have to be complicated or especially difficult; yet to be successful at reaching them, be focused and clearly-defined. Research showed that managers who set high, specific goals in the workplace see increased motivation, persistence, and task performance, compared to setting vague or easy goals. You feel inspired when you have a goal in mind, as it gives you something to set your sights on. Give yourself goals and work to achieve them, and thus find fulfillment and joy as you get closer to building the life you want.
11. **Allowing miserable people into their lives** Loyalty to friends and family is admirable, but when you allow miserable people into your life, you increase your chances of being miserable yourself. We are social creatures, and our attitudes shift and change in relation to our social groups. People tend to do what others around them are doing. Walk onto an elevator and almost everyone stands facing forward. People in conversation tend to match each other's speech rate and pitch. If you hang out with miserable people, you're probably end up significantly more miserable than you have to be. That doesn't mean you should ditch your friends when they're having a hard time. But if you want to be meaningfully happy, balance your time with those who reflect the state of mind you wish to be in, rather than one who will bring you down.

Condensed from: <https://www.yourtango.com/self/people-with-habits-make-themselves-more-miserable-than-have-be>

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some-questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

1=Never

2=Rarely

3=Sometimes

4=Often

5=Very Often

- _____ 1. I am happy.
- _____ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
- _____ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
- _____ 4. I feel connected to others.
- _____ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
- _____ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
- _____ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
- _____ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
- _____ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
- _____ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
- _____ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
- _____ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
- _____ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
- _____ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
- _____ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
- _____ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
- _____ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
- _____ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
- _____ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
- _____ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
- _____ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
- _____ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
- _____ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
- _____ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
- _____ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- _____ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
- _____ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
- _____ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- _____ 29. I am a very caring person.
- _____ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

What is my score and what does it mean?

In this section, you will score your test and then you can compare your score to the interpretation below.

Scoring

1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. Go to items 1, 4, 15, 17 and 29 and reverse your score. For example, if you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. We ask you to reverse these scores because we have learned that the test works better if you reverse these scores.

You Wrote	Change to
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

To find your score on **Compassion Satisfaction**, add your scores on questions 3, 6, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 27, 30.

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions was	So My Score Equals	My Level of Compassion Satisfaction
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

To find your score on **Burnout**, add your scores questions 1, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26 and 29. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Burnout questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Burnout
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

To find your score on **Secondary Traumatic Stress**, add your scores on questions 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 23, 25, 28. Find your score on the table below.

The sum of my Secondary Traumatic Stress questions	So My Score Equals	My Level of Secondary Traumatic Stress
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, your personal scores are below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

The average score is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .88). About 25% of people score higher than 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 40, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job.

Burnout _____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of compassion fatigue. It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

The average score on the burnout scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .75). About 25% of people score above 57 and about 25% of people score below 43. If your score is below 18, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 57 you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a “bad day” or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern.

Secondary Traumatic Stress _____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work-related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. You may see or provide treatment to people who have experienced horrific events. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, due to your work as a soldier or civilian working in military medicine personnel, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events as a result of your work, such as providing care to casualties or for those in a military medical rehabilitation facility, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

The average score on this scale is 50 (SD 10; alpha scale reliability .81). About 25% of people score below 43 and about 25% of people score above 57. If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional.

Skovholt Practitioner Professional Resiliency and Self-Care Inventory

The purpose of the inventory is to provide self-reflection for practitioners and students in the caring professions. Practitioner here refers to individuals in the caring professions—such as the helping professions, teaching and health care. Examples are psychologist, counselor, social worker, academic advisor, K-12 teacher, college professor, clergy, human resources specialist, physician, registered nurse, dentist and family law attorney.

Questions are addressed to both active practitioners and also students in training programs. There is no total number that is considered best. In fact, some of the questions are not relevant to some professionals or students who fill out this inventory. The inventory is intended to help decrease stress, not increase it!

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The checklist consists of four sub-scales: Professional Vitality, Personal Vitality, Professional Stress and Personal Stress.

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Professional Vitality

Circle your Response

1. I find my work as a practitioner or as a student to be meaningful..... 1 2 3 4 5
2. I view self-care as an ongoing part of my professional work / student life..... 1 2 3 4 5
3. I am interested in making positive attachments with my
clients /students/patients..... 1 2 3 4 5
4. I have the energy to make these positive attachments with my
clients /students/patients..... 1 2 3 4 5
5. The director / chair at my site / school is dedicated to practitioner welfare..... 1 2 3 4 5
6. On the dimension of control of my work / schooling, I am closer to
high control than low control.....1 2 3 4 5
7. On the dimension of demands at my work/ schooling, I have
reasonable demands rather than excessive demands from others ... 1 2 3 4 5
8. My work environment is like a greenhouse--where everything grows--because
the conditions are such that I feel supported in my professional work..... 1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Professional Vitality (Possible score is 8-40) _____

Personal Vitality

9. I have plenty of humor and laughter in my life.....1 2 3 4 5
10. I have a strong code of values / ethics that gives me a sense of
direction and integrity..... 1 2 3 4 5
11. I feel loved by intimate others.....1 2 3 4 5
12. I have positive /close friendships.....1 2 3 4 5
13. I am physically active and receive the benefits of exercise 1 2 3 4 5
14. My financial life (expenses, savings and spending) is in balance.....1 2 3 4 5
15. I have lots of fun in my life..... 1 2 3 4 5
16. I have one or more abundant sources of high energy for my life.
(examples—other people, pleasurable hobby, enjoyable pet, the natural
world, a favorite activity)..... 1 2 3 4 5
17. To balance the ambiguity of work in the caring professions, I have some concrete
activities in my life that I enjoy where results are clear cut (e.g. a rock
collection, painting walls, growing tomatoes, washing the car) 1 2 3 4 5
18. My eating habits are good for my body.....1 2 3 4 5
19. My sleep pattern is restorative.....1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Personal Vitality (Possible score is 10-55) _____

Professional Stress

20. There are many contradictory messages about both practicing
self-care and meeting expectations of being a highly competent
practitioner / student. I am working to find a way through
these contradictory messages. 1 2 3 4 5
21. Overall, I have been able to find a satisfactory level of “boundaried generosity”
(defined as having both limits and giving of oneself) in my work with
clients / students / patients 1 2 3 4 5

22. Witnessing human suffering is central in the caring professions
(e.g. client grief, student failure, patient physical pain.). I am able to be
very present to this suffering, but not be overwhelmed by it or experience
too much of what is called 'sadness of the soul.'1 2 3 4 5
23. I have found a way to have high standards for my work yet avoid
unreachable perfectionism. 1 2 3 4 5
24. My work is intrinsically pleasurable most of the time..... 1 2 3 4 5
25. Although judging success in the caring professions is often
confusing, I have been able to find useful ways to judge my own
professional success..... 1 2 3 4 5
26. I have at least one very positive relationship with a clinical supervisor /
mentor / teacher. 1 2 3 4 5
27. I am excited to learn new ideas—methods—theories—techniques in
my field.....1 2 3 4 5
28. The level of conflict between staff / faculty at my organization is low..... 1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Professional Stress (Possible score is 8-40) _____

Personal Stress

29. There are different ways that I can get away from stress and relax
(examples-- TV, meditating, reading for fun, watching sports)..... 1 2 3 4 5
30. My personal life does not have an excessive number of one-way caring
relationships where I am the caring one..... 1 2 3 4 5
31. My level of physical pain / disability is tolerable.....1 2 3 4 5
32. My family relations are satisfying..... 1 2 3 4 5
33. I derive strength from my religious /spiritual practices and beliefs 1 2 3 4 5
34. I am not facing major betrayal in my personal life.....1 2 3 4 5
35. I have a supportive community where I feel connected.....1 2 3 4 5
36. I am able to cope with significant losses in my life..... 1 2 3 4 5
37. I have time for reflective activities such as journaling-expressive writing

or solitude.....1 2 3 4 5

38. When I feel the need, I am able to get help for myself1 2 3 4 5

Subscale Score for Personal Stress (Possible score is 10-50)

Total Score for the Four Subscales (Possible score is 38-195)

There are a total of 38 questions in the Skovholt Professional Resiliency and Self-Care Inventory. All are scored in a positive direction with 0 low and 5 high. As stated earlier, the scoring system is a method for self-reflection by practitioners and students in the caring professions. There is no total number that is considered best. In fact, some of the questions are not relevant to some professionals or students who fill out this inventory. The inventory is intended to help decrease stress, not increase it!

As a way to consider professional resiliency and self-care in your career work, consider these questions. First, scan the questions and focus on your high answers, those with 4 and 5 responses. What do you conclude? Write here.

Then focus on your low answers, those with 1 and 2 responses. What do you conclude? Write here.

Then look across the four categories of Professional Vitality, Personal Vitality, Professional Stress and Personal Stress. Are they in balance? If not in balance, what remedies could you consider? Write here.

Finally, consider the different topics covered in the inventory, your answers and the comments you made for future self-reflection, clinical supervision and discussion with others. Best wishes!

Tom Skovholt

APPENDIX

The Swedish Demand-Control-Support Questionnaire

Psychological demands

1. Do you need to work very quickly? (*work quickly*)
2. Do you need to concentrate intensively while you work? (*work intensively*)
3. Does your work demand excessive effort? (*work effort*)
4. Do you have enough time to complete all your tasks? (*enough time*)
5. Are you often asked to perform tasks that contradict with each other? (*conflicting demands*)

Decision latitude

Skill discretion

6. Do you learn new things through your work? (*learn new things*)
7. Do you need advanced skills and specialized abilities to do your work? (*require skills & ability*)
8. Are you expected to use imagination and ingenuity in your work? (*require imagination & ingenuity*)
9. Do you have to repeat the same tasks over and over again? (*repetitive work*)

Decision authority

10. Do you exert any influence over decisions about how your work should be carried out? (*how to do the work*)
11. Do you exert any influence over decisions about the nature of your work? (*what work to do*)

Social support

12. There is a calm and comfortable atmosphere in my workplace. (*calm & comfortable atmosphere*)
 13. Everyone in my workplace gets on well with each other. (*relationships at work*)
 14. My colleagues support me. (*colleagues support*)
 15. The people around me show some understanding when I am not feeling at my best. (*helpful colleagues*)
 16. I have a good relationship with my superiors. (*relationship with superiors*)
 17. I have a good time working with my colleagues. (*good time with colleagues*)
-

The authors are responsible for the above-written English translations.

EI WORKPLACE TRIGGERS CHECKLIST

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR TRIGGERS

CHECK ANY WORKPLACE STRESS TRIGGERS THAT APPLY TO YOU:

Work-Related Triggers

- ☐ Tight deadlines causing pressure and anxiety
- ☐ Unclear communication leading to frustration
- ☐ Workplace conflicts with colleagues or supervisors
- ☐ High workload or unrealistic expectations
- ☐ Lack of control over tasks or decision-making

Environmental Triggers

- ☐ Noisy office distractions
- ☐ Uncomfortable or poorly designed workspace
- ☐ Lack of privacy or feeling micromanaged
- ☐ Frequent interruptions disrupting focus
- ☐ Remote work isolation or lack of connection

Social Triggers

- ☐ Passive-aggressive behaviour from colleagues
- ☐ Lack of recognition or appreciation for efforts
- ☐ Unclear expectations from leadership
- ☐ Office gossip or workplace politics
- ☐ Feeling excluded from team dynamics

Internal Triggers

- ☐ Perfectionism leading to stress and self-criticism
- ☐ Fear of failure preventing action or decision-making
- ☐ Negative self-talk affecting confidence
- ☐ Personal insecurities triggered by feedback
- ☐ Difficulty managing emotions under pressure



EI WORKPLACE TRIGGERS CHECKLIST

STEP 2: RECOGNIZE YOUR REACTIONS

- ☐ Increased heart rate, tension, or restlessness
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or frustrated
- ☐ Avoiding tasks or people due to stress
- ☐ Reduced focus, motivation, or productivity
- ☐ Reacting emotionally before processing the situation

STEP 3: DEVELOP AN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ACTION PLAN

- ☐ **Self-Awareness:** Keep a journal to track workplace stressors | [RESOURCE HERE](#)
- ☐ **Emotional Regulation:** Use mindfulness or deep breathing exercises | [RESOURCE HERE](#)
- ☐ **Social Awareness:** Observe team dynamics and seek feedback | [RESOURCE HERE](#)
- ☐ **Self-Management:** Set boundaries and plan ahead for challenges | [RESOURCE HERE](#)
- ☐ **Professional Support:** Seek coaching, mentorship, or workplace resources | [RESOURCE HERE](#)

NEXT STEPS

Want to deepen your emotional intelligence and stress management strategies? Explore Linda Marshall's book, [***The Mindful Journal: Cultivating Emotional Intelligence through Reflective Writing***](#) or [***The Power of Emotion, A Practical Guide to Making The Most Of Your Emotional Intelligence***](#) to build self-awareness and resilience in your professional life.



Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

Checklist for Supervisors



There has been a reported [rise in the number of individuals experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders in the United States](#). This checklist provides recommendations for supervisors to help support mental health and alleviate stressors for workers.

Be a compassionate leader and establish a supportive tone.

- ☐ Raise awareness about stressors and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and substance use by:
 - Talking about the types of specific stressors that relate to your particular workforce and sector, as well as their impact on mental health (e.g., high rates of depression and anxiety disorders, increased substance use).
 - Sharing [national statistics](#) so that workers know they are not alone if they are struggling with mental health or substance use issues.
 - Sharing a story about stress for you and what you are doing to address it to demonstrate empathy, show vulnerability, and communicate that the group is all in this together.
 - Telling workers that it's natural to feel stressed and encourage them to seek help if needed. **It is important to assure workers their jobs will not be negatively impacted if they seek help.**
- ☐ Implement an “open door” policy for workers to express their problems and concerns.
- ☐ Check in with workers periodically to ask them how they are doing and whether there is anything that management can do to support them.
- ☐ Hold frequent group meetings to promote connectedness and provide a forum for workers to voice concerns, ask questions, and receive information about ways to cope with stress, build resiliency, and seek outside support if necessary.
- ☐ Build connections and encourage coworkers to be supportive of one another by:
 - Creating peer support networks around common issues. These networks can be formal or informal. Each network might have a trusted employee to set up sessions (in-person or virtual) for their coworkers and lead conversations that give other staff a chance to talk about issues, tell their stories, and brainstorm potential solutions.
 - Encouraging coworkers to check in on each other and/or create a “buddy system,” as helping others improves an individual’s sense of control, belonging, and self-esteem. For example, advise coworkers to break into small teams and ask them to call or email each other weekly or biweekly to check in.
 - Planning optional in-person or virtual social activities using videoconferencing tools to promote camaraderie among staff (e.g., virtual coffee breaks, lunches, allotted time for story sharing, games, virtual book clubs).

Reducing workplace stress benefits **everyone** and can lead to improved morale, increased productivity, fewer sick days, better focus, fewer workplace injuries, an enhanced quality of life, and improved physical health (e.g., better sleep, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system).

- ☐ Be a good role model by:
 - Showing a more personal side, acknowledging that you also feel the stress.
 - Taking care of your own mental health by practicing self-care (e.g., getting enough sleep, exercising, taking breaks) and establishing work-life boundaries (e.g., setting a time by which you will be offline for the day, taking breaks during the day, scheduling a meeting-free day once a week).
 - Being honest with yourself: are you experiencing concerning signs and symptoms of distress? Do you need more support? If so, ask for it.

Look for opportunities to alleviate stress at work.

- ☐ Look for ways to reassign work, prioritize tasks, and allow more time to complete tasks.
- ☐ Be realistic and fair about expectations, especially in situations where workers are being asked to take on additional job responsibilities.
- ☐ Determine if staff need new training, tools, or equipment to adapt to the changes introduced to their job tasks and work environment.
- ☐ Allow workers more flexibility in choosing their work hours to accommodate childcare or other caregiving needs.
- ☐ Encourage workers to set a time by which they will be offline for the day.

Look for and address signs and symptoms of distress.

- ☐ Review or download and share the poster “[My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?](#)”
- ☐ Show compassion and offer additional support to workers who appear to be struggling.
- ☐ If you are worried that a worker is experiencing a more serious mental health or substance use issue, get help.
 - Tell someone in your human resources department and ask for guidance on how to support them or direct them to help.
 - Call a hotline if you are unsure of what to do, such as the [Disaster Distress Helpline](#), the [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#), or the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#).
- ☐ Be mindful of privacy concerns—do not try to force someone to disclose a medical or mental health condition.

Stress can look different in different people. Examples include:

- Irritation, anger, or denial
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Having trouble sleeping or focusing
- Getting into conflicts at work
- Having trouble completing tasks or meeting deadlines
- Submitting poor-quality work