

Pandemic Burnout in School-Based Occupational Therapy  
Session Outline  
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Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the how burnout manifests in occupational therapy practice including the three primary components of burnout, the risks and protective factors that lead to burnout, and the major effects of burnout at all levels of a system.
2. Reflect on their own understanding or experience with burnout in practice and compare that experience to the information presented in school-based practice.
3. Understand how the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the burnout experience in school-based occupational therapy practice.
4. Discuss as a group how practitioners could better be supported by their workplaces, professional organizations, colleagues, and themselves to mitigate the effects of or prevent burnout from occurring.

- Introduction
- Part I: What is Burnout?
  - “An occupational phenomenon” resulting from unmanaged chronic workplace stress
  - Three characteristics: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Reduced Self-Efficacy
- Part II: Significance
  - Physical effects: hypertension, diabetes risk, obesity, chronic pain, chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances
  - Psychological effects: depression, anxiety, PTSD-like symptoms, panic attacks, suicide
  - Client outcomes: reduced quality and satisfaction, increased medical errors, decreased patient safety, not meeting educational goals, reduced emotional regulation
  - System impacts: cost (\$125-190 billion per year), turnover, decreased employee morale, attrition from work roles and the profession, practitioner shortages
- Part III: Causes
  - See graphics in Appendix A for risk factors and protective factors
  - Reflect, Pair and Share
- Part IV: School-Based Burnout
  - School-Based settings are the second highest group of OT practitioners, warranting a particular focus on this group
  - Lack of evidence for the practice setting, but signs point to high risk due to commonality among risk factors
  - Qualitative Study results from 2022
    - Burnout manifestation and management

- Positive responses to work
  - School-based specific contextual factors
  - Pandemic effect (both positive and negative)
  - Overall, validated previous study results in other settings and contributed new knowledge about the school-based setting
- Part V: Personal Storytelling and Burnout Bingo activities
- Part VI: Burnout Supports
  - Current supports are targeted at individuals vs. larger systems
  - Evidence-based solutions can include: humor, communication training, collaboration with teams, mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, authentic leadership, physical activity, problem-focused thinking
- Part VII: Envisioning a Better Future
  - Share with a small group what you think is a feasible solution to help support yourself, your team, your profession from experiencing burnout

Individual Solutions	
Team Solutions	
System Solutions	

- Questions and Contact Info
  - Email: [lingelbachsusan@gmail.com](mailto:lingelbachsusan@gmail.com)
    - Email for permission to use slides
  - Twitter, LinkedIn

## Risk Factors

- High workload
- Limited direct time w clients
- Role confusion
- 5-10 yrs experience
- Little control over work
- Negative mindset
- Emotion-focused coping
- Professional pressure

## Protective Factors

- Use of humor
- Collaboration w OTs
- Knowledgeable leaders
- Work-life balance
- Social support
- Satisfaction w income
- High degree attainment
- Mindfulness practice



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