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## Resiliency Strategies for Brightly Burning Librarians

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# Resiliency Strategies for Brightly Burning Librarians

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SCC/SCMLA Joint Annual Meeting 2023



# Research & Education Informationists

## MUSC Libraries



Rena Lubker

- College of Dental Medicine
- Public Health Sciences
- Healthcare Studies
- Dietetic Interns



Christine Andresen

- College of Nursing (ABSN & RN/BSN)
- Health Administration
- Health Informatics
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Physician Assistants Studies



## Recap

- Librarianship & Healthcare = caring/helping professions
- Mentally, physically, emotionally invested & go above and beyond
- Juggling teaching, research, scholarship, and service
- FOMO & FOMM
- Chronic stress & burnout
- Work/life “balance”

\*We are not experts; just sharing lessons learned from our experiences!

# Workplace Burnout

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## THE 12 STAGES OF BURNOUT



### Stage 1

You feel there is a strong need to prove yourself



### Stage 2

You keep working harder and harder to achieve this



### Stage 3

You begin to neglect your own needs more



### Stage 4

You are conflicted and blame others or the situation



### Stage 5

You change your values to focus on work more



### Stage 6

You deny the problems that arise due to work stress



### Stage 7

You withdraw from social life and your family as well



### Stage 8

Your behavior changes which upsets your loved ones



### Stage 9

Depersonalization happens, you do not feel like yourself



### Stage 10

You feel empty and numb, substance abuse can occur



### Stage 11

You feel depressed, lost and completely exhausted



### Stage 12

You mentally and physically collapse, full burnout

# Why Are Librarians Prone to Job Burnout?

- Percentages of activities – instruction, research, scholarship, professional service, etc.
  - Difficulty deciding which activities to keep, what to drop – often exchange one form of burn out for another.
  - As “outsiders”, librarians are often over-engaged in their work.
  - Mentoring new librarians.
  - Learning on the job – sink or swim process.
  - Constant need to keep up with trends in librarianship, teaching, searching, technology, etc.
  - Chronic understaffing.
  - Lack of social support at work or in personal life.
  - Heavy workloads, long hours.
- Evidence from over 30 years reporting instruction librarian burnout (Affleck, 1996; Badia, 2018; Becker, 1993; Patterson & Howell, 1990; Sheesley, 2001).
  - Librarians supporting systematic reviews report widespread burnout (Demestres et al., 2020).



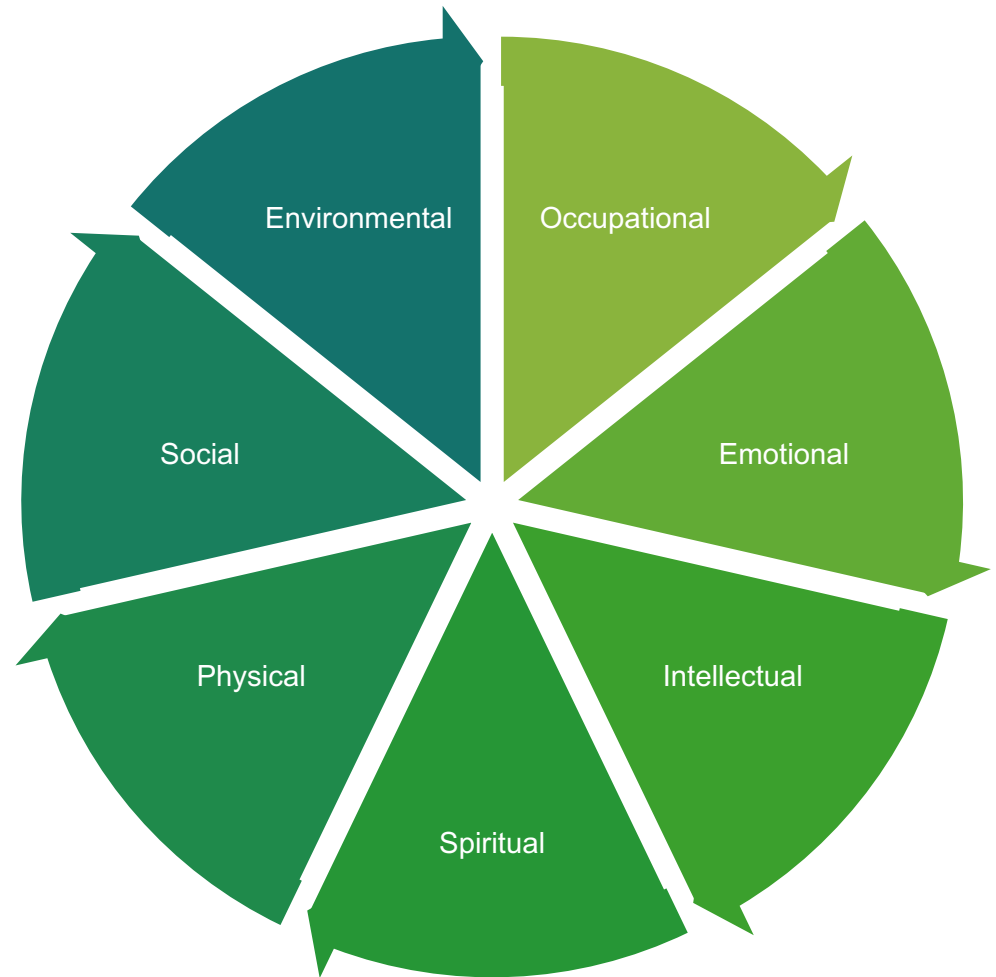


# Fallacies & Myths About Job Burnout

- “You are weak and cannot handle stress”
- “All you need is to take a vacation”
- “You must be depressed”
- “Don’t tell anyone, keep it to yourself”
- “You need a major life change”
- “If I were better at my job I wouldn’t struggle with burnout”
- “You just need to practice more self-care”
- “It is a personal issue”
- “It is an excuse for millennials”

# Myth of the Work/Life Balance

- Complex relationship between your work and your personal life.
- Impossible to keep personal life and work life separate.
- Impossible to choose between work and well-being.
- Continuous cycle, not a one-time achievement.
- Multiple dimensions of wellness coexist in work-life harmony.





# Work/Life Harmony at Work

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- Schedule meetings for 30-45 minutes.
- Block out time after to complete action items.
- Block off focused work time on calendar.
- Deadline setting before the actual deadline.
- Close email or silence notifications for 1hr.
- Take lunch and breaks throughout the day.
- No work email on personal phones.
- Take time to decompress after work.
- Make your health a priority.
- Set boundaries and stick to them.

# More Tips for Work/Life Harmony

- Take mental health days to disconnect from work and decompress.
- Use your leave – you’ve earned it & we deserve time off!
- Draft a long-term strategy to help with prioritization.
- Solo weekly meeting – take 30min to review your personal/professional commitments each week, write out your to-do’s, add tasks to your calendar.
- Open a dialogue with your supervisor.
- Find someone to act as your reality check.
- Seek out or create peer and/or institutional support systems.
- Think of your career as a book with many chapters.



# When to Say Yes & How to Say No

- Learn to avoid saying YES or NO on the spot.
- YES = unconscious, automatic default response.
- Consult calendar and estimate how many hours of work will be required.
- Say YES strategically – calculate your promotion/tenure percentages as a rough estimate for how much time to spend on each area.
- “Just say no?” - say NO strategically – use a mentor, accountability buddy, ‘no’-committee, supervisor, etc. to help you protect your precious time.
- “I can’t say no” – remove this from your vocabulary – yes you can, just takes practice!
- Establish a ‘No’-Committee to discuss the pros and cons of accepting each additional commitment.





# **Burnout Prevention Support – Supervisors**

- Advocate for support resources.
- Regular check-ins with people you supervise.
- Burnout mitigation plan.
- Create environment where employees are safe to share struggles and know it is okay to fail.
- Work proactively to create sense of community.
- Model work-life harmony.

# Burnout Prevention Support – The Organization

## **MUSC Health & Wellness Institute**

- 4-Week Introduction to Mindfulness for Stress & Burnout
- Individual consultations with wellness experts

## **Employee Assistance Program**

- 4 free counseling sessions per year

## **Resiliency Program**

- Individual telehealth interventions and virtual workshops on stress management strategies, coping, and fostering well-being.

## **Meditation Labyrinth**



Yogic breathing session conducted by Dr. Sundar Balasubramanian  
(Photo/Brennan Wesley)

# Burnout Prevention Support - External

- Support groups - e.g., AAMLA
- National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity
- Hobbies outside library work e.g. , Knitting or Book club
- Accountability partner

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# Takeaways/Action Items

## Prioritize

Prioritize self-care, including physical and emotional well-being.

## Boundaries

Set boundaries and give yourself permission to truly disconnect from work for an appropriate amount of time.

## Social

Don't neglect your social wellness; healthy relationships with colleagues, friends, and family can help relieve work stress.

## Grace

Remember to have grace with yourself and others as time zone changes impact multiple dimensions of our wellness.

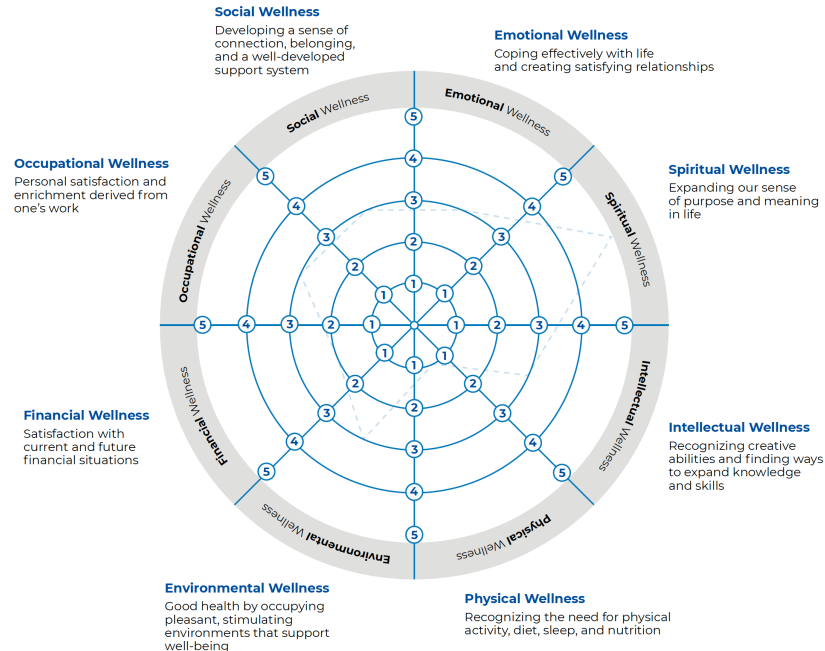
### SAMHSA's 8 dimensions of wellness

#### YOUR WELLNESS WHEEL

Score your current level of happiness in each of the sections on this wheel. The scale is 1-5. 1 is your lowest level of happiness and 5 is your highest level of happiness. You can either fill the corresponding section in or you can write some reasons for your score in that section – either way works. Then you can draw lines connecting each section like the example provided by the dotted lines. This is your wheel and it can show you quickly what is working and what still needs improvement. Good luck on your wellness journey.

#### Key

1. I am very unhappy with this part of my life.
2. I am unhappy with this part of my life, but I haven't hit rock-bottom.
3. This part of my life is pretty good but could still use some improvement.
4. I am content with this part of my life, but I can see a few tweaks that would make it even better.
5. I am completely happy and fulfilled in this part of my life – there is no room for improvement.



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# Thank you!

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