Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Compliments of Canada Life

Workshop Series



Participant handout

Preventing and managing burnout

Notes



Types of rest

- **Physical** – sleep, massage, yoga
- **Sensory** – screens, noise, lights
- **Emotional** – authenticity, receiving
- **Mental** – quiet mind
- **Creative** – from doing to appreciating
- **Social** – supportive people
- **Spiritual** – comfort and peace

> **Don't work to earn rest**
> **Work from a place of rest**
>
> — Saundra Dalton-Smith MD

How do you manage stress at work?

How can you make work more enjoyable?

Explore your options

We have choices when it comes to dealing with stress and adversity. These choices can usually be classified as one of the **4 A's**:

- Accept
- Avoid
- Alter
- Adapt

Learn more about the 4 A's

The following is adapted from: wellness.uchicago.edu/healthy-living/health-information/stress/.

Recognize that valid choices are those that can eliminate or significantly reduce your stress:

Accept

Accept the things and people you really can't change.

As hard as it may be, accepting what's not possible to change, rather than desperately or hopelessly wishing it were different, allows you to manage your stress more effectively:

- Don't try to control the uncontrollable
- Look at challenges as opportunities for personal growth and learning
- Share your feelings to help reduce their power over your emotions
- Learn to forgive and move on

Avoid

Avoid unnecessary stress. Not all stress can be avoided.

It may even be unhealthy to avoid stressful situations that need to be resolved. When appropriate, try to avoid unnecessary stress:

- Learn how to say no and stick to your boundaries
- Avoid people who may foster or create a stressful environment for you, whenever possible
- Take control of your environment, such as establishing a low-stress study space
- Prioritize your to-do list and drop tasks or activities that aren't truly necessary

Alter

Alter by shifting your external environment in some way so the stress is reduced or eliminated:

- Modify your environment
- Change your routines, including what you consume, how you move, what you watch and where you go
- Set boundaries in your relationships

Adapt

Adapt your internal thought process:

- Change the way you think about or interact with the source of the stress
- Reframe problems as a desired solution. For example, reframe "I don't sleep enough" into "I need to improve the quality of my sleep"
- Consider potential consequences of taking various actions – Look at the big picture
- Set clear and reasonable expectations and standards for yourself

Instructions

Think about a specific stressor in your life right now and use the chart below to consider how each of the 4 A's – Accept, Avoid, Alter and Adapt – might make your stress better or worse.

Briefly describe the stressor for which you'll explore your options

How I might make stress worse:		How I might reduce my stress:
	Accept Put the situation in perspective – it is what it is – so it becomes less personal or stressful **Avoid** Refocus away from the stressful situation or person toward something more positive for you **Alter** Shift your external environment in some way so the stress is reduced or eliminated **Adapt** Change the way you think about or interact with the source of the stress	

You may have noticed...

Perhaps you use a coping strategy that's more damaging than healthy or helpful. Considering all the 4 A's might help you manage your perspective of the situation and improve your stress level. The 4 A's are used in many organizations because they work.

From Prevent burnout on Workplace Strategie for Mental Health website:

The lies we tell ourselves

Some who've recovered from burnout shared what they called "the lies we told ourselves" about the signs of burnout, even when loved ones pointed it out to them. These included:

- I'm fine
- Your nagging at me is more stressful than my work
- I love my job
- I'm happy to take more on
- I'm just tired
- You don't understand, no one else can do this
- People depend on me
- I really want to be helpful
- I'll be fine once this is done
- This too will pass
- I need to get back to the top of my game
- I'll take a vacation and then be okay
- If people just let me do my job, I would be fine
- It's not me, it's everyone and everything else

Most actually believed these statements to be true, and, to a certain extent, many of them were. The "lie" was denying that their current situation was damaging their health and well-being and that they needed to change. This denial eventually led to burnout.

Learn to prevent burnout

What will you do differently?

Notes



Workplace Strategies for Mental Health resources are:

- For all employers, people leaders, employees and facilitators of workplace psychological health and safety
- Available in English and French
- Evidence- or practice-based
- Available to anyone at no cost

Examples of the resources available at clwsmh.com include:

Caregiver resources
Tips and strategies to make it easier to advocate for the health and well-being of our loved ones.

Explore your options (The 4 A's)
Learn how one of the four A's – Accept, Avoid, Alter or Adapt – can help you respond to stress.

Independent professionals
Valuable insights and suggestions to balance these challenges with the potential benefits of independent work.

Managing stress
Learn how to manage your reactions to stress and protect your well-being.

Name, claim and reframe: Personal stress tools
These workshop materials and personal stress tools can help develop skills to identify and manage responses to everyday stressors.

Prevent burnout
Strategies to help identify risks and prevent burnout for yourself.

Resilience
This resource helps you develop healthy coping strategies to deal with life's challenges.

Window of tolerance (for stress)
What is your window of tolerance for stress? Is it narrow, causing you to respond with fear or anger? Or is it wide, allowing you to manage the majority of everyday stressors?

Working from home
Working from home comes with some unique challenges. Learn strategies to support your well-being while balancing your personal and work life.

Workload stress
Use this tool to help you have a conversation with your leader about your current workload and ways to manage and improve it.

We’d love to hear how you used this free resource!

Contact us through social media or at clwsmh.com

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