

Burnout for Psychologists: How to Actively Manage & Respond



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Table of Contents

- ▶ What is burnout
 - ▶ Impact of burnout on Early Career Psychologists (ECPs)
- ▶ Burnout self-assessment resources
- ▶ Advocacy: what can we do?
- ▶ Limitations
- ▶ References



What is Burnout?



- ▶ Burnout is a condition where individuals experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment due to chronic interpersonal stressors in work-related situations.
- ▶ Typically impacting people involved in direct service related work otherwise known as Burnout Syndrome (BS).
- ▶ This psychosocial phenomenon was first described by Maslach in 1982 and later expanded upon by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter in 2001.

Burnout Syndrome: Gil Monte Model

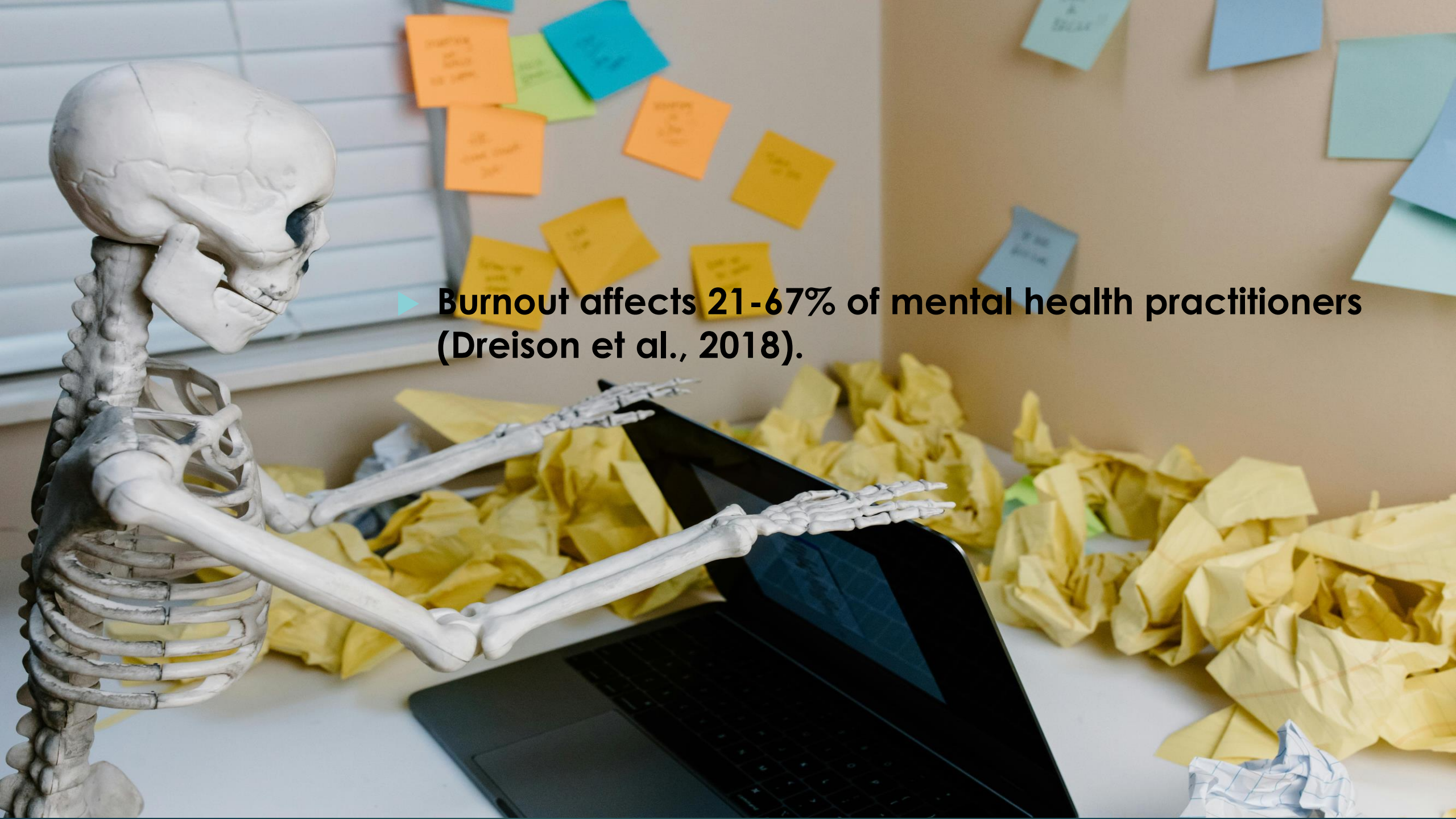
- ▶ Four Dimensions
 - ▶ Enthusiasm toward the job
 - ▶ Psychological exhaustion
 - ▶ Intolerance
 - ▶ Guilt
- ▶ Work-related characteristics such as overwork, weekly workload, number of clients, years of experience, and type of employment have been identified as Burnout predictors. Burnout in psychologists may be related to the intense emotional demands of their work with individuals who are dealing with emotional turmoil (Gil-Monte, 2005).

What is Burnout?

- ▶ Ziede & Norcross (2020) two critical points to burnout:
 - ▶ It is not simply the stressful environment and vulnerable person – it is the interaction between the environment and person
 - ▶ There are different types of burnout requiring different ways to address the issues
 - ▶ E.g., wearout or brownout where the psychologist gives up due to too much stress and little gratification

Impact of Burnout

- ▶ According to Dreison et al. (2018), burnout can have adverse effects on both the personal health and the work performance of mental health therapists.
 - ▶ The personal health effects include behavioral health problems, anxiety, depression, poor sleep, substance abuse, and impaired memory.
 - ▶ On the other hand, work efficacy can be disrupted due to an impaired sense of empathy, lowered client engagement, decreased retention, higher absenteeism, and disrupted therapeutic alliance.



▶ **Burnout affects 21-67% of mental health practitioners (Dreison et al., 2018).**

Burnout and COVID



- ▶ Unsurprisingly, the 2023 APA impact survey suggests that it has been challenging to meet the demands for services, and severity of symptoms has increased.
 - ▶ 36% of psychologists surveyed indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they felt burned out, which is reportedly down from the 2021 survey indicating that 47% psychologists reported burnout.
 - ▶ 21% of respondents indicated plans to reduce practice hours in the next 12 months as compared to 16% in 2021.
 - ▶ <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/practitioner/2023-psychologist-reach-limits>

What are the Causes?

- Emotional exhaustion
- Perfectionism and stress have been identified as risk factors for the development of burnout in psychotherapists (D'Souza, 2014).
- Job Demands/Job Factors
 - Improper Workload
 - Work Setting
- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Trauma (Miu, 2021)
- Cultural racism (Shell, 2021)



Identity Factors Impacting Burnout

- ▶ Socioeconomical status
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Intersecting Identities (Barnett)
 - ▶ In a 2021 article by Miu & Moore, results showed that extended exposure to racism may elevate the risk of burnout among Black mental health therapists.

ECPs are at a Higher Risk for Burnout

- ▶ Studies have shown that mental health practitioners are at a higher risk of developing burnout during their transition from residency (internship) to practice. This is due to various factors such as lack of supervision, limited experience, professional isolation, poorly defined roles, and inability to bring about changes at systemic levels within care settings (Volpe, 2014).
- ▶ Rossi et al. (2012) discovered that having a greater number of years of experience as a mental health professional is linked to lower rates of burnout.
- ▶ According to Warren et al. (2013), psychotherapists who had been practicing for less than five years reported higher levels of burnout than those who had been practicing for more than five years.



Burnout Assessment Tools

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)



Maslach Burnout Toolkit for Human Services

The **Maslach Burnout Toolkit for Human Services** combines the **Areas of Worklife Survey** and **Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey** to measure burnout in the worklife context. The combined assessment consists of 50 items and usually takes 25-30 minutes to complete.

<https://www.mindgarden.com/330-maslach-burnout-toolkit-for-human-services>

Self-Care Inventory

Rate the following areas in frequency:

5 = Frequently

4 = Occasionally

3 = Rarely

2 = Never

1 = It never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care	
	Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
	Eat healthy
	Exercise consistently
	Get regular medical care for prevention
	Get medical care when necessary
	Take time off when sick
	Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing or do some other physical activity that is enjoyable to self
	Take time to be sexual
	Get enough sleep
	Take vacations
	Wear clothes you like
	Take day trips or mini-vacations

The Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL; Stamm, 2012)

- ▶ Measures three critical areas important for mental wellbeing:
 - ▶ Compassion satisfaction
 - ▶ Compassion stress
 - ▶ Compassion fatigue

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small, vibrant green seedling with two leaves and a small bud, growing out of a small amount of dark soil. The background is a soft-focus green landscape with trees. The text "Advocacy: What Can We Do?" is overlaid in white on the bottom left of the image.

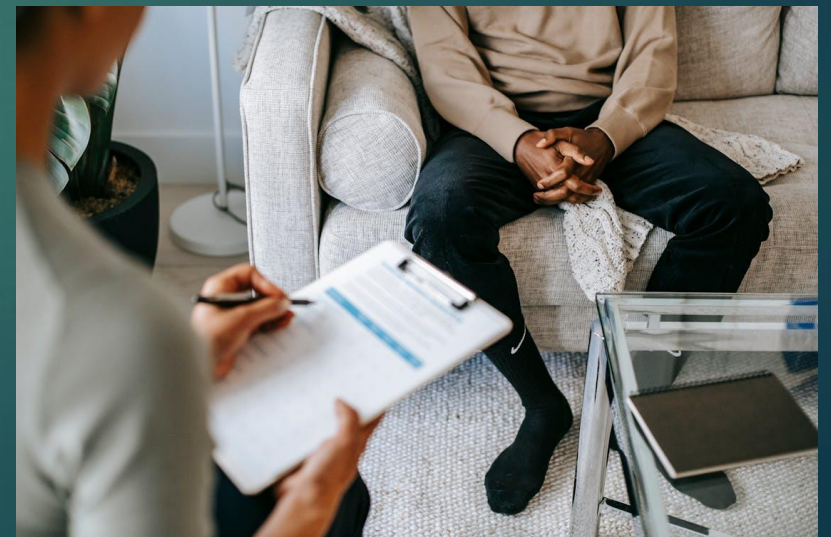
Advocacy: What
Can We Do?

Burnout and ECPs

- ▶ The intersection of identities for ECP's also impacts susceptibility to burn-out, and their ability to focus on and prioritize self-care.
- ▶ Racial, cultural, gender, and economic status all impact how psychologists show up in their professional lives.
- ▶ Prioritizing self-care with both intention and action is the responsibility of both the employee and employer.
- ▶ While it may not seem obvious or realistic, the early career psychologist can and should advocate for their own self-care.

Burnout and BIPOC Psychologists

- ▶ For psychologists of color, paying attention to self-care and the risk of burnout appears to present an even greater challenge, often necessitating additional steps to ensure work-life balance and professional longevity.
- ▶ Shell et al., (2021) explored race related stress for Black mental health therapists, including psychologists. Utilizing measures of individual racism, cultural racism and institutional racism, they found race-related stress to significantly predict burnout for Black mental health therapists.



Mental Health Providers, Identity and the COVID-19 Pandemic

- ▶ Kirk et al. (2023) included the experiences of mental health providers during the COVID-19 pandemic from a wider array of backgrounds and identities, including those identifying as Black , Indigenous, or Persons of Color (BIPOC).
 - ▶ They assessed for racial discrimination experienced during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, between 2019 and 2020, as well as perceived stress and coping.
 - ▶ Younger, early career providers were found to have higher levels of burn-out, and similar to other research findings, racial discrimination was positively related to burn-out for BIPOC providers.
 - ▶ The authors provide background and documentation suggesting that the combined experiences of systemic and institutional racism, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the racial violence and unrest experienced both directly and vicariously have led to greater challenges for BIPOC mental health providers.

APA's Advisory Committee on Colleague Assistance: Self-Care Action Plan

- ▶ The plan highlighted the importance of these steps: avoiding isolation, establish and maintain professional connections, take occupational risks seriously, develop reasonable work expectations, aim for balance and monitor relationships with substances, pursue and nurture interests outside of psychology, and diversify professional responsibilities.
- ▶ The guide also emphasizes the importance of developing the habit of self-care as an early career psychologist.



Self-care for Mental Health Practitioners



- ▶ Posluns and Gall (2020) completed a literature review on self-care for mental health practitioners.
 - ▶ They identified six self-care domains with suggested strategies to support each domain.
 - ▶ The domains they identified are Awareness, Balance, Flexibility, Physical Health, Social Support and Spirituality. While the strategies provided are geared towards the provider, there are strategies that can be promoted and supported by the employee through advocacy.
 - ▶ These strategies include decreasing demands that increase stress levels at work, encouraging breaks as well as professional and personal boundaries, promoting mentorship, and providing professional development.
 - ▶ A commitment to implement these strategies in the workplace, targeting early career and psychologists of color can be a first step in promoting well-being and professional longevity for practitioners in the field, and create the environments that allow our helpers to also achieve and maintain optimal health.

The Take Aways:



- ▶ Burnout for psychologists and ECPs is real and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this challenge.
 - ▶ Burnout impacts ECPs and BIPOC psychologists at higher rates.
- ▶ Advocacy Includes:
 - ▶ Engaging in self care strategies including peer consultation groups
 - ▶ Employer awareness and commitment to addressing burnout.

Let's Get Social

BATTLE BURNOUT: LOVE LETTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS



PEER CONSULTATION GROUP

Utilize a peer consultation group to connect, improve clinical skills, and decrease isolation

PHYSICAL HEALTH



CULTIVATE INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF WORK



Good Job!!



Battle Burnout

#battleburnout

www.reallygreatsite.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Clinicians of Color experience HIGHER rates of BURNOUT

?

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WHY?

1. Post-Covid, there has been increased demand for clinicians of color, with 1 BIPOC therapist per every 1,000 BIPOC persons in the United States.



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WHY ?

2. BIPOC therapists are managing their own racial trauma while supporting others through their traumas.

#battleburnout

WHY?

3. Clinicians of Color often encounter microaggressions in the workplace.



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SOLUTIONS:

Mentoring.

Policy.

Self-Care.



#battleburnout

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