

# YOGA WON'T CURE BURNOUT

Well-intentioned but misguided efforts miss the mark for truly having an impact on employee burnout.



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## EMPLOYEE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING CONTINUES TO DECLINE

In a recent [Gallagher Pulse Survey](#), 39% of employers stated that employee emotional wellbeing had declined; that's 13% worse than our last measurement in February of 2021. Additionally, only 4% of employers stated that employee emotional wellbeing was improving — which is down 17% from February.

With 68% of C-suite leaders being concerned about the impact of stress and burnout on their organization, emotional wellbeing has become a leadership issue. With heightened levels of stress, anxiety, depression and substance misuse being problematic even prior to the pandemic, the compounding stressors, chronic uncertainty and changing work environment have accelerated the decline of emotional wellbeing and increased the potential for burnout. Now that addressing burnout is a business and cultural imperative, many organizations are responding, but may be misguided in their efforts.

## WHAT IS BURNOUT AND WHY DO WE NEED TO CARE ABOUT IT?

Burnout became an official diagnosis by the World Health Organization in 2019. Defined as a syndrome and characterized by cynicism, exhaustion and detachment (from both work and colleagues), it can be devastating both professionally and personally. It can also be very contagious, where one person experiencing burnout (and the toxic behavior that often accompanies burnout) can negatively impact an entire workgroup. And if that person is in a leadership position? Not good.

Recognizing the issue, organizations are accelerating their efforts to provide resources to their employees. Mindfulness apps, expanded EAP services, yoga, work/life resource and referral services are all positive options that help demonstrate to your employees that you 1) care for them 2) want to provide benefits to help them manage their health, and 3) support a culture of wellbeing. But, those wellness tactics to support individual employees will not cure burnout.

## WAIT, WHAT?

Burnout is not an individual issue — it's an organizational issue needing organizational intervention. Efforts to build interconnectedness and strengthen relationships within the workplace can help enhance resiliency, which can reduce the potential for burnout, but understanding and acting on the root causes is necessary for real impact.

## 6 MAIN CAUSES OF BURNOUT

- Unsustainable workload
- Perceived lack of control/autonomy
- Insufficient recognition and/or rewards for effort
- Lack of community/relationships
- Lack of fairness or perceived injustice
- Mismatched values and skills

## FROM ADJUSTING LIFE FOR WORK, TO ADJUSTING WORK FOR LIFE

The massive pivot to remote work during the pandemic gave many a new sense of autonomy, positively impacting their ability to manage work and home life. However, the pivot also meant that job responsibilities often grew and/or changed. Feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work that needed to get done, lacking clarity on how to prioritize objectives and losing contact with colleagues while adjusting to new modes of work and communication further exacerbated burnout. And employees who do not feel appropriately recognized or rewarded for their efforts, or feel that their personal values and skills are not well aligned with the organization, are even more susceptible to burnout.

## NEW LEADER COMPETENCIES ARE EMERGING

The role of people leaders transformed through the pandemic into one with an increasing level of responsibility and complexity. With leaders at the forefront of change, new competencies and skills have emerged as critical to the manager-employee relationship, and the organization's ability to attract, retain and engage talent. Previously thought as soft skills, competencies around leading with compassion, empathy, optimism and kindness are increasingly important human skills that translate to business results and can reduce the potential for burnout.

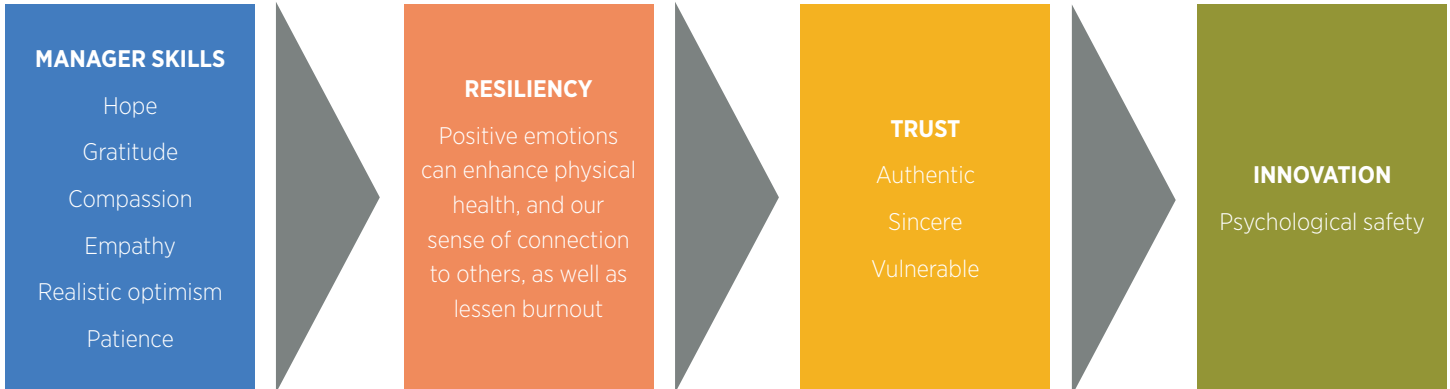
Effectively demonstrating these positive emotions and behaviors is good for your health, happiness and work performance — and helps strengthen the relationships around us, thereby helping to build social connectedness and resilience in team members which reduces the potential for burnout.

The key is that the behaviors have to be delivered sincerely and authentically, which may leave managers feeling a bit vulnerable, which can be uncomfortable. However, delivering on these competencies authentically builds trust and enables a culture of psychological safety, where the employees feel empowered to bring their whole selves to work and contribute without fear of repercussion or judgment. This psychological safety is key to driving innovation, and fueling growth and overall organizational wellbeing.

## MANAGER SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES ARE EVOLVING

Emotions and behaviors that optimize performance, health and happiness.

### Organizational Wellbeing



## YOUR SUPERPOWER IS YOU!

Every manager needs to understand the power of their influence on the people around them. The manager behavior significantly influences the behavior of the employees on their team with regard to wellbeing, productivity and how employees feel about the employer.

So, while wellness tactics are extremely important, the path to reducing burnout is working organizationally to ensure fairness and manageable workloads, giving employees some control over when and where they work, helping them feel recognized and rewarded for their performance, and training managers on new leadership competencies and skills to help employees connect to purpose and each other. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, managers modeling positive behaviors and prioritizing their own wellbeing will give license to the people around them — at work, home and in the community — to also prioritize their wellbeing.

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