



MANUAL FOR HEADMASTERS



"Preventing teachers' burnout in primary schools"
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Chapter 1

What is burnout?

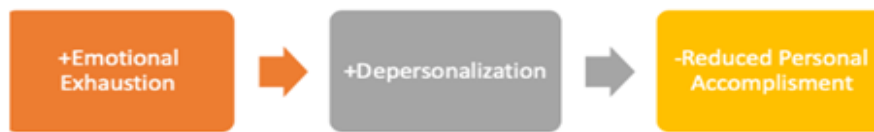
1.1. Introduction

The problem of burnout may affect anyone and, in any position, but the greatest risk of its occurrence is related to performing stressful functions (e.g., managerial) and professions requiring intensive contact with people. A large group consists of: teachers, trainers, pedagogues, nurses, doctors, salespeople, psychologists, and personnel consulting consultants. Burnout occurs as a result of specific factors occurring both on the part of the person involved in the work and on the part of the organization that generates time pressure and sometimes, although much less often, requires work that causes fatigue and discouragement. These factors overlap to create a specific "mechanism" promoting burnout. Burnout is a phenomenon that has been described by researchers since the 1970s. Initially, they were associated only with the professions of social groups related to providing help and support. We now know that burnout syndrome can be diagnosed in representatives of all professions requiring high emotional, cognitive and social involvement.

1.2 Definitions of burnout

The concept of burnout appeared thanks to the American psychiatrist H.J. Freudenberg. He was the first to describe the burnout syndrome characterized by a sense of mental and physical exhaustion, impatience, excessive tendency to irritation, combined with cynicism and a sense of chronic boredom, tendency to isolate and suppress emotions. This phenomenon occurs when stress is part of one's professional role. Professional burnout always appears in the area and context of specific social relationships, so a particularly important problem is the awareness of the occurrence of circumstances that are particularly favorable to it in the organization.

Around the same time, Christina Maslach, published her article titled "Burned-out" (Maslach C. , 1976) where she studied coping strategies used to deal with emotional arousal at work. Maslach described burnout as a syndrome emerging as a result of the reflection of feelings of physical exhaustion, long-term fatigue, helplessness and hopelessness in people who are exposed to intense emotional demands due to their job and who constantly work face to face with other people, with negative attitudes towards work, life and other people. She highlighted that there are three different dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment seen in individuals who have an intense relationship with people because of their job (Maslach C. J., 1996). She also developed a tool, the so called "Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) that is used to self-assess whether someone might be at risk of burnout.



Professional burnout is the body's response to stress resulting from the work situation. It may be a reaction to long-term overload with responsibilities, too responsible and difficult tasks, as well as exhausting, monotonous and boring work. Burnout syndrome occurs when work stops giving satisfaction, the employee stops developing professionally, feels overworked and dissatisfied with the job he once enjoyed. This is the result of burnout, i.e. stress resulting from overwork.

The burnout process also depends on the age and seniority of the employee, but it is more often observed among younger employees, both in terms of age and seniority. Burnout syndrome is also determined by gender, although the relationship between these variables is not clear. Greater tendency women are attributed to "burnout", primarily due to their greater sensitivity and emotional lability, a higher level of empathy manifested, among others, by in a greater tendency to identify with patients' or clients' problems. It is expressed in the fact that women are more prone to emotional exhaustion and men to depersonalization.



The WHO European Forum of Medical Associations defines burnout as a syndrome of exhaustion of emotional, physical and cognitive energy, manifested by emotional and physical exhaustion, lack of effectiveness and competence.

Burnout is most often described as a state of physical, spiritual or emotional exhaustion. It is difficult to determine the exact beginning of this process. Most often, it is suggested that this process begins very slowly and imperceptibly, and reveals itself suddenly and with great force. Symptoms have a huge impact on professional life, free time from work, relationships with friends, partnerships and the functioning of the individual in the family. They are often accompanied by aversion and escape thoughts and behaviors.

According to E. Aronson, "burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally taxing situations".

Chapter 2

How does burnout affect the teacher's work and life?

2.1. Introduction

What causes some of us to burn out while staying in the same environment and others not? This is determined primarily by our personality and temperament traits, as well as attitudes and beliefs.

The analysis of the cause and spread of stress and burnout covers more and more places in the literature on the subject. We live in a narcissistic culture that values transience, participation, and a competitive style of functioning. Individualism is associated with an increased sense of threat and stress (alienation), and excessive focus on oneself (narcissism) is associated with frustration and production. It also has a large impact on risk in the case of social complications, in which demands on skills, importance, efficiency and pace increase, which increases the risk of threat burnout.

2.2. Personal factors of burnout

The personal factors responsible for burnout can be divided into two groups, A and B.

A. are factors related to the mental properties of an individual and include:

- low self-esteem,
- hypersensitivity, high reactivity,
- uncertainty, instability, poor sense of self-identity,
- stiffness, low tolerance for differences,
- defensiveness, defensive attitude,
- dependence, insufficient autonomy,
- passivity, low activity,
- perfectionism,
- external locus of control,
- low skills in coping with emotions and stress,
- avoiding difficult situations.

B. are factors related to an individual's competences/skills and include:

- insufficient professional preparation / low professional competences,
- low self-efficacy / belief that I can't, won't cope,
- idealistic approach to work / professional mysticism,
- low interpersonal skills.

Interpersonal factors include inappropriate contacts with superiors and co-workers, especially:

- interpersonal conflicts,
- hostile competition,
- grievances,
- lack of mutual trust,
- impaired communication,
- verbal aggression,
- mobbing

The individual characteristics of people susceptible to burnout include:

- low level of self-esteem, low self-esteem

accompanied by:

- constant uncertainty
- doubt about one's own competences
- lack of faith in one's own abilities
- underestimating one's own contribution to the implementation of tasks
- feeling of helplessness and reluctance to confront professional challenges

- unrealistic assessment of one's own capabilities

- excessive expectations of yourself and others
- high expectations regarding one's own effectiveness
- reluctance to share work with others - doing everything on your own

- perfectionism

Perfectionism is defined as the tendency to set unrealistically high standards of functioning for oneself and/or others, including the inability to accept mistakes or imperfections.

- irrational professional beliefs

- belief in one's own "mission" (profession as a mission requiring special commitment and special sacrifices)
- excessive sense of obligation
- over-responsibility
- belief in being irreplaceable ("if I don't do it, everything will collapse")
- tendency towards idealism, too much optimism

- too much commitment to work

• Many burnout researchers emphasize that people most at risk of burnout are those who are highly committed in their professional or social lives.

- lack of assertiveness
- inability to say no
- inability to ask for help
- sacrificing oneself for others, suppressing one's own needs
- low self-efficacy



The phenomenon of burnout has a huge impact on the functioning of individuals, organizations and entire societies. By introducing appropriate countermeasures, we can reduce costs related to, among others: with absence from work, exhaustion and illness. Jörg-Peter Shröder in the book "Burnout. Recognizing symptoms, prevention and lasting transformation" writes: "Good news. Burnout is avoidable." According to the author, the most important thing is early recognition, appropriate treatment of the burdens, but also one's own expectations, and the use of specific strategies and countermeasures.

Chapter 3

What are the organizational factors of burnout?

3.1 Introduction

Burnout syndrome could be described as a state that emerges slowly due to prolonged work stress causing sensations of emotional, physical, or mental exhaustion and lack of professional efficacy. Even though numerous incidents of burnout at workplaces are coming out, managers often think it is the employee's fault for experiencing it instead of recognizing the organization's part in generating and perpetuating it. They focus on the individual while they ought to also take into consideration the environment in which individual operates. The question arising is what are these organizational factors that contribute to employees' burnout and transform them from hopeful contributors to apathetic, burned-out shells.

3.2 Organizational factors of burnout

Organizational factors that cause burnout are aspects of a work environment that contribute to an increased risk of burnout. Research has identified several areas that contribute to burnout (Parrello et al., 2019). Teachers' burnout plays out a significant role in the quality of education and their well-being. Although burnout can arrive from a variety of personal and environmental factors, organizational factors within schools play a critical role in aggravating or alleviating this problem (see Fig 1). By understanding these factors, we could develop strategies to support teachers and create healthier work environments within educational institutions.

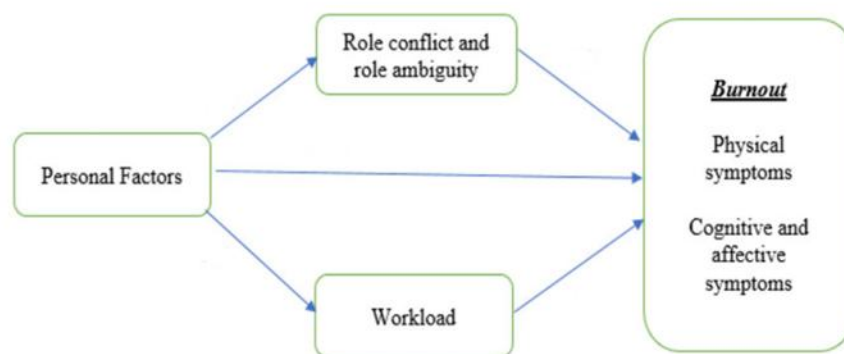


One of the primary organizational factors causing burnout is **workload and time pressure** according to Yildirim & Dinc (2019). Teachers often have to deal with work demanding tasks such as lesson planning, grading, extracurricular activities, and administrative paperwork. They feel pressure in order to meet deadlines while also keeping high professional standards which lead to continuous stress and exhaustion. Moreover, following standardized testing and accountability measures could add more to their workload and minimize personal time for rest. While having no adequate support and resources, teachers can easily become overwhelmed and experience burnout. Tasks become more difficult under time constraint and as some situations are emotionally distressing, they become even more difficult to handle. Working conditions are exacerbated by conflicts and multitasking. These workplace factors are defined as job demands. Anything that makes everyday tasks difficult to complete belongs to this category (Demerouti et al., 2001). On the other hand, studies have shown a negative correlation between workplace social support and teacher burnout, so having helpful coworkers, guidance, and excellent support can help minimize working stress. (Brouwers et al., 2011, Ju et al., 2015)

Lack of resources and support within schools is also a major factor. Low funding or resources can make it harder for teachers to have the equipment, supplies, and professional development opportunities they need (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021a). Additionally, low management or colleagues support could produce feelings of loneliness and disappointment. The risk of burnout is greater when there is lack of

encouragement, helpful criticism, or work recognition. Teachers may lose motivation and become less satisfied in their work if they feel unappreciated or unsupported.

Role ambiguity and conflicting expectations may be the reasons why teachers get a burnout. They often face the situation when they don't fully understand what exactly is expected of them or are torn apart by the contradictory demands of a number of parties, like lawmakers, parents, and school principals. For instance, it can be a hard task for them to find a balance between academic and socio-emotional aims or they may feel the pressure to make standardized test scores prevail over the holistic development of the student. Dealing with such situation of unclear roles and expectations, teachers get stressed and have problems with defining their own professional objectives in line with the objectives of the organization (Parrello et al., 2019). Yildirim and Dinc (2019) highlight how role ambiguity (when an individual does not have clear information about the expectations of their role in the job or organization), role conflict (the need to interact with other groups of people such as children, teachers, adult workers, peers, parents, supervisors/employers, among others, each of which has its own expectations and demands on an individual's time), and workload (the absolute amount of work to be done, and the time within which it should be completed) along with personal factors (age, gender, marital status) contribute to school principal burnout.



A school's organizational culture along with its contextual attributes has a significant impact on the well-being and job satisfaction of the teachers. Trust, collaboration, and respect as pillars of culture empower and support teachers within the environment. On the contrary a toxic culture characterized by competition, lack of transparency, decentralization of governance destroys morale and increases burnout. Interactions between colleagues, as well as faculty and staff, greatly influence the atmosphere of the college as well. Because institutions that promote communication, cooperation, and group-based decision-making are more apt to lead to a favorable work environment and the avoidance of burnout.

School size, student academic level, and neighborhood socioeconomic status may also contribute to teacher burnout by increasing instructional stress and affecting the dynamics of the professional community. Middle and high school instructors are more likely to experience burnout than those who teach younger pupils (Arvidsson et al., 2016; Pietarinen et al., 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017), and teachers in bigger schools often report higher burnout symptoms (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021b). One

probable explanation is that instructors in larger schools receive less social support than those in smaller schools (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2009). Furthermore, low socioeconomic status in the school area has been connected to higher levels of teacher burnout (Pietarinen et al., 2021).

Moreover, the degree of exposure of the employee is significant when considering the number and diversity of groups (students, parents, and colleagues) that the teacher interacts with and engages alongside. Social interactions are crucial in teachers' jobs, and thus contribute to teacher burnout. Specifically, dysfunctional relationships, such as inadequate support from colleagues and administration, along with issues involving students and parents, are linked to a higher risk of teacher burnout. (Conley & You, 2017; Kokkinos & Davazoglou, 2009)

Teaching demands are significant, and the emotional effort involved can result in teachers feeling drained, isolated, and fatigued. Demotivation among students is a crucial element affecting work-related burnout, as students lacking motivation lead to increased burnout levels (Jin et al., 2021). This could heighten their likelihood of developing cynicism regarding work, school community, and feelings of inadequacy in the pupil-teacher dynamic (Soini et al., 2019). Furthermore, **reforms in the educational system and up-to-date needs such as the digitalization of the class and the need to adopt new teaching methods without sufficient assistance or training** may become another stress factor leading to teachers' burnout (Lavian, 2012)

To summarize, an educator's burnout can stem from an organization's specific factors. Improving the organizational climate requires a holistic approach. It involves offering adequate resources, promoting a supportive culture, clearly articulating roles and responsibilities, and fostering autonomy and balance between personal and professional life. There are several factors in an organization that may play a role in causing burnout among educators. Educational results could be improved and a positive school community established when providing healthier work environment and supporting teachers' well-being. In order to foster a long-term success and endurance of educators in the current educational environment, identifying and dealing with organizational elements that lead to burnout is needed.

Every employee has a personal life and life expectations beyond the workplace. Although the burnout that employees experience may not be strictly related to their jobs, is increasingly recognized as a significant organizational concern instead of just a person's issue. It is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment, as a result of prolonged exposure to stressors in the workplace. In order to create developing effective interventions we should first understand the organizational elements that lead to burnout.

Reducing burnout requires changing the organization's expectations and behaviours, which in turn allows employees to recuperate and fosters a more supportive working environment. Maintaining employee satisfaction and mitigating burnout is facilitated by a secure, effective, and healthy workplace. Essential to effective managerial practices, increased sensitivity to employee needs enhances productivity while enabling adequate motivation to prevent burnout.

Chapter 4

How burnout affects the teacher's work and life?

4.1. Introduction

Research shows that overtime, lack of adequate resources, and other factors result in emotional exhaustion and lack of job satisfaction (Maslach et al., 2001). We have to underline that burnout affects not only the teachers, but also the entire school environment. This chapter presents the negative impact of burnout on a teacher's personal situation and the way he or she performs the work. The relationship between burnout and work-life balance in the teaching profession is also described.

4.2 How burnout affects the different areas of teachers' life

Teachers suffering from burnout may struggle with problems which concern many areas of his or her life. Below we are presenting how burnout may affect the most important areas of teachers' life.

Physical area

- Teacher may feel exhausted. Because of working long hours under pressure teacher may suffer from chronic fatigue, weakness, and lack of energy and may not be able to manage basic tasks like cooking dinner or exercising after work.
- Teachers may have problems with sleeping. Racing thoughts about work may result in waking up frequently.



<https://nexus-education.com/blog-posts/reducing-teacher-burnout-tips/>

- Teachers may have a weakened immune system. A teacher experiencing burnout might catch colds or the flu more often
- Teachers may suffer from health problems, such as headaches, muscle aches or other. Chronic tension which is connected with long-term stress affect negatively health.
- A teacher may change the way of eating. Due to stress, a teacher may eat less or too much.

Emotional area

- A burned-out teacher might feel increased irritation. Students may experience outbursts of teacher's anger.
- Burned-out teachers usually lose the enthusiasm for their work and might not be able to develop engaging lesson plans.
- Burnout can lead to pessimism and negativity, which may result in the belief that the teacher has no significant influence on students' academic outcomes.
- Burned-out teachers may be socially isolated. A teacher might cancel social plans or avoid attending school events.
- Burnout may have a bad impact on teacher's self-esteem. Teachers might question their abilities and feel a lack of agency.

Mental area

- Burnout can lead to problems with concentration. A teacher might have difficulty focusing during meetings or lesson planning.
- Burned-out teachers may have memory disturbances. A teacher might forget students' names or tasks to do.
- Burnout has a negative impact on work performance and efficiency. A teacher might need more time to complete tasks or make more errors.
- Mental and emotional exhaustion can be the result of a long stress. Exhaustion might make teachers unable to cope with challenges connected with doing their job
- In extreme cases, teacher can have suicidal thoughts. It is extremely important to support teacher in these cases.

Social area

- Burnout can destroy relationships with family. It might generate conflicts with family members, because of teachers impatience and irritation.
- Burn-out teachers might neglect household chores. A teacher might let household chores pile up or cancel family plans.
- Burnout can lead to social isolation of a teacher. A teacher might decline invitations to social events or spend less time with friends.
- Teachers might experience parenting problems. A teacher might feel less patient and engaged with his or her children.

4.3. How burnout affects teachers' work

Teachers suffering from burnout need to cope with many challenges at work. Below we are presenting how burnout may affect the most important areas of teachers' work.

Teaching

- Quality of teaching and student's motivation might decrease. A teacher might engage in lessons less, which results in less student interest.
- The number of teacher's mistakes might increase. Burnout can lead to concentration problems, which can result in more mistakes in teaching.
- Burn-out teachers might be less creative. They are more likely to use old methods and have fewer ideas for diversifying lessons.
- Teachers might have problems with students' discipline. Stress and fatigue can make it difficult for teachers to manage students behaviour.



Relationships with students

- Burned-out teachers may have difficulty in building positive relationships with students, because they might keep distance and lack empathy.
- Teachers might be less available to students. Students might have difficulty in getting help from the teacher.
- Burned-out teachers may grade students unfairly and make mistakes in assessing their work.
- Burned-out teachers may be less interested in their students' problems and experiences.

Relationships with other teachers and school staff

- Burnout can increase teachers' irritation and impatience, which can result in conflicts with other teachers and school staff.
- Burned-out teachers may avoid contact with their colleagues. It makes difficult to share their problems or cooperate in joint projects.

- Even one burn-out teacher may have a bad impact on the atmosphere in the school.

Relationships with parents of students

- Burn-out teachers may have less motivation to engage in relationships with parents. They may not answer phone calls and emails, avoid meetings and, sharing information about students' progress.
- Burned-out teachers may lack patience and understanding in contact with parents. They may get into conflicts and not listen to parents' needs and concerns.
- Burned-out teachers may have a pessimistic attitude. They may present students' potential and abilities less optimistic.
- Burned-out teachers may make more mistakes and provide incorrect information or use inappropriate language in communication with parents, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts.
- Burn-out teachers may be perceived as unprofessional. They may present unprofessional behaviour, such as being late for meetings or cancelling them at the last minute.

4.4. Relationships between the burnout and work-life balance in a teacher profession

Research shows a strong negative correlation between burnout and work-life balance. When work-life balance decreases, the likelihood of experiencing burnout increases.

Emotional, physical and mental exhaustion which make a teacher ineffective at work can create a vicious cycle which destroys work-life balance. Feeling unwell at work makes harder to find the energy and motivation for self-care, which worsens burnout.



The impact of teachers' burnout on work-life balance manifests itself in the following way:

- **Separating private and professional life can be a challenge for a teacher .** It may result in dealing with work responsibilities during their personal time, constant thinking about work, excessive workload.

- **Putting work above private duties.** Teachers often dedicate more time and energy to their jobs than personal issues, such as family time, social activities, and self-care.
- **Teachers' stress and fatigue affect family and social relationships.** The high levels of stress and exhaustion of a teacher lead to poor communication, irritability, and limiting relationships with family and friends..
- **Reducing time for leisure and hobbies.** When teachers resign from hobbies and leisure it may lead to isolation and decreased well-being.

Promoting a healthy work-life balance which prevents burnout is an important task for school. As teachers often dedicate their private time for working, and neglect their own needs, it is recommended for schools to encourage them to set boundaries between work and personal life.



Besides, schools can support work-life balance by flexible schedules, training in the area of stress management and self-care, and creating at school the culture that values personal time and well-being.

Chapter 5

Consequences of teacher's Burnout for the school Community

5.1 Introduction

Burnout isn't just a buzzword, it's a real issue which affects everyone at school from teachers and students to parents and administrators. The impact of burnout on teachers' work and life was described in detail in the 4-th chapter, which also shed light on other members of the school community. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the community as a whole.

5.2. How teachers' burnout affects the whole school community

The primary school community consists of many entities. The most important element of the community are students, whose situation depends on these entities. Teachers are responsible for teaching, management and administrative staff for organizing the teaching at school, pedagogues and school psychologists support students in dealing with difficulties. Moreover, schools are supervised by local government authorities. We cannot forget that parents are also members of the school community, because they get involved in school life in order to support the development of their children. The entire school community creates an integrated network, the task of which is to provide students with the best possible conditions for learning and upbringing. Teacher burnout impacts all the members of the community because teachers are in the center of the system.



Burned-out teachers lose satisfaction with their work. The lack of energy and enthusiasm for their work may cause them to not be able to conduct classes in a way that engages students. Burn-out teachers may not give clear instructions, treat the teaching material superficially, and not take into account individual student's needs. In these circumstances, the level of teaching is decreasing. In addition, a stressed teacher has less patience and tolerance for students' behavior, which makes it difficult to control a group of students during lessons. As a result, students are less motivated to learn and achieve lower results. Burn-out teachers can also transfer their negative attitude to students, which can result in lower students' well-being.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, teacher burnout can also cause tension in teacher-parent relationships. Teachers may lack patience and energy to communicate effectively with parents about their children's progress in learning, which can make parents become frustrated, confused, and often powerless to support their children in their learning. If we add to this the stress which children experience, as a result of not receiving the right education at school and they are expected to have knowledge and skills that they are not gaining at school to a sufficient degree, a vicious circle appears. Therefore, tensions related to education and student behavior impact the life of the entire family.

Teacher burnout has also serious consequences for school administration. The effect of teacher burnout is an increased frequency of sick leave or resignations, which requires the administrative staff to be additionally involved in organizing replacements, recruitment, preparing additional documents, and spending additional time on introducing new employees to work. Burned-out teachers are more likely to have misunderstandings with students or parents, which forces the headmasters to resolve conflicts and conduct mediation. When burnout occurs among teachers, the frequency of conflicts increases among the teaching staff as well. In addition, burn-out teachers are less interested in getting involved in new and innovative initiatives, which limits the development of a given school. The headmasters and administration must also deal with the consequences of the negative image of the school resulting from the dissatisfaction of parents and students. Schools with burnout become less attractive to new, competent employees.



Headmasters are often forced to deal with current difficulties, resolve conflicts and deal with sudden crises instead of achieving long-term goals and developing a school. The accumulation of problems and the lack of real tools to change the situation mean that headmasters may also experience burnout.

This situation makes effective school management difficult and affects the entire community.

As teacher burnout often results in a higher turnover rate, the governing bodies have to spend more funds for recruitment, training, and temporary staff. Replacing experienced teachers with less experienced requires additional resources for professional development and support.

Teacher burnout affects so many members of the school community, that fighting with it should be a priority for the whole community. Burnout prevention, and fostering a culture of well-being can create an environment friendly for the all school community members.

5.3 How the school community can minimize the burnout

The culture that exists in a school has a direct impact on the likelihood of teacher burnout. Collaboration, trust, respect and support are the elements of a culture that prevents teacher burnout. In contrast, a culture that promotes competition and lacks support, makes teachers experience frustration, exhaustion, and isolation, which increases the risk of burnout.

Therefore, schools should provide teachers with healthy working conditions and adopt practices that support the individual needs and boundaries of their staff. They should also consider the needs of their students and the wider community, so addressing burnout can be a major challenge for schools when the school does not have the tools to do so.

The program, which was developed, fits into the gap that exists in the education system. It provides tools and offers solutions that allow for a comprehensive approach to solving the problem of burnout. The set of developed tools allows for the implementation of solutions that fit a specific school and allow them to be adapted to the possibilities that a given school has.

Implementing organizational solutions that make it easier for teachers to perform their daily work must be accompanied with offering them support in acquiring skills enabling them to build resilience. By implementing activities that meet the needs of teachers, the school has a chance to minimize the risk of burnout.



Thanks to the effective and proven solutions offered as part of this project, taking into account the above requirements, it is possible to make a real change in the school reality, which has a chance to contribute to improving the well-being of the entire school community.

Strong leadership is needed to effectively implement the proposed solutions. School leaders who consistently focus on implementing solutions in the school that support the mental health and well-being of their staff contribute to limiting the phenomenon of burnout.

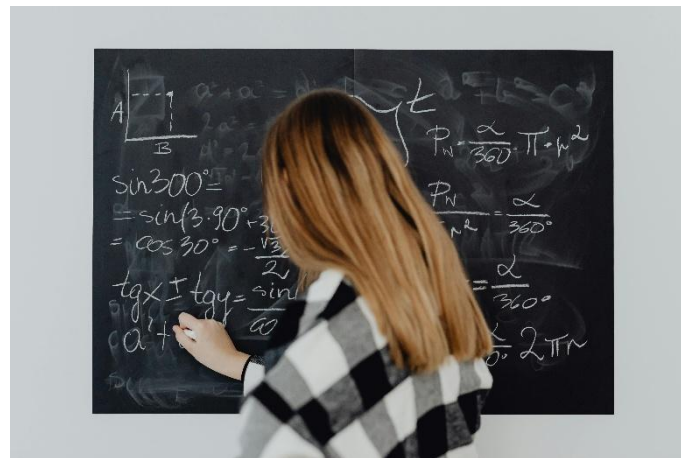
It is worth mentioning that preventing burnout may also result in limiting the shortage of teachers, because burnout can cause teachers to give up their profession or retire early. Besides, the less burnout of teachers, the better the perception of the teaching profession.

5.4 Case study: a real-life example of burnout in school

Examining real-life examples of burnout in schools can provide valuable insights into its impact on the whole community and potential solutions.

Case: a mathematics teacher employed at a primary school located in a large city

She is a person who took up teaching studies because of her passion for teaching and good contact with children.



For the first 5 years of her professional career, she was very committed to her work and derived great satisfaction from it. As a perfectionist, she carefully prepared for lessons, and conducted lessons in a way that engaged her students. Students made great progress in their education for which she was appreciated by both the school management and parents. The school was famous for its high level of education, so the teacher fit well into the school culture. At the same time, more and more administrative work appeared at the school year by year. This work absorbed a large part of her time.

After 5 years, she began to feel overwhelmed by administrative duties. Preparing lessons in an equally interesting and engaging way as before became increasingly difficult. Moreover, contact with students and teaching them became only a routine, and she had no satisfaction from it. Besides, students told their parents that the lessons

were not interesting and did not encourage them to learn mathematics. Since the parents were not satisfied with their children's academic results, they began to report their concerns to the teacher more and more often. Responding to messages sent by parents became a torment for the teacher. Every day, right after waking up, she felt anxious about checking the messages from parents because she expected that she would have to deal with more problems they reported. At night, she woke up and her thoughts about school matters returned to her. In contact with parents and other teachers, she became increasingly irritated and sometimes rude. Parents began to report problems in communication with the teacher to the school headmaster. The headmaster talked to the teacher, who explained that the parents were demanding and the students were causing behavioral problems. The headmaster did not have the right tools to constructively support the teacher, so the talks did not change the teacher's behavior or attitude.



The described case shows how a teacher who at the beginning of her professional career was full of passion and commitment, and liked contact with students, became a person who stopped liking her job, and how contacting with members of the school community became a very big challenge for her. But above all, we can see that the teacher's deteriorating well-being affected the deterioration of students' academic results, as well as their behavior during lessons.

We can also see that burnout was influenced by both the teacher's personality traits and external conditions. Perfectionism, commitment, passion seem positive in themselves, but they are associated with high standards that are difficult to meet in the long run. External conditions, such as increasing administrative duties and high requirements for maintaining the level of education were also increasingly burdensome for the teacher. If the headmaster could offer to the teacher preventive measures in the form of training and individual support, the increasing stress that ultimately led to professional burnout would probably be limited, because the teacher would have received knowledge and acquired specific skills that protect against burnout.

Chapter 6

How to create the environment, which supports teachers' well-being and motivation?

6.1 Introduction

To support teachers' well-being and motivation to work, it is necessary to create a positive atmosphere and environment in schools that teachers perceive as supportive. Meanwhile, some schools unknowingly create an environment that creates stressors and promotes burnout.

The key is to foster a positive school climate that responds to the needs of teachers before they resign, demand higher wages, advocate for better teaching methods, or show a lack of interest in student success. From the arguments examined in this paper, specific and general recommendations are presented to school leaders, policy makers and teachers themselves to foster conditions of individual and organizational commitment, passion and productivity.

6.2 The level of dependence and expectations should be reduced

The demands of parents, students, and school management often overwhelm teachers to the point that they are powerless to fulfill their teaching responsibilities in a way that meets the expectations of all these groups. Furthermore, overworked teachers may have difficulty taking care of their own well-being, which creates a vicious circle and negatively impacts the quality of teaching and students' educational performance. Therefore, school management and school governing bodies should consider implementing actions to reduce the burden of unnecessary meetings, bureaucracy, and other duties that can be reduced or improved. From the perspective of school headmasters, it is crucial to manage teachers' resources in such a way as to prevent them from being overloaded, but also to effectively use their potential to create optimal conditions for students to learn.

6.3 Creating a positive and supportive school culture

The culture that exists in a school has a direct impact on the likelihood of teacher burnout. Collaboration, trust, respect and support are the elements of a culture that prevents teacher burnout. In contrast, a culture that promotes competition and lacks support, makes teachers experience frustration, exhaustion, and isolation, which increases the risk of burnout.

Therefore, creating a positive and supportive culture in the school becomes a key action in preventing burnout. This can be achieved by creating an environment in which everyone feels important and appreciated. In order to make this possible, it is necessary to promote empathy, trust, respect and cooperation. Moreover, it is important to create conditions in the school that are conducive to open communication, because teachers need to feel that their opinion counts and has an impact on the school community.



Therefore, the school headmasters, who listen to the needs of teachers and take actions aimed at taking care of the well-being of teachers, create a positive and supportive school environment. The tools and solutions developed as part of the project "Preventing teachers' burnout in primary schools" can help them to do it efficiently.

6.4 Offering continuous professional development

Promoting professional development among teachers shows that the school is interested in developing the potential of its staff. Teachers who have the opportunity for continuous professional development in line with their needs are given the chance to acquire new skills and strengthen their sense of self-confidence, which allows them to build the belief that they have the competences to perform the teaching profession in a way that is consistent with the changing reality. If the school additionally implements training and coaching support, which is proposed as part of the program aimed at preventing professional burnout, teachers will have the opportunity to strengthen not only their teaching competences, but also their social and personal skills.

Thanks to participation in training and coaching during individual sessions, teachers will gain skills in coping with stress by identifying their own stressors and building their own stress management plan. They will also have the opportunity to gain the ability to recognize and manage emotions, strengthen cooperation skills, take care of their self-esteem, and use the skill of agency in their work. The training will also give teachers the opportunity to reflect on whether their competences correspond to the competences that a modern teacher should have, as well as to build their goals adequately to their skills. In addition, teachers will have the opportunity to learn how

to effectively manage their working time, as well as communicate effectively with students' parents, especially in the area of needs and academic results.

Offering sustainable professional development focused not only on meeting students' educational needs, but also on taking care of teachers' well-being, gives the management a chance to create conditions that will not only prevent teachers from burning out, but also motivate them to continue working in their profession.

6.5 Promote positive leadership and reward system

Strong leadership is needed to effectively implement the above proposed solutions. School leaders who consistently focus on implementing solutions in the school that support the mental health and well-being of their staff contribute to limiting the phenomenon of burnout.

Effective leadership should be based on cooperation, transparency and setting a positive example. A headmaster who prioritizes respect for the needs of teachers inspires the entire environment to rely on similar values.



An important role in preventing burnout is also played by appreciating teachers' efforts. A headmaster who uses various forms of appreciation, whether financial or verbal, lets teachers know that their efforts matter. In this way, they also set an example for the entire environment on how to treat a teacher's work. Thanks to this, the environment begins to better understand and appreciate the role of a teacher.

6.6 Assumptions of the program developed in the project "Preventing teachers' burnout in primary schools"

There are many strategies for preventing burnout, and prevention can take place at various levels. In schools where, due to the specificity of a teacher's work and the strong influence of the work environment on the risk of burnout, effective prevention requires the involvement of both the school itself and the teachers employed there.

The developed burnout prevention program is based on three pillars:

1) The school management introduces solutions aimed at supporting the well-being of teachers, which are based on the following assumptions:

- The management creates the position of Burnout Expert at the school and selects a person to fill this position.
- The management provides a Burnout Expert with the tools necessary to conduct burnout support which include: Manual for Burnout Expert, Training programs and materials, The anonymous questionnaire examining the level of burnout, personal and social competences and organisational factors, The questionnaire aiming the self-reflection of teachers
- The management, using the tools described in the directors' manual, develops an action plan aimed at creating an environment at school conducive to the well-being of teachers

2) The burnout Expert provides support for teachers, which is based on the following assumptions:

- The main task of the Burnout Expert is to support teachers employed at school by conducting group trainings and individual support in strengthening their personal and social competences
- When providing support, the Burnout Expert uses a set of tools developed as part of the project

Bearing in mind that each school may have different capabilities and organizational conditions, support is planned to be provided based on one of 4 options. To obtain maximum benefits for the school community, it is recommended to use option I or II. Resigning from individual support, which is provided for in options III and IV, means that teachers lose the opportunity to individually discuss ways of introducing the acquired skills into their own teaching practice. Taking advantage of group training gives teachers many tools to increase awareness of their resources and deficits, as well as acquire new skills, but it is individual work that gives the most motivation to put the acquired skills into practice.

Option I – implementation of a full training package and individual support for interested teachers

Option II - implementation of selected training courses that, according to the results of the teacher survey, are necessary to implement and individual support for interested teachers

Option III - implementation of a full training package, without individual support

Option IV - implementation of selected trainings that, according to the results of the teacher survey, are necessary to conduct, without individual support

3) The teacher introduces new solutions into his professional practice, enabled by the changes implemented at school, and uses the skills acquired during group trainings and individual support

6.7. Practical tips how to create an environment that supports teachers' well-being and motivation

Below you can find tips on what to do when anonymous teacher surveys have shown that there are factors in the school environment that may negatively affect teachers' well-being. The table presents examples of actions that can be taken to eliminate negative factors.

Area of school environment	Negative factors	Description of the problem	What to change?	Examples of positive activities to implement by management and administration in the school
Workload	1.Excessive Administrative Tasks	Teachers are often burdened with non-teaching duties such as paperwork, meetings, and bureaucratic requirements, which can detract from their primary teaching responsibilities and lead to feelings of being overwhelmed.	The range and way of realizing administrative tasks by teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deciding which bureaucratic requirements may be limited -Limiting the range of administrative tasks - Deciding how administration staff may support teachers -Limiting the paper work and implementing digital forms instead - Deciding how to organize procedures in a more friendly way and preparing these procedures - Preparing clear instructions how to deal with administrative tasks
	2.Large Class Sizes	Managing large numbers of students can make it difficult for teachers to provide individual attention, leading to increased stress and a sense of inadequacy.	The workload for teacher during classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing classroom support such as teaching assistants or aides, - limiting the number of students in classes
	3.Lack of Resources	Insufficient access to teaching materials, technology, and classroom supplies can hinder effective teaching and increase frustration among teachers.	Access to resources for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing teachers with up-to-date and sufficient teaching materials and technology -indicate the technical staff to support teachers

Workplace Culture	4. Poor Communication from Administration	Inadequate communication regarding policies, changes, and expectations can create uncertainty and stress among teachers.	Way of communication with teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparent and open communication from administration - Sending to teachers e-mails when changes are happening - Sending to teachers e-mails with summary after meetings
	5. Lack of Appreciation/ Recognition	Teachers who feel their efforts are not acknowledged or valued may experience decreased motivation and increased feelings of burnout.	Attitude towards teachers' efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular recognizing and appreciating teachers' efforts and achievements - Offering tangible rewards such as bonuses, extra leave days, or public recognition
	6. Inadequate Support for Student Behavior Management	Without proper support and resources to manage student behavior, teachers may face additional stress and burnout.	Access to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - determine how teachers, administrative, and support staff need to cooperate in resolve these problems - offering the training in this area for teachers
Professional Development	7. Limited Opportunities	When teachers do not have access to ongoing professional development, they may feel stagnant and unsupported in their growth and development.	The access to trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - offering to teachers' wider range of trainings, which are offered regularly
	7A. Irrelevant Training	Professional development that does not align with teachers' needs or interests can feel like a waste of time and add to their stress.	The way of choosing subject of trainings for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - researching the teachers' needs of professional development in a regular way - searching for trainings that are aligned with teachers' needs
Physical Work Environment	8. Poor Classroom Conditions	Uncomfortable temperatures, inadequate lighting, and outdated or broken furniture can negatively impact teachers' physical comfort and overall well-being.	Classroom conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - taking care of adequate lighting - providing efficient and, if possible, modern equipment and teaching aids
	9. Safety Concerns	Teachers working in environments where they do not feel safe may experience heightened anxiety and stress.	Enhanced Security Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement security systems, including trained security personnel.
Work-Life Balance	10. Long Hours	Extended work hours, including evenings and weekends, can prevent teachers from having adequate time to rest and recharge.	Organization of teachers' work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizing in school breaks for resting during which teachers may relax, meditate, chat with colleagues

				- offering to teachers the training concerning the effective time management
	11. Inflexible Scheduling	Lack of flexibility in scheduling can make it difficult for teachers to manage personal responsibilities and maintain a healthy work-life balance.	Attitude towards scheduling	- providing options for flexible work hours or remote work if possible - focusing on friendly for teachers' schedule while planning their work
Support System	12. Lack of Mentorship Programs	Access to experienced mentors can provide guidance, support, and encouragement, helping teachers navigate challenges and develop professionally.	Access to mentorship programs	- creating the school's mentorship program - encouraging teachers to participate in the mentorship program
	13. Lack of Peer Support Groups	Collaborative and supportive relationships with colleagues can foster a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation.	Attitude towards promoting collaborative and supportive relationships	- organizing regular integration meetings for teachers - encouraging teachers to participate in the integration meetings - organizing in a school the place for Peer Support Groups meetings
	14. Lack of programs preventing burnout	Teachers may not be aware of what burnout is or how to take care of their well-being which may result in higher rate of burnouts in school	Access to programs preventing burnout	- to implement program offering individual support or/and group trainings connected with burnout prevention
Cooperation with parents	15. Lack of support from school in solving problems in cooperation with parents	Parents may have high expectations for their child's achievements, while teachers may have limited options due to a variety of factors. Teachers may need support from the school in maintaining constructive relationships with parents.	Attitude towards supporting teachers in the area of solving problems in cooperation with parents	- offering the training in this area for teachers - organize regular meetings for teachers during which they could talk about their problems and exchange with other teachers the methods of solving problems

Chapter 7

How to prepare the post of Burnout Expert and to select the right candidate?

7.1 Introduction

Burnout is an increasing phenomenon in today's ever-moving and stressful society. People are beginning to carry the burden of exhaustion, whether in the form of physical, emotional, or mental fatigue, be it at home, in workplaces, or educational institutions. Educational institutions can be seen as productive and helpful communities involving children's development and education; however, these institutions are not immune from the adverse implications of burnout, particularly among employees and learners. Therefore, creating the position of a Burnout Expert is both important and useful for the purpose of creating and preserving a healthy and supportive atmosphere. This chapter describes why the position is important, what its main functions are, and what steps have to be taken to select a Burnout Expert.

7.2 Understanding the role of a Burnout Expert

The function of a burnout expert is to offer guidance and support to teachers thereby enabling them to effectively manage their feelings and preserve their well-being. In a school community, a burnout expert would collaborate with the headmaster and teachers to provide resources for prevention. This function is becoming increasingly critical to the success teachers in light of the growing concern regarding mental health of teachers.

7.3 Why a Burnout Expert is needed in school communities

The rising number of stress-related issues among teachers has led to the necessity of a Burnout Expert in school communities.



In recent years, awareness of mental health has increased and it has been recognized as a basis for achieving success in education and work. Therefore, schools have begun to show greater interest in creating a healthy and balanced learning environment for students and work for teachers and other staff employed in schools. Therefore, the Burnout Expert Position, whose main task will be to take care of teachers' well-being, is a response to this new paradigm.

7.4 Key responsibilities of the Burnout Expert

The Burnout Expert must understand the specifics of stressors that occur in the school environment, as well as know how to deal with these stressors. Their tasks are to focus on supporting teachers in developing competencies that help build resilience. Therefore, the most important tasks of the Burnout Expert include:

1. **Recognizing the risk of burnout.** It is the responsibility of the burnout specialist to conduct tests, and one-on-one consultations.
2. **Supplying resources for prevention.** Organization of preventive measures is relative to effective functioning of the position. To prevent burnout situations, Burnout Experts will create plans that will include trainings and individual sessions and will organize and conduct these activities. They will assist teachers with setting either healthy work-life boundaries, set realistic goals, and cope with responsibilities.
3. **Providing crisis support and interventions.** It is imperative to provide prompt intervention when burnout symptoms reach critical levels. To help the teacher suffering from strong burnout symptoms, the burnout expert may support him or her by individual session or recommend contacting other experts eg. therapists, psychologists. He or she may also encourage the teacher to participate in trainings which increase his or her competences which build the resilience.
4. **Promoting a supportive culture.** In addition to the above-mentioned tasks, the Burnout Expert should support the school management in implementing activities aimed at creating a working environment that is friendly to teachers' well-being, as well as creating conditions that enable receiving support in situations when well-being is at risk.
5. **Assessing and modifying support systems.** Finally, the burnout expert will evaluate the efficacy of implemented actions. This necessitates the monitoring of fatigue trends within the institution, the collection of feedback from teachers, and presenting the conclusions to school management. As a result of these activities the school management together with Burnout Expert may plan the subsequent modification of strategies, which fulfill the requirements of the school community.

7.5 Qualifications and skills required for the role

To comprehend the specific needs of the school context adequately, a Burnout Expert should have elements of both formal education as well as practical experience. The minimum requirement here is a degree in pedagogy, psychology, sociology, social work, coaching, resocialization.

Candidates can still be very productive in the school community if they have transferrable abilities from areas like healthcare, law, or business, because they are high-pressure field.



The Burnout Expert, should also be someone with a high level of communication skills, good range of culture, respect and understanding of other people. He or she should be a person perceived as trustworthy in the school environment.

Additionally, the ideal applicant should exhibit a dedication to lifelong learning, because he or she will need to become familiar with the teaching tools and apply them in practice.

7.6 What school management should take into account before preparing the Post of a Burnout Expert

Several measures must be taken to establish the position of a Burnout Expert within a school community. It is crucial that the management recognises that there is a need for support for teachers' mental health. The next step is to ensure funding for the position. Funding may consist of transferring existing funds to the purpose or obtaining funds from outside sources. Each school that wants to create a Burnout Expert position should define the scope of requirements that a candidate for this position should meet, taking into account the specifics of the environment in which they will work. Factors such as working hours, form of employment, organisational issues, e.g. when and where the support will take place, should be also taken into account. The next step should be to conduct recruitment.

7.7 Steps to prepare the Post of a Burnout Expert and recruit the right person

- 1) The school director, the school board of teachers or other body which is entitled to make decision, create the position of Burnout Expert.
- 2) If the school is supervised by a higher body, which also supervises other schools, it is possible to create the position of a Burnout Expert who will support teachers from other schools as well.
- 3) The appropriate authority decides whether the person designated to perform the tasks in this position will be a person recruited from within the institution and whether he or she will receive additional salary or be delegated to perform the tasks as part of a full-time position at the school. You can also consider employing an external person on terms permitted by the conditions of your institution.

4) The representative of the appropriate authority recruits for the position of burnout expert.

5) You can also consider employing an external person on terms permitted by the conditions of your institution.

If permitted by the organization of your country's educational system, you can proceed with the following procedure:

The recruiter may rely on the scheme presented below:

a) Information about the recruitment can be posted on the school's website, in social media and/or sent directly, e.g. by e-mail, to potential candidates.

The advertisement contains a description of the position, including the terms and conditions of employment.

Candidates recruited within the institution can be provided with information whether they will receive additional salary for carrying out the tasks or whether they will perform them as part of a full-time position with a reduced salary.

External candidates can be provided with information about the type of contract and working hours.

The advertisement should also include information about the e-mail address to which candidates will send their CV and letter of intent, as well as the recruitment date.

If your educational system does not allow direct recruitment of staff, you can address the invitation to your school staff and the following actions are recommended:

b) Based on the CV and the letter of intent sent by the candidates, it is initially checked whether the candidate meets the requirements.

Below there is the proposition of requirements (could be adapted to the needs of a given institution):

- It is preferred that the candidate has education in the field of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, social work, coaching, resocialization.
- Experience in working with adults, in particular in conducting consultations or training, will be an additional advantage.
- Knowledge about the functioning of educational institutions.
- A high level of social skills, including communication, cooperation, as well as relationship building and problem solving, is crucial in this position.
- Openness to others, patience and the ability to actively listen are key features in this position.
- Knowledge and skills in coping with stress and taking care of your well-being will be appreciated.

c) Candidates who meet the above requirements are then invited for interviews to deepen the knowledge about their qualifications for this position.

You can ask the candidate the following questions:

- How do you find yourself as a person providing individual support for adults and what previous experience can you use in this role?
- How do you find yourself as a person providing group support for adults (trainings, workshops) and what previous experience can you use in this role?
- Do you know the specific nature of a teacher's work? Please tell me how you gain the knowledge or/and experience in this work?
- What challenges do you think primary school teachers face?
- How do you deal with stress?

- What social and personal skills are your assets and which ones do you think you could work on?
- Please rate on a scale of 0-5 (where 0 means none and 5 means a very high level) the presence of the following features:
 - Openness to others
 - Patience
 - Active listening skills
- What are your expectations regarding salary (if additional salary is expected)?
- How do you see the possibility of joining work in your current position with the work of a Burnout Expert (if the job is not full-time)?
- d) The selected candidate is invited to a final interview, during which the final terms of cooperation will be presented, in particular:
 - working hours
 - period of work
 - salary, if applicable
 - scope of reduced existing responsibilities, if applicable
 - detailed scope of duties as a Burnout Expert
- e) Establishing cooperation with the candidate selected during recruitment, completing the appropriate formalities, depending on the requirements of a school e.g., signing a contract, preparing a document regarding delegation

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