MISSION FATIGUE

WHY IT HAPPENS

WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT
WHO’S IN THE ROOM?
THIS IS WHAT MISSION FATIGUE LOOKS LIKE
...AND THIS IS HOW IT FEELS
What is Mission Fatigue?

Emotional and physical exhaustion that develops over time when you’re either faced with one intractable problem or a very large volume of very similar issues, often resulting in an inability to react sympathetically or empathetically to a crisis, problem, or need.
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funding, regulations, political climate, board, budgets, personnel issues...  

addressing the causes & conditions of poverty
BURNOUT
(aka Mission Fatigue)
affects health

The World Health Organization has categorized Burnout as a syndrome (IDC-11) that results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

Purpose-driven work is at increased risk of burnout, particularly mission-focused executives; non-profit employees, teachers/principals, nurses, and physicians.
WE’RE A BURNED-OUT NATION

28% The rate of “overall burnout” among the general U.S. workforce (2018 - Mayo Clinic)

23% American workers who feel burned out “often or always.” (2017 – Gallop)
Emotional and physical exhaustion that develops over time when you’re either faced with one intractable problem or a very large volume of very similar issues, often resulting in an inability to react sympathetically or empathetically to a crisis, problem, or need.
WORK IS PERSONAL!

We take it personally. We stress over the small things and the big things constantly!
RECOGNIZING THE STAGES OF BURNOUT

Enthusiasm

Stagnation

Frustration

Apathy
WHEN WE DENY THE STORY, IT DEFINES US.

WHEN WE OWN THE STORY, WE CAN WRITE A BRAVE NEW ENDING

BRENÉ BROWN
Why are Community Action Executives vulnerable to Mission Fatigue?

- Ever changing grant requirements
- Too many constituents to please – elected officials, staff, clients, funding sources, media, general public
- Soft funding streams create budget stress
- Excessive workload
- Regulations!
- Little or no access to peer support
50/40/30/20-Year-Old

“We’re looking for someone with the wisdom of a 50-year-old, the experience of a 40-year-old, the energy of a 30-year-old, and the pay scale of a 20-year-old.”

SOUND FAMILIAR?
Mission Fatigue affects Community Action Workers, too.

- Typically low pay, contributing to personal stress
- Complicated work
- Lack of control over their duties or assignments
- Isolation, especially in remote locations
- Low respect from community for the work (And feelings that clients don’t appreciate it either)
- Uncertain future in many positions (soft funding)
- Vicarious Traumatization through perceived never-ending need from clients
BURNOUT = TURNOVER
&
TURNOVER = WASTED $$
IMPROVE MORALE TO REDUCE TURNOVER

- Encourage open, honest communication
- Avoid micromanaging
- Recognize employee achievements
- Reduce employees’ fear of job loss
- Revise jobs to reduce excessive workloads (especially when they extend over time)

(AccountTemps Survey of 300 managers)
HOW DO WE OVERCOME MISSION FATIGUE?
WHAT NOT TO DO

- Blame others.
- Look for a new job, buy a new car, get a divorce, have an affair.
- Fall into the habit of complaining with your colleagues.
- Hire a lawyer.
- Work harder and longer.
- Self-medicate.
- Neglect your own needs and interests.
THINGS TO TRY:

- Celebrate more often.
- Reflect.
- Express gratitude to others.
- Have a regular digital detox.
- Spend more time on activities you enjoy.
- Go home WITHOUT your briefcase.
- Take a vacation.
TECHNIQUES, con’t.

■ Find someone to talk to.
  (Maybe even employ a coach?)
■ Work on succession planning to reduce stress.
■ Understand your feelings are normal.
■ Exercise and eat properly.
■ Get enough sleep.
■ Learn to say “No” more often.
HERE'S ONE TRICK:

LEARN TO ENGAGE WITH A STRESSFUL EVENT, REMAIN CALM, AND RETURN TO YOUR BASELINE QUICKLY.
HELP YOUR TEAM

■ Focus on your culture by creating Psychological Safety.
■ Remember that the budget is not an excuse for low wages.
■ Focus on providing more staff training – no more “hiring and hoping.”
■ Recognize success, accomplishment, & effort across the organization.
  – Celebrate!
  – Show appreciation
TEAM, con’t.

- Implement workplace wellness programs
  - Pilot with a small group first
  - Expect everyone to spend one hour per week – on work time
    - on the wellness activities of their choosing – walking, yoga in the office, team lunches, etc.
  - Consider providing on-line mental health tools (Happify, CogniFit, Lumosity, MyBrainSolutions, Fit Brains, and Elevate)
  - Provide resilience coaching or group training

- Remember to include your remote workers, too - all offices and departments
AND FINALLY . . .

Remember that the **WHAT** is important, but it is the **WHY** that makes the difference.

Make sure your Mission, Vision, and Values are *front and center* at all times.
I think we’re in good enough shape to start making the same mistakes again.
YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT TO THE PARTNERSHIP.

WE INVITE YOU TO COMPLETE A BRIEF EVALUATION OF THIS SESSION SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE TIMELY CONTENT.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE EVALUATION ON PAPER OR IN THE EVENT APP.
THANK YOU!

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