

Mental Health Provider Burnout & Clinical Supervision

Information for improving occupational mental health

About 40% of mental health providers show signs of burnout,¹ a syndrome that develops in response to occupational stress.² People with burnout may have emotional exhaustion, cynical feelings about their work, and a sense that they are ineffective or unaccomplished.² Better clinical supervision and support from colleagues is linked to reduced burnout,¹ providing an opportunity for organizations to improve their workers' occupational mental health.



Signs²

- Overwhelming emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism and indifference
- Feelings of reduced personal accomplishment
- Associated with increased workload and larger caseloads¹



Impact

- Prevalent emotional exhaustion among psychiatrists³ and other professionals¹
- Poor health and professional outcomes³
- Reduced health care quality and safety⁴
- Mental health workforce shortages^{6,7} may be a contributing factor



Research

- Both individual and organizational interventions can be effective⁸
- Severe psychiatric trainee burnout is linked to insufficient clinical supervision⁹
- Better supervision of mental health nurses is associated with less burnout¹⁰



Tips for Supervision¹¹

- Recognize good work and achievement
- Communicate candidly and honestly
- Show interest, curiosity, and vulnerability
- Collaboratively ask for input and feedback
- Support professional development

Burnout is a major issue facing the mental health care workforce,¹ and a growing body of research suggests that organizations can improve occupational mental health.⁸ Effective clinical supervision may help prevent negative outcomes^{8,9} associated with burnout^{3,4} by engaging professionals in meaningful conversations about their work, areas for improvement, and professional goals.¹¹



Southeast (HHS Region 4)

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