

# Mental Health Provider Burnout & Clinical Supervision

Information for improving occupational mental health

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



## Signs<sup>2</sup>

- Overwhelming emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism and indifference
- Feelings of reduced personal accomplishment
- Associated with increased workload and larger caseloads<sup>1</sup>



## Impact

- Prevalent emotional exhaustion among psychiatrists<sup>3</sup> and other professionals<sup>1</sup>
- Poor health and professional outcomes<sup>3</sup>
- Reduced health care quality and safety<sup>4</sup>
- Mental health workforce shortages<sup>6,7</sup> may be a contributing factor



## Research

- Both individual and organizational interventions can be effective<sup>8</sup>
- Severe psychiatric trainee burnout is linked to insufficient clinical supervision<sup>9</sup>
- Better supervision of mental health nurses is associated with less burnout<sup>10</sup>



## Tips for Supervision<sup>11</sup>

- 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,<sup>1</sup> and a growing body of research suggests that organizations can improve occupational mental health.<sup>8</sup> Effective clinical supervision may help prevent negative outcomes<sup>8,9</sup> associated with burnout<sup>3,4</sup> by engaging professionals in meaningful conversations about their work, areas for improvement, and professional goals.<sup>11</sup>



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