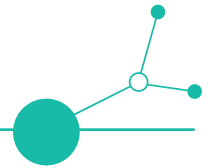


D.1.1.1 Burnout self-assessment tool for employees (BSA-tool)

Offline and online questionnaire



Version 2

02 2025





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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About the project

The BURNOUT PREVENT project aims to enhance entrepreneurial skills to address the growing challenges of anxiety, burnout syndrome, and depression among the workforce in SMEs. Project comprehensively addresses all three critical aspects of burnout syndrome: the corporate environment, free time, and digital stress.

Depression and anxiety have become the most prevalent psychological and emotional challenges in the workplace, accounting for over 20% of all sick leaves. This trend negatively impacts productivity and innovation, leading to an estimated €202 billion loss annually in Central Europe. Sectors driven by smart specialisation are particularly vulnerable due to the pressures of a highly competitive global environment.

The project focuses on strengthening entrepreneurial skills and establishing a comprehensive organisational model for burnout resilience in SMEs across three smart specialisation fields: Industry 4.0, Smart Health, and Sustainable Food. By equipping managers and employees with new knowledge and tools, the project will enable the implementation of burnout prevention measures in both workplace and personal environments.

1.2 Purpose of deliverable

Deliverable “D1.1.1 Burnout self-assessment tool for employees” is part of Work Package 1 “Enhancing professional capacities and setting up the organisational model for burnout resilience in SMEs” and activity “A1.1. Assessment of burnout syndrome”, where the main goal is to develop a model for the organisational redesign of working environments to enhance workers’ well-being, retention of jobs and SMEs productivity

Currently, various countries utilise differing approaches to assess burnout syndrome, with most methods relying on the 40-year-old Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). However, this tool is often impractical for widespread use due to its overly complex questionnaire. To address these limitations, the B-SA tool was developed using a combined theoretical and empirical approach. It focuses on key dimensions such as chronic fatigue and mental distance from one’s job while also incorporating assessments of emotional and cognitive impairments.

The B-SA tool is designed for both individual and organisational use. It enables personal burnout assessment risk and serves as a screening tool within organisations to identify individuals with potential elevated burnout levels. The tool will be accessible online, providing users with immediate results. For corporate use, an offline version is available to ensure data privacy.



1.3 Relation to other project activities and deliverables

Deliverable “D1.1.1 Burnout self-assessment tool for employees” is strongly connected to deliverable “D.1.1.2 Corporate burnout assessment tool (CORSAs tool).”

Both tools will be presented in national and regional training dedicated to SMEs in the chosen Smart specialisation sectors (Industry 4.0, Smart Health, and Sustainable Food), as part of “Activity A1.2 Improving skills of SMEs’ management and employees for burnout prevention” and used for testing measures before and after the change and effect of the measures as part of Activity “A1.3 Development and testing of participatory work-related measures for prevention of burnout”.

Online version of B-SA tool will also be useful for any EU citizen to assess their own burnout risk and thus possibly make personal changes.

The use of the B-SA tool is also planned in the “Work package 2 Enhancing burnout preventive skills for S3 employees outside working time”, part of “Activity 2.1 Development and testing of “digital detox” activities for prevention of burnout syndrome in workers from S3 sectors outside of their working time”, before and after the testing digital detox activities to measure the potential improvements.

1.4 Contribution of the project partners

Work package leader PP2 Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine (NIOM) was supported in the preparation of the D1.1.1 B-SA tool by the knowledge expert partners, PP3 Comenius University Bratislava (UNIBA), PP11 National Center for Public Health and Pharmacy (NNGYK) and PP12 Croatian Institute of Public Health (HZJZ). The role of knowledge expert partners in the project is to provide their expertise in the fields of occupational health, including health promotion, work psychology, and stress physiology, as well as to provide knowledge and experiences in conducting research and implementing workplace health promotion interventions.



2 B-SA TOOL

The B-SA tool was developed using a theoretical and empirical approach. It focuses on key factors such as "chronic fatigue" and "mental distance" towards one's job while also addressing emotional and cognitive impairments.

This tool is designed for both individual and organisational use, enabling personalised burnout assessments and collective screening within organisations to identify employees at risk of elevated burnout levels.

2.1 Directions

The following statements relate to your work situation and how you experience it. Please indicate how often each statement applies to you.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other

2. Age:
 -

3. Years of employment (overall):
 - 6 months - 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - More than 10 years

4. Years of employment in current company:
 - 6 months - 1 year
 - 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - More than 10 years

5. Employment type:
 - Fixed-term employment contract
 - Employment contract for unspecified period
 - Mandate contract/specific-task contract (contract for specific work)
 - Self-employment

6. Education Level:
 - Elementary education
 - Vocational education
 - High school
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree or higher

7. Work mode:
 - Office
 - Remote
 - Hybrid (Office and Remote)



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- 8. Type of work:
 - Intellectual
 - Physical
 - Mostly intellectual
 - Mostly physical

- 9. Position:
 - Managerial
 - Non-managerial

- 10. Company size:
 - 1-50
 - 51-100
 - 101-250

Symptoms/Indicators		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1.	I lack the energy to act.					
2.	After coming back from work, I am too exhausted to do my daily chores.					
3.	Despite resting after work, I still feel exhausted.					
4.	I lost my interest in my job.					
5.	I am sarcastic with my clients/managers/business partners.					
6.	I'm less compassionate to other people (colleagues, managers, clients, business partners).					
7.	I feel that my job is a source of constant frustration.					
8.	I feel rather negative emotions related to work.					
9.	I overreact in various situations.					
10.	I easily get distracted more than before.					
11.	I feel like I'm not as effective at work as I used to be.					
12.	Due to my absent-mindedness, I still make mistakes.					
13.	The pressure at my work is overwhelming.					
14.	I worry excessively about work-related issues.					
15.	The stress I feel at work exceeds my coping abilities.					



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16.	I have some trouble sleeping (trouble falling asleep and waking up during the night).					
17.	I experience symptoms like heart palpitations, abdominal distress or gut discomfort.					
18.	I experience symptoms like shoulder and/or back pain or headaches.					



3 ONLINE VERSION OF BSA-TOOL

The online version of the B-SA tool was created using Google Forms, a sustainable and publicly available platform that any European citizen can use. The questionnaire consists of an introduction, a demographic questionnaire and questions assessing the risk associated with the possibility of experiencing burnout.

The full version of the B-SA tool is available at the following link:

<https://forms.gle/EHCoJP9CEwhwNNdc6>

3.1 Information for respondents

The introduction contains information about the project and the tool presented. The presentation also includes the survey participation rules and guidelines on anonymity.

Figure 1: Print screen of the online version

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE

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the European Union

BURNOUT PREVENT

B-SA tool- *Burnout self-assessment tool for employees*

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The BURNOUT PREVENT project aims to develop entrepreneurial skills in response to the growing challenges of anxiety, burnout and depression among SME employees. It covers three key aspects of burnout: the work environment, leisure time and digital stress.

The project focuses on strengthening entrepreneurial competences and developing a comprehensive organisational model to support resilience to burnout in SMEs operating in three areas: Industry 4.0, Smart Health and Sustainable Food. Thanks to the new knowledge and tools, both managers and employees will be able to effectively implement measures to prevent burnout in the workplace.

ABOUT THE TOOL

The B-SA Tool was developed to assess the risk of burnout among employees. Burnout is seen as a state of mental exhaustion, manifested by both the inability and unwillingness to engage in work.

We kindly invite you to fill in a short questionnaire. By answering the questions, you will get a brief insight into your well-being at work and how you experience your professional situation. Based on the results, you will receive practical tips and recommendations to support your balance and well-being.



INFORMATION ABOUT THE SURVEY AND DATA PROTECTION

Participation in the survey, which is part of the Burnout Prevent (CE0200521) project, is completely voluntary. The survey includes questionnaires to assess the risk of burnout.

RULES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY:

- ✓ Participation in the survey is voluntary – you can opt out at any time without giving a reason and without any negative consequences.
- ✓ All data collected in the survey is anonymous and used in the form of impersonal results for scientific purposes and the implementation of the project itself.

HOW TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS:

To ensure the anonymity of the submitted survey, please note the following:

1. The creator of the survey has set it to anonymous when configuring it.
2. To ensure complete anonymity, please use the incognito mode in your web browser when filling out the survey.
3. Avoid logging into your Google account when filling out an anonymous survey.
4. Before starting a survey, read the privacy policy of the tool provider <https://policies.google.com/privacy>.

3.2 Scoring system

Following the administration of the survey, respondents receive automated feedback on their total score, which can range from 0 to 72 points. The points are categorised into ranges that assess the degree to which the individual is at risk of developing occupational burnout. The ranges proposed by the expert partners are:

- 0-14 points - low risk of burnout.
- 15-30 points - slight signs of burnout.
- 31-45 points - moderate level of burnout.
- 46-60 points - high level of burnout.
- 61-72 points - very high level of burnout.



3.3 Recommendations and knowledge capsules

Recommendations tailored to each score range have been prepared for the B-SA tool. After receiving their score, each participant can follow a link to a presentation that includes a description of the results and recommendations for respondents. The recommendations serve an educational purpose and provide best practices to support individuals in reducing the risk of occupational burnout. The recommendations are an element of second-order prevention, otherwise known as early intervention, which relies on practical advice and theoretical knowledge to minimise the harmful effects of risk factors.

The recommendations also include the 'knowledge capsules' that provide a substantive supplement to the recommendations prepared in an accessible format for the audience. The knowledge capsules explain expert psychological concepts and include specific exercises and tips to help develop psychological resources.

The content of recommendations, along with knowledge capsules, can be found below.

3.3.1 Recommendations

■ RESULT: 0-14 POINTS - LOW RISK ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCING BURNOUT

Link: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1QZIBvUZGNNJ7Jvzghiwz9izaVSgBCAj7WrUo_kCZecY/edit?usp=sharing

Recommendations related to the result:

This means that you have the right resources to take on everyday challenges and can strike a balance between action and rest. This is a great skill to have! It's worthwhile for you to continue to take care of yourself on a regular basis and to be attentive to any signals from your body that indicate that you may be experiencing stress.

We would like to toss you a few ways that can help you continue to successfully avoid burnout.

- Take regular breaks

Recovery time is key. Try to take short breaks every 1-2 hours at work - even a few minutes can refresh your mind and improve your concentration.

- Set your boundaries

Do you sometimes find yourself saying 'yes' even though you know it's too much for you? Practicing assertiveness and skillfully setting boundaries in your work and private life can effectively help you to maintain balance and inner peace.

- Take care of a variety of activities

Remember to find time during the day for activities that you enjoy and that are a break from your responsibilities - this could be physical activity, reading a book or spending time with loved ones.

- Take a closer look at your emotions

If you are feeling tense, tired or discouraged, try to stop for a moment and think about what you can do for yourself at this moment. Perhaps just talking to someone you trust or taking a moment to breathe.

- Take care of your body

A healthy diet, enough sleep and regular movement are the foundations of your balance. Small changes, as walking instead of driving or turning off your phone before bedtime earlier, can pay huge dividends.

Remember that taking care of yourself regularly will help you stay well for longer. Observe yourself with sensitivity, and don't be afraid to reach out for help if you need it.



■ **RESULT: 15-30 POINTS - SLIGHT SIGNS OF RISK ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCING BURNOUT**

Link: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BRxXSo__xtJqsSWQ-fes0Xw4oG-m7achaHZwJL0V8BU/edit?usp=sharing

Recommendations related to the result:

Your score indicates that you may be experiencing some emotional and mental strain from your work responsibilities. This is an important time to listen to your needs and consider making small changes to help you maintain balance and look after your well-being.

We would like to offer you some ways that can help you feel stronger in the face of daily challenges.

- Identify and accept your limits

Try to notice the moments when you feel overwhelmed. Work on your assertiveness. It's OK to ask for help or delegate tasks when you feel you can't do everything yourself. Setting boundaries is a sign of taking care of yourself.

- Take a closer look at your emotions.

If you are feeling tense, tired or discouraged, try to stop for a moment and think about what you can do for yourself in this moment. Perhaps just talking to someone you trust or taking a moment to breathe.

- Small step towards rest

Ensure that you make time for recovery every day - this can range from physical activity to moments of relaxation to recharge your batteries. Adequate sleep and regular breaks are the basics to help prevent exhaustion.

- Introduce stress management techniques

Techniques such as mindfulness practice and relaxation are excellent ways to manage tension. Try taking a few moments during the day to focus on the present moment - these simple actions can help you manage stress more effectively and restore inner harmony.

- Social support

It's worth talking to your loved ones or colleagues about how you are feeling. Building support around you is very in more difficult moments. Sometimes, just sharing your thoughts with another person can bring relief.

- Get professional help

If you feel that stress is becoming too overwhelming, it is worth considering consulting a psychologist or therapist. A professional can help you regain control of the situation.

Remember that your mental and emotional health is paramount. Whatever difficulties you are facing, there are plenty of options for you to take care of yourself and regain your balance. This is the moment to focus on what really matters and take care of your needs.



■ **RESULT: 31-45 POINTS - MODERATE LEVEL OF RISK ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCING BURNOUT**

Link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1mXOWMG5Hd-BNQAAdrCemwZhcTIn-3HGotB4t62-mchN4/edit?usp=sharing>

Recommendations related to the result:

You are at a challenging time - your score indicates a moderate level of burnout. This is an excellent time to take care of your needs with care and attention, as your well-being and effectiveness in daily activities may already be under some strain.

We want to reassure you that you are not alone and that there are many ways to get back into balance.

● **Seek emotional support**

Talking to someone you trust - a friend, family member or co-worker - can bring you relief. Sometimes, just expressing your thoughts and emotions can help you feel better. If you feel it could be helpful, consider talking to a mental health professional such as a psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist. Such a consultation can provide new perspectives and help you find solutions tailored to your needs.

● **Engage in stress management techniques**

Techniques such as mindfulness and relaxation are effective and versatile methods for dealing with tension and stress. Introducing them into your daily life can help not only to reduce tension but also to improve your concentration and overall well-being. Start with a few minutes a day - for example, with simple breathing exercises to help you get back in touch with your body and mind. All you need to do is sit in a quiet place, close your eyes and focus on the rhythm of your breathing - this is the first step to calmness and inner balance. Regularity in even small practices can have surprising results and open the way to a deeper understanding of your needs.

● **Take a look at your priorities**

Think about which of your responsibilities are necessary and which you can postpone or delegate to someone else. Getting your schedule in order and getting rid of unnecessary burdens will allow you to carve out more time for rest and recuperation. Remember that prioritizing tasks is not only about efficiency, but also about looking after your own well-being.

● **Take care of your body**

Regular exercise, healthy eating and enough sleep are the foundations of well-being. Making even small changes in these areas can significantly improve your physical and mental condition.

● **Give yourself permission to rest**

Remember that taking care of yourself is not a sign of weakness - it's an investment in your health and future. Allow yourself moments of respite to help you recharge your batteries.

Your score indicates that you are at a point where taking care of yourself should become a priority. It's not always easy, but just taking steps towards change is evidence of your strength and determination.

If you feel you need support, don't hesitate to reach out for it - talking to loved ones, a psychologist or psychotherapist can be invaluable during difficult times. Mental health professionals can help you find the right tools and strategies to better cope with your challenges. Remember that every step, even the smallest, matters. You are important, and taking care of your mental health is an expression of concern for yourself and your future.



■ **RESULT: 46-60 POINTS - HIGH LEVEL OF RISK ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCING BURNOUT**

Link: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1k6bfq1l2Kyw8n1BD_WOPT8sPOLMFBSNy3RYi17rpKmE/edit?usp=sharing

Recommendations related to the result:

Your score may indicate that you are experiencing many of the symptoms of professional burnout. This means that you may be experiencing significant difficulties that are affecting your well-being, health and daily functioning. We would like to reassure you that this is a situation that can be dealt with, although it now requires your attention and opening to kind support from those around you. Remember that reaching out for help is an expression of strength and self-care.

It is important that you are not alone with this currently.

- Reach out for professional support

Consider contacting a psychologist, therapist or career counsellor. These people can help you understand what is affecting your well-being and develop a personalised action plan. Also, don't hesitate to consult your doctor, especially if you notice difficulty sleeping, chronic fatigue or other physical symptoms.

- Focus on your recovery

Your body and mind may now need time to rest. If possible, consider taking a holiday or reducing your responsibilities. Even short breaks can be the start of improvement.

- Find a space for your emotions

You may feel a variety of emotions - frustration, fatigue, helplessness. This is perfectly natural in your situation. Talking to someone you trust - a friend, a close friend - can help you express what you are feeling. Don't be afraid to talk about what is weighing you down.

- Take small steps to change

Even small changes such as taking a 10-minute walk, temporarily giving up extra responsibilities or practicing simple breathing exercises can bring you relief. Focus on what is achievable for you now - you don't have to change everything at once.

- Treat yourself with care

Remember that your health is a priority. Be gentle with yourself - avoid self-criticism and give yourself permission to recover. This is not a sign of weakness, but of self-responsibility.

Your body is sending signals that should not be ignored. It takes courage to decide to take action, but every step you take is a step towards better well-being. Remember that you are not alone with this - support and help is available and your health and well-being is paramount.



■ **RESULT: 61-72 POINTS - VERY HIGH LEVEL OF RISK ASSOCIATED WITH EXPERIENCING BURNOUT**

Link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/13DJUPYE07794GwL9FeRhkwTO0NIluzrWPYsUHegA-Tk/edit?usp=sharing>

Your score indicates that you may be severely experiencing symptoms of burnout. This may mean that you are currently experiencing a difficult time that is significantly affecting your life and well-being. It's very important that you've decided to look at the problem - it's a crucial first step in looking after yourself.

We want you to know that burnout is not an indication of weakness but an important signal from your body and mind telling you that it's time to stop and put your needs first. This is the moment to take care of yourself and your health with care.

- Immediate step: Seek professional help

Your score suggests that it is a good idea to contact a psychologist, therapist or doctor specialising in mental health as soon as possible. Professionals can help you understand the causes of your burnout and suggest appropriate solutions - from individual therapy to possible medical intervention, if necessary.

- Try to slow down and make room for rest

If it's possible, take a break from excess responsibilities. Consider a holiday or a break, even a short one, that will allow you to start the recovery process. Right now, your health is the most important thing.

- Find support in your environment

Don't be afraid to talk about your difficulties - talking to a close person who will listen to you without judging you can bring relief. Surround yourself with people who are supportive and understand what you are going through.

- Treat yourself with care

Avoid self-criticism, you really deserve to take care of yourself. Professional burnout can cause feelings of guilt or frustration. Remember that what you are experiencing is a natural reaction to prolonged stress and overload. You need time now to rebuild your resources - this is not a bad thing.

- Take small steps to change

In the beginning, any change, however small, makes a difference. It could be a daily walk, regular meals or a moment to take deep breaths. Over time, making bigger changes will become easier.

- Consider making long-term changes

In the future, as you recover, it will be useful to look at the sources of stress in your life and consider what changes might help you avoid similar difficulties. The most important thing now, however, is that you can feel safe, supported and cared for.

Remember: what you are feeling now is not a state that needs to last forever. With the help of the right people, rest and gradual changes, you can return to balance. Don't delay taking action - you are important and deserve care and support.



3.3.2 Knowledge capsules

■ Assertiveness

Imagine you are working on an important task when a colleague approaches you. They ask you to help them with their project, but you already have your hands full. Still, you find it difficult to say no because you like them and don't want to upset them.

Does this sound familiar?

All of us sometimes find it difficult to say “no”, even if we know that something is beyond our capabilities. Maybe we are afraid that someone will be offended? Or that they will consider us unkind? That is why it is worth learning assertiveness - the art of expressing your needs and boundaries in a firm, but at the same time polite and respectful way.

What is assertiveness?

Assertiveness is the ability to say what we really think and feel without feeling guilty or afraid. It is also about setting boundaries and taking care of us without hurting others.

How to set boundaries?

- Understand your needs - you have the right to take care of your time and comfort.
- Use clear messages - e.g. “I can't do that now, but I can help later”.
- Don't apologise for setting your boundaries - saying no is not a lack of kindness, it is self-care.

Exercise: “Three ways to say ‘no’”

Think about a situation in which it was difficult for you to say no. Now come up with three ways in which you could have said “no” assertively, e.g.:

- Short and sweet: “I can't right now, I have a lot of work.”
- With an alternative suggestion: “Not today, but I can help you for 10 minutes tomorrow.”
- With empathy but firmly: “I understand that this is important to you, but I have my own responsibilities, and I can't take care of it.”

Practice this regularly and saying no will become easier over time!

■ Stress

Stress - your enemy or ally?

Imagine you have an important meeting or exam. You feel your heart beating faster, your palms sweating, and your thoughts start to revolve around what could go wrong. This is stress - the body's natural response to challenges and threats.

Sounds familiar?

We all experience stress. It is a natural mechanism that can be both motivating and destructive. The extent to which it helps or harms us depends on its intensity and duration.

When does stress help us?

In the right doses, stress can be positive - it mobilises the body to act, improves concentration and increases efficiency. We call this motivating stress eustress.



When does stress harm us?

When stress becomes too intense or lasts too long, the body begins to overload. Once the peak coping capacity has been exceeded, further pressure leads to distress, i.e. negative stress, which weakens our adaptive mechanisms.

What is stress?

Stress is the body's reaction to situations perceived as difficult, demanding or threatening. The nervous system and hormones play a key role in its mechanism - mainly cortisol and adrenaline, which mobilise the body to act.

Effects of chronic stress

If stress persists for a long time, it can lead to serious health consequences, such as:

- Burnout - chronic fatigue, lack of motivation, indifference to work.
- Mental health - anxiety, depression, excessive irritability, difficulty concentrating.
- Physical health - high blood pressure, heart disease, weakened immune system.
- Difficulties in relationships - conflicts, avoidance of contact, feeling of loneliness.

Whether stress becomes our ally, or our enemy depends on how we deal with it. The key is to consciously manage your emotions, make sure you get enough rest and use effective stress management strategies.

Remember! We cannot eliminate stress, but we can learn to manage it in a way that supports us, not weakens us!

■ Emotions

Do emotions control your day?

Imagine receiving a critical comment about your work. In an instant, you feel yourself getting hot, your heart starts beating faster, and thoughts like "I'm not cut out for this" or "I always do something wrong" pop into your head. A moment later, you feel sad, angry or frustrated.

Sounds familiar?

Each of us experiences emotions every day. They are like signposts - they inform us what is happening to us and how to react to the surrounding world. Thanks to them, we know what makes us happy, what arouses fear and what makes us nervous. They are a natural and necessary part of our lives.

What are emotions and how do they arise?

Emotions are our internal reactions to what is happening around us. However, they do not appear on their own - they result from how we interpret a given situation. This is perfectly illustrated by the ABC model by Ellis:

- A (Activating event) - a situation
- B (Beliefs) - thoughts and beliefs about this situation
- C (Consequence) - consequences in the form of emotions and behaviour

Example:

- Situation (A): Your boss asks you to have a talk with him at the end of the day.
- Thoughts (B): "He definitely wants to criticise me," "I did something wrong."
- Emotions (C): Anxiety, fear, tension.



· Behaviour: You avoid eye contact; you feel tension in your body.

But what if you think differently?

New interpretation: “Maybe he wants to thank me for the last assignment” or “It’s normal for him to have conversations with employees sometimes.”

New emotions: Calm or slight anxiety, but no panic.

Behaviour: You go to the meeting without any tension.

As you can see, it is not the situation itself that triggers our emotions, but the way we interpret it.

Table 1: Exercise: Thoughts and emotions table

Situation	Thoughts	Emotions	Sensations in the body	Behaviour
What happened?	What thoughts came to mind?	What did I feel?	How did my body react?	What did I do?

Exercise for regulating emotions: “Distant perspective”

When you feel strong emotions, try to look at the situation from someone else’s perspective:

- Imagine that a friend is experiencing what you are. What advice would you give him/her?
- How will this situation look like in a week, a month, a year? Will it be as important then?
- What would someone who is not involved say?

This exercise helps you to distance yourself from difficult situations and to reduce the intensity of your emotions.

Remember: Emotions are important, but it is up to us how we react to them!

■ **Take care of a variety of activities**

Taking a break from screens allows you to calm your mind and regenerate your body. It is important to take time for an activity that you enjoy and to be in the here and now. Engaging in activities that help you feel the moment better reduces the negative effects of information overload. Information overload often leads to feelings of tension and stress, so it is worth consciously limiting contact with technology and introducing activities into your daily routine that will allow you to fully disconnect from the constant flow of stimuli. It is crucial to find the right balance between using devices and time set aside for relaxation.

Here are some ideas for activities that can replace the daily unproductive use of technology:

Creative activities, e.g. painting, drawing, writing (diary, poetry or short stories), embroidery, sewing, handicrafts (DIY projects), cooking, baking, doing jigsaw puzzles.

Social activities, e.g. meeting up with friends, spending time with family, playing board games

Relaxation and lifestyle, meditation, mindfulness, conscious breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, long relaxing baths, listening to relaxation music, spending time alone

Development and education, e.g. learning new skills from books and guides, reading, participating in various workshops, learning a language



Contact with nature, e.g. a walk in the forest, a picnic, camping, bird watching, working in the garden, spending time with your pet, taking care of plants

Prioritise tasks and define your sphere of influence - your tools to effectively fight overload

One of the key factors contributing to the development of burnout is task overload resulting from the feeling that all things are equally urgent and important. A good employee wants to perform all assigned tasks to the best of his or her ability and in the shortest possible time. However, the reality is that each of us has our own limited capacity, and it is difficult for us to complete too many tasks at once. Trying to focus our attention on everything at one time can reduce our efficiency, which will only reinforce the sense of frustration we feel about our work.

1. Prioritisation of tasks - how to separate what is most important?

One effective tool you may have already heard of is the Eisenhower matrix, which helps classify tasks using two questions

- Is this task urgent? = Do I have limited time to complete it? Does this task require immediate action?
- Is this task important? = How important is it for me to complete this task? Does its performance affect the quality of my life?

By writing out all your current tasks, you are able to assign them to one of four categories and place them in a specific quadrant of the matrix:

Table 2: Matrix of current tasks

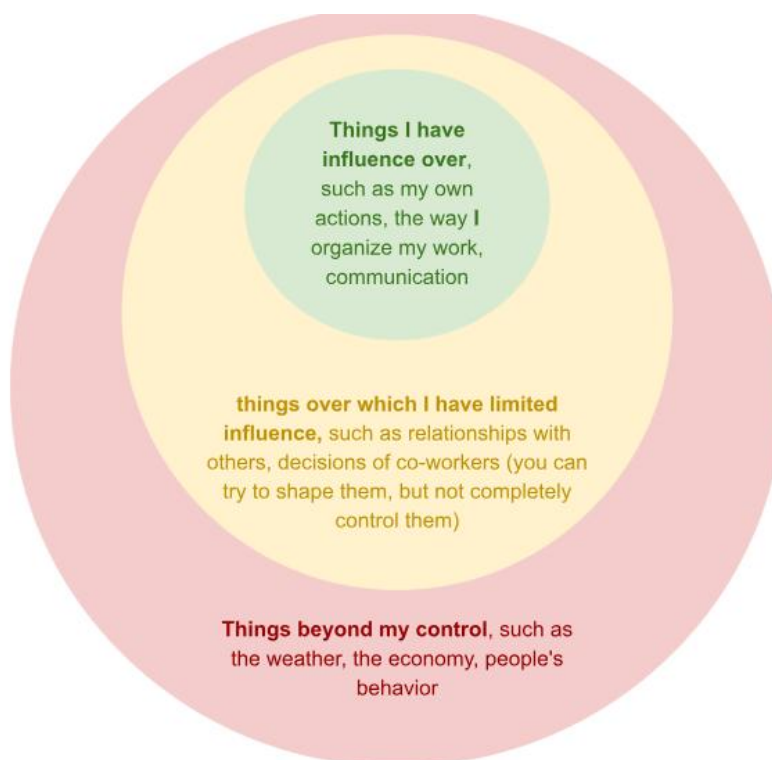
	Urgent	Non-urgent
Important	Urgent and important tasks - require immediate attention, such as sudden crises, deadlines that cannot be postponed	Important but non-urgent tasks - strategic tasks, long-term goals, personal development. Their implementation is important from a subjective point of view
Not important	Urgent but unimportant tasks - things that seem urgent but are not subjectively important. You can try to delegate or limit them	Tasks neither urgent nor important - time-consuming activities that add no real value. You can try to dispense with them by gaining time to complete other tasks



2. Defining my sphere of influence - what can I control?

A huge step to reducing the perceived overload is to understand that you have no control over everything that happens around you.

Figure 2: The sphere of influence model



Focusing on the tasks that lie within your own sphere of influence helps you organise your responsibilities, avoid overwork and regain a sense of agency in your daily functioning. Try, as an exercise, to make your own influence map and put on it the events you are currently struggling with.

■ Self-compassion: How can it help to fight burnout?

Self-compassion is the ability to treat yourself with kindness and understanding in difficult moments, instead of criticising or condemning yourself. It is an approach that helps you build a healthy relationship with yourself, especially in the face of setbacks, mistakes and challenges that are an inevitable part of life.

What is self-compassion?

Self-compassion consists of three basic elements that together form a supportive approach:

- Kindness towards oneself - instead of judging oneself for mistakes, we treat ourselves with the same care that we would show to a friend in a similar situation. We try not to judge ourselves or feel bad about experiencing difficulties.
- Universality of human experience - recognising that difficulties are part of life and that we are not alone in them. Everyone experiences challenges, struggles and failures, which helps us feel less isolated.
- Mindfulness - being aware of your emotions without suppressing or over-identifying with them. This allows you to accept your feelings and thoughts without excessive criticism.

How can you practice self-compassion daily?

1. Be supportive of yourself



Instead of thinking, “I’m no good, I can’t do this,” try: “This is a difficult moment, everyone has bad days. I need to rest.”

Accept your feelings without judging them.

Talk to yourself with care and tenderness, as if you were talking to someone very close to you.

2. Notice your needs

Don't ignore your tiredness and stress - stop, ask yourself what you really need.

Respond to your body's signals and emotions with care.

3. Formulate and repeat supportive thoughts

“I am good enough, even when not everything goes according to plan.”

“I deserve to rest and regenerate.”

“What I feel is natural. I am not alone in this.”

“I have the right to be gentle with myself”

Self-compassion helps to deal with burnout and stress. Instead of self-criticism, be gentle; instead of ignoring your needs, be mindful. By practicing these small steps, you can improve your quality of life and regain your inner balance.

■ Relaxation

Relaxation is the deliberate loosening of the body and mind, which helps to reduce tension, stress and improve well-being. In today's fast-paced life, our body is often in “fight or flight” mode, which leads to chronic tension, fatigue and health problems.

Regular relaxation exercises lower the level of cortisol (stress hormone), improve concentration and facilitate regeneration of the body. Just a few minutes a day are enough to feel the difference!

Simple relaxation exercises

Diaphragmatic breathing (“belly breathing”)

Breathing is one of the fastest relaxation tools - just a few deep breaths are enough to calm the nervous system and relax the body.

How to do it?

1. Sit or lie down comfortably, place one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
2. Inhale slowly through your nose, directing the air towards your abdomen (not your chest).
3. Hold your breath for 2 seconds, then exhale slowly through your mouth.
4. Repeat 5-10 times, focusing on your breathing rhythm and bodily sensations.

Effect: Calmer pulse, muscle relaxation, tension reduction.

2. Progressive muscle relaxation

This technique helps you consciously relax your body by tensing and relaxing individual muscle groups.

How to do it?

1. Sit comfortably or lie down in a quiet place.
2. Start with your feet - tense your muscles for 5 seconds and then relax them completely.
3. Slowly move up - calves, thighs, stomach, arms, hands, neck, face.
4. Focus on the feeling of the difference between tension and relaxation.

Effect: Deep relaxation, release of accumulated tension in the body.

3. Visualisation - “safe place”

Our imagination can be a powerful tool for relaxation. Visualisation helps you detach from stress and take your mind to a peaceful place.

How to do it?

1. Close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel safe and calm (e.g. beach, forest, mountains).
2. Focus on the details - what colours do you see? What sounds do you hear? What scents do you smell?
3. Breathe calmly and allow yourself a moment of rest in this place.

Effect: Mental relaxation, improved mood, stress reduction.



■ Mindfulness

Have you ever been driving or walking somewhere and suddenly realised that you can't remember the route you just took? Or eaten a meal so quickly that you barely tasted it?

That's what a lack of mindfulness feels like.

Mindfulness is the conscious directing of attention to what is happening here and now - without judging, analysing or thinking about the past or future. It is the ability to be fully present in the moment, to notice your thoughts, emotions and body signals without automatically reacting to them.

Mindfulness and stress

Stress often results from excessive worrying about the future or dwelling on the past. Mindfulness helps us to stop this mechanism, giving us space to react consciously instead of automatically panicking.

Mindfulness at work helps to manage stress better and increase concentration and efficiency. It is not about "turning off your thoughts", but about consciously focusing on the present moment - without judging and unnecessary pressure.

How does mindfulness help at work?

- It reduces stress - it helps you react consciously instead of automatically panicking.
- Improves concentration - we are less likely to be distracted.
- Increases mental resilience - it makes it easier to deal with difficult situations.
- Improves relationships - it helps us to listen to and understand our colleagues better.

Exercises for mindfulness at work

1. Mindful break - stop for 1 minute

At work, we often act on the go, not noticing tension and stress. Try this exercise:

1. Take a break from work. Close your eyes or focus your gaze on a single point.
2. Take three deep breaths - feel the air filling your lungs and slowly leaving them.
3. Pay attention to your body - are your shoulders tense, your jaw clenched? Relax them.
4. Observe your thoughts for a moment, but don't judge them. Just notice what's going on.
5. After a minute, go back to work - but consciously, with more self-control.

This simple exercise reduces stress and helps you to get back to work with a clearer head.

2. Listen carefully - focus on the conversation

How many times during a meeting do you think about what you are going to say next instead of listening to the other person? Listening carefully improves communication and reduces tension at work.

Exercise:

1. During a conversation, focus exclusively on the other person - don't think about what you will say later.
2. Notice the other person's tone of voice, body language and emotions.
3. Refrain from interrupting - give yourself a few seconds to think of an answer.
4. After the conversation, reflect on whether you were able to be truly present.

This exercise improves work relationships and reduces misunderstandings.

3. Focused work - concentrate on one task

Multitasking is a myth - being distracted between different tasks reduces productivity and causes stress. Try the "one task at a time" approach.

- Choose one task that you have to do.
- Turn off notifications and close unnecessary browser tabs.
- Focus only on this activity - if your mind wanders to other things, gently return to work.
- After completing the task, take a short break and only then move on to the next thing.

This way, you work more effectively and reduce the stress associated with the chaos of responsibilities.

Mindfulness: why is it worth practising?

Work is often a source of stress, but we can learn to consciously manage our attention and emotions. Mindfulness does not require additional time - all we have to do is start paying more attention to what we are doing at the moment.

Key benefits of mindfulness at work:



- Greater concentration
- Less tension and stress
- Better relationships with colleagues
- More effective work

Try one of these exercises today and see how it will affect your everyday work!



4 REFERENCES

1. Basinska, B. A., Gruszczynska, E., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2023). The Polish adaptation of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT-PL) by Schaufeli et al. *Psychiatria polska*, 57(1), 223-235.