



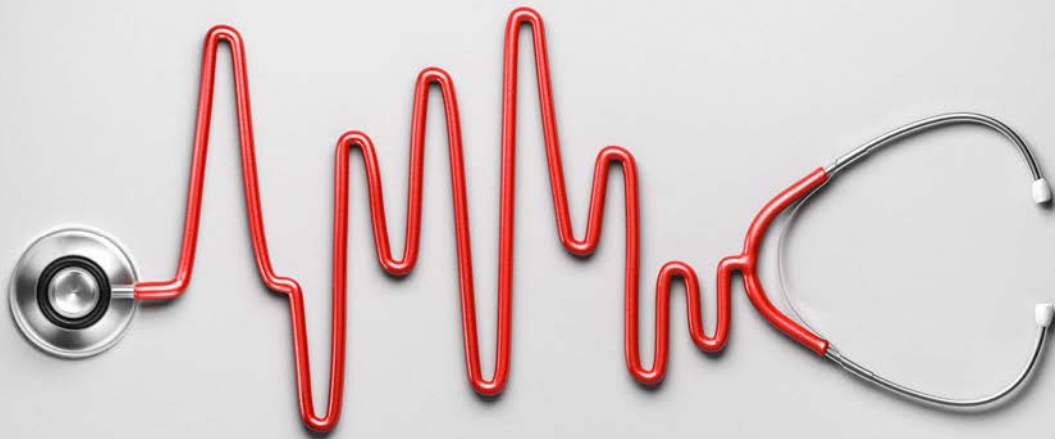
MCIT: Signs, Causes and Solutions for a Toxic Work Culture

Objectives

- **Stress and Burnout Refresher**
- **What is a toxic work environment?
Signs and symptoms**
- **How did it get this way? Causes**
- **Effects of Toxicity**
- **How to address Toxicity**
- **Microaggressions, harassment,
bullying, inappropriate behavior**
- **What is a healthy Workplace**
- **Importance and benefits to having a
healthy Workplace**
- **Strategies to change**



Stress

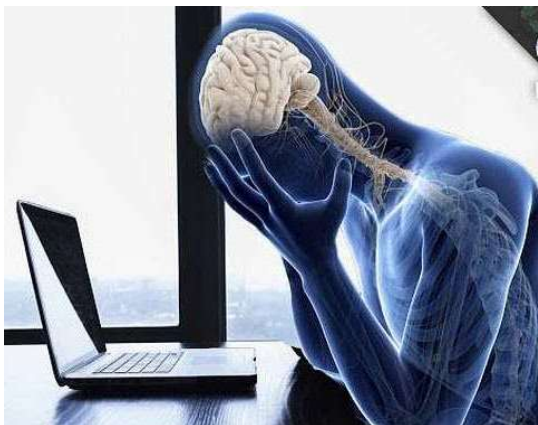


How stressed am I?

How do I know?

What can I do?

DEGREES OF STRESS



POSITIVE

Brief increases in heart rate; intensified focus; mild elevation in levels of stress hormones

TOLERABLE

Serious but temporary stress responses mitigated by positive, buffering influences or relationships

TOXIC

Intense and prolonged activation of stress response systems without positive, buffering influences or relationships

Mental Health Continuum Model



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal mood fluctuations • Calm & takes things in stride • Good sense of humour • Performing well • In control mentally • Normal sleep patterns • Few sleep difficulties • Physically well • Good energy level • Physically and socially active • No or limited alcohol use/ gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritable / impatient • Nervous • Sadness / overwhelmed • Displaced sarcasm • Procrastination • Forgetfulness • Trouble sleeping • Intrusive thoughts • Nightmares • Muscle tension / headaches • Low energy • Decreased activity/socializing • Regular but controlled alcohol use / gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger • Anxiety • Pervasively sad / hopeless • Negative attitude • Poor performance / workaholic • Poor concentration / decisions • Restless disturbed sleep • Recurrent images / nightmares • Increased aches and pains • Increased fatigue • Avoidance • Withdrawal • Increased alcohol use / gambling is hard to control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angry outbursts / aggression • Excessive anxiety / panic attacks • Depressed / suicidal thoughts • Over insubordination • Can't perform duties, control behaviour or concentrate • Can't fall asleep or stay asleep • Sleeping too much or too little • Physical illnesses • Constant fatigue • Not going out or answering phone • Alcohol or gambling addiction • Other addictions
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What is Burnout ?

Burn-out is defined in ICD-11 as follows:

"Burn-out is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.

Heavy or almost impossible workload

Role ambiguity or unclear expectations

Lack of recognition

Little or no control over workload & responsibilities

Poor or lacking support system

Difficult or challenging clients

Inadequate pay and benefits

Bureaucracy and paperwork

Value conflicts between personal & work life

Personality conflict with coworker/supervisor

Burnout

*Burn-out is included in the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon. It is **not** classified as a medical condition.*

Stress	Burnout
You experience emotions more intensely (Anxiety, Mood Swings, Guilt)	You experience emotions flattening out (Mental Depression, impatience, Irritability)
Causes hyperactivity/alertness	Causes a helpless feeling
You have less energy, experience fatigue	You have less motivation and hope, Chronic Exhaustion
Can lead to anxiety, physiological changes	Can lead to depression, psychosomatic complaints
Difficulty concentrating, and forgets things easily	Forgetfulness is frequent, autopilot state, zoned out
Dissatisfaction with work; job commitment drops off	Bored and cynical about work; job commitment virtually zero

Key Signs of a toxic work environment

A toxic working environment is one where you feel psychologically unsafe. There's often a general feeling of negativity, unhealthy competition, and aggression.



Hostility or aggressiveness

Narcissism or lack of accountability or responsibility

Rudeness, disrespect or bullying towards colleagues or clients

Actions or statements that undermine team motivation or business goals

Resistance to change or criticism

Contributors of toxicity

- Micromanagement
- Excessive gossip
- Cliquish behavior
- Passive aggressive boss or coworkers
- Harassment or discrimination
- Bullying
- Unsafe working conditions
- Microaggressions (indirect or subtle prejudice)
- Cutthroat working conditions (environment of jealousy for others' success or coworker trying to make you look bad or take credit for your work)/ Sabotage



Contributors of toxicity cont...

- Sarcasm
- Walking away without answering-dismissive behavior
- Defensiveness
- Passive-aggressiveness or negative environment
- Blame
- Cynicism
- Emotional reactivity
- Lack of growth opportunities
- Unrealistic workloads
- Unclear expectations
- Inconsistency in policy follow-through





Forms of Bullying Behavior

- Spreading rumors and gossiping
- Recurring unfair criticism
- Social bantering and teasing
- Yelling, shouting and screaming
- Insults and behind-the-back put downs
- Hostile glares and other intimidating gestures
- Humiliating hazing practices
- Aggressive emails or notes
- Overt threats and aggression or violence
- Cyber bullying

Subtle Workplace Bullying

- Ignoring, isolation, and exclusion
- Minimization
- Creating hostility
- Scapegoating/taking credit
- Deception
- Manipulation of roles





What is Not Workplace Bullying

- Expressing differences of opinion
- Offering constructive feedback
- Making a legitimate complaint about another employee's conduct
- Reasonable management action

Definition of Harassment

- Unwelcome conduct based on a protected class as race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or genetic information.
- Includes “sexual harassment” or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal/physical harassment of a sexual nature.

Unlawful when:

- Quid pro quo
- Hostile work environment

*U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)



Microaggression

“The standard definition for microaggression is a verbal or nonverbal slight that impacts an individual who might identify as being from a marginalized or nonmainstream community,” ... A microaggression can even come in the form of an organizational process that was designed to keep specific groups from advancing. ... You’re not going to experience a microaggression and say, “Oh, that’s a microaggression.” Instead, you’ll feel as if an aspect of yourself, an aspect of your identity or even the intersectionality (how the effects of different kinds of discrimination combine or overlap) of your identity wasn’t valued or respected.



Types of microaggressions

There are three main types of microaggressions:

Microassaults

Microinsults

Microinvalidations

Microassaults

- *Microassaults occur when someone engages in intentional discrimination, bullying, or insensitivity.*
- Examples include using racial slurs, telling racist jokes, displaying offensive symbols, and mocking a group's cultural norms.
- Microassaults commonly form the basis of discrimination and harassment claims.

Microinsults

Microinsults occur when someone intentionally or unintentionally demeans another person on the basis of their protected class.

Microinsults can be intentional or unintentional and are sometimes couched as compliments. Examples include asking a person of color how they got into an Ivy League school, assuming a woman is in a secretarial role, avoiding saying someone's name because it is unfamiliar, expressing surprise that an older employee is skilled at using computers, commenting that a Black colleague is so articulate, complimenting an Asian colleague's English, or reassuring someone that they are not like a negative stereotype imposed on their culture.

In each case, the perpetrator is acting upon assumptions based upon a person's membership of a culture or protected class. **These comments send the message that 'It is surprising that a member of your group is successful,' or 'You do not belong here.'**

Microinvalidations

Microinvalidations occur when someone intentionally or unintentionally excludes, ignores, or discredits a person based on their membership in a culture or protected class.

One example is expressing color-blindness by making comments such as, 'I don't see color,' or 'There is only one race: the human race.' This may have the effect of dismissing a person's racial identity by sending the message that a person's race and culture, which may be an integral and celebrated part of that person's identity, are unimportant. Likewise, comments on meritocracy can be microinvalidations, such as, 'Everyone can succeed if they work hard enough,' or 'I succeeded by pulling myself up by my bootstraps, not by sitting back and waiting for a handout.'

These types of comments dismiss the structural barriers that many people of color experience and can send the message that 'People of color are given unfair advantages.'

How a toxic work environment can affect mental health

Most of us spend a good portion of our day at work. If 8 hours of your day are filled with toxicity, it can significantly affect your mental health.

- Research shows that a toxic workplace — including harassment, bullying, and ostracism — is a significant source of psychological strain for employees and can lead to high levels of stress and burnout.
- This toxicity can also promote counterproductive behavior at work and ruin the efficiency of the organization. It causes disengagement among employees, decreases productivity, stifles creativity and innovation, and results in high turnover.
- According to a recent report from MIT Sloan Management Review, a toxic workplace culture is over 10 times more likely to contribute to an employee quitting their job than low pay.
- In fact, the report shows that a toxic work environment was the number one reason people left their jobs during the post-COVID-19 "Great Resignation" — not because of compensation (as most people believed).

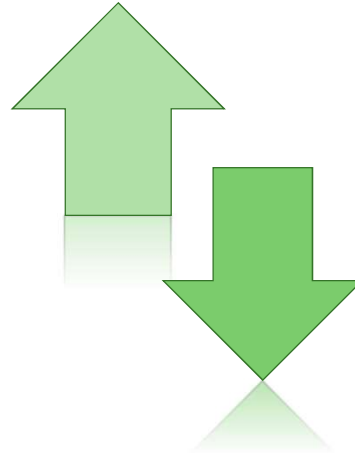
Organizational Impact of Behavior Issues

Increase

- Accidents/errors
- Medical benefit usage/ LOA
- Turnover

Decrease

- Productivity/creativity
- Morale (e.g., teamwork)
- Authority



SOLUTIONS



Addressing Inappropriate Behavior

D	<p>Describe the inappropriate behavior to aggressor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid being accusatory. • Share specific examples.
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the Impact of the behavior on a personal and organizational level. • Describe the feelings it causes and how it affects productivity.
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause to gauge aggressor Response. • If aggressor apologizes, thank them and stop here; <i>if not</i>, proceed to Explain.
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the consequence of continuing inappropriate behavior. • If aggressor continues, it will be reported to management/HR.

How to Address and Handle Employee Misconduct



Tangible Actions

- Virtual water cooler meetings
- Listening is a superpower
- Management training
- Prevention practices and creating a stigma free environment
- Social activities, team building and inclusive events
- Delegate tasks
- Remain positive
- BE CONSISTENT



Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Centered on the worker voice and equity, these five Essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being. Each Essential is grounded in two human needs, shared across industries and roles.



Components

Creating a plan with all workers to enact these components can help reimagine workplaces as engines of well-being.

Protection from Harm

- Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety
- Enable adequate rest
- Normalize and support mental health
- Operationalize DEIA* norms, policies, and programs

Connection & Community

- Create cultures of inclusion and belonging
- Cultivate trusted relationships
- Foster collaboration and teamwork

Work-Life Harmony

- Provide more autonomy over how work is done
- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible
- Increase access to paid leave
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time

Mattering at Work

- Provide a living wage
- Engage workers in workplace decisions
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition
- Connect individual work with organizational mission

Opportunity for Growth

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility



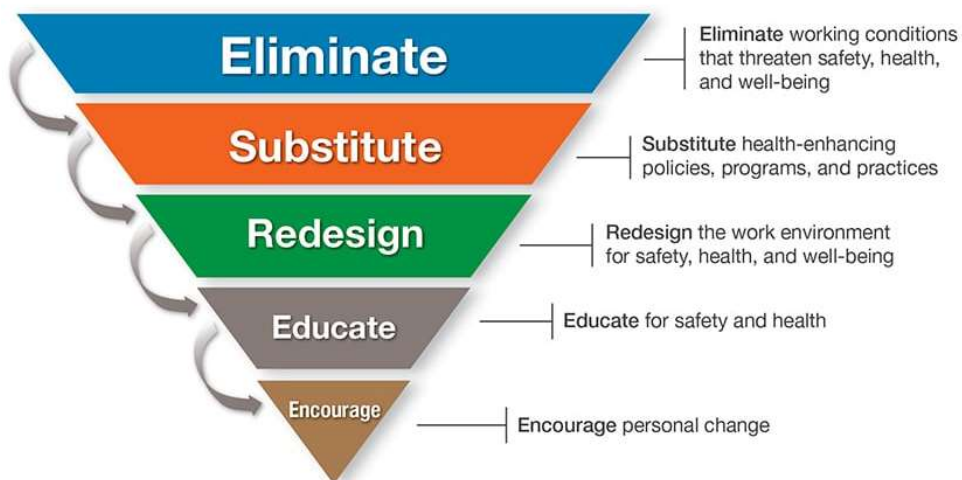
Worker well-being domains

The NIOSH WellBQ comprises the five domains of worker well-being identified by NIOSH and the RAND Corporation. The domains are described in *Expanding the Paradigm of Occupational Safety and Health: A New Framework for Worker Well-Being*:

1. Work Evaluation and Experience
2. Workplace Policies and Culture
3. Workplace Physical Environment and Safety Climate
4. Health Status
5. Home, Community, and Society



Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH Total Worker Health®

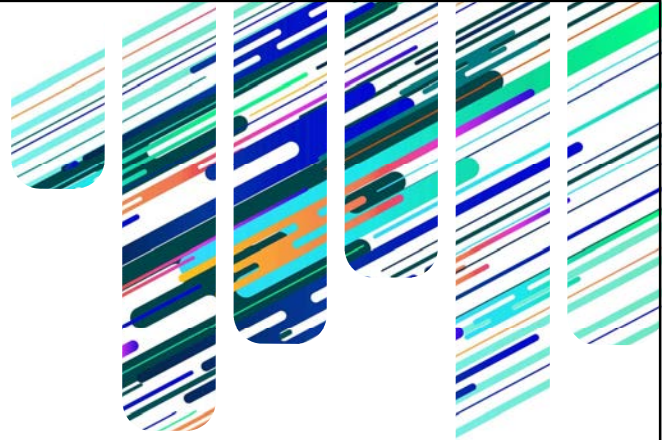


Suggested Citation: NIOSH (2016). Fundamentals of total worker health approaches: essential elements for advancing worker safety, health, and well-being. By Lee MP, Hudson H, Richards R, Chang CC, Chosewood LC, Schill AL, on behalf of the NIOSH Office for Total Worker Health. Cincinnati, OH: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2017-112.



Ask yourself...

- Are employees increasingly absent?
Is there a pattern?
- Are any teams experiencing a sudden loss of productivity?
- Are departments experiencing high turnover rates?
- Do employee satisfaction surveys indicate any signs of having experienced negative behavior?
- Whose voice are we missing?



Self Care

- Exercise
- Journaling
- Eating well
- Seeing friends, etc.
- Sleep
- Relaxation
- Gratitude, Humor
- Avoid use/overuse of substances
- As well as...
 - Massage
 - Acupuncture
 - Meditation
 - Music, Art
 - Aromatherapy
 - Spirituality/religion...



Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- Counseling Sessions (6)
- Life Coaching
- In-the-moment support
- Supervisor Support/Consultation
- Parent Coaching and Referrals
- Elder and Child-Care Referrals
- Financial Counseling
- Legal Consultations
- Critical Incident Response
- Crisis Debriefings



1-800-550-6248

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Mental Health First Aid Training: Free

- [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)
 - Psychological First Aid Online Course | Red Cross
- [Mentalhealthfirstaid.org](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)
 - Find a Course or Instructor - Mental Heal
- [Samhsa.org](https://www.samhsa.org)
 - Psychological First Aid Online | SAMHSA



Resources

- U.S. Surgeon General Releases New Framework for Mental Health & Well-Being in the Workplace | HHS.gov
 - Total Worker Health® Program | Total Worker Health | CDC
 - Expanding the Paradigm of Occupational Safety and Health: A New Framework for Worker Well-Being:
 - Microaggressions in the Workplace | WCI, Inc (wciinc.org)
 - Burn-out an "occupational phenomenon": International Classification of Diseases (who.int)
 - *U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Chari, Ramya PhD; Chang, Chia-Chia MPH, MBA; Sauter, Steven L. PhD; Petrun Sayers, Elizabeth L. PhD; Cerully, Jennifer L. PhD; Schulte, Paul PhD; Schill, Anita L. PhD; Uscher-Pines, Lori PhD. Expanding the Paradigm of Occupational Safety and Health: A New Framework for Worker Well-Being. Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine 60(7):p 589-593, July 2018. | DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000001330

Surgeon Generals Framework

https://youtu.be/2_ifFuTGdK

