



DOWNWARD SPIRAL

Burnout is as bad for employees as it is for employers. Workers who say they very often or always experience burnout at work are:

- 63%**
more likely
to take a
sick day
- 23%**
more likely
to visit the
emergency
room
- 13%**
less
confident
in their
performance
- 1/2**
as likely to
discuss how
to approach
performance
goals with
their manager
- 2.6x**
as likely to
leave their
current
employer

Source: Gallup, 2018

WORK-LIFE REBALANCING

“**Millennial burnout**” became a hot topic earlier this year when a BuzzFeed article on the phenomenon went viral. The “working all the time” mindset was confirmed by millions of readers—and dismissed by some as a cover for laziness or common fatigue.

Recent surveys do support the idea of a brewing burnout crisis. They indicate, however, that it is not exclusive to the millennial generation. In the U.S., 23 percent of employees say they frequently or constantly feel burned out at work, according to a 2018 Gallup survey. And 44 percent say they sometimes feel burned out. (The numbers are 28 percent and 45 percent, respectively, for millennial respondents only.)

Step back and it is easy to see that an out-of-whack work-life balance is a global problem. Sixty percent of Indian professionals rate their work-life balance as “average to terrible,” according to a 2019 Monster.com survey. Two-thirds of Indian respondents said they think about work while not at the office, and about half of people in relationships said a lack of work-life balance makes them or their partner “irritable or ill-tempered.” For professionals in Singapore and Malaysia, 35 percent and nearly 50 percent of employees, respectively, are not satisfied with their work-life balance, according to a Monster.com survey also conducted this year.

It seems that managers, alone, might hold much of the power to fix the problem. A Gallup study from 2018 highlighted these five factors as the most important to contributing to burnout: unfair treatment, unmanageable workload, lack of role clarity, lack of communication and support from a manager, and unreasonable time pressure. With these issues in mind, the study recommends managers focus on five solutions: listen to employees’ work-related problems, encourage teamwork, make everyone’s opinion count, make work purposeful, and focus on strengths-based feedback and development.

And managers would do well to look after themselves also, write Gallup’s Director of Research and Strategy, Workplace Management Ben Wigert and Research Manager Sangeeta Agrawal. “Managers are people, too, and they have the same fundamental human needs as individual contributors: the need to be heard, to feel like they are part of a team, to know they matter, to contribute meaningfully, and to learn and grow.” Engaged managers are more likely to have engaged direct reports too. So do not forget to take care of yourself.