



Workforce Capability Project

Burnout

More and more employees in Aotearoa New Zealand are suffering from burnout. A research release from Massey University in May 2024 says that “with new research revealing one in two workers are reporting severe burnout, the rate of burnout experienced in the workforce has risen to a record high, surpassing levels seen at the height of the pandemic”. This research was led by Professor Jarrod Haar (Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Mahuta) and is informed by data collected in April of this year, from 1000 representative kiwi employees, whom Professor Haar has been tracking three times a year since 2020. Professor Haar’s research defines burnout as having four dimensions, including emotional exhaustion, mental distancing, cognitive impairment and emotional impairment.

You can read more about the research, including what it has uncovered as the main reason for burnout, [here](#).

As employers, CHPs need to be managing and mitigating health and safety risks including psychosocial risks and risks to worker mental health. Burnout is a psychosocial risk, and given the increasing numbers of affected kiwi workers, it appears that there is more that employers could or should be doing to address it. The World Health Organisation has produced [this infographic](#) of its recommended preventative measures, most of which are reiterated on [the Worksafe website](#) and in Worksafe’s [Draft Mentally Healthy Work - Good Practice Guidelines for Managing Psychosocial Risks at Work](#). Being ‘burned out’ is not only a dreadful state for the employee, but it affects the employer through how much leave an employee may take, costs of treatment if paid by the employer, and the cost to other staff having to ‘pick up the slack’ if someone is on leave with burnout, or resigns. This will have a downstream effect on tenants, clients and whānau who will not be getting the best possible ‘service’ from a burned out workforce.

To help you educate leaders and staff about burnout and stress, Telus Health have made a number of fact sheets and tip sheets available in [this shared folder](#), which you are more than welcome to download and share within your organisation.

Finally, if you’re a podcast fan, the episode “[Burnout is everyone’s problem](#)” from Adam Grant’s *Worklife* podcast is a great listen. Adam Grant is a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, specialising in organisational psychology.

Whichever tool you choose, making a plan to reduce the risk of burnout in your organisation is in everyone’s interest.