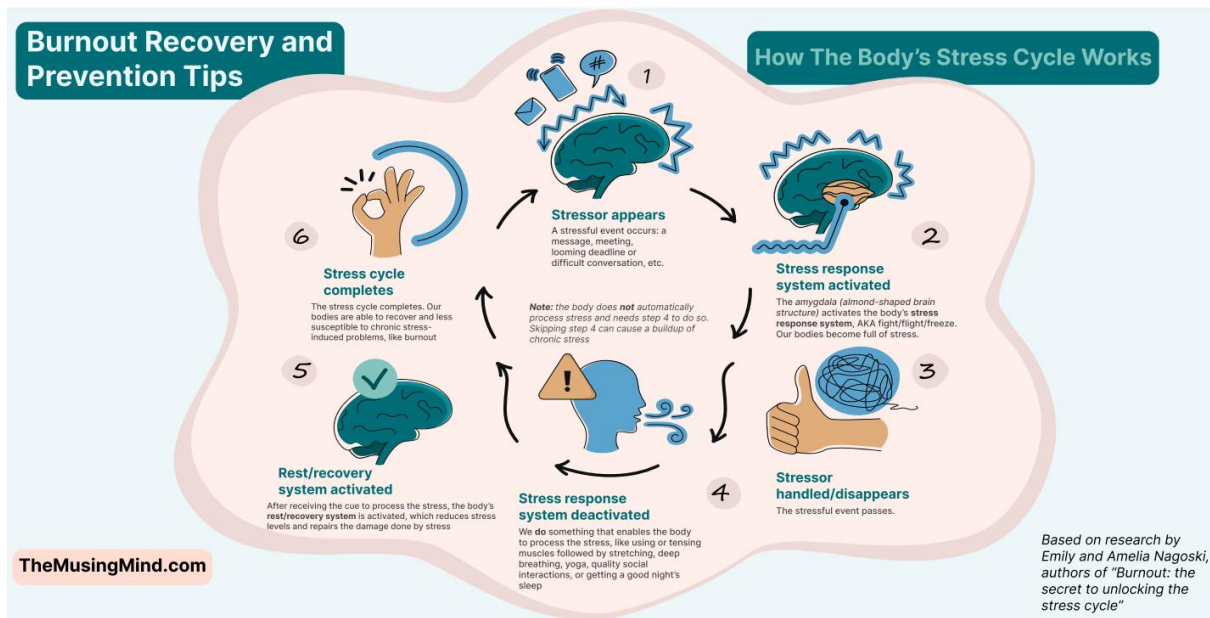


Workforce Capability Project

Supporting Your People



This month's Supporting your People article is about the importance of completing the stress cycle.

New Zealand is currently going through a really tough patch and that is putting many people in prolonged periods of stress - and community housing workers are no exception! Stress is described by the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand as a physical, mental, or emotional response to a situation we experience as a demand or pressure - which are called stressors. When you encounter a stressor, our bodies react by releasing adrenaline, putting us into an alarmed state. Our bodies need us to end our alarmed state, which is described as 'ending the stress cycle'. Emily and Amelia Nagoski, authors of "Burnout: the secret to unlocking the stress cycle", how this cycle needs to be actively worked through to reduce stress-induced problems like burnout. This [infographic](https://themusingmind.com) from themusingmind.com shows the full stress cycle - including how it can be closed.

When kaimahi (staff) don't allow themselves to complete a stress cycle, even if they seem to have 'recovered', there is a good chance that they are still experiencing that stress and their bodies don't know that the danger has passed. When this continues, this contributes to the increased sensitivity to additional stressors and increases the risk of chronic stress-related

health issues, such as anxiety, fatigue, depression, heart disease, stomach ulcers, sleep problems, psychiatric disorders, and burnout.

Stress is something that affects everyone, and not all of us appreciate the need to 'complete the cycle' when we feel stressed. Encourage your kaimahi to commit to simple actions like getting enough sleep, physical exercise, expressing emotions such as laughing or crying, and practising deep breathing: these are all simple ways to help our bodies to relax. [This handout](#) from the Oregon Health and Science University provides more detail on effective techniques for reducing stress: you may like to share it with your colleagues or use a team meeting to brainstorm ideas for finishing the cycle.

If you want to learn more about this and love books, check out *Burnout: The Secret to Solving the Stress Cycle* by *Emily Nagoski*, *Amelia Nagoski* or listen to them talk about this topic on [this podcast](#).