

When the Going Gets Tough: Improving Mental Health and Avoiding Burnout as a Legal Professional



Objectives

At the completion of this presentation, participants are equipped to:

- Define Burnout;
- Identify signs and symptoms of burnout in themselves and others;
- Identify the link between mental health, burnout, and boundaries;
- Implement 2 daily practices to prevent burnout;
- Self-assess the strength of boundaries at work and home;
- Prioritize wellbeing;
- Determine when it's time to seek outside help;
- Identify 2 options for seeking outside help.



Burnout

A state of chronic stress and frustration that leads to:

- An inability to successfully function on a personal and professional level



Burnout

Leads to:

- Mental and physical health problems
- Absenteeism
- Intentions to quit/checking out
- High turnover
- Decrease in quality of provided services



Signs of **Burnout:**

calling out more often

silly mistakes

irritability

foggy-headedness

inability to focus

low morale

exhaustion

lack of motivation





Avoiding Burnout:
So What Do We Do Now?



Avoiding Burnout

- Maintain Mental Wellness
- Conquer Stress:
 - Acknowledge Your Stress
 - Set Boundaries
 - Disconnect
 - Implement "Me Time"



Defining Boundaries

- Why is the idea of “boundaries” sometimes viewed negatively?
- Why do we need boundaries?
- What are boundaries?



Overly Sensitive
Lack Of Motivation
Can't Shut Off

Can't Catch Up
Unmotivated
Nervous

No Way Out
Grumpy
Overwhelmed

Apathetic
Agitated
Catching Up
Detachment

Argumentative
Racing Thoughts
Sadness
Sleepless Nights
Anxious

Worried
Lethargic
Irritable

Powerless



Setting Boundaries

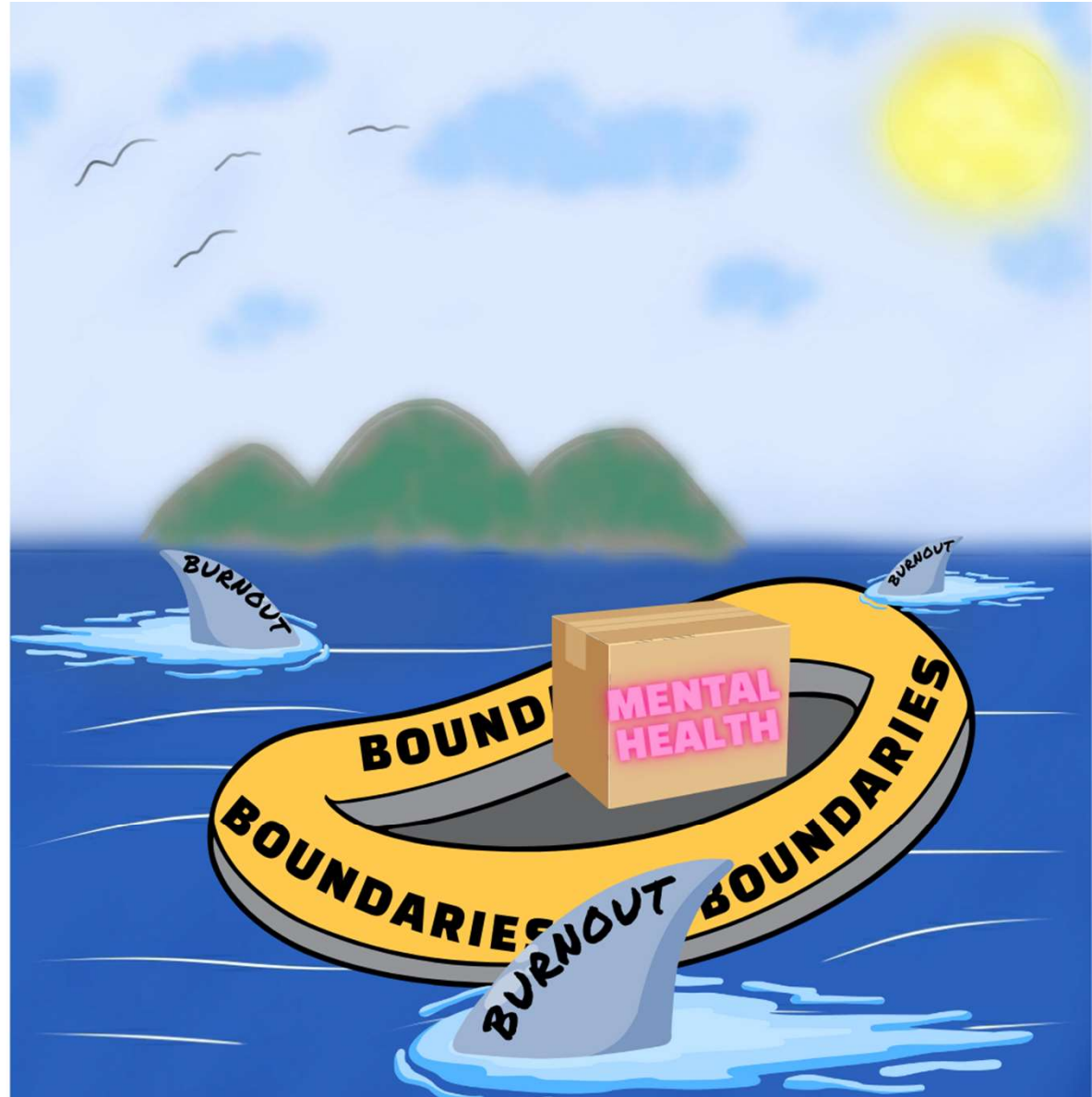
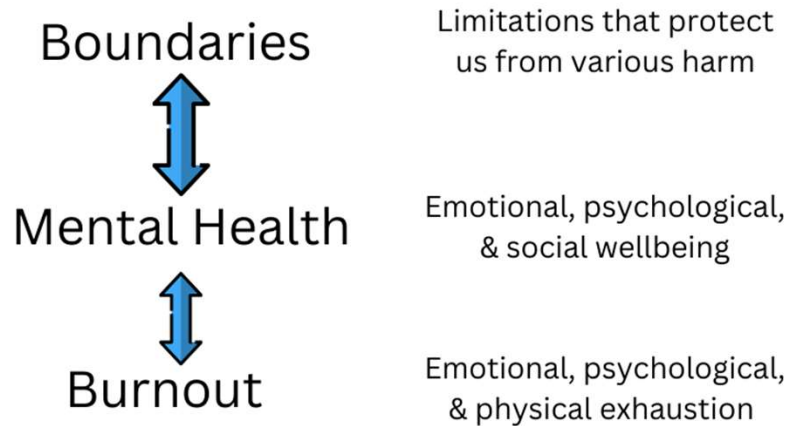
- **Why is it so hard to set boundaries?**
- **Boundaries at work**
 - **examples**
- **Boundaries at home**
 - **examples**
- **Where to begin?**



ShouldBeAbleToDoItAll
CompanyExpectations
NotDoingEnough
Expectations
FamilyExpectations
UnreasonableWorkload
being people
seen incapable
Fear disappointing
SomeoneHasToDoIt
UnreasonableDemands
people-pleasing Demands
FearOfFailure
SeemedLikeAGoodIdea
OverestimateAvailableTime



The Boundaries - Mental Health - Burnout Connection



Assessing Burnout: A Small Sample of Possible Questions

Do you feel run down or drained of physical or emotional energy?

Do you have negative thoughts about your job?

Are you less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve?

Are you easily irritated by small problems, or by your coworkers and team?

Do you feel misunderstood or unappreciated by you coworkers, supervisors, or supervisees?

Do you feel you have no one to talk to?



Work-Related Strategies

Staff can:

- Say “no” / Set boundaries
- Take breaks if possible between stressful events
- Reasonable scheduling (when possible)



Work-Related Strategies

Supervisors/Team Leaders can:

- Encourage staff to take at least one break per day
- Encourage staff to take a lunch break
- Allow staff the space and opportunity to give feedback (e.g., workload, responsibility, etc.)



What Else Can I Do?

- Journaling
- Exercise
- Read Fiction
- Take breaks



A Few More Things...

- Limit social media
- Limit current events/news consumption
- Notice which people and/or activities give vs. take away energy
- Sit in silence for 5 minutes per day



What Works for You?



GETTING HELP

When is it time to tell someone?

- Significant decrease in functioning
- Loss of control
- Overreacting to minor situations/annoyances



GETTING HELP

- Psychotherapy (Group, Family, Marital, Individual)
- Psychiatry
- Drug / Alcohol Rehabilitation



HELPING A COLLEAGUE

- Be supportive
- Pick a private time in a quiet place away from work
- Express concerns in a non-accusatory manner



Resources

Websites

- NC Lawyer Assistance Program www.nclap.org
- MH America: www.mentalhealthamerica.net
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org
- Workplace Mental Health: www.workplacementalhealth.org
- National Institute of MH: www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml
- Suicide Crisis Lifeline: 988
- Apps: Rain Rain, Calm, Breathe2Relax, Colorfy, HeadSpace



Questions?



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