Burnout Aid *Workshop for one NGO*

Authors: *Gabrijela Ivanov and Marina Milković, Common Zone*

Duration of the workshop:
6 hours

4. Short description:

The workshop is for one organization and its team who is overwhelmed by work and some of the team members are sliding into burnout. Participants will get an opportunity to be in the process which will get them to experience and acknowledge the group's dynamics, possible sources of burnout, main obstacles in better functioning of the NGO, and team member's specificities and aspirations. By the end of the workshop team members will have a roadmap in front of them to reorganize organizational work with awareness of their specific situation.

5. Workshop goal

The aim of the workshop is for team members to get an overview of the processes within the organization, untangle the "big black cloud" of problems into strategic steps of priorities having the organization's mission in sight, but with great respect for differences between the team members and their aspirations. As the quote in the NGO sector often is very loud: **People before profit**, the workshop will offer another NGO specific tagline to consider and induce organizational self care: **Team before the mission**.

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6. Workshop target group

The workshop is created for individuals from the same NGO. Minimal number of participants is 4, maximal number of participants is 12.

7. *Workshop agenda*

	Time	Goal	Description of the activity
1.	**Introduction** 10 minutes	Presentation of the program and facilitators. Setting group rules	Facilitators present themselves, their professional experience, the structure of the workshop, and its goals. Also, facilitators suggest important group rules and check whether participants agree with them and if they want to add some rules. See Appendix 1. Group rules
2.	**Icebreaker** 15 minutes	Loosen up, get to know each other, and connect.	Participants state their name, years of working experience within the organization, and position in the organization and answer a funny question. Questions can be written on small papers and participants pull one question out from a small box or envelope. Examples of funny questions (more questions are listed in Appendix 2): If you woke up tomorrow as an animal, what animal would you choose to be and why? If you could live anywhere on this planet and take everything that you love with you, where would you choose to live? If you could meet any historical figure, who would you choose and why? If you were to change your name, what name would you adopt going forward? Why? If you could pick a TV show to be your life, what show would it be?
3.	**Expectations** 10 minutes	Exploring what do participants want to take from this workshop, and what are their fears.	The task is to write expectations from the workshop to post-it papers. Different colors of post-it papers are used. One color is used to write what participants want to learn/take from this workshop. Another color is used to write what they don't want to happen. Facilitators read post-its, group them, summarize and comment. It is important to give participants permission that they don't have to write expectations if they don't have them.
4.	**Group expressive work**	Get insight into how team members see themselves at work,	One of the facilitators spreads Habitat metaphoric cards (or other similar cards, eg. Dixit cards) on the floor, in front of the participants. Each participant looks at the cards and picks up **one**

45 minutes	their individual boundaries, and group dynamic.	**that represents them best** at their **workplace at the moment.** It is important that participants don't look for the „appropriate" card. They should pick the card that catches their eyes first and that resonates with them.
		Then each of them, one by one, places their card on a large piece of paper (hammer paper, or 2 flip chart papers glued together)
		After that, in the same order they are allowed to move their card intuitively to find the most appropriate position for them depending on where the other cards are now. That goes into a circle until no one wants to move their card anymore.
		At that point, participants are given the box with pencils, felt pens, crayons and the instruction is to draw whatever they wish for a few minutes only around their own card. **There is no instruction on what exactly participants should draw. This is a projective exercise.** At the end participants will get a picture of the NGO and possibly see how structure and relationships in the NGO are presented in the paper. They will find their own interpretation of the picture.
		After everyone is finished, participants get an instruction that they can now draw whatever they like on the whole paper without restrictions, for another few minutes.
		Finally, facilitators moderate the reflection about the final picture on the paper and the whole process. They ask participants how the process was for them, how they felt throughout these stages. If somebody did something that upset the other person, make sure that both sides give their reasoning why they did something. Also, facilitators ask if there are any connections with what happened on the paper with their interpersonal dynamic and/or dynamic at work? How can they relate the picture with the situation at the NGO?. Why did they pick the first card and what does it tell about their position at work? What was on their mind while drawing around the card?. Each team member is invited to say something. **It is very important that facilitators don't give their specific interpretations of the picture, that they just facilitate the exchange of the impressions and conclusions that team members make.**
		The picture should stay in the room until the end of the workshop.

5.	**What is burnout?** 25 minutes	To educate participants about burnout.	Facilitators have a short presentation about burnout. Content for the presentation is in the first page of handout that participants get after the workshop, at the end of this scenario. See Appendix 3. Themes: - Definition - Dimensions of burnout - Signs of burnout on organizational level - Signs of burnout on individual level – physical, cognitive, behavioral, emotional After the presentation the group discusses the content shortly and comments if they can relate with something they heard. There will be more possibilities to discuss it in the following exercises.
6.	**Break** 30 minutes		
7..	**Group mapping** 45 minutes	Map the problems, resources, visions.	Facilitators announce that team members will answer some questions about the NGO. Each member of the team answers the questions one by one. Each answer should be written on a different post-it. Facilitators should give participants 5-10 minutes to answer each question. Facilitators will collect answers and group them under the questions. Everybody can move and find a nice place for themselves. After everyone has answered one question, facilitators can put the next one on the wall. They should be printed in a bigger font and visible to participants. After everyone got post-it papers and pencils, facilitators can put the first question on the wall. As participants write their answers and give post-it papers to facilitators, they stick them under the question. Same is repeated for further questions, one by one. While the group is answering the next question, the facilitator groups answers from the previous question. Questions: 1. **What is great in this NGO?** 2. **What could be better in this NGO?** 3. **What is important for you in this NGO?** It can be something that is important for you personally (values, working conditions, relations) or something that you find the most important for this NGO (mission, vision, organizational values…). 4. **What tools am I using in my work (to communicate, share and plan)?** (separate communication tools and planning tools) 5. **How can we make things better for our NGO?** 6. **What do you want to work on in this organization?** (What would bring you satisfaction/joy to work on? Eg. maybe someone is doing finances and they want to work directly with users, or they are tired of doing education and want to do project management, or they are satisfied with what they are already doing.)

8.	**Group reflection** 45 minutes	To reflect on the answers of team members and to have an overview of the situation and see if everybody is on the same page, or there are contradictory views.	The group stands beside each question and facilitators and participants go through the answers together, discuss and find the most important issues for each question. At the end, the group should have an overview of the pressing issues in the organization related to: - good aspects of the NGO that should be kept, - problems in the NGO (working conditions, office space, workload, project cycles, communication flow, planning issues, decision making, task division), - what is important for the team and should be cherished, - possible problems in communication and planning - possible solutions of existing problems, - team roles satisfaction and aspirations (worn-out people that need break or new positions, possible changes of positions).
9.	**Break** 30 minutes		
10	**Group planning** 45 minutes	To make a specific, realistic, achievable and time bound plan for solving one problem in the NGO that could help in preventing burnout and facilitating a healthy environment.	According to the group reflection, the team should decide on their priorities and pick **one thing they could change easily and soon for 1 topic that emerged in the previous exercise.** It should be something small and manageable (eg. changing something in the office, making decisions about communication after working hours, arranging the NGO archive, planning a team building, planning rituals for celebrating successes…). After deciding on the one thing they want to change, the team should make a plan with the help of facilitators. They should write their goal, make a scheme of action steps, decide who will do what if needed and determine a deadline for the goal. It is very important that all the team members believe it is manageable to achieve the goal.
11	**NGO-care bank** 40 minutes	To collect all forms of NGO-care that the team prefers at one place. To determine time in a day/week for NGO-care.	The team gets a big envelope or a box. They can write their names on it, write „NGO-care bank" or decorate it in some other way. Also, they get small pieces of colorful paper. While doing this activity, participants should have in mind the previous exercises – group mapping and reflection. On pieces of paper, they write all forms of NGO-care that they can remember (eg. team building, supervision, mutual meals, time for short exercises in working hours…). The number is not limited. They will take the envelope/box with them after the workshop. They should write down only things they will really do, things that relax them, not something they think they should do. The team should agree on each activity. It is important that participants realize that their team already has many tools that can help them to relax and recover from stress. After that, participants should determine a specific time in a day/week/month that they will use for NGO care. It should be very specific and manageable. For shorter activities like breathing exercises, it could be a part of a working day, for something a bit longer one specific time in a week, and some things could maybe be done only once a month or once a year. In the end, participants read the content of their NGO-care bank and repeat conclusions about the time when they can practice those activities. Facilitators point out that NGO-care should not be something that happens "when we have time" because in that case

			that time usually never comes, and that it should be planned. Also, they point out that NGO-care activities should have equal value in our schedule as work-related activities. Finally, facilitators present the second page of the handout (Appendix 3) and some possible strategies to prevent or deal with existing burnout on an individual and organizational level. Also, facilitators can inform the team about specific tools available from the Burnout Aid project - the tool, videos, reports. Also, it is possible that, after this workshop, facilitators organize an additional workshop for the team with some activities from the workshop for individuals (see Comments/possible modifications).
12	**Evaluation** 20 minutes	To check whether expectations were met and to say goodbye.	Participants look at the picture from the beginning of the workshop and share their impressions about the workshop, conclusions, and what they will take for themselves and the NGO from this workshop. Note: Facilitators can use an example of paper evaluation presented at Appendix 4.

5. Materials for the workshop

Flipchart, papers, pencils, coloring pencils, colorful post-its, colorful small papers, Habitat metaphoric cards (or other similar cards eg. Dixit), one big envelope or box.

It is recommended to make an excel sheet in which the answers will be put after the workshop.
It is also recommended to make an excel sheet in which the action plan for one thing that the team decided to change will be put.

6. Context (list of publications, films, presentations worth looking at after the workshop)

1. https://smallbusiness.chron.com/nine-types-team-roles-15566.html
2. https://www.strategy-business.com/feature/10-Principles-of-Organizational-Culture?gko=1f9d7
3. https://hbr.org/2018/01/the-culture-factor
4. https://medium.com/startup-grind/does-culture-really-eat-strategy-a3172df58912
5. https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/body.cfm?id=107&iirf_redirect=1

5. Comments/ possible modifications - suggestions for additional activities:

If conflicts are prevalent, watch this video first with the group:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2I-AOBz69KU.

Organization usually has a strategic plan and action plan, and this prevention-burnout planning should then be incorporated into their action planning. Also, the team should see which resources money wise are already available and can be used for burnout prevention.

This workshop can also be done in three 90-105 minutes meetings. In that case, after the second meeting and the "Group reflection" exercise, the team would have homework until the last meeting - to decide on one small, specific, realistic thing they want to change in the NGO. In that case they could come to the workshop with the decision and the plan would be done in the workshop.

It can be useful to do some activities from the workshop for individuals for the team after this workshop, specifically: Myths about burnout, Pressure at work, My week schedule, What is important to me?, Self-care bank, My Safe Place Visualisation, Assertiveness training.

APPENDIXES:

Appendix 1. *Group rules*

- ✔ **We listen to each other** (Microphone rule - when one person speaks, other people listen to him/her)
- ✔ **We respect each other** (every experience is valuable, no condemnation, no insults)
- ✔ **We speak from "I"** (there is no generalization like "everyone thinks", "everyone knows"…, when we speak, we express our opinion and describe our experience, we do not assume someone else's)
- ✔ **We take care of our needs** (we take care if we need a break, how much we want to share with the group, we ask for space to say something when we need it)
- ✔ We arrive on time after the breaks
- ✔ **Confidentiality** (what is said at the workshop remains at the workshop; outside the workshop, we talk about our experiences and how it was for us, we do not retell other people's experiences)

Appendix 2. *Funny Questions Icebreaker*

1. If you woke up tomorrow as an animal, what animal would you choose to be and why?
2. If you could live anywhere on this planet and take everything that you love with you, where would you choose to live?
3. If you could meet any historical figure, who would you choose and why?
4. If you were to change your name, what name would you adopt going forward? Why?
5. If you could pick a TV show to be your life, what show would it be?
6. If you were famous, what would you be famous for?
7. If you could have any celebrity be your best friend, which celebrity would you pick?
8. If you could eliminate one food so that no one would eat it ever again, what would you pick to destroy?
9. If you could create one holiday, what would you create?
10. If you were a vegetable, what would you be?
11. If you were an Olympic athlete, what sport would you compete in?
12. If you could be one superhero, which superhero would you be?

Appendix 3. Handout with basic information about burnout

Workshop handout

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion associated with work. It is a consequence of chronic stress at work, which is inefficiently managed primarily on a social and organizational level, and then on an individual level. It is characterized by three dimensions: 1. exhaustion, 2. work-related cynicism, and 3. reduced work efficiency.

NGOs are vulnerable to burnout due to insufficient and irregular funding and an unfavorable social and political climate.

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL BURNOUT SIGNS

- Expressed pressure to achieve goals and planned activities and to always do more,
- Neglecting the importance of rest and distancing from activities related to the work,
- Reduced efficiency despite the same or even greater amount of work,
- Disturbed relations in the organization, which include more frequent conflicts, mutual accusations and sometimes quitting.

EXAMPLES OF INDIVIDUAL BURNOUT SIGNS

Physical	Emotional
- Lack of energy - Muscle tension - Insomnia - Changes in the rhythm of sleeping and eating - Headache - Digestive disorders - …	- Mood swings - Irritability - Constant emotional arousal - A sense of emptiness - Guilt - Depressed mood - Anxiety - Helplessness - …
Cognitive	Behavioral
- Attention and memory difficulties - Loss of interest in activities - Difficulties in decision making - Cynicism - Pessimism - Thinking about quitting - Ideas of irreplaceability - Distractibility - …	- More work with less efficiency - Delay/procrastination - Withdrawal and isolation - Lack of self-care and refusal to accept help - Frequent verbalizations about overload - Excessive consumption of coffee, cigarettes, alcohol… - More frequent conflicts at work and in private life - …

PREVENTION AND DEALING WITH BURNOUT (BASIC GUIDELINES)

Individual

1. Maintaining physical health
Enough sleep, physical activity, a balanced diet, enough fluids, regular check-ups and general health care.

2. Planning self-care
Taking care of yourself does not happen spontaneously, but should be a planned part of your daily schedule.

3. Being more mindful
Focusing on one's own physical, emotional, and thought processes in the present moment.

4. Show vulnerability
It's okay to show ourselves and others that we are having a hard time.

5. Burnout is not a sign of achievement
We live in a culture that values burnout as an indicator of success and effort, it is important to strive to actively reject such expectations.

6. Listen to yourself
Listen, recognize, and take into account your burnout signs.

7. Listen to others
Listen to other's feedback and consider how much it applies to you.

8. Connection with others
Nurture relationships with others and leave time for the people you love and who are important to you.

9. Avoid accusation
Use "I" messages and avoid accusing each other, focus on behavior when criticizing, not on the person.

10. Seek professional help and support
Sometimes it is necessary to engage in psychotherapy or counseling with a mental health professional.

Organizational

1. Nurture supportive relationships
Talk about stress and check how everyone is at team meetings.

2. Team building
Organize joint activities unrelated to work, but during working hours.

3. Organized support
Introduction of supervision/individual counseling/workshops/training on mental health and/or communication.

4. Celebrate successes
Celebrate finished activities and reward yourselves.

5. Talk about difficult moments
Provide time and space to talk about difficult work situations.

6. Provide time for rest
Respect working hours, break time and include planned breaks during the working day.

7. Limit communication outside working hours
Establish an agreement on in which situations one communicates after working hours and by what hour max.

8. Clear distribution of activities and tasks
Try to agree as clearly as possible who, what and when is doing.

9. Simplify work
Learn about effective ways to simplify project management and administration and implement them.

10. Normalize failures and mistakes
Encourage the attitude that mistakes are normal at work and that the team can solve them together.

11. Encourage setting boundaries
Develop the attitude that it is okay and normal to set a limit when we are asked to do something we do not want or cannot do.

Appendix 4. Example of evaluation form

Burnout Aid – international project on professional burnout in non-governmental organizations

Please share your thoughts with us after the workshop, so we can develop this project.

Date and place of the workshop:

What content or activities during the workshop were most useful for you and why?

……
………..

Would you recommend this workshop? If so, to whom?

……
……..

How do you assess the probability of using the acquired knowledge and skills in your daily work? (on a scale from 1 to 5)

1.- very low 2 low 3 - medium 4 - high 5 - very high

Was the length of the workshop suitable?

1 - too short, 2 - perfect, 3 - too long

Was the number of the participants suitable?

1 - I would prefer smaller group,

2 - it was perfect,

3 - more participants would not influence the dynamic of the workshop

What did you miss during today's workshop?

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....

How can we improve this workshop?

....
....

Other comments you would like to make

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