Job burnout is a real syndrome: So how do you prevent it?

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Last week the World Health Organization announced an update to their definition of burnout. It will be called a "syndrome" in the newest version of its handbook, *International Classifications of Diseases-11*, which will come out in 2022.

Fifty-five percent of U.S. employees have admitted to checking work emails after 11 p.m., according to Lucinda Pullinger, Global Head of HR at Instant Offices.

Being committed to the job is one thing, but if you or your employees feel required to be available 24/7, you could all be headed for burnout.

The big take away is that burnout is now tied to workplace stress, which gives the people experiencing it more validity. But what does it mean for employers? Time will tell. In the meantime, try these 4 ways to prevent burnout:

Pullinger recommends this advice to put an end to the “always-on” mindset:

1. Focus on results, rather than hours spent at a desk. Don’t confuse success with being a workaholic. Praise everyone who hits their goals, even those who don’t have to burn the midnight oil to meet them.

2. Promote work-life balance. Sometimes your team will have to work overtime; however, it should be the exception, not the norm. Insist on a 40-hour workweek for everyone, yourself included. If you notice people consistently working late, meet with them to talk about their workload and time management.

3. Take a digital detox. Set specific rules that no one should email or text outside of work hours, and that you should call in the case of an emergency. Most important is that you follow that rule. If employees think the boss could message them, they will keep checking their phones.

4. Maximize the time spent in the office. So much of the workday is wasted on meetings and ineffective communication. Eliminate unnecessary meetings and shorten the rest. Encourage more face-to-face communication, rather than relying on email, to resolve issues faster. Carve out several distraction-free hours each day where employees can focus entirely on their most important tasks.

Almost all managers agree: Staff are burning out

The country is nearly at full employment, but U.S. workers may also be approaching full burnout.

Now a new survey from staffing firm Accountemps has found that nearly all senior managers (96%) believe their team members are experiencing some degree of burnout. In a separate survey, 91% of workers said they are at least somewhat burned out.
Senior managers were asked to report the level of burnout among employees on a scale of 1 (not at all burned out) to 10 (completely burned out), and the average was 5.6. One in five respondents rated their team’s burnout at level 8 or higher.

Workers also cited an average burnout level of 5.6, with 28% of respondents saying their degree of burnout fell in the 8 to 10 range.

Workers and managers alike seem to agree burnout is an issue, but they don’t see eye to eye on the main reason. When given a list of factors that may be contributing to employee burnout, workers ranked constant interruptions first, while senior managers believed unmanageable workloads were the biggest issue for their teams.