

BURNOUT TO BALANCE

SUPPORTING RESILIENT PROFESSIONALS

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GOALS FOR TODAY:

UNDERSTANDING

A clinical understanding of what burnout actually is and why this profession is structurally high-risk

VALIDATION

Permission to stop pathologizing yourself by recognizing this is not a personal failure, it is a physiological response to a demanding environment

TOOLS

You have a framework: Regulate, Reclaim, Recover, and the specific tools to start using it today

LET'S START HERE

ON A SCALE OF 1-5, HOW FULL IS YOUR TANK RIGHT NOW?

1 = Running on fumes

2 = Getting by, barely

3 = Okay but fragile

4 = Pretty solid

5 = Genuinely good

THE REALITY CHECK

WHAT THIS ROLE ASKS OF YOU

- **Accountability:**
 - Multiple competing stakeholders (boards, homeowners, vendors, management) all at once
- **Responsibility:**
 - For outcomes that require board authority to resolve
- **Expectations:**
 - Maintain professional composure regardless of how you are treated
- **Availability:**
 - No natural off-switch built into the role
- **Absorption:**
 - The emotional labor of an entire community, day after day
- **The catch-22: you may be the one to carry the weight without the authority to fix the root cause**

LET'S GET CLEAR

WHAT BURNOUT IS AND ISN'T

MISCONCEPTIONS

- A temporary stress response
- A sign of weakness or poor resilience
- Something a vacation fixes
- Evidence you are not good at your job
- The result of not being tough enough to push through

DEFINITION:

- A syndrome from chronic, unmanaged workplace stress (WHO, ICD-11, 2019)
- Characterized by three specific, measurable dimensions
- A physiological state, not just a mindset problem
- A signal from your system, not a sentence about your capacity

THE CLINICAL PICTURE

MASLACH BURNOUT INVENTORY — THE GOLD STANDARD IN BURNOUT RESEARCH

Exhaustion

Depletion of emotional and physical resources beyond what rest alone can restore.

Not tired, systemically depleted. Sleep does not touch it. Emotionally tapped out. Nothing left to give.

In this role: You dread calls you used to handle easily. You white-knuckle through the last two hours of every day.

Depersonalization

Detachment is your systems distancing response to self protect.

The homeowner who used to feel like a person now feels like a problem.

You might have stopped caring and then you feel guilty for not caring.

In this role: You roll your eyes at emails before you even open them.

Reduced Efficacy

You stop believing your work matters. You question your competence due to reduced output.

The motivation that used to drive you has gone silent.

Frequently mistaken for depression in clinical settings.

In this role: You can't remember the last time you felt good at your job.

QUICK CHECK-IN

WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST ENERGY DRAIN RIGHT NOW?

Workload that never drops

Difficult or hostile interactions

Lack of control over outcomes

Always being "on" — no real off switch

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Feeling like nothing I do makes a difference

YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM IS RUNNING THE SHOW

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN IT'S BEEN ON HIGH ALERT FOR A LONG TIME

- Your nervous system's job is to detect threat and respond accordingly:
 - Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn
- In a high-conflict role, it's scanning for danger constantly
- Chronic activation = the system never fully powers down
- You stop being able to "just relax" because your body doesn't believe it's safe to

Imagine your nervous system is a smoke alarm. In a healthy environment, it goes off when there's actually smoke. In chronic stress, it's going off all day. And eventually you're so used to the alarm, you stop hearing it. Until one day the whole kitchen is on fire and you didn't notice.

NOT ALL BURNOUT LOOKS THE SAME

WHICH ONE IS YOU?

Overload Burnout

You're working yourself to the ground trying to succeed.

Urgency is both a coping strategy and an identity.

The system runs at maximum output indefinitely.

You feel indispensable and exhausted at the same time.

Under-Challenged Burnout

You're bored, disengaged, or feel like your work doesn't matter.

You have stopped doing work that provides meaning or growth.

You're going through the motions.

You're stuck but can't leave.

Neglect Burnout

You've stopped trying.

Chronic exposure to environments where effort does not produce change.

Helplessness has set in.

You feel invisible and overlooked.

Passive disengagement.
Pervasive loss of agency.

WHY THIS HAPPENS

THE 6 WORKPLACE CONDITIONS THAT CAUSE BURNOUT

Workload

The volume never drops. Your capacity is finite; the demands are not.

Fairness

Expected to maintain professionalism while being treated unacceptably.

Community

You can feel profoundly alone in this work.
No team to debrief with.

Reward

Nobody calls when things go right. The effort doesn't match the recognition.

Control

You hold the responsibility without the authority. That gap is exhausting.

Values

Politics and red tape make it hard to do the work the way you believe it should be done.

WHERE ARE YOU RIGHT NOW?

STAGE 1 EARLY WARNING

Working harder but getting less done
Increased reactivity to minor stressors; resting tension
Difficulty disengaging at end of day; sleep disruption
Starting to resent the job
You still care, but it's starting to feel like an effort

STAGE 2 ACTIVE BURNOUT

Emotional detachment and just going through the motions
Dreading work in a way that doesn't pass
Physical symptoms: headaches, tension, GI issues, frequent illness
Relational spillover: family and close relationships receiving diminished capacity
You can perform but you're white-knuckling it

STAGE 3 FULL DEPLETION

Dissociation from work and self; unsure why you chose this career
Emotional numbness and complete lack of motivation
Functioning on autopilot and unable to connect with meaningful moments
Relationships significantly suffering
Cynicism has become your default

**This is where most people first recognize something is clinically wrong. External performance and internal experience have significantly diverged.*



IT DOESN'T JUST STAY AT WORK

HOW BURNOUT SEEPS INTO YOUR WHOLE LIFE

At Home

- The people closest to you receive the version of you that has already given everything else away.
- You're physically present at dinner but mentally still at work, or answering an email
- Intimacy, patience, and presence all take the hit
- Over time: relationships start to feel like another obligation

In Your Body

- Your sleep suffers, you feel wired but exhausted
- High stress and higher cortisol levels suppress immunity in your body
- Predisposed to medical conditions where stress exacerbates symptoms

In Your Sense of Self

- You stop doing the things that used to bring you joy
- Feeling disconnected to your self and others
- Loss of sense of identity outside of work related roles

PREDISPOSING FACTORS

WHY BURNOUT IMPACTS YOU DIFFERENTLY

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences** are early life exposures to stress, adversity, or relational trauma that shape the nervous system's baseline sensitivity to threat.
- **ACE score based on 3 categories: Abuse, Neglect, Household Dysfunction**
- **Research finding: ACEs are significantly correlated with elevated workplace stress responses and heightened physiological reactivity in high-demand professional environments. (Steen, Senreich & Straussner, 2021)**
- **Prior Mental Health Diagnoses or predisposing factors, such as history of trauma, interpersonal challenges, current life stressors, etc.**

WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

THE THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE

REGULATE

Understand and work with your nervous system, not against it.

Learn to recognize when you're activated, how to come back down, and how to build micro-recovery into your day.

Regulation is not the absence of stress, it is the trained ability to return to baseline after activation.

RECLAIM

Reclaim your professional limits, your sense of agency, and your relationship with your own personal boundaries

Recognize your limits are not interpersonal preferences, they are neurological requirements for sustained professional function.

RECOVER

Move beyond managing depletion toward actively rebuilding physiological and emotional capacity.

Distinguish between behaviors that numb the stress signal and practices that genuinely restore the system.

Develop rituals that produce conditioned safety responses over time.

REGULATE YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

AWARENESS AND PHYSIOLOGICAL INTERRUPTION

- Regulation is not about being calm, it is about knowing where you are so you can get back to yourself
- You cannot regulate what you cannot recognize, the first skill is noticing your state before it runs you
- Goal: internal awareness of yourself so you can come back to baseline between activations, not just at the end of the day

THREE TOOLS YOU CAN USE RIGHT NOW

- 1. The Physiological Sigh:** Your body does this automatically when overwhelmed. Now you do it on purpose. It deflates stress chemistry in under 60 seconds.
- 2. The Body Scan Check-In:** Our body will "prepare" for a threat. Recognize when you are holding tension so you can intentionally come down from it.
- 3. The Emotion State Label:** Labeling what you are feeling or experiencing help with diffusion. Separating yourself from the thought or feeling interrupts the automatic stress response.

RECLAIM YOUR TIME AND ENERGY

INWARD AND OUTWARD BOUNDARY WORK

- A boundary is not about shutting people out, it's about being sustainable enough to keep showing up
- There are two directions: what you protect inside yourself and what you communicate to others.
- The goal: protect your capacity so you can actually do the job well

THE DEPERSONALIZATION REFRAME

When an interaction feels like a personal attack, your nervous system responds as though it is one.

Instead of: "This person is attacking me"

Try internally: "This person is in conflict with the position of community manager. I happen to be filling that position right now."

Instead of: "I need to fix this"

Try: "This belongs to the board, the policy, or the process. My job is to be the conduit, not the container."

RECLAIM YOUR TIME AND ENERGY

INWARD AND OUTWARD BOUNDARY WORK

THE ONE COMMUNICATED LIMIT

Pick one specific pattern that is currently costing you, after-hours messages, a particular resident, a recurring intrusion on your time.

Communicate one clear, professionally worded boundary around it to one person.

Examples:

- "I respond to non-emergency communications the next business day."
- "For issues requiring board approval, I will bring this to our next scheduled meeting."
- "I am not available by phone after 6pm. Please email and I will respond by 9am."

The consistency is the skill, not the wording. Your nervous system needs to learn that the limit is real before anyone else does. Every time you hold it, you are also telling your nervous system: this is where I end and the role begins.

RECOVER BY BUILDING CAPACITY

THE TRANSITION PROTOCOL: THE DISCHARGE AND THE RE-ENTRY

- Recovery begins the moment you decide the workday is over and do something physical to mark it
- The nervous system does not respond to the clock, it responds to cues
- Without a deliberate transition, the system stays in work mode long after you have closed the laptop

THE DISCHARGE

The goal is to externalize what the nervous system is still carrying so it does not follow you into the evening. Pick one:

- **Write it out** — three things still taking up space in your head.
- **Say it out loud** — call someone on the drive home and debrief. Co-regulation through voice and connection.
- **Move it through your body** — a walk, a run, lifting, even aggressive cleaning. Physical movement metabolizes stress hormones that are sitting in the body waiting to be processed.
- **Creative discharge** — music loudly in the car, cooking, building something, playing an instrument. Anything that shifts your brain out of problem-solving mode and into sensory engagement.

THE RE-ENTRY

Before you engage with family, a partner, kids, or anyone at home, give yourself a transition:

- **The threshold pause** — sit in the car for five minutes before you go inside. Just a pause to regroup and shift your mindset.
- **The physical change** — change your clothes the moment you get home. The nervous system registers the physical shift and begins to release the work context.
- **The outdoor reset** — five to ten minutes outside before re-entering. Natural light, movement, a shift in sensory environment.
- **The honest check-in** — say to whoever is home: "I need about ten minutes to decompress and then I am all yours." It protects the relationship from receiving the activated version of you.

RECOVER BY BUILDING CAPACITY

THE TRANSITION PROTOCOL

- Most people treat recovery like a reward or something you earn after a hard stretch, or something you do when you finally crash.
- What works is building it in before you need it as scheduled maintenance.

BUILDING RECOVERY INTO THE ARCHITECTURE OF YOUR YEAR

WEEKLY — THE PROTECTED HOUR

Once a week, before the schedule fills, block one hour that belongs to you.

MONTHLY — THE EARLY FRIDAY

Once a month, leave early on a Friday.

QUARTERLY — THE FULL DAY OFF

Four times a year, take a day that is entirely yours.

ANNUALLY — THE REAL RESET

Once a year, take time off that is long enough for your nervous system to actually power down.

START HERE

THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO THIS WEEK

1 One Daily Regulation Moment

Identify one existing transition point in your professional day. Assign it a 60-second extended exhale practice. Consistency is the mechanism, you are training a conditioned nervous system response, not performing a relaxation exercise.

2 One Reclaimed Limit

Identify one specific pattern currently producing chronic low-grade activation. Communicate one clear, professional boundary around it to one person this week. Begin with the lowest-stakes version. Precision matters more than scope.

3 One Restorative Practice

Identify one activity that reliably returns you to a regulated state. Protect 20 minutes for it before the week fills. This is physiological maintenance, schedule it with the same professional regard you give a client meeting.

KEEP GOING

Grab the Burnout Recovery Guide Here.



Q&A

What questions do you have on burnout?
What support are you needing right now?

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