



FROM BURNOUT *to Shining Bright*

A Look at Workplace Realities and Coping Possibilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our ever-changing world of “new normals”—with new Covid-19 variants, stock market tumbles, rising inflation and global conflict—we are continually faced with adjusting (and readjusting) to working from home or exploring some type of hybrid working model. The net impact of these forces has shaped the way we view our work—and ourselves... and not always for the better.

In this proprietary study, we looked at workplace burnout in America, how it has impacted women and men, both mentally and emotionally, and how individuals have found themselves coping with the stress. To conclude, we recommended what leaders—both within our organizations and within the broader industry—can do support individuals feeling burnout, or to help avoid burnout altogether moving forward.

Methodology

The topic of workplace burnout in America was deeply interesting to us—specifically uncovering any gender and generational differences. As part of its recent proprietary omnibus study, Burke, Inc. surveyed 600 individuals, aged 18 years and older, representing a sample within the United States, balanced to the census on age, gender, income and ethnicity. The research consisted of a five-minute online survey that was optimized for viewing on both computers and mobile devices. Data collection occurred February 18 through February 24, 2022.

**WHO:**

600 individuals
18 years of age or older

**WHERE:**

A representative sample within the U.S., **balanced to the census on age, gender, income and ethnicity**

**WHAT:**

A 5-minute online survey

**WHEN:**

Data was collected between
2/18 - 2/24, 2022

Feeling the Burn... Out.



Workplace burnout. We've all heard—and probably even used—the phrase, especially over the past few years. But what is it *exactly*? Mayo Clinic defines it as “a type of work-related stress, specifically, a state of physical or emotional exhaustion that also involves a sense of reduced accomplishment and loss of personal identity.”

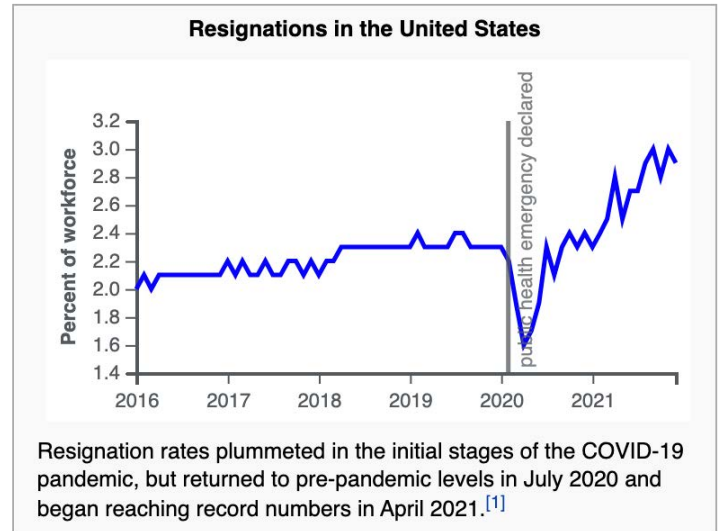
With this definition in hand, we were curious how many Americans truly felt workplace burnout of this magnitude, versus perhaps a more anecdotal definition of feeling stressed or overwhelmed. We presented our respondents with the Mayo Clinic definition of workplace burnout, and 50% of employed respondents agreed that they'd felt workplace burnout in the past three months.

50% is a tremendous number! It makes for a work culture that is not sustainable, and one that is certainly not acceptable.

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Another “Great” Era

With the confirmed knowledge that workplace burnout is a dramatic issue, we turned to view the larger picture. You may have heard this era in time defined in many ways, such as The Great Reflection or The Great Reprioritization. Paired with Burke’s recently uncovered workplace burnout data, let’s dig into each of these monikers to examine why they’ve become so telling of today’s workplace environment.



The **Great Resignation** refers to the period beginning in early 2021 when masses of workers began voluntarily resigning from their jobs. However, while this term is quite descriptive of the continuing economic trend of worker resignation, it represents an incredible range of reasons behind the movement. Citing diverse motivations such as wage gaps and stagnation, stimulus payments, job dissatisfaction, COVID-19-related issues, and of course, workplace burnout, The Great Resignation is only the tip of an enormous iceberg.

Digging a little deeper into the movement, McKinsey coined a slightly more descriptive term: **The Great Reflection**. The pandemic prompted many, who had the ability to do so, to take a step back and reflect upon their current situation. From mandated time off from work, to shifted priorities, to the blending of home and work into one environment—it all equated to a incredible opportunity for reflection. For employees, that reflection often centered around considering whether they felt supported and fulfilled by their job or career. Happier employees are less likely to make a move—reinforcing the importance of creating an open, supporting, caring work environment.

The term **Great Reprioritization** might be one of the more precise titles for this period of time, reflecting what actually has been happening over the past two years—which, of course, has been spurred from much reflection. First, after many were left sitting tight through an unpredictable economic environment, there was pent-up demand for more rewarding, fulfilling pursuits. Second, on what may seem like an unrelated note, geographic location has seen a shift during this period.

(Another Great Era cont.)

While overall permanent move numbers are down, the pandemic's remote work arrangements have spurred a trend of people moving away from large cities, with also an increased desire for more space to allow greater isolation—both of which have had a large impact on workplace culture. Finally, we're seeing many workers migrating from low-fulfillment jobs to better opportunities. With remote work now often being the norm, moving to a new job is less daunting. These factors have all built upon one another, as workers have spent the last two years reprioritizing their life's goals and outlook. With higher standards, fewer barriers and emboldened priorities, workers are readily jumping to different organizations—and sometimes even different industries—that offer better benefits, better advancement opportunities, or better fulfillment potential.

What do these trends look like in our study? Of our respondents, 24% said they are likely to quit their job within the next three months, representing an estimated 40MM people in the United States. And in fact, men are almost twice as likely to agree with the statement. Adults aged 18-24 are also significantly more likely to agree, amounting to 24% of that age group versus only 12% of 55-65-year-olds.

Supporting the root causes of some of the era monikers reviewed above, our respondents reported several reasons as to why they are considering quitting. Perhaps most interestingly to our study, “finding better compensation” and “workplace burnout” carried the same weight as the most-cited reason. Other top reasons included “rethinking my life priorities” and “not feeling valued”—which one could presume would continue to escalate in scale if the current workplace environment continues in current trends.

Considering all of the above, there never been a greater need for organizations to change and adapt as we navigate the third year of pandemic.

24%

Agreed are likely to quit their job in the next 3 months



16%



30%



Primary Reason for Quitting

Found better compensation

19%

Workplace burnout

19%

Re-thinking my life priorities

17%

Don't feel valued

12%

Choosing a new career path

10%

Not feeling connected to company purpose/mission

8%

Mental health concerns

7%

Not feeling respected at work

3%



A New Picture of Health

Health and wellness have evolved in recent years to encapsulate a more holistic perspective, going beyond just the physical to also include mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. With the incredible weight of workplace burnout and the potential grappling with tough decisions like changing careers, reprioritizing goals and even putting plans on pause, we knew there would likely be a toll on mental and emotional well-being—especially on women.

Of the respondents we polled, 27% of women claimed that their personal mental health has gotten worse over the past 3 months, which is statistically significant compared to 18% of men. Similarly, 31% of women claim their emotional well-being has gotten worse over the past 3 months, which is also statistically significant versus 18% of men.

Q: How, if at all, have the following changed in the **past three months**? *Personal mental health*

27%

of women claim their personal mental health has gotten worse in the past 3 months

vs. 18% (♂)

Q: How, if at all, have the following changed in the **past three months**? *Emotional well-being*

31%

of women claim their emotional well-being has gotten worse in the past 3 months

vs. 18% (♂)

Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World

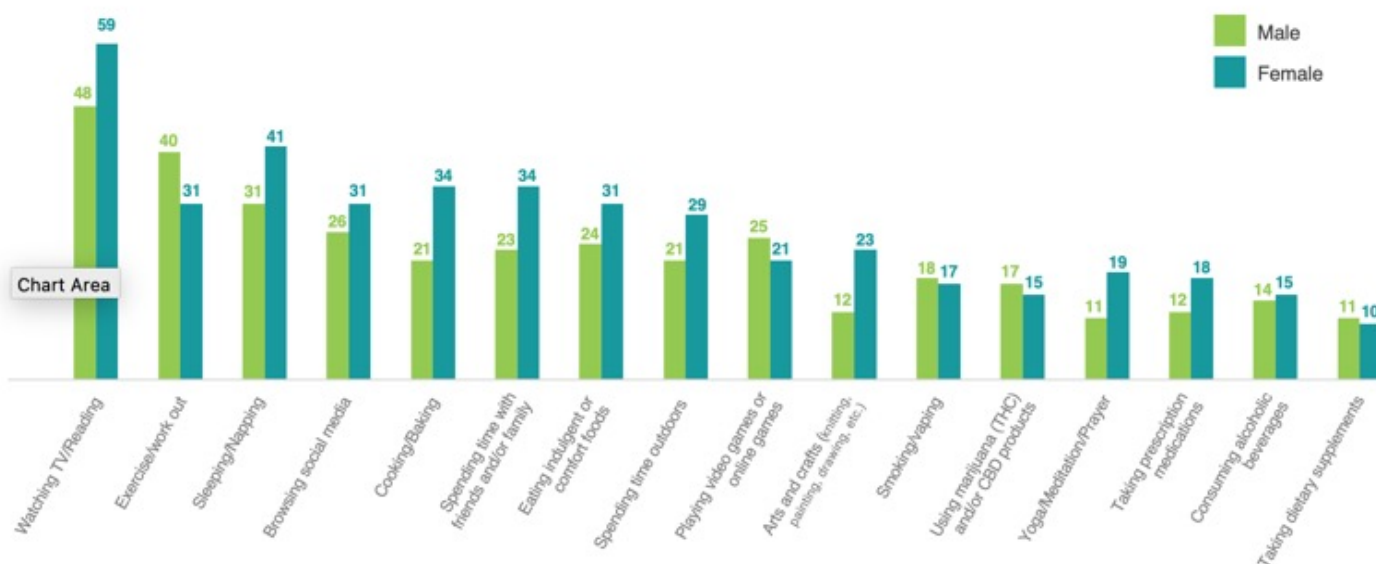
With growing stress and anxiety, both work and home-life related, we were curious about the behaviors people were adopting in order to cope, and if those, too, varied by gender or age.

For women, reported coping behaviors were a mix of truly mellowing and unwinding—like TV/Reading and Sleep—and also human connection—like Spending Time With Friends and Family and Social Media. Women also reported more instances of practicing spiritual connection, with activities like Yoga, Meditation and Prayer. And lastly, we see many women also choosing to increase the level of their physical activities like Working Out and Exercising. All in all, a great combination of mind, body and soul!

For men, coping strategies tend to be less diverse. The activities that men are increasing in order to cope with stress or anxiety include their level of physical activity—Working Out and Exercising—or, doing quite the opposite—Watching TV or Napping. Men were much less likely than women to increase their time spent with friends and family, browsing social media, indulging in comfort foods, or cooking and baking. They are also less likely to increase their use of prescription medications, meditation, yoga or prayer.

Coping strategies for anxiety and stress that are on the rise.

What have you been doing MORE of in the past 3 months to manage anxiety and stress?





As Leaders, Be The Light

So, what can we do?! We're all in this same era, facing increasing pressures and stress. As employees, leaders, brand stewards and friends—what can we do to be the light in what can feel like dark times?

As leaders, we have the power to be the light in many ways.

We can start by acknowledging and being receptive to burnout. Remember, 50% of our respondents reported feeling burnout! Keep your eyes and ears peeled for these conditions, help ease the burden and possibly—but perhaps most importantly—work to destigmatize speaking of burnout. This might look like reframing “asking for help” as a welcome conversation instead of a sign of weakness, or even initiating frank, open discussions with your team about emotional well-being

Next, support work-life balance (and we mean actual balance). Work-life balance is an extremely over-used term—and often represents something that's not really an actual balance, or even a genuine scenario, at all. Empower your team to set realistic boundaries, and remain faithful to them. While being “always on” may seem like peak productivity, it's actually what leads to burnout! So truly maintaining boundaries, and allowing yourself and others to define what a healthy “balance” means to them, will allow for you and your team to bring their best self to the table.

Being the light as a leader can also be as simple as turning an empathetic ear to morale. Feel the vibes of your team, and encourage a healthy, balanced environment. Celebrate wins, both big and small. Boost morale when it feels like the team is in a rut. Listen—just listen—when your team needs to talk, vent or explore their feelings. Having this open and supportive avenue to leadership can help support positivity and can ease negative feelings.

There are also many ways to create impact as brand stewards.

Use your brand voice to de-stigmatize mental and emotional health, elevating it to an even plane with physical health. This may look like providing authentic ways to connect with others, help with beginning difficult conversations or help with making time for self-care.

Ensure your brand is living a true and meaningful purpose. While the notion of a purpose-driven brand is well-established, it's never been as important to define it and live it. Consumers are paying attention more than ever and expect brands to follow through on promises—so how might your brand actually help make consumers' lives better, whether in big or small ways?

And third, **keep the right company.** Consider carefully who your brand is seen with... whether that's via customer channels, strategic partnerships and media outlets. Who your brand "hangs out with" can make a difference and can help garner support as emotional wellness partners.

All in all, together we can make a difference in our role as leaders, brand stewards, friends, mentors and members of the increasingly small world.

To close, we'd like to share a quote by cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, with a sentiment that feels appropriate as we continue to live, and shape, our evolving "new normal":



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, *Cultural Anthropologist*