BURNOUT, BOREOUT, BROWNOUT

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn and practice new idiomatic words, verbs and expressions and discuss workplace stress.

Activity one - Ask and answer with your partner or teacher.

1. Do you know anyone who has had 'burnout' due to stress? (a mental health problem due to exhaustion)
2. Are you familiar with the terms burnout, bore out and brownout (before today)?
3. How do you cope with stress?
4. How do you think employers deal with issues of stress and mental health currently?
5. What should they do to avoid stress in the workplace?



Source: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3b-burn-brown-bore-out-places-context-work-stress-juliette-poilane/?articleId=6673517458319540224

Activity Two - Read the article, answer the questions.

When we talk about stress in the world of work, it's now inevitable to think of the serious consequences that could lead us to the failure to which we expose ourselves as our relationship with stress deteriorates and as our discomfort increases.

Burn out : a lack of recognition and overwork at work

The first descriptions in the scientific literature by psychologists date from the 1970s. Despite the already passed 40 years, and numerous studies have been carried out on the subject, there is currently no single, widely accepted definition, which is unfortunate.

Most of the definitions that do exist, however, agree on the following points :

· Burn out is a process that does not happen overnight

· It's an emotional phenomenon that can affect both your psychic and your somatic spheres

· Burn out induces significant suffering

· It can cause a total and permanent inability to work

· It induces serious concerns for those around them who see the evolution

· It has a very significant cost for society (absenteeism, accident, inefficiency, professional misconduct…)

Boredom at work : bore out

Like burn out, bore out would bring the employee to the same devastated mental state, but this time through boredom, cruel lack of work and lack of job satisfaction.

Anxiety, demotivation, sadness, guilt… these are the first symptoms experienced by employees who experience boredom on a daily basis.
The causes of this trouble are multiple :

- Over qualification
- Lack of challenge
- Repetitive tasks
- Lack of professional perspectives

Newly arrived… brown out or the notion of loss of meaning.

This mental decline is said to be caused by a lack of understanding of an absurd world of work.

Obliged to carry out tasks deemed more absurd than each other and which have little to do with what was promised to the employee when arriving on this position, tasks that come into opposition with its values and ideals… All of this leads to gradual divestment.

Faced with « 3B », some of which are new occupational diseases (even if they are not yet all recognized as such…). We can then ask ourselves what are the solutions not to see our employees sink into these new diseases and to anticipate this psychological deterioration.

The privilege of a leader / manager of excellence is to achieve a posture of « coach » with his teams focused on caring, commitment and happiness at work. It must become the mover of its business by bringing its teams together around a clear vision for the future, communicating its values and those of the company. It is with this ambitious and certainly human approach that employees will regain efficiency in all circumstances.

1. What is a burnout?
2. When did the first descriptions of a burnout appear in scientific literature ?
3. What is a boreout?
4. What is a brownout?
5. Which of the 3 are the most serious/ severe, in your opinion?
6. Which of the three are most common, in your opinion?
7. Do you agree with the final paragraph about the responsibilities of the manager in the workplace?
8. Does this reflect on your own previous experience reality?



Activity Three - **Phrasal verbs and nouns .**
A phrasal verb is a combination of words containing **a verb and a** preposition.Phrasal verbs you may be familiar with include wake up, get up, turn on, put away, look up to, do over, give back, turn down, run into, just to name a few. Although they're called phrasal verbs, most of them can **function as both a noun and a verb**, and sometimes even as an adjective. See the examples below.
to burn out= (verb) to have a mental health problem due to exhaustion
a burn-out = (noun) is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion



to take off= (of an aircraft or bird) become airborne.
the take off= an instance of becoming airborne. "a perfect take-off"

to break up= (with reference to a couple) to end a romantic relationship
the breakup = the end of a relationship.

to set up = to organise, arrange something.
the set up= the organisation, arrangement of something

to break down = (of a person's health or emotional control) to fail or collapse
the break-down = a sudden collapse in someone's mental health.

to take away= to buy food at a cafe or restaurant for eating elsewhere
a takeaway= a meal or dish bought from a shop or restaurant to be eaten elsewhere

to break out= to escape from prison
the breakout= a forcible escape, especially from prison.

WORD STRESS - PLEASE NOTE - **W**hen you are pronouncing to burn out, as a verb, you will put the emphasis on the preposition. When you are pronouncing a burn out, as a noun, you will put the emphasis on the verb. This is very important as it would be hard to understand you if you got the word stress wrong. As we don't usually stress prepositions, when you hear someone stressing one it's a good indication that it's part of a phrasal verb. Practice reading the verbs and nouns from this activity.

Activity Four - Fill in the gaps!
Which of the above from activity 3 should be used in each sentence? AND... which sentences take the noun, and which the verb?



Phrasal verb = She _____ _____ due to her heavy workload.
Noun = She had _____ _____ due to her heavy workload.

The _____ of the organisation was very hierarchical.
The organisation ____ _____ _____ in a hierarchical way.

The _____ he suffered caused him many difficulties in returning to work.
After he _____ _____, he had many difficulties with returning to work.

The _____ of the space rocket is planned for this Friday.
The space rocket is _____ _____ this friday.

I want to order _____.
I want to _____ my food _____.

Yes, we heard about her _____ _____- I hope she finds someone new soon.
Yes, we heard that they _____ _____ - it was very sad.

They _____ _____ of prison last week!
The _____ was reported in the local newspaper.

Activity Five- Tiredness vocabulary.
Learning new idiomatic words will give you more choices when you are talking about specific subjects in English. It will also help you to improve your listening skills. Here are some very common words we use to talk about being tired. Which are more, or less familiar to you? Read the vocabulary words below, with the examples. Then, answer the questions below. These are all adjectives and some are also phrasal verbs. Which are phrasal verbs?

Careworn (adj)
looking tired and sad because you have worries for a long time
He has a careworn expression on his face.

Drained (adj)
very tired and having no energy
I feel emotionally drained and unhappy.



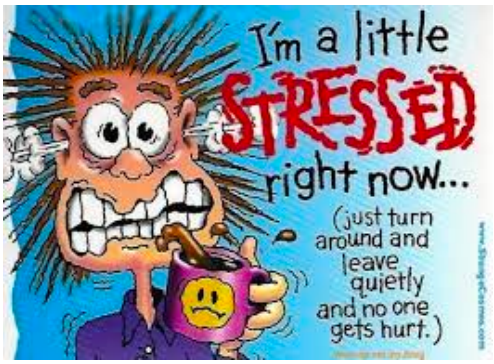
Drowsy (adj)
feeling tired and needing sleep
The light music made me drowsy.

Exhausted (adj)
extremely tired
to be/feel/look exhausted
Carrying the heavy boxes left us exhausted.

Frazzled (adj)
informal. very tired and slightly worried
My nerves are totally frazzled.

Haggard (adj)
looking very tired, anxious or ill especially with dark circles under your eyes
He looked thin and haggard.

Spent (adj)
formal. very tired and without energy- nothing left.
I was utterly spent at the end.



Weary (adj)
very tired or fatigued after doing something for a long time
I felt weary after the walk along the cliffs.

Worn out (adj)
emotionally or physically exhausted
We are absolutely worn out after a five-mile run.

Worn down (adj)
Extremely tired: bleary, dead, drained, exhausted, fatigued

run down (adj)
fatigued; weary; exhausted. in a state of poor health

1. What makes you feel frazzled?
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2. What makes you feel drowsy?
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3. Tell me about a time you felt completely exhausted?
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4. What wears you out?
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5. Who wears you down?
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6. What can you do when you are run down in order to feel better?
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7. Is there a time of day when you feel particularly drowsy at work?
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8. What can you do to avoid work learning you down.

Now, Fill in the gaps with the most logical adjective from the above list.

1. He was admitted to hospital due to his illness, and I must say, he looked very thin and _____.

2. When I am at the beach, listening to the waves makes me feel a little bit _____.

3. At the end of WW2, people living in France were _____ of conflict and war.

4. After going to the gym, I feel _____ _____. But, my muscles look great!

5. She is very concerned about her teenage son, he is almost never at home and she doesn't see him. When he is home, he refuses to speak to anyone and shuts himself in his room. As a result, she always has a _____ look on her face.

Activity Six - Common Idioms about work and working too hard.

"I'm burning the candle at both ends"
This means that you are staying up late into the night and getting up early to start on the work in the morning.
"He's been burning the candle at both ends to finish this project."

"I am buckling down"
When we say that we are "buckling down" we mean that we are focusing and putting a lot of energy into a project or a task.
" I need to buckle down and study for this exam"

"work your fingers to the bone" = work very hard. "I work my fingers to the bone for you."

"go the extra mile" = do more than is expected of you: "She's a hard worker and always goes the extra mile."

"pull your weight" = do your fair share of the work: "He's a good team worker and always pulls his weight."

"work all the hours that God sends" = work as much as possible: "She works all the hours that God sends to support her family."

"be thrown in at the deep end" = not get any assistance, advice or support: "He was thrown in at the deep end with his new job. No-one helped him at all."

Which of these expressions have you seen before or used before? Now, use these idioms to make a few sentences sentences to talk about your working experience. If you have time prepare a short written paragraph in the 'bloc notes' using the expressions from this activity.



Discussion questions.

1. Did you ever have a very stressful job, or period of your life?
2. Can you think of anyone else you work with, or know, who works very hard?
3. How do you manage to secure a good work life balance?
4. How can a company avoid a toxic work culture?
5. How can you help colleagues who are stressed, frazzled or overworked?

Activity Seven - prefixes with 'over'.
Overburdened, overwhelmed, overtired, overcautious, overcompensate, overachiever, overabundance, overreact, overkill, overcome.

Fill in the gaps with the 'over' words.

It is easy to feel _____ and _____ at work sometimes- with constant deadlines, full schedules, and with other colleagues who are also stressed and who may occasionally _____ about small problems or issues. All of this adds to the pressure you feel, especially if you are inclined to be a bit of an _____ or a perfectionist. Sometimes, we feel that we need to _____ in our jobs. For example, if we have gone on holidays and then need to catch up on work, sometimes we spent too many hours in the office as a result afterwards. Then, we are once again _____ , and need to rest, and we feel we need another holiday!

It is important to realise that there should be a balance between our work lives and our personal lives. Spending 12 hours a day at the office or more is _____! And it does not make us productive. Sometimes, it is better to be _____ and take frequent pauses and rests if we are feeling a bit low. We have to remember, there is an _____ of people who feel the same as we do, and deep down, we know that we are capable of _____ many obstacles in our lives.

Activity Eight- Role-play.

Imagine you are a manager, and that you have noticed many of your team are becoming exhausted, as they are all working very long hours for this new project. You are worried about the possibility of certain members of the team having a burnout. You speak to your manager about this, and express your opinion on what you think should be done.

