

BATTLING BURNOUT

Learning from the Behavioral Sciences
to Promote Employee Wellness



The Arc[®]
Mid-Hudson
New York

Brian Healy

LMHC, LBA, BCBA, NCC, CCMHC

INTRODUCTION

The Arc Mid-Hudson

Hudson Valley, NY

Comprehensive Services for
Individuals with ID/DD

Clinical Services
Training & Consultation

Counselor & Behavior Analyst

AGENDA

What is Burnout?

Common Strategies & Obstacles

Five-Stage Approach based on
Evidence-Based Principles

Consider your setting as we proceed...

THE PROBLEM: BURNOUT

Exhaustion (Physical & Mental)

Cynicism/Apathy/Depersonalization

Lack of Motivation, Passion, Engagement

Poor Performance
(Lacking Sense of Accomplishment)

ORGANIZATION IMPACTS

Retention & Recruitment Issues

Decreased Service Quality

Decreased Quality of Life

WHAT GOT US HERE...

Limited Resources...

Too much work

Too few people

Too little time

Drifting Workplace Culture

Etc.

THE COMMON APPROACH

External Supports (EAP)

Employee Appreciation (EOM)

Education

Encouraging Self-Care

Supervisor Support

Not individualized to Organization/Person

WHAT STANDS IN OUR WAY

Work Identity/Glorifying the Over-Worked

Stress-Focused Interpersonal Connection

Mental Health Not Prioritized/Stigma

Obstacles to Accessing Support

WHAT WE CAN DO INSTEAD... FIVE-STAGE PROCESS

We want people to be happy,
do well, and stay...

Evidence-based principles from various
behavioral/social science fields...

1. Assessment

2. Goal Identification

3. Intervention Selection

4. Education

5. Implementation

BHO, INC.

(Barely Hanging On, Inc.)

Check in with them again at Stage 2



ASSESSMENT

We need data...

What are we working with?

1. Organization-Wide
2. Department-Specific
3. Individual-Specific

Initial & Ongoing Feedback
from Leadership & Employees
(avoid group discussion only)

Assessment is Intervention

- Allows us to get buy-in
- Offers sense of control
- Increases feelings of support & investment

- What is contributing to employee burnout?
- What are the impacts of employees experiencing burnout?
- What supports are we offering?
- What's working? What isn't?
- What support would make a difference (that is currently in place)?
- What internal resources do we have available to support our staff?
- What external resources are available in our community?
- What similar challenges have we faced in the past? How did we respond?

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT

Contributors
to Burnout

Issues Resulting
from Burnout

Effectiveness
of Support

Gaps in
Support

Resource
Availability

Past Problem
Solving

- How often do you feel tired at work?
- Do you feel motivated to complete your tasks? Do you feel productive?
- Are you critical of others?
- Are you easily distracted?
- My work feels dull to me at times (T/F)
- I worry about work when I am not working (T/F)
- If your workload didn't change, how long could you continue doing it?
- Do you look forward to coming to work?
- Do you have to multi-task to get things done?
- Do you think being stressed at work is a normal experience?

EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT

1 of 3

Burnout Symptoms

Self-Care Practices

Attitudes
Toward Work

Stress Identification/
Insight

- Expectations are clear and realistic (T/F)
- My workload is reasonable (T/F)
- My tasks are well organized (T/F)
- I work outside of my normal work hours (T/F)
- I have the tools I need to be successful (T/F)
- I have influence and control over my work (T/F)
- What aspects of your job cause you the most stress?
- Is self-care an important part of your routine?
- The work I do is important (T/F)
- What do you enjoy doing outside of work?
- What do you do to “recharge your battery”?

EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT

2 of 3

Factors Contributing to Burnout

Protective Factors

Resilience Promoting
Attitudes

Passions/Interests

- What supports are available to you?
- Do you utilize these supports?
- Are the current supports helpful to you?
- What supports would be helpful to you?
- Do you feel comfortable asking for help when you need it?
- I feel supported by my coworkers (T/F)
- I feel supported by leaders in my company (T/F)
- My supervisor is accessible to me (T/F)
- Do you have a mentor? Would you like one?
- I feel that my work is appreciated (T/F)
- When you do a great job, how do you like to be recognized?

EMPLOYEE ASSESSMENT

3 of 3

Availability &
Use of Supports

Effectiveness
of Support

Help-Seeking

Problem-Solving

Preferred
Recognition Style

- How do you know when you're feeling overwhelmed?
- Tell me about a time you were stressed at work
- What do you get excited about outside of work?
- When you do a good job, how do you like to be recognized?
- Tell me about a work experience where you felt really supported
- What are your relationships like with your coworkers? Your supervisor?

INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT

Be Honest...
Imaginary Exposure

Use this to select
education & supports
that will be needed

This info
will inform
stage 2...

GOAL IDENTIFICATION

INTERPRETING RESULTS TO IDENTIFY GOALS

We have something we don't want...
We want something we don't have...

Group like responses into categories

- Start with easier to categorize responses
- Narrow categories over time
- See if outliers fit in toward end

“Post-It” Strategy

CHECKING IN ON BHO, INC.

Assessment identified...

ORGANIZATION/DEPARTMENT

1. Burnout is creating retention issues across most departments
2. Limited staffing increases demands on programs & staff are upset
3. Employees aren't using counseling supports or attending education sessions

INDIVIDUAL

1. Staff don't feel comfortable saying no/setting boundaries, resulting in taking on too much
2. Staff feel a lack of control over their daily work
3. Staff don't feel their concerns are understood and taken seriously by management



CHECKING IN ON BHO, INC.

Translate problem areas into goals...

ORGANIZATION/DEPARTMENT

1. Improve Retention
2. Improve Staff Experience by Reducing Demands on Staff
3. Increase use of Counseling Supports/Education Sessions

INDIVIDUAL

1. Help staff feel more comfortable setting boundaries/limits when feeling overwhelmed
2. Increase staff's sense of control over their daily work
3. Improve managers' ability to engage supportively with their staff



This info
will inform
stage 3...

INTERVENTION SELECTION

So now what do we do... Time to make a plan

Learn from CBT...

Move toward action, create behavioral momentum & avoid decision paralysis by...

Starting Small (minimize effort)

Breaking Larger Goals into Smaller Ones

Planning Concretely

Forecasting Obstacles

Utilize Strengths/Resources

Make Success Objective/Measurable

Build in Accountability

DESIRED OUTCOME	EFFORT (1-3)	IMPACT (1-3)	RESOURCES REQUIRED	OBSTACLES	STEPS	TIMELINE	SUCCESS CRITERIA	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

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DESIRED OUTCOME	EFFORT (1-3)	IMPACT (1-3)
Improve Managers' Ability to Respond Supportively	1	2



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RESOURCES
REQUIRED

OBSTACLES

STEPS

Training Materials,
Manager Time,
Trainer Time

Managers are
busy...

1. Identify existing
Manager
meeting time



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TIMELINE

SUCCESS
CRITERIA

RESPONSIBLE
PARTIES

8 weeks

65%
Participation

Program
Management,
Training Team
(LIST NAMES)



This info
will inform
next two
stages...

EDUCATION

When moving to action, start with teaching-related goals... have to teach skills before they can be used

Education should be specific to employee needs

Avoid info dump

Topics may include...

Self-Care

Help-Seeking

Conflict Resolution

Effective Communication

Implementing Boundaries

Gratitude (Avoid Toxic Positivity)

Use an Evidence-Based Teaching Strategy...

Behavioral Skills Training (BST)

1. Instruction on specific skill
2. Modeling of skill by trainer
3. Rehearsal of skill by learner
4. Feedback from trainer

Repeat to move from fluency to mastery

CHECKING IN ON BHO, INC.

GOAL

1. Improve Managers' Ability to Respond Supportively

BST ON ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Education on benefits and methods of active listening
2. Modeling of active listening by skilled trainer
3. Managers practice active listening in groups (through roleplay)
4. Trainer gives feedback about performance, highlighting things done well and giving corrective feedback



Completing
this leads
us into
Stage 5

IMPLEMENTATION

Time to implement our plan...
INTEGRATED SUPPORTS

Is Burnout the employee's problem?
The organization's?

Taking a systems approach...
A problem with a member of the group is a
problem with the group (to be solved by the group)

Solutions can come from change within
the group (even if change doesn't
originate with person experiencing the
problem) leading to chain reaction in group

Intervention should occur
at all levels (leaders are models)

When integrating supports, think of employee experience...

Accessibility matters

Minimize response effort

Is it available within the work day?
Where does the employee have to go?
Is it something they could do while working?
Could it be done alongside others?

Reinforce use of support
(incentivize or make it a game)

CHECKING IN ON BHO, INC.

We outlined a plan, now where do we begin...

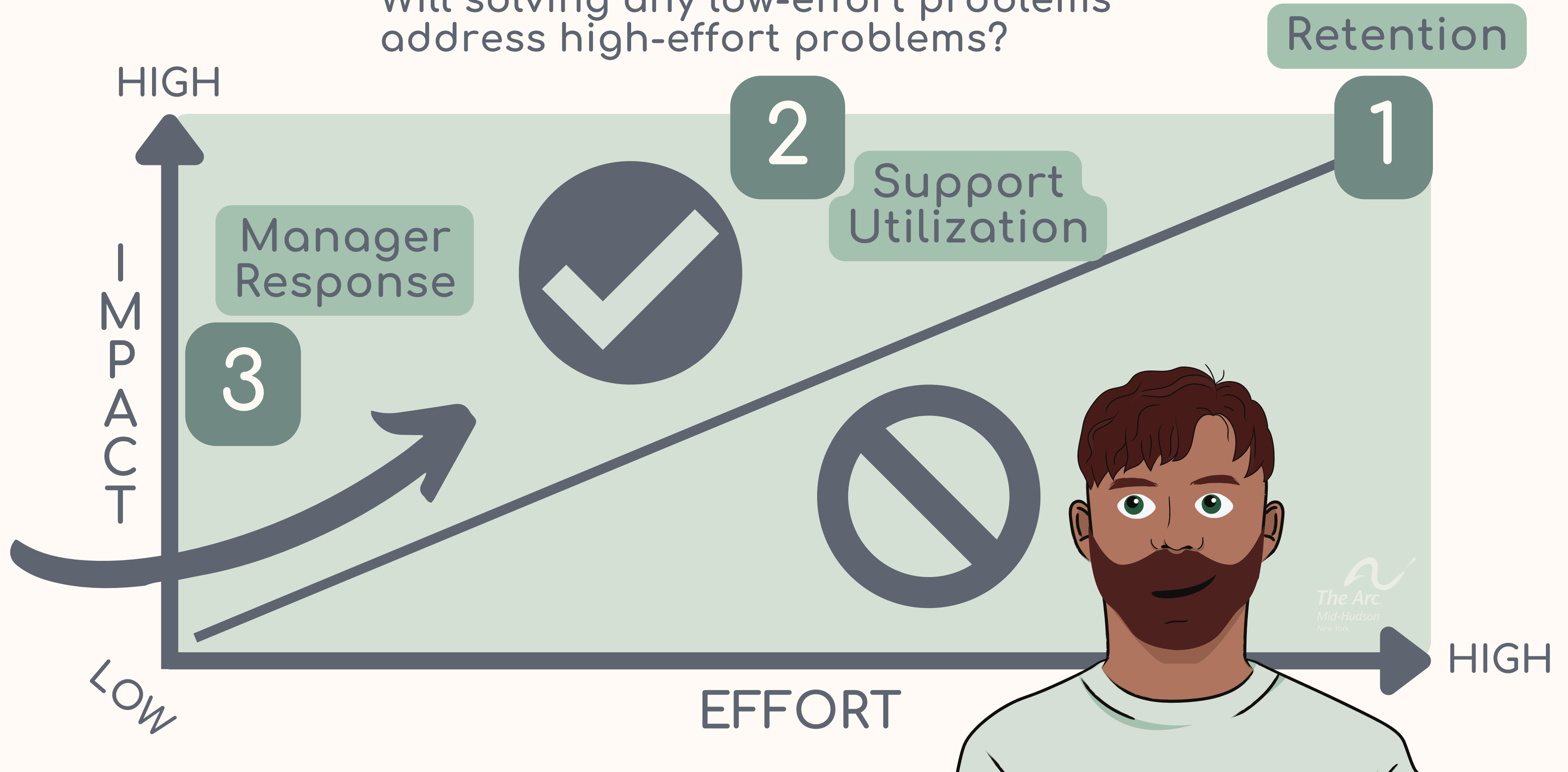
DESIRED OUTCOME	EFFORT (1-3)	IMPACT (1-3)
(1) Improve Retention	3	3
(2) Increase Support Utilization	2	3
(3) Improve Managers' Ability to Respond Supportively	1	2



Graph our goals to see where to start...
Then follow outlined steps
Will solving any low-effort problems
address high-effort problems?



Graph our goals to see where to start...
Then follow outlined steps
Will solving any low-effort problems
address high-effort problems?



ONGOING EVALUATION

Back to Stage 1

Don't "set it and forget it"

Need to check back in

Continually assess

Are things improving?

Are needs changing?

FINAL THOUGHTS

“Your workplace is often responsible for the causes of burnout - they should take responsibility for the cures.”

-Adam Grant

QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?

CONTACT INFO
Brian.Healy@ArcMH.org

Reach out for References
or Additional Resources

Find me on LinkedIn!

