

# SELF CARE: PREVENTING BURN OUT

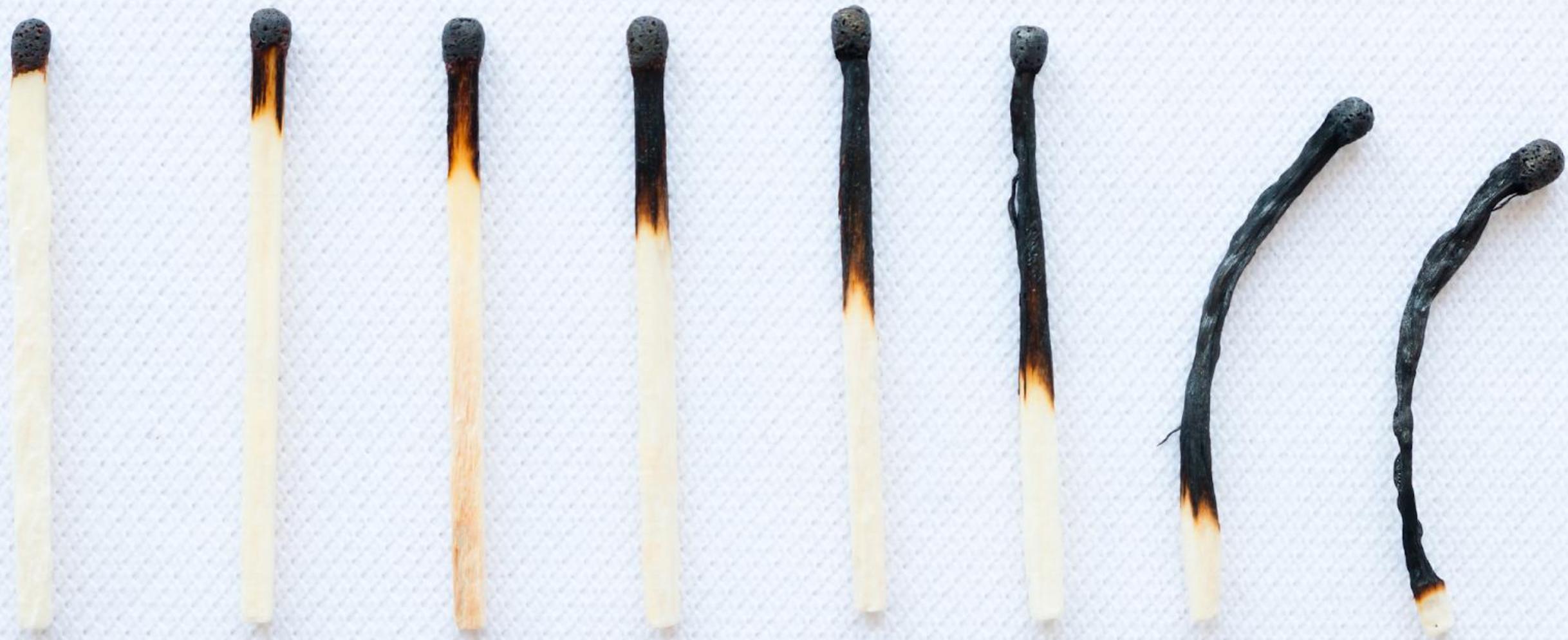
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# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY BURN-OUT?

- Emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress
- WHO recognizes work-related stress: when pressures are not matched to knowledge and abilities and that challenge ability to cope, worsened by lack of support and control
- General Social Survey of 2016 found that 50% of respondents are consistently exhausted because of work, compared with 18% two decades ago





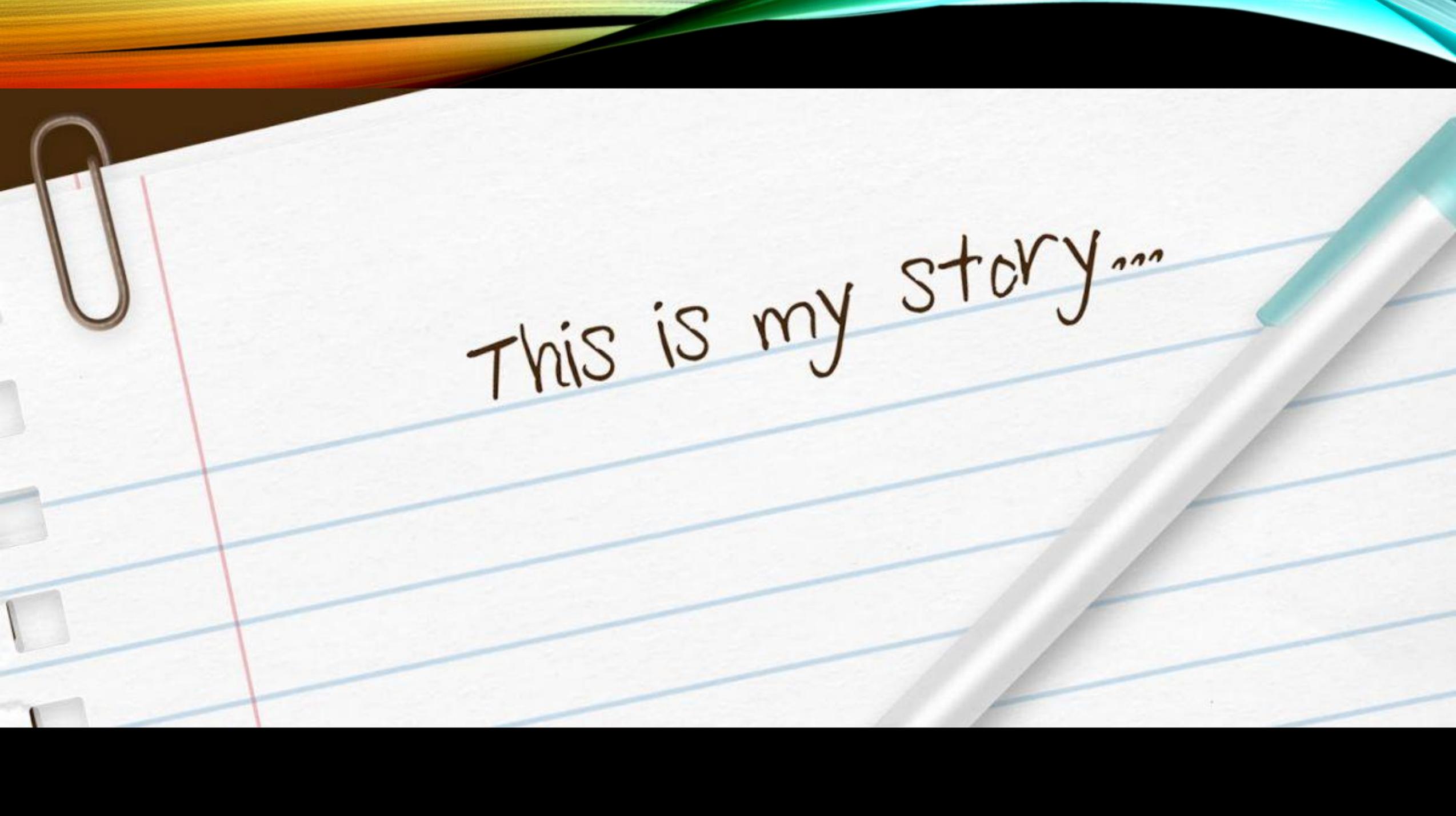


# WHY TALK ABOUT IT?

- Burn-out is real, especially in service industries
- Challenges specific to libraries
- Self-care is the only remedy for burn-out
- Self-care is often the last on your to-do list but it should be first



**stop existing  
and start living**

A close-up photograph of a white, lined notebook page. A silver paperclip is attached to the top left corner. A silver and teal pen lies diagonally across the bottom right. The text "This is my story" is written in brown ink in a cursive style. The page has blue horizontal lines and a red vertical margin line on the left. The background shows colorful, abstract shapes in shades of orange, yellow, and green.

This is my story...

# BURN-OUT CAUSES

- Volume, velocity, and abuse
- Stressors that are physical, psychological, financial, or social
- Practical examples:
  - overcoming non-stop challenges
  - unrealistic deadlines
  - frequent scheduling conflicts
  - frequent interruptions
  - unpredictable schedules
  - physical demands
  - responsibility beyond the scope of your role or compensation
  - interpersonal demands

# SPOON THEORY

Spoonie Librarians  
Facebook Group

 get out of bed	 bathe	 make & eat a meal	 go to work/school
 get dressed	 style hair	 make plans & socialize	 go shopping
 take pills	 surf the internet	 light housework	 go to the doctor
 watch TV	 read/study	 drive somewhere	 exercise

# INSTITUTIONAL COSTS OF BURN-OUT

- Reduced productivity and revenue
- Decreased job satisfaction
- Increased absenteeism and sick leaves
- Increased job turnover
- Low morale
- Compensation, litigation and disability claims
- Burned-out employees less inclined to assist others or care about the organization

# A TWIST: EMOTIONAL LABOR

- Regulating emotions during interactions with customers, co-workers and superiors, including expressing false emotion as well as the suppression of emotion
- Prevalent in service-based jobs
- Not just at work: consider emotional labor at home and in personal relationships

# GENDER AND EMOTIONAL LABOR

- Started in the field of sociology and incorporated into feminist discourse
- In home and work situations women tend to assume the greater burden of emotional labor
- Author and activist Rose Hackman: “What if, much like childcare and housekeeping, the sum of this ongoing emotional management [that women do] is yet another form of unpaid labor?”
- Recent report from the United Nations found that women do 2.6 times the amount of unpaid work/emotional labor that men do



# ARE YOU BURNED OUT?

- Physical and mental exhaustion
- Depression
- Cynicism
- Insomnia
- Forgetfulness
- Increased illnesses
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Isolation

The abbreviated Maslach Burnout Inventory consists of the following questions:

**How often do the following statements describe the way you feel about working as a doctor?**

	<i>Every day</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>Once a month or less</i>	<i>A few times a year</i>	<i>Never</i>
I deal very effectively with the problems of my patients							
I feel I treat some patients as if they were impersonal objects							
I feel emotionally drained from my work							
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job							
I've become more callous towards people since I took this job							
I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work							
Working with people all day is really a strain for me							
I don't really care what happens to some patients							
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my patients							
I think of giving up medicine for another career							
I reflect on the satisfaction I get from being a doctor							
I regret my decision to have become a doctor							

# BURN-OUT IN LIBRARIES

- Stereotypical library vs. real life
- Physical stressors vs. psychological stressors
- Frequent interruptions
- Budget problems and excessive workloads
- Difficult customers
- Difficulties with co-workers or management
- Lack of recognition and support for the hard work being done

# INDIANA

## **“Predictors of burnout in public library employees” in the *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* (February 2018)**

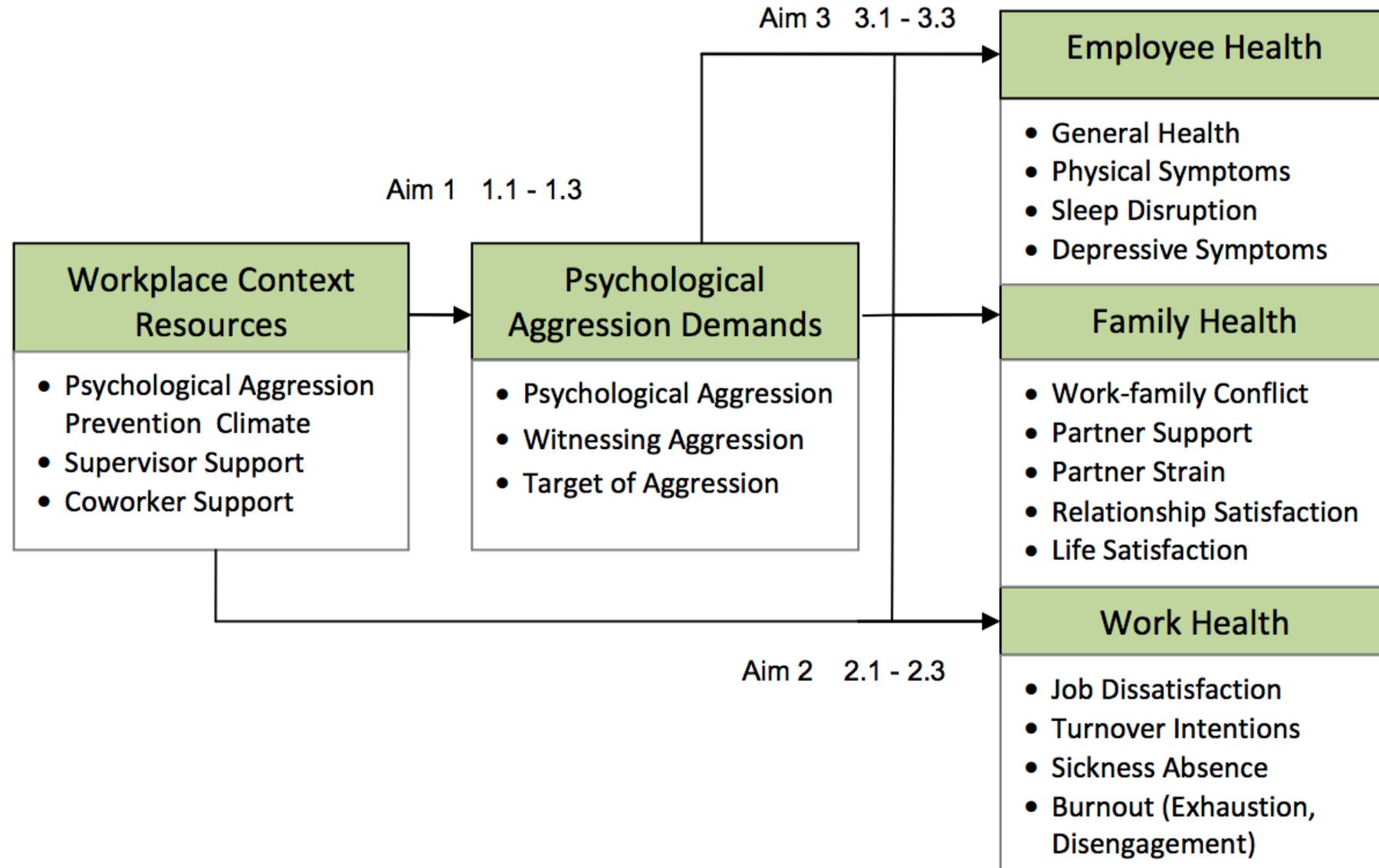
- Symptoms: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, decrease in professional efficacy
- Predictors: autonomy, co-worker support, work pressure, technology attitudes, recovery experiences
- All of the predictors, except for technology attitudes, correlated with burnout
- In the longitudinal section of the study, the only factor that was effective in decreasing burnout was if the supervisor provided role clarity for the employee.

# WASHINGTON

## ***The Washington Library Work, Stress, and Health Project: Final Report (2012)***

- Statewide study 2010-2012
- Prevention/Mediation of burn-out: supervisor support and psychological aggression prevention practices and policies
- Results: fewer psychological aggression experiences among staff, better employee work and health well-being, better family relationships

**Figure 2. The Washington Library Work, Stress, & Health Measurement Model**



# WAYS TO ADDRESS BURN-OUT

- Self-care
- Care of each other
- Organizational culture that supports physical and mental health

# WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

- Day-to-day decisions to manage your life
- Critical to support you living the best possible quality of life
- The week after the 2016 US Presidential election, Americans Googled the term “self-care” almost twice as often as they ever had in years past  
*(Source: Google Trends)*
- Self-care is not selfish
- Self-care is not a one-time deal



**Cookie Monster** ✓  
@MeCookieMonster



Dis year me focusing on me self-care. When me need little love, me going to give meself cookie.

9:04 AM · 02 Jan 19 · [Twitter Web Client](#)

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**13.7K** Retweets **39K** Likes

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# THINGS TO DO RIGHT NOW

- Identify a list of the things that are most important to you in your life. Ask yourself how you would ideally show up for these things and what you need to do to put yourself in that state of mind.
- Self-reflection about your work environment
- Figure out what you enjoy doing, in and out of work
- How to debrief from work

# THINGS TO DO REGULARLY

- **Time:** frequent breaks, choose who you spend time with, protect your time
- **Environmental factors:** ergonomic desks and chairs, plants in your office space, natural light, pleasant scents, protect your personal space
- **Solitary activities:** meditation, journaling, sleeping, eating well, love yourself
- Find a mentor
- Know your own limits and respect them
- Decompress throughout the day
- Have a life outside of work

# HANDLING ACUTE SITUATIONS

- During
  - Focused breathing
  - Treat the interaction as if you're observing it as a social experiment
- Afterward
  - Take a walk
  - Read or watch something goofy
  - Eat something weirdly healthy
  - Seek outside help
  - Stop trying to control your thoughts and emotions. Instead, control your response and behavior.

# WHAT CO-WORKERS CAN DO

- Watch for signs of burnout and stress in your coworkers
- Ask your coworkers how they are feeling
- Ask again
- Be willing to actively listen to a coworker's difficulties
- Offer to help a coworker with a difficult situation
- Create stress-relievers for each other--60 second dance parties, pie day, healthy food day, write thank you notes acknowledging hard work, play a short game during lunch
- Remind each other to take breaks
- Support each other in taking time off
- Talk about workplace stressors and role-play ways to handle them together--back each other up!
- Create the workplace culture you want to be a part of

# WHAT MANAGERS CAN DO

- Make people's roles and responsibilities really clear. (RACI: responsible, accountable, consulted, informed)
- Watch for signs of burnout and stress in your coworkers
- Ask your coworkers how they are feeling
- Be willing to actively listen to a coworker's difficulties
- Create an environment where workaholism is not considered a virtue
- Do not take someone else's stress as a criticism of you
- Stress the importance of taking breaks
- Encourage people to take their earned time off
- If your workplace is identified as unhealthy, find a healthy workplace peer and figure out what is being done differently
- Ensure all managers and supervisors are trained on and model professional ethical and supportive behavior
- Ensure all managers and supervisors are trained on conflict management and conflict resolution
- Ensure all managers and supervisors are trained on harassment and bullying laws

# WHAT EVERYONE CAN DO

- Build what the Washington State study calls a “Psychological Aggression Prevention Climate”
- Endorse and enforce zero tolerance psychological aggression policies
- Create and maintain a code of conduct that defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for all staff
- Develop a policy that outlines procedural responses to breaches in the code of conduct; especially a mechanism for reporting violations of policy without repercussions
- Take complaints seriously and investigate all complaints systematically and promptly with clear safeguards in place for confidentiality and due process
- Provide support to any individual impacted by psychological aggression
- Perform yearly supervisory and managerial risk assessments of the workplace environment, focusing on markers of positive psychosocial climates such as demonstrated equality in work and rewards



# RESOURCES: MONOGRAPHS

- *Managing Burnout in the Workplace: A Guide for Information Professionals* by Nancy McCormack and Catherine Cotter, 2013.
- *Is Work Killing You? A Doctor's Prescription for Treating Workplace Stress* by David Posen, 2013.
- *The Washington Library Work, Stress, and Health Project: Final Report* by Nanette L. Yragui, Whitney Johnson, and the Washington Department of Labor & Industries. 2012.

# RESOURCES: JOURNAL ARTICLES

- “You Too, Can Prevent Librarian Burnout” by Jennifer A. Bartlett in *Library Leadership and Management*. February 2018.
- "All stressed out, but does anyone notice? Stressors affecting public Libraries" by Mary Wilkins Jordan in *Journal of Library Administration*. 2014.
- "Exploring the Stressors of New Librarians" by Anne Larrivee in *Library Scholarship*. 2014.
- “Predictors of burnout in public library employees” by Michelle P. Salyers, Melanie A. Watkins, Amber Painter, Eric A. Snajdr, Lauren O. Gilmer, Jennifer M. Garabrant, and Nancy H. Henry in *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. 2018.
- “Fight or Flight...or Fix? Employers Must Work with Employees to Address Workplace Stress” by Jane Langille in *Canadian Journal of Medical Laboratory Science*. Winter 2017.

# RESOURCES: WEB ARTICLES

- “45 Simple Self-Care Practices for a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul” by Ellen Bard on *Tiny Buddha*.
- “A History of Self-Care: From its radical roots to its yuppie-driven middle age to its election-inspired resurgence” by Aisha Harris on *Slate*.
- “Crash and Burnout: Is Workplace Stress the New Normal?” by Brianna Hansen on *Wrike*.

