

WOMEN OF STEEL COMMITTEE SPECIAL PUBLICATION #2 LIVING WITH BURNOUT — SELF-CARE

Generally, members are aware of what depression, anxiety and stress are. However, workers may not be aware of what burnout is. The Women of Steel are releasing four publications raising awareness around some common mental health issues, with a focus on burnout which could

be affecting members. Publication #1 reviews general information, #2 is on self-help, #3 explores how burnout could affect you at work, and #4 is what to do when self-help is no longer working. These have been adapted with permission from the [original publications produced by Local 1944](#).

WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

According to [Psychology Today](#), “self-care is a regular, intentional process of devoting oneself to protecting and sustaining mental health. It is backed by science and not just feel good, self-indulgent sentiments.”



MAKE MORE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Take an honest look at all of your commitments and see how you can make more time for yourself. Starting in small increments, even as little as 5 minutes a day, find some way to take a moment just for you. Choose a time, set a reminder on your phone, and be present for yourself.

If you only have a short amount of time: Meditate; Do some breathing exercises; Read; Write or draw in a journal; Call or message a friend; Stretch/movement practice; Go for a walk; Take the time to sit and eat a snack; Spend some time away from screens.

If you are able to carve out more time, here are some more ideas: Massage; Speaking to a therapist; Physical activity (yoga, etc.); Spending time with friends/family; Dedicating time to a hobby that you feel passionate about or inspires you.

Try to clean things from your life for a period of time (ie. time commitments, extra work, extra activities) that don't NEED to be done right now, and that aren't serving you in a positive way. Remember that it's ok to say no when asked to do more, and set clear boundaries of what you are and aren't willing to commit the time to.

WHAT TO DO? APPROACHES TO RECOVERY

Recovery takes anywhere from 6 weeks to 2 years, with an average of 6 to 9 months. Most describe recovery as a life-long journey.

Many people benefit from talk therapy including group counselling and addiction counselling. Some are prescribed medication that they feel is helpful. Most make significant life changes around how they take care of and think about themselves, how they do their work, and how they engage in relationships.

Check your Benefits manual or call your Benefits department to understand your coverage. For example, Telus Appendices A & B recently had improvements on coverage allowing for counselling with a registered clinical counsellor or psychologist which no longer impacts the paramedical coverage bucket.

Improved self-care strategies:

- Take time away from work if the burnout is resulting in impairment in the ability to function or requires treatment
- Ensure that the recovery process includes the development of a healthy approach to work
- Minimize or eliminate alcohol and caffeine
- Develop and follow a healthy eating plan



- Exercise regularly
- Walk in green space
- Find a creative outlet such as painting or gardening.

Change how you think about and do work:

- Stop multi-tasking – focus on one thing at a time
- Work at a reasonable, steady pace
- Break down seemingly overwhelming tasks and projects into smaller achievable parts
- Recognize and celebrate your small steps along the way
- Tell your manager you want to be successful at your job and ask them how they would measure that
- Take regular assigned breaks and resist working unnecessary overtime
- Even if you must provide contact information in case of emergency, try as much as possible to stay disconnected from work during vacation time.

BURNOUT, ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE RESOURCES

- **Wellness Together Canada** provides free online resources, tools, apps and connections to trained volunteers and qualified mental health professionals when needed.
- **MoodGym**: Learn and practice skills which can help to prevent and manage symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- **Living Life to the Full**: Work out why you feel as you do, how to tackle problems, build confidence, get going again, feel happier, stay calm, tackle upsetting thinking and more. Free online courses covering low mood, stress and resiliency.
- **HelpGuide**: Start improving your mental health and wellness today.
- **Psychsafety.org**: Non-medication strategies: antidepressant skills rather than antidepressant pills - The workbook is available for FREE online (can be viewed on screen or printed, or listened to, or downloaded as a "talking book"). Copies are available in English, French, Punjabi, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Farsi.
- **Bounce Back Ontario**: a free skill-building program designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry. Delivered online or over the phone with a coach, you will get access to tools that will support you on your path to mental wellness.
- **Selfcare.ca** explains the Seven Pillars of Self-Care.
- **Rethink Drinking**: Discover their interactive **worksheets**.
- **Hello Sunday Morning** delivers campaigns to reduce stigma around alcohol and encourages people to consider their relationship with alcohol.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)** offers confidential short-term counselling, coaching, information and support for issues relating to mental health, health management, and achieving greater personal and workplace well-being.
- **University of Toronto Wellness Hub** is a single source for all wellness services, supports, and resources available to U of T employees.
- **Lifeline Foundation** provides free, confidential counselling, information and referral services to USW members and their families dealing with depression, stress, anxiety, financial problems, or legal issues. Sharon Clarke is the Lifeline Coordinator and can be reached at 416-977-6888 or life_line@bellnet.ca.

APPS

- **Ginger** is a free mobile APP solution. It provided on-demand access to behavioral health coaching, video therapy, video psychiatry and self-guided content that's clinically proven to reduce symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. For your needs: Challenges with work, relationships, stress, anxiety, and depression.

For your goals: Understand emotions, build self-confidence, take that next big step.

At your pace: Built-in assessments to ensure measurement-based progress. On your time: Accessible on the bus, in between meetings, and in the middle of the night.

- **Daybreak App** is designed to support people looking to change their relationship with alcohol.
- **MindShift** uses scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

- **Maple** offers access to online general practitioner visits. You can connect with a Canadian-licensed general practitioner in minutes from the comfort of your home.

- **The Digital Clinic by Green Shield Canada** offers a suite of products and services that allow you to access health care from your own home, your phone, or literally anywhere.

*At any time if you need help, please reach out to the **Union**. These communication pieces have been created in the spirit of education and empowerment.
In Solidarity,*

*Women of Steel USW Local 1998 Committee
info@usw1998.ca*