

CHS Ongoing Conversations

Inequities in Burnout

October 18, 2022

Welcome!

Our Committee:

Carrie Earthman
Behavioral Health and
Nutrition

Amelia Ayala
Speech Language
Acquisition &
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**Julie Carney-
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CHS Advising

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Kinesiology and Applied
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Employee Assistance Program

<https://dhr.delaware.gov/benefits/compsych/>

Center for Counseling & Student Development

<https://sites.udel.edu/counseling/>

What is the Goal of the Ongoing Conversations Series?

To continue to engage CHS employees and students on topics related to diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism

Where We've Been, and Where We're Going

Creating Safe Spaces

Microaggressions

White Privilege

Practicing Allyship

Professionalism in the Workplace: Intersections with Racism and Gender Nonconformity

.... Today: *Inequities in Burnout*

From our Second Conversation for Change...

Ground Rules for a Safe Space:

- Everyone is expected “to avoid language that is pejorative or perpetuates stereotypes about gender, age, race, religious affiliation, class, sexuality, national origin, dialect or disability (not an exhaustive list)”.
- Listen, with an open mind and actively check understanding
- Show respect with your voice, attention, and body language
- Be open to other perspectives
- Give people the benefit of the doubt
- When people say something that isn't “PC” correct them respectfully without affirming negative ideas

Burnout



What is Burnout?

- Defined as “a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress”
- What are the symptoms of burnout?
 - Energy depletion and exhaustion
 - Depersonalization and cynicism (lack of interest/concern, difficulty maintaining focus)
 - Reduced efficacy (ineffective, unproductive)
 - Fantasize about escape/quitting
- Consequences?
 - Debilitating health effects, reduced productivity, depression, suicidal thoughts

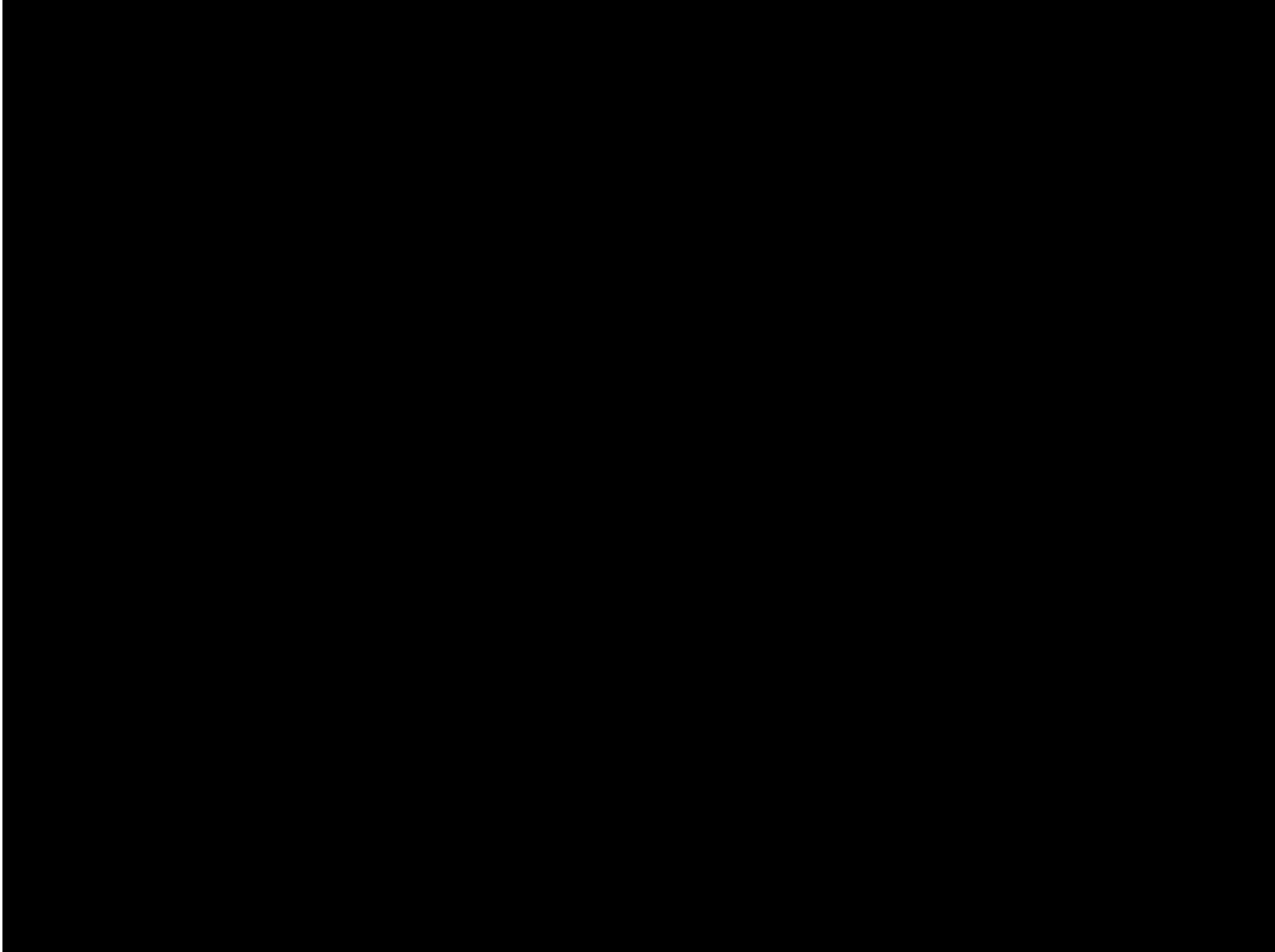
What Factors Contribute to Inequities in Burnout Among BIPOC in our Workspaces?

- Pandemic disparities, racial injustices, political division, bodily autonomy
 - Greater impact on BIPOC due to:
 - lack of support
 - isolation at work
 - constant stress of racial trauma
 - *“mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes”*
 - White colleagues may be unable to relate to BIPOC pain or perspective when a race-related issue arises; emotional burdens with ongoing racial trauma can be substantial

What Factors Contribute to Inequities in Burnout Among BIPOC in our Workspaces?

- Heightened pressure to perform
 - Pressures: to prove oneself, exceed expectations, represent the entire BIPOC community
 - Imposter syndrome despite evidence of success
 - Result → pushing oneself beyond reasonable expectations
- Advocacy for diversity and inclusion; carrying the burden of educating others

Race-Related Stress



Factors that Contribute to Inequities in Burnout Among BIPOC and Underrepresented Groups in our Workspaces

- Why is burnout more likely, and more impactful on these individuals?
 - Working multiple jobs within a single role (*well-documented in BIPOC*)
 - Lack of access to professional advancement
 - Increased expectations to manage workplace racial-gender emotional labor
 - Added burden of being unable to be complete self in workplace
 - Hybrid/on-line work environments can be even more difficult than in-person

What is gender nonconformity?

- Cisgender
 - Someone who identifies with their gender assigned at birth
- Transgender
 - Someone who identifies with a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth
 - Binary and nonbinary gender nonconforming people
- Personal Pronouns
 - Hi nice to meet you! My pronouns are they/them, what are yours?
 - Examples: he/him/his, they/them/theirs, she/her/hers, ze/zir/zirs
 - <https://www.mypronouns.org/they-them>
 - Inclusivity: adding pronouns to Zoom and email signatures
- What is misgendering?

Inequities in Burnout: Gender Nonconformity

- Additive burden on top of normal burnout associated with having to correct people on pronouns
- If not correcting people, still the emotional toll of being misgendered and not being seen by colleagues
- How to minimize this for gender nonconforming colleagues?
 - Read pronouns in Zoom and email signatures and USE them
 - Practice using pronouns you aren't as comfortable with during conversations with friends and family

Break Out Discussion

Inequities in Burnout Scenarios 20 Minutes

LINK to our Google Sheet to Record Discussion Notes from Break-Out Groups:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Q9ZXGSN_fdlpTTjX4ztHdBFreFdy-pS/edit?usp=sharing&oid=117777144708130088103&rtpof=true&sd=true

Scenario #1

Crystal is a second year doctoral student. She identifies as a Black woman and is currently the only Black graduate student in her program. Crystal's doctoral advisor is Dr. Y, a Professor who identifies as a White woman. Crystal works for Dr. Y as her Graduate Teaching Assistant for a large (200+) undergraduate course, and as her Graduate Research Assistant. At the same time, Crystal is juggling the demands of serving on the department's graduate committee as the student representative and because the faculty is hiring a new faculty member, Crystal has also been asked to serve on the Search Committee to ensure that the committee has 'diverse' representation. Crystal is feeling substantial stress and decides to go to her advisor to be proactive, and to let her know how she is feeling and to get Dr. Y's support in reducing some of the demands on her in order to allow her to be more effective as a graduate student towards her own dissertation goals. Dr. Y is supportive at first, recognizing that 'work-life balance' is important to learn. However, by the end of the conversation, Dr. Y seems to imply that Crystal is just not 'coming to the table' given the great opportunities she's being given to demonstrate leadership and growth as a graduate student and Crystal feels compelled to back off from her initial request to be relieved of some of these obligations in order to save face. She leaves the office feeling demoralized, exhausted, and overwhelmed.

1. What signs of burnout is Crystal exhibiting? What are the likely contributing factors?
2. How would you feel in this situation, i.e. if you were Crystal?
3. What could Crystal do to address this situation in the moment or after the fact?
4. What would have been more appropriate actions for Dr. Y to take in this situation?

Scenario #2

Dr. Nicole Poole was recently promoted to Associate Professor. She identifies as a Black woman; she is one of two Black faculty members in her college. She has been working hard as she came up for Promotion and Tenure - writing grants, publishing papers, supporting several graduate students, and teaching two of her department's core undergraduate courses every semester. Nicole serves on her department and her college's diversity and inclusion committees, in addition to several pipeline ad-hoc committees. She works with the local high school by meeting with students and making presentations on a regular basis to encourage interest in her department's program. When she received news of her promotion over the summer, she was at first relieved and happy - but now, several months later, she is realizing that she is feeling exhausted, stressed, and anxious about everything that remains on her plate despite this achievement. She decides to stop answering emails and texts on weekends and evenings after the workday ends. She adds a note to the bottom of her signature to indicate that she won't answer emails after 5 pm on weekdays and between 5 pm on Fridays and 8 am on Mondays. A week after she has implemented this change, she is requested to meet with her Department Chair. In that meeting she is told that it sends the 'wrong message' to students and further, that it is unacceptable for her not to reply when she (her Chair) or other faculty members send an urgent email that requires her input in a more timely manner. Nicole knows that a departmental colleague (White male professor) has a similar message on his email, and she raises this point to her Chair. Her Chair states that he's a full professor and has earned his right to do so. She states that being perceived as a 'good egg' and willing to serve is important for the next promotion. She seems to imply that Nicole does not do enough service, and she is being selfish and unreasonable by making this stand about weekend and evening emails and texts while 'the rest of the department is meeting the needs of the students and the department by responding in a more timely way'.

1. What signs of burnout is Dr. Poole (Nicole) exhibiting? What are the likely contributing factors?
2. How would you feel in this situation, i.e. if you were Nicole?
3. What could Nicole do to address this situation in the moment or after the fact?
4. What would have been more appropriate actions for Nicole's Department Chair to take?

What Can Be Done to Reduce the Burden on our BIPOC and Other Colleagues Who Are at Higher Risk of Burnout?

- Remember that it takes active work to:
 - Learn to identify and challenge your implicit biases
 - Visit <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>
 - Challenge your ideas about professionalism in the workplace
 - Recognize and call out microaggressions when you witness them
 - Change your language to include gender nonconforming people by using everyone's preferred pronouns
 - Be willing to recognize and learn from your mistakes, and don't be afraid to make mistakes!

What Can Be Done to Reduce the Burden on our BIPOC and Other Colleagues Who Are at Higher Risk of Burnout?

- Daily Actions:
 - Think about our implicit biases with race and gender to be inclusive of everyone in the workplace
 - Read to educate oneself
 - Listen to your BIPOC and other colleagues from underrepresented groups and learn about their concerns; Avoid making conversations about you
 - Hold yourself accountable; connect with others on this journey with you
 - Recognize the impact that code-switching may be having on your colleagues
 - Use your power and take action
 - Speak up when you see inequities; look for ways to reduce the burdens; advocate!
- What else?

**Please Join Us for our Upcoming
Healthcare Theatre Session,
Part II of our Learning about Inequities in Burnout:**

Tuesday, November 15 from 11 - 12:30 PM, North Atrium of STAR

Stay tuned for the flyer that will be sent out via email...

Thank you for coming!

On behalf of our committee:

**Shannon Lennon
Carrie Earthman
Amelia Ayala
Julie Carney-Jones**