



Organisational factors

STAFF BURNOUT

This evidence theme on organisational factors is a summary of one of the key topics identified by a scoping review of staff burnout research.

Key points

- Organisational factors refer to various interconnected elements that collectively influence the behaviour and functioning of the organisation (i.e., aged care).
- Findings indicated two categories of organisational factors that contribute to burnout: work demands and work-related stressors.
- Examples of work demands include long work hours and time pressure, whereas examples of work-related stressors include role conflict and lack of resources.

What are organisational factors?

Burnout is a complex occupational phenomenon that is influenced by organisational, personal, and interpersonal factors. [1] In this theme, organisational factors refer to the various interconnected elements within an institution that collectively influences the behaviour and functioning of an organisation (i.e. aged care). [1] Within aged care, there are specific organisational factors that contribute to an increased risk of burnout among aged care workers. [2] Identifying these factors can assist organisations to reduce the risk of burnout among their workers, promoting a healthier and more sustainable workplace. [1, 2] This not only benefits the wellbeing of the aged care workers, but also enhances the quality of care provided to clients/residents, ensuring a more positive and therapeutic care delivery. [1, 2]

Personal and interpersonal factors are discussed in separate evidence theme reports.

What do we know about organisational factors contributing to burnout in aged care?

The 2022 scoping review found nine studies on organisational factors contributing to burnout among aged care workers. [3-11] The 2023 update found an additional three studies that contributed to this theme. [12-14]

The stressful nature of aged care workplaces (i.e. work conditions) may contribute to burnout for aged care workers. [12] These work conditions can be divided into two categories, namely, work demands and work-related stressors.

A list of reported work demands contributing to one or more burnout components in aged care include

- Heavy and increased workloads [4, 6, 8]
- High acuity of residents [4]
- Long working hours [3]
- Time pressures [3, 5]

A list of reported work-related stressors contributing to one or more burnout components in aged care include:

- Insufficient time to perform tasks for residents [4]
- Professional responsibilities and role conflict [6]
- Lack of materials and resources (i.e. towels) to support the care workers to do a 'good job' [6, 15]
- Lack of belief in the quality of care provided by the organisation [11]
- Lack of opportunities for continuous education [8] (for registered nurses) [7]
- Dissatisfaction with wages and salaries [13, 14]
- Inflexible work schedules [10]
- Inability to build long-term relationships with clients/residents [10]
- Caring for dying residents when there is a lack of emotional support [9]

What can an individual do?

- Establish healthy work-life boundaries to ensure adequate rest and relaxation outside of work hours.
- Workers should communicate with supervisors about the importance of having access to necessary material resources to perform the job effectively.
- Take advantage of opportunities for skill-building, education and training provided by the organisation.

What can an organisation do?

- Implement measures to minimise excessive working hours, such as scheduling rotations and providing adequate breaks.
- Establish a supportive environment that encourages open communication and addresses concerns related to job insecurity.
- Implement recognition and reward systems to acknowledge worker efforts and foster a sense of accomplishment.

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