



# Organisational interventions

## STAFF BURNOUT

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

### Key points

- Organisational interventions refer to the planned efforts within an organisation to foster positive changes in employee (i.e. aged care staff member) wellbeing and work conditions.
- These interventions modify work context to reduce sources of stress within the workplace, thereby mitigating the risk and impact of burnout among aged care workers.
- This scoping review identified a range of organisational interventions such as to assess and implement strategies for stress reduction, job training, flexible schedules, and staff recognition initiatives.
- The research evidence also provided insights learned during and since the COVID-19 pandemic and suggests organisational interventions that may be useful in the event of future crises and pandemics.

### What are organisational interventions to prevent staff burnout?

Burnout is an individual reaction in response to high job demands and low job resources'. [1] Individuals who are burnt out have high levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and low levels of accomplishment. [1] Aged care workers are especially at risk in developing burnout due to the chronic stressors of their work, which can negatively affect the quality of work performance. [2-4] Implementing suitable interventions, whether at the individual or organisational level, or through a combination of both, can mitigate burnout among aged care workers. [2] Personal interventions attempt to increase aged care worker's psychological resources to cope with workplace stressors. [5] Organisational interventions focuses on changing the occupational context to reduce sources of stress within the workplace. [5]

A combined intervention takes on both personal and organisational perspectives. [5]. A separate evidence theme was developed, which reported on personal interventions. There were no findings on combined interventions relative to staff burnout for aged care workers.

## What do we know about organisational interventions?

The 2022 scoping review found six studies on organisational interventions to prevent or manage burnout in aged care workers. [6-11] The 2023 update found additional three studies that contributed to this theme. [12-14] Research studies on burnout propose a variety of effective actions that organisations can implement to protect and manage burnout among staff members.

### These include:

- Providing adequate job training opportunities [7, 10, 12] and learning resources [7, 8, 15] such as textbooks, policy and procedural manuals, and guidelines. [15]
- Providing staff with a voice to express concerns about care quality [9]
- Implementing community and government support initiatives, such as recognising staff as “healthcare heroes” and “health care warriors” [13]
- Improving work environment (organisational context) [6]

One study reported that nursing staff working in small-scale living facilities had fewer physical demands and workloads. [11] However, there were no differences found in burnout symptoms when compared to other workplace environments, such as within hospitals. [11]

The following provides organisational intervention findings in relation to future crisis and pandemics, which were learnt at the time of COVID-19:

- Ensure clear direction and guidance from leaders and regulators. [14]
- Implement procedures for crisis situations through listening, consultation, and dialogue with multidisciplinary staff, recognising their knowledge and experience. [14]
- Grant greater staff autonomy in decision-making, particularly in crisis events. [14]

## What can an individual do?

- Assess and implement personal strategies to reduce work stress.
- Seek and participate in relevant job training opportunities, utilising learning resources such as textbooks, policy manuals, and guidelines.
- Utilise opportunities to express concerns about care quality.

## What can an organisation do?

- Ensure clear direction and guidance from leaders and regulators.
- Implement crisis procedures involving listening, consultation, and dialogue with multidisciplinary staff, recognising their knowledge and experience.
- Provide greater autonomy to staff in decision-making processes, especially during crisis events.

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