

OASIS 2014

Motivation, Challenges and
Needs:

What do Support Staff Say?

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- Centre for Research on Employment and Workplace Health
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MAPS
MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASSESSMENT
OF PROVIDERS AND SYSTEMS

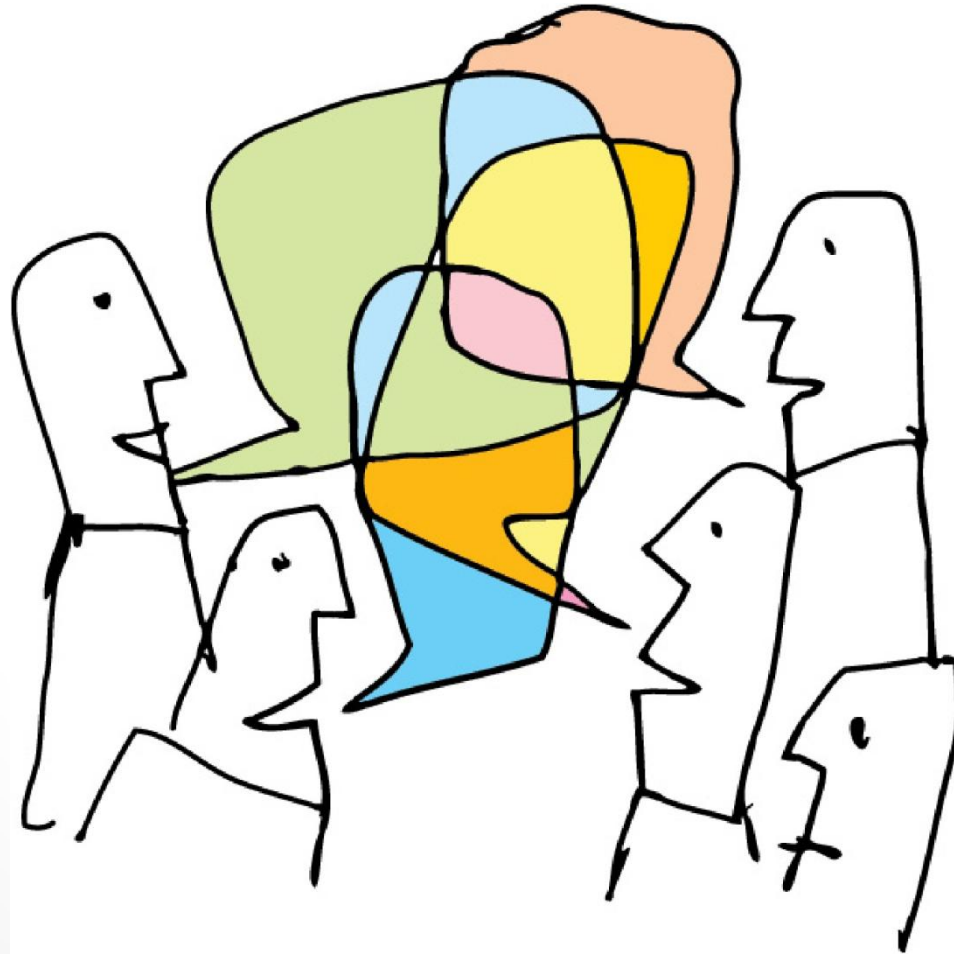
camh CREWH

Centre for Research on Employment
and Workplace Health

Overview

- Understanding the experience of stress and burnout
 - Stress related to the exposure to challenging behavior
 - Employment related stress
- Building on the strengths of the sector to manage stress and support employees
 - Strong commitment to the nature of the work
 - What do direct support professionals say?
- Putting research into practice
 - Evidence-informed HR practices to reduce stress and burnout

Let's have a
conversation...



Why does this matter?

- Human service workers are at high risk for job burnout
- In this sector, there are some usual and some unique factors that can contribute to burnout
- Burnout can affect personal and professional lives
- Staff well-being can affect the well-being of people supported
- Recruitment and retention is a challenge
- Direct support workers who are more pro-socially motivated experience more acute levels of burnout



Nurse Silversides phone the Uni
and order another batch of new
graduates. They burn out so quickly
these days

fg
20
05

They're on
back order



The context is relevant!

- Turnover in the community sector is high^{1,2}
 - 50-70% in U.S. data
 - 10-30% in U.K.
 - Ontario Agency reports suggest similar to UK data
 - Highest in part-time staff
- The 'leaver' phenomenon³
- Costs associated with retraining
 - est. \$2,413/worker (U.S. data)²
 - est. \$1,776 (Ontario data)
- Mental health related disability is rising and accounts for approx. 30% of disability claims⁴

¹Hatton et al., 2001; ²Hewitt & Larson, 2007; ³Hall & Hall, 2002; ⁴Dewa et al., 2004

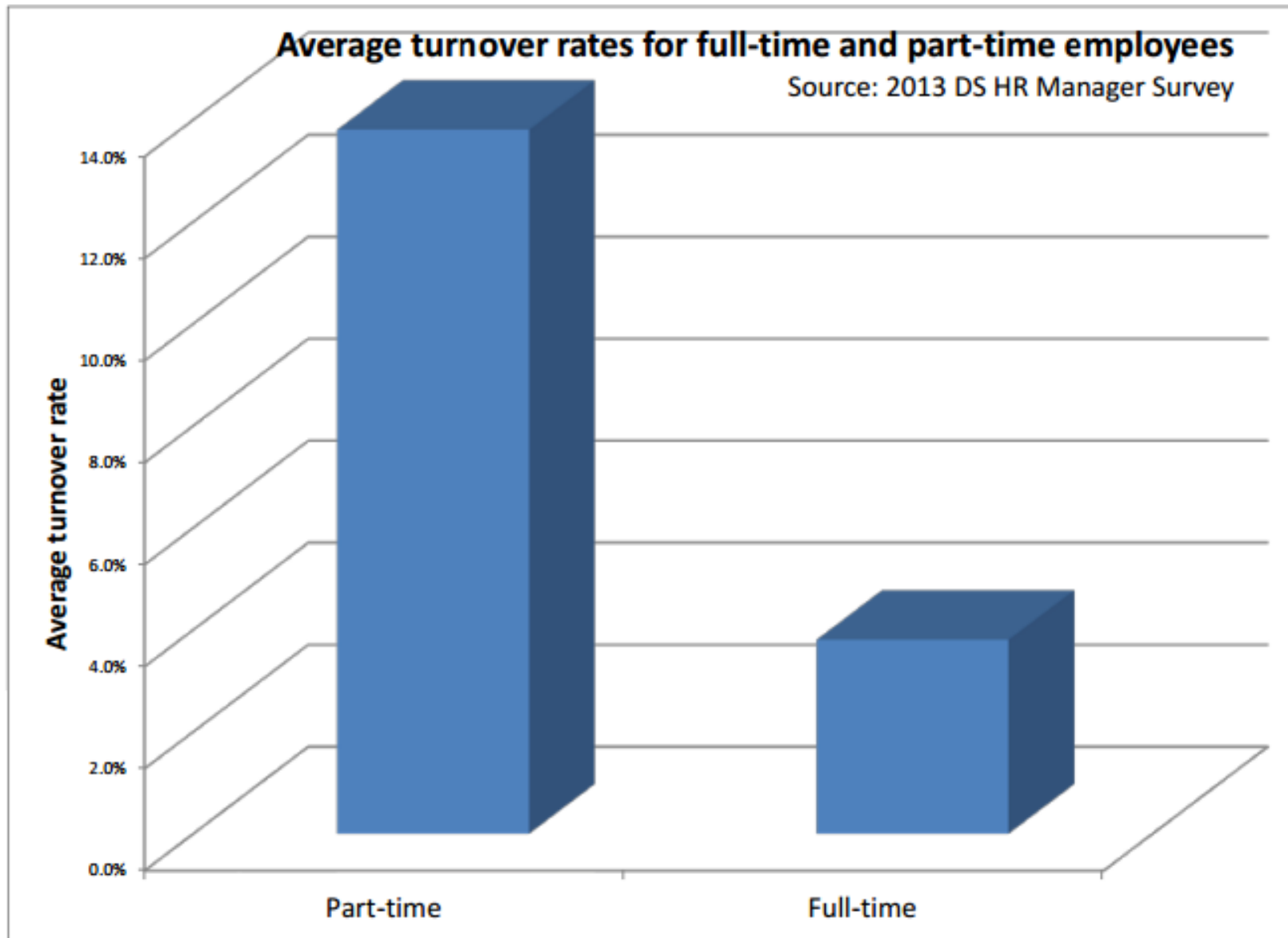
Data for Ontario

We have been involved with some major work to date:

- 2010 Provincial Survey of staff (n = 1,017)
- Hospital, Student and seasonal camp staff surveys
- 2010 Core competencies (n = 1,570)
- 2012 Core competencies (n = 1,198)
- 2012 HR manager survey
- 19 interviews with support staff re: experiences with challenging behaviour
- ~75 interviews with managers, support staff, unions re: HR practices and labour relations

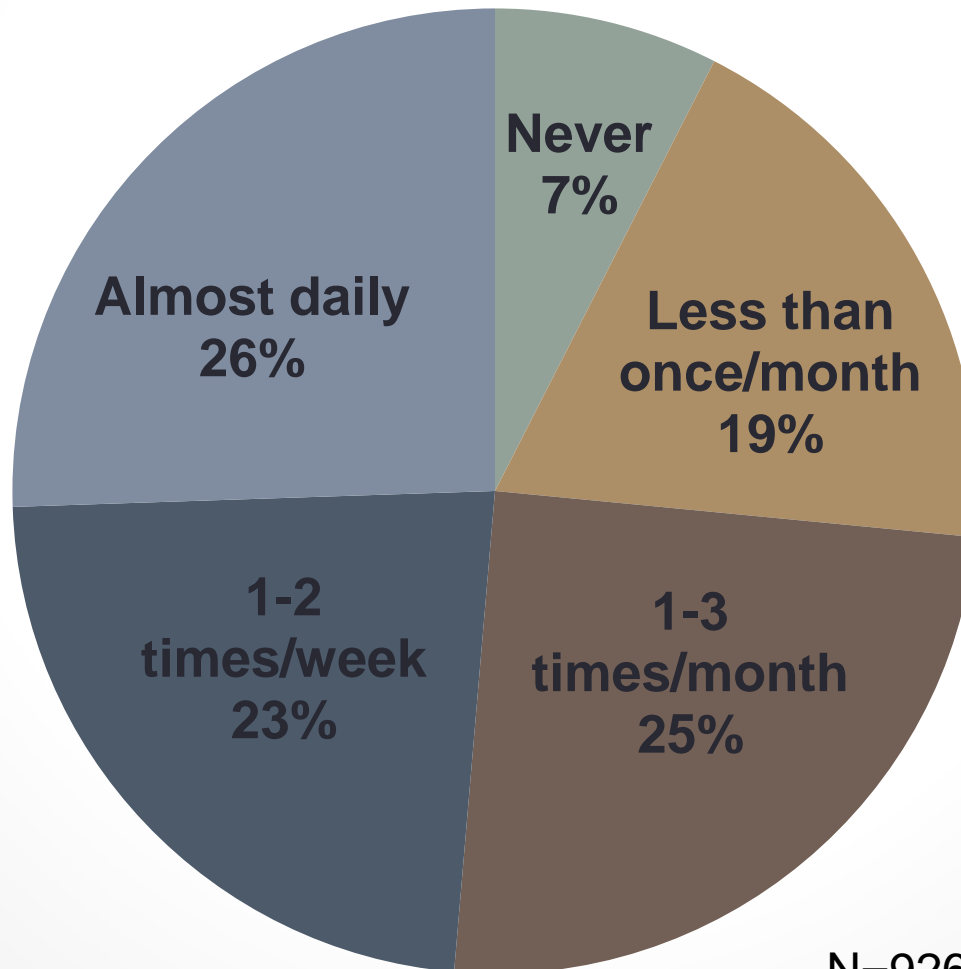
Average turnover rates for full-time and part-time employees

Source: 2013 DS HR Manager Survey



- Ontario HR Strategy Report: Human Resource Metrics , February 2014 ●

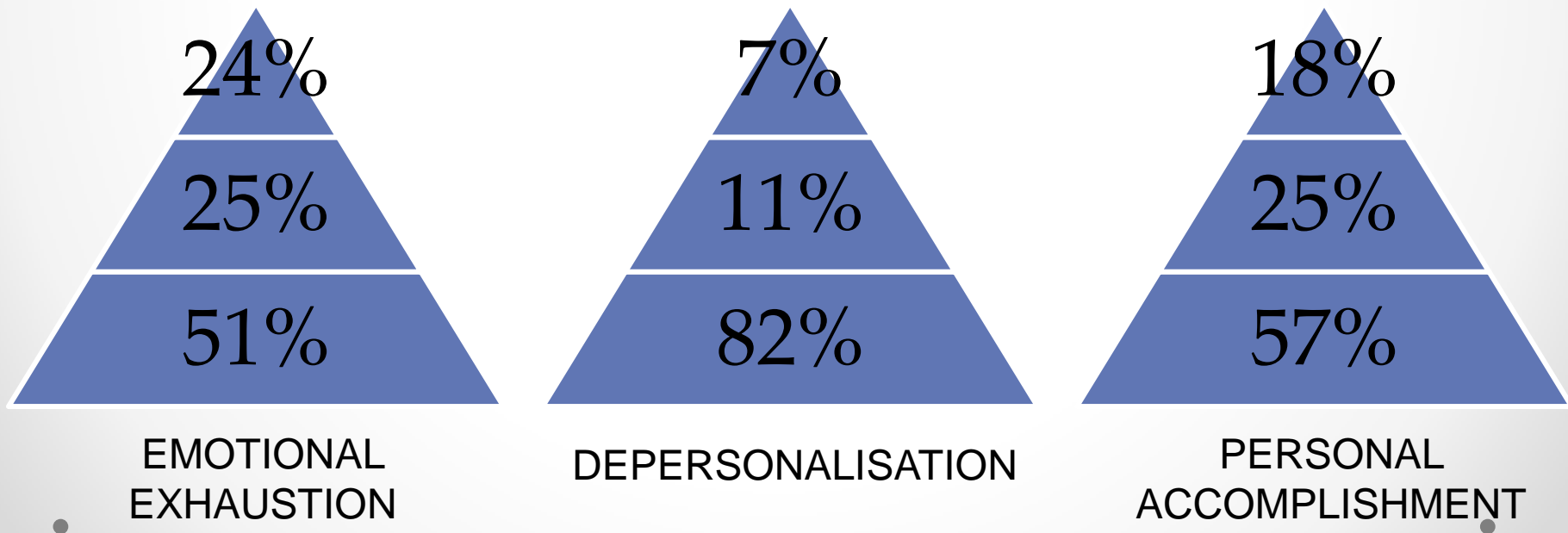
Staff Exposure to Challenging Aggressive Behaviour



N=926 staff from Ontario

Results - Burnout

- Significantly lower than social services norms
- Comparable to other studies internationally
- Proportion of staff are 'burnt out' or at risk



So why do people do this work?

- Despite a lot of challenges, there are a lot of reasons why people get into this work and why they continue to do it
- Some researchers have suggested that it is because of the *RELATIONSHIPS* that form¹
- Or the *POSTIVE IMPACT* of working with people with IDD¹
- In general, people also stay in their jobs because they need to financially, or they feel obligated to their employer
- I asked front-line residential support staff about their motivation to keep working in the field....


¹Hastings. *IDD, 2010*

I keep doing this work because I have to

- I tried other things and they didn't work out
- There are no other comparable opportunities in my community

“Now it's-, well it's partly for practical reasons cause now I'm full-time with a really secure position and [the community] doesn't have anything else available, right?”





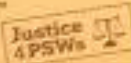
**I am a Personal
Support Worker
and I deserve
Sweet\$16!**

A campaign to raise the minimum wage for personal support workers from \$12.50 to \$16 per hour.

Ontario's government is doing just P.S.W. workers have always been undervalued and so low in pay. Community P.S.W. helps reduce this low, unfair, amount when you have the confidence that you're getting paid what you're worth. P.S.W. is the backbone of the care for everyone else.

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Ray began his course
at the local college
and I get to
help him with his
post secondary dream!

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I keep doing this work because I feel like I should

- I feel like it is my duty. Finding quality of life for people with IDD is really important to me.
- My work has invested in my training and professional development opportunities exist for me in this field.

“I don’t get anything back, I just think it’s something I should do, you know? Like, they need to be taken care of. It’s not me getting something back. I just think it’s my right as a human being to make sure that they’re taken care of.”



I keep doing this work because I like it

- I like the people I support
- I like my colleagues
- The work is fun
- The work has a positive impact on my life outside of it
- I am good at my job
- I can make a difference
- I have job control and autonomy
- It's who I am

“I absolutely love it when somebody experiences something for the first time, and smiles and appreciates that, even if they can’t even talk and you know they’ve appreciated it.”



“I get attached to some of the guys. Like... they become a little bit like family I guess.”



“I love the interaction with the people. It is fascinating, like, the dynamics, just everything about it, I just love it.”

Positive contributions

- Scale developed based on research with parents of children with IDD¹
- Captures the positive things parents/staff get out of working with people with IDD
- In our study², over 80% of DSPs agreed:

I consider working with people with developmental disabilities to be:

Responsible for my increased sensitivity to people

The presence of people with developmental disabilities:

Is an inspiration to improve my job skills

Gives me a new perspective on my job

Is very uplifting

¹Horne & Hastings. *Am J Ment Retard*, 2004

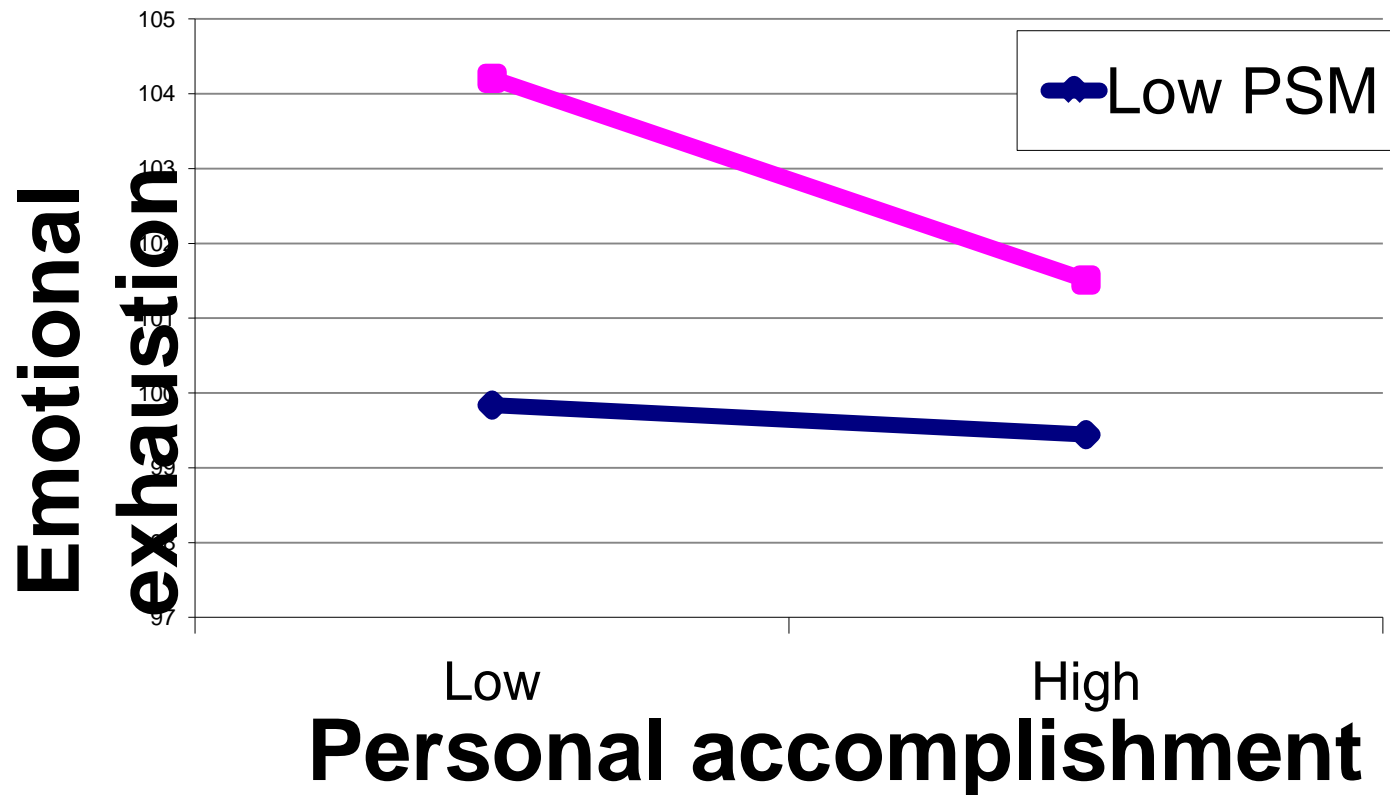
²Lunsky et al. *IDD*, in press

Positive Contributions

“It’s taught me how to better deal with, just, how to speak to people....Tolerance, definitely. Patience. I mean sometimes you think that, you know, my life is just so tough, and then you look at some of the people we support and what they’ve gone through and are still going through, the situations they’re dealing with. And it’s like, you know what? Things aren’t that bad!”

Positive motivation inspires and tires...

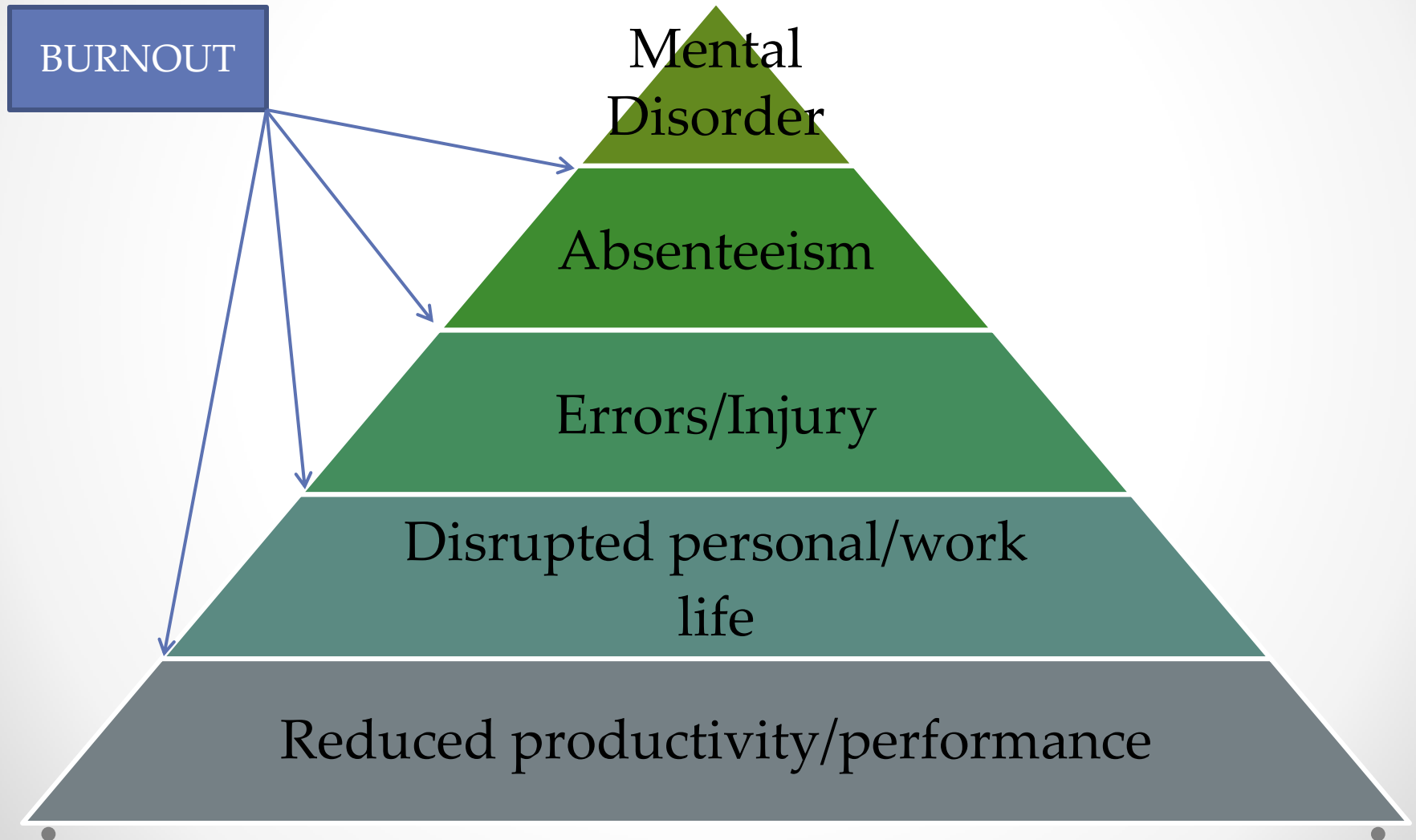
Empirical data show that pro-social motivation is associated with more intense feelings of emotional exhaustion when interacted with feelings of personal accomplishment



Inspired...then tired...

“I would say, there’s a lot of self-sabotage. Um, which, you know, is happening to the people we’re supporting but it affects us just as much. There’s a guy that I was working with and we just set him up with a job. Well, he got fired, right? ...—you feel inside—‘cause you work so hard to get him that job and it’s so good -- He’s in a fun, cool environment.....when I got the call that the guy was fired, I went into the office, closed the door with the other full-time staff and went, ‘I am gonna lose my [cookies]!’ and we sat down and we talked about it for a good 30 minutes!”

What is the impact of work stress



When is stress a problem?

- When it pervades your life:

“I’m thinking about it more outside of work... I’m over-anticipating things...I can feel it, you know, my body expresses stress in certain ways that I’m aware of....I get tired, irritable...the rewarding part of the job doesn’t feel very rewarding anymore.”

When is stress a problem?

- When you are making serious errors:

“I knew I was making some colossal mistakes, but you know, it’s not until somebody points it out to you that you really recognize, ‘Oh, yeah, okay, I am doing that.’”