When is stress a problem?

- When you start having nightmares:

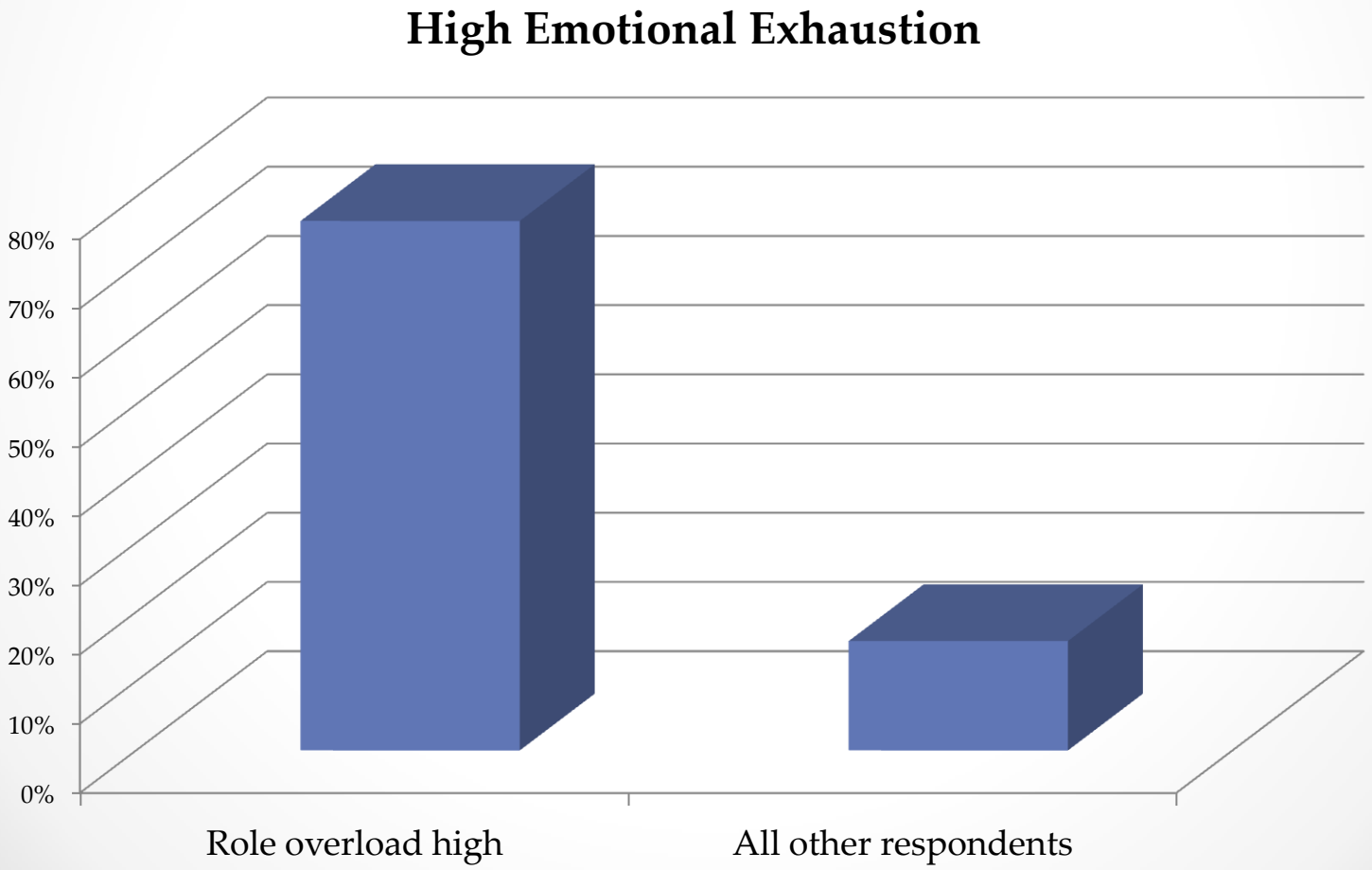
"People are having dreams before going to work that they're gonna get hit the day before that they go to work. Um, gettin' stressed out and just thinkin' about it all the time and… so, it's nerve-wracking."

I THINK
IT'S
STRESS!!

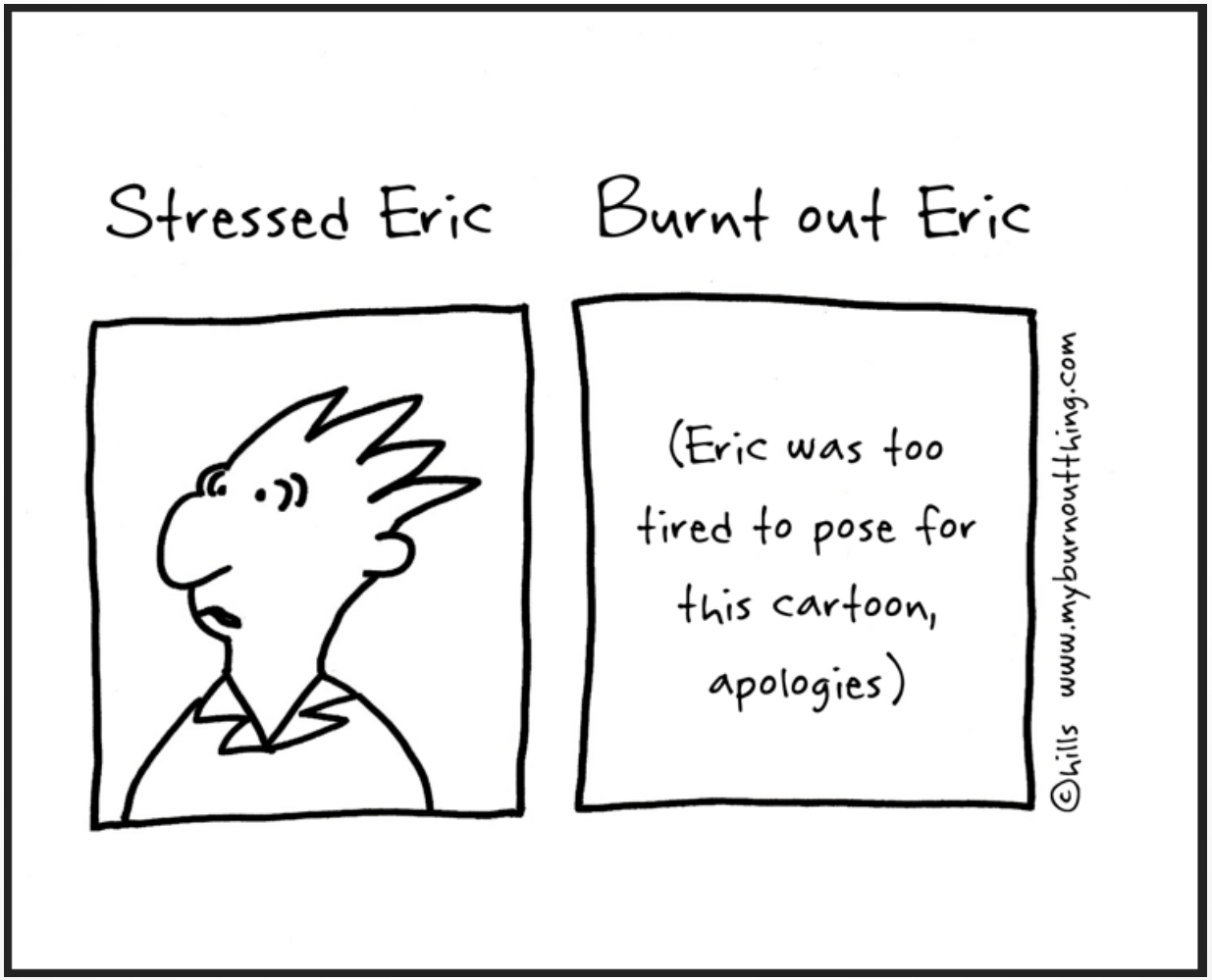
Stress Experienced by DSPs

Occupational role scale	Description
Role overload	Measures the extent to which job demands exceed resources (personal and workplace) and the extent to which the individual is able to accomplish workloads.
Role insufficiency	Measures the extent to which the individual's training, education, skills, and experience are appropriate to job requirements.
Role ambiguity	Measures the extent to which priorities, expectations, and evaluation criteria are clear to the individual.
Role boundary	Measures the extent to which the individual is experiencing conflicting role demands and loyalties in the work setting.

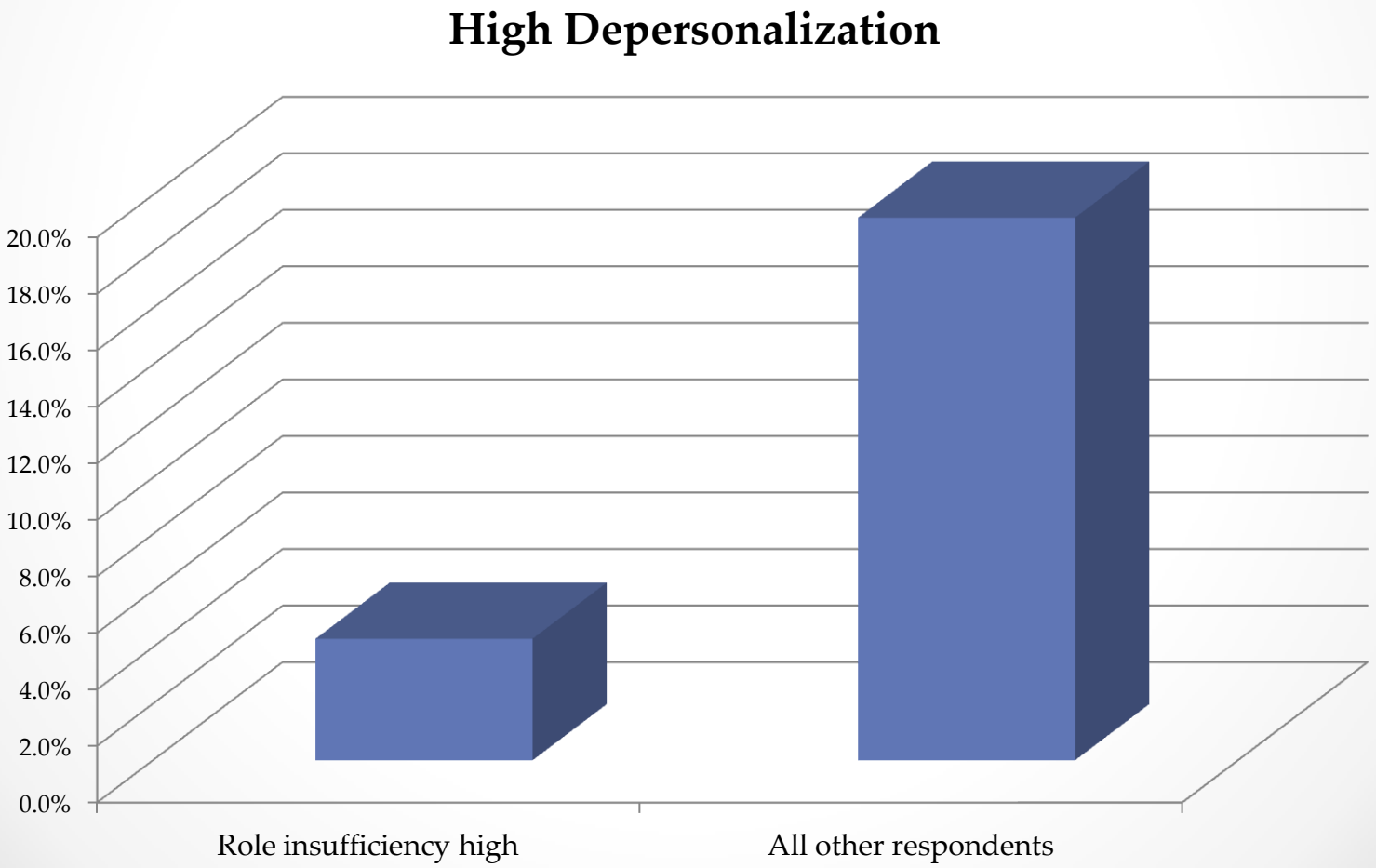
Stress builds into burnout



Stress vs. Burnout



Not just workload…



How do staff cope?

- When I spoke to staff about work stress and burnout, I found they engage in a lot of strategies to prevent and/or cope with stressors, like aggression
- Some use learned strategies like *mindfulness* and *distraction*
- Some seek social support from within and outside of the workplace
- Some seek additional training or coaching from colleagues or managers
- Often team members work together

Finding Relief

- Switching off
- Sharing duties

Personal Resources

- Friends/Family
- Hobbies
- Stress Management

Team Cohesiveness

- Trust
- Humour
- Peer Support

Work Culture

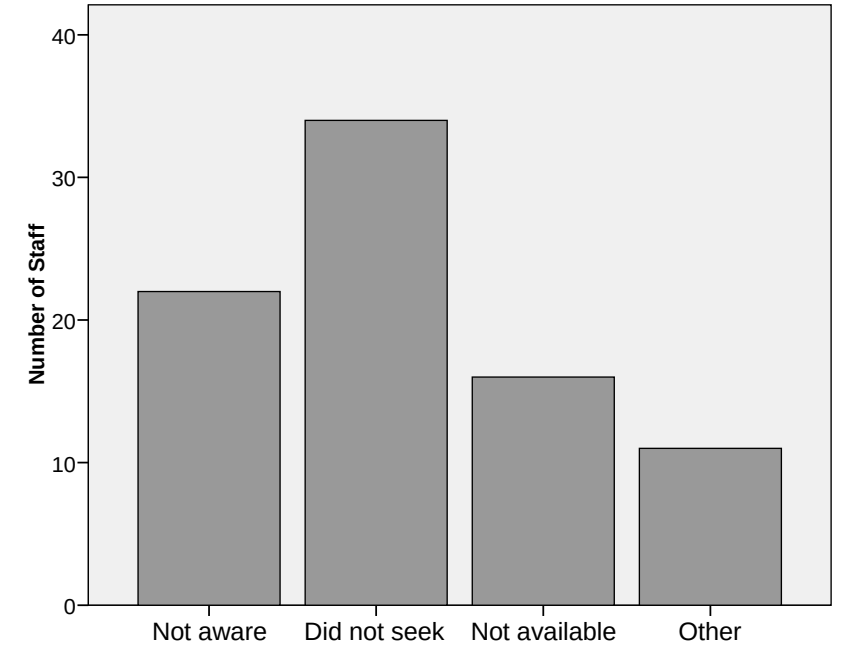
- Supportive Managers
- Education
- Debriefing

Self-Efficacy

- Training
- Experience

Barriers to seeking support at work

- Of the survey respondents who indicated they had experienced emotional problems, only 38% had sought support through their workplace



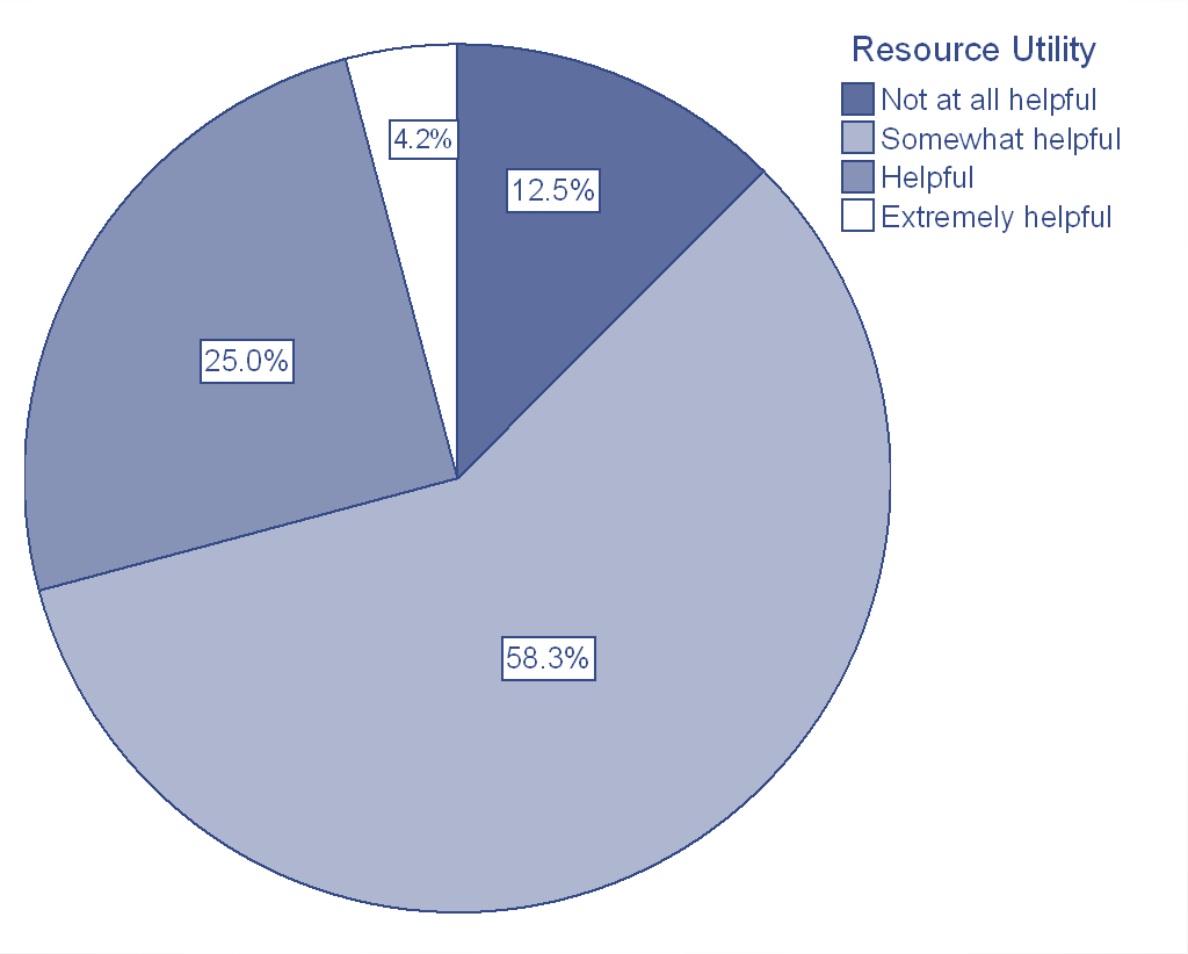
Reasons for not seeking workplace resources

N=224 staff from Southwest Ontario

Enabling (and not so enabling) Factors

- Those things that will encourage or allow staff to seek support
- Availability of services
  - And accessible!
  - And useful!
- Personal beliefs and motivation
  - Beliefs about illness and help
  - May be affected by cues from family, co-workers
- Support in and out of organization
  - Time, benefits ($)
  - Co-worker and supervisor support
  - Focus on people supported, Rules – less enabling

Are Resources Effective?



N=224 staff from Southwest Ontario

"…the fear that if they did go somewhere or tell their supervisor, that they would be removed from the home…fear of your supervisor seeing you or others seeing you as being inadequate, that you can't do the job."

"I think my supervisor would somehow be suspicious that 'Well, why is it that you can't work with this person? Why can't you handle this kind of a situation?'"

"Um, so one of the things I do is I go for monthly massages too, just to kind of work out the tension and just to have that hour of strict relaxation….being full-time our benefit package covers that. So it's also a load off my mind knowing that I can do that and it's not coming out of my pocket."

"Sometimes we don't show the same empathy for our employees as we do for the people we support. It only seems like there's a disconnect and there's two different things that's happening there but it's the same environment."