

## OUT OF AIR: RECOGNIZE AND FIGHT BURNOUT



### What is “Burnout?”

#### **Burnout is more than just being tired.**

Being a first responder demands strength and sacrifice. But over time, the constant exposure to trauma, long shifts, overtime, and balancing home life can take a toll. Not just physically, but mentally and emotionally. Burnout is a state of chronic stress that can manifest itself in many ways physically, mentally, and emotionally. Identifying what burnout can look like in yourself and others can look like:

- Irritability or feeling emotionally “numb.”
- Constant fatigue that is out of the ordinary for you.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Starting to withdraw from coworkers, family, or friends.
- Feeling detached from the job you once loved.

[Click here for a sheet outlining the various cognitive and emotional, physical, and behavioral signs to look out for in yourself and others.](#)

### Combatting Burnout

**Burnout can creep in slowly, so it's important to check in with yourself regularly.** Checking in can be as simple as spotting early symptoms emotionally, physically, behaviorally, and mentally, such as:

**EMOTIONAL:** Feeling cynical or unmotivated?

**PHYSICAL:** Feel exhausted even after a day off?

**BEHAVIORAL:** Use alcohol or food as a coping mechanism?

**MENTAL:** Struggle to focus or make decisions?

Now that you've recognized what burnout is and how it could manifest in you, try out some of these tips to combat burnout and make sure you aren't hanging on to the chronic stress that it can cause.

### Combatting Burnout

#### 1. **Prioritize rest**

- a. Why it matters: sleep deprivation fuels emotional exhaustion and impairs judgement.
- b. What to do: protect your rest days. Sleep in off going from your shift. Create a rest routine at home.

#### 2. **Talk to someone you trust**

- a. Why it matters: bottling things up increase stress and feelings of isolation.
- b. What to do: open up to a trusted coworker, peer support team member, or therapist. You don't need to explain everything or have a “reason,” just start talking.

#### 3. **Set boundaries and keep them**

- a. Why it matters: constant availability and accessibility for work can lead to resentment and overload.
- b. What to do: say no to OT if you're running on empty. Schedule time for yourself and protect it.

#### 4. **Find purpose outside the job**

- a. Why it matters: when your whole identity is “firefighter,” burnout feels like personal failure.
- b. What to do: make time for hobbies, volunteering, or learning something new. You are more than your job.

#### 5. **Check in with your mental health**

- a. Why it matters: burnout often overlaps with depression, PTSD, or anxiety.
- b. What to do: do a monthly self-check in. Ask yourself: Am I enjoying anything? Do I feel numb? Am I snapping at people I love?

#### 6. **Take your leave and actually unplug**

- a. Why it matters: time off lets your body and mind recalibrate.
- b. What to do: use vacation time proactively, not reactively. Leave texts and emails behind.

**Learn more about burnout from the mental wellness lineup drill!**



### Dr. Kelsey Loftus

**Certified Athletic Trainer  
MCFR Health & Injury Prevention**

Did you know that you have someone working within MCFRS to provide you with quality injury care, injury prevention, and functional assessments to lengthen your time on the floor and keep you out of FROMS?

#### **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!**

Starting this year, all station visit requests will be submitted through the link attached to the QR code below. Any station in any battalion can sign up for a station visit with the choice of activities, now including:

- In-station injury clinic
- Sleep health and hacking round table discussion
- Trigger point release work
- Group instruction on prevention of common injuries (low back pain, shoulder immobility, or any area of your choosing!)
- And more!

Have an individual question about an ache or pain? Make an appointment through the link at the bottom of this page!\*

**\*ALL APPOINTMENTS ARE SAFE AND CONFIDENTIAL AND CANNOT EFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO STAY ON THE FLOOR WORKING!**



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**Concentra**

**CLICK HERE TO MAKE AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENT!**

# Mental Wellness Lineup Drill

**Real strength isn't just made in the gym or during drills- it's also knowing when to talk, ask for help, and recover. Your mental health matters. Break the stigma and become more aware of how to combat burnout.**

## AFTER THE CALL

### CREATING AN INDIVIDUALIZED AFTER ACTION REPORT

Can be used for personal use or optional sharing with shift mates, peer support team, therapist, or trusted supervisor. This is not part of formal documentation but is instead meant to help you process through a traumatic or mentally taxing call.

#### Brief Summary of the Call

- What was the call type?
- What stands out about this call?

#### Initial Reactions & Thoughts

- What were you thinking or feeling at the time? What stuck with you after the call?

- ☐ Shock ☐ Guilt ☐ Sadness ☐ Other:  
☐ Anger ☐ Confusion ☐ Numbness

- Describe the feeling in your own words.

#### Personal Impact

- How did this call affect you- mentally, emotionally, or physically?  
☐ Trouble sleeping ☐ Irritability ☐ Withdrawal from others  
☐ Relaying the call in my mind ☐ Difficulty concentrating ☐ Physical symptoms: headache, fatigue, etc.  
☐ Other:
- Any additional reflections.

#### What Went Well & What You're Proud Of

- Focus on anything positive, such as your actions, team efforts, or decision-making.

#### Lessons Learned & How to Improve

- Any changes you'd want to make in response, tactics, communication, mindset, or other area.

#### Support & Follow-Up

- Do you feel you need support?  
☐ No, I'm coping well right now ☐ Maybe, I'd like to talk to someone soon ☐ Yes, I want help or peer support now

#### Who Can Your Talk to If Needed?

- ☐ Peer Support Team ☐ Behavioral Health Clinician ☐ A close friend or family member  
☐ Supervisor or officer ☐ Chaplain ☐ Not sure, I need help finding resources

## TIPS FOR FAMILY

**Agree on a language to communicate in to avoid being defensive.**

Instead of "you're being a brat," state that "I notice you're really stressed, what can I do to help?"

**Figure out your partner or family member's "tells" for when they are in a period of high stress.**

Do you all of a sudden notice them getting withdrawn, extremely fatigued, or short tempered?

**Support and push for your partner or family member to practice self-care.**

Encourage time being still and doing nothing, taking time for hobbies, or simply spending quality time with each other.

**Provide validation when your partner or family member says they are feeling burnt out.**

Recognizing and communicating burnout is the biggest first step. Encourage them to talk and clarify whether they'd like solutions or just want to rant.

## APPS, PODCASTS & BOOKS

**For you and your partner or family!**

**Click on those items underlined to be taken to their page/where to purchase/watch**

#### APPS

- Smiling Mind (Free)
- Healthy Mind (Free)

#### PODCASTS

- Burnout and human performance
- Responder resilience
- Fireline: Burnout

#### BOOKS

- Fully Involved
- I Love a Firefighter
- Minding the Body, Mending the Mind

\*More resources can be found through the link below to the mental wellness resource page!

Want more information?

**CONTACT YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM!**



**CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT THE MENTAL WELLNESS RESOURCE PAGE**



**CLICK HERE FOR THE SERVICES REQUEST FORM FOR THE MCFRS MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM**

Want more information?

**CONTACT YOUR ATC!**



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**CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP FOR A STATION VISIT**