

Burnout Syndrome: Prevention and Management

**Handbook
for workers of harm reduction programs**

Central and Eastern European
Harm Reduction Network



Сеть снижения вреда
Центральной и Восточной Европы

2006

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Organization information

The Central and Eastern European Harm Reduction Network (CEEHRN) is a regional network with a mission to support, develop, and advocate for harm reduction approaches in the field of drugs, HIV/AIDS, public health, and social exclusion by following the principles of humanism, tolerance, partnership, and respect for human rights and freedoms.

Founded in 1997, CEEHRN today unites more than 250 individuals and organizations from 25 countries of in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The network's members come from both the public and private sector and include government agencies, drug treatment and HIV specialists, harm reduction organizations, researchers, community groups and activists (notably, organizations of people living with HIV and drug users), as well as supporters and experts from outside the region. CEEHRN is governed by its members and through their elected representatives on the Steering Committee. The executive work is carried out by a Secretariat based in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The main activities of the network include advocacy for better policies on HIV/AIDS and drugs, informational support and exchange, and capacity building of members and other organizations involved in the field of reduction of drug-related harm in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. CEEHRN members and their allies seek to reduce drug-related harm, including the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases, through facilitating the use of less repressive and less discriminative policies with respect to drug users and other vulnerable groups and populations, including sex workers. CEEHRN strives to work together with regional and national advocates and policymakers to ensure that national drug and HIV related policies are rational, effective, and humanitarian—and based on scientific evidence. All policies should also protect the human rights of individuals.

More detailed information about CEEHRN may be found on its website: www.ceehrn.org.

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Foreword

There is a great level of stress among people who work with vulnerable groups of society: injecting drug users (IDU's), sex workers, people living with HIV, men who have sex with men, and inmates. Particularly, this problem affects personnel of harm reduction programs, medical and social workers.

Stress related to this type of work often causes a notion which is known as burnout syndrome. The peculiarities of the syndrome are: frequent depressions, incessant anxiety, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, low level of work satisfaction, etc. All this is a widely spread reaction on a permanent emotional stress related to work with other people who are in a difficult situation and often face hardships. A burnout syndrome is a very painful problem for individual and it leads to work efficiency decrease and labor drain in an organization.

Central and Eastern European Harm Reduction Network (CEEHRN) together with the International Harm Reduction Development Program (IHRD) conducted a grant program "Prevention of a Burnout Syndrome Among Harm Reduction Programs" in 2004-2006. The aim of the program was to work out and implement activities on burnout syndrome prevention among harm reduction projects employees (including programs of syringe exchange and programs of substitution therapy, as well as service projects for sex workers and inmates) in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

This manual presents the best practices of such programs. It includes a theoretical part with description and explanation of a burnout syndrome, as well as recommendations on burnout syndrome prevention and management based on the experience of the projects in the region. The manual also includes training programs, relaxation techniques, methods of stress management and a list of sources for further reading. We hope this manual will help to understand the reasons of this problem personally and among your organization personnel and will advice how to overcome the problem and to increase motivation and work satisfaction.

Section 1: Definition of a burnout syndrome

First reports on a burnout syndrome appeared in 1970s in the USA. One of the founders of a burnout idea was an American psychiatrist, H. Fredenberger, who worked in an alternative medical help service. In 1974 he described a phenomenon that he observed himself and by his colleagues (exhaustion, loss of motivation and responsibility), and gave it memorizing name – a burnout.

Nowadays, there are lots of different types of burnout definitions that particularly correspond to the activity among vulnerable groups of society. According to Fredenberger, professional burnout is an “energy exhaustion among professionals in the sphere of social help, it is when people feel that they are overloaded with problems of other people”. This, according to his words, accompanies the cynical setting: “Why should I take care? It doesn’t matter”. When an employee faces a burnout syndrome, his work becomes inefficient.

K. Maslach determines this concept in a following way – “a syndrome of physical and emotional exhaustion, including the development of a negative self-esteem, a negative attitude to work and loss of understanding and sympathy for clients”. K. Maslach emphasizes that a burnout is not the loss of creativity, is not the reaction on boredom, but a problem that “arises because of the stress, caused of personal interrelationship”.

A burnout can be compared to the highest level of stress and to the third stage of a general adaptation syndrome – exhaustion (as a “condition of full exhaustion” a burnout syndrome was described in the 10th review of the International Classification of Diseases under a heading Z.73.0). But the moment when stress comes to a burnout is not clearly stated. G. Selje describes the general adaptation syndrome as stress in the whole body that is developed in a definite time. A person, being at the stage of exhaustion, is not able to adapt or to resist.

Although, stress is one of the necessary components of our everyday life; without it a person would die, when the level of it is too high it becomes toxic. Optimal amount of stress is very personal. Still, G. Selje says that some people look for stress and need it to live and to feel themselves happy. Other people, at the same time, avoid stress and want to live calm and easy. To live this way is their need and they should avoid stress. Thus, each person needs to set such a level of stress that is needed for a successful living.

Professional burnout – is a syndrome that develops because of the permanent stress and leads to exhaustion of emotional and personal resources, loss of energy in a working person. Professional burnout comes up when negative emotions are accumulated without a proper “discharge” or “liberation” from them. The danger of a burnout is that it is not a short time temporary period, but a prolonged process of “burning to the end”.

Negative feelings of people with a high burnout level are related to loss of a sense of their professional activity, loss of ability to self-realization, loss of personal perspective. Despair due to absence of the result or indifference and incomprehension on the part of one's associates, leads to devaluation of efforts and not only loss of the sense of activity, but also the sense of life. The feelings of inanity of existence, aimlessness of all that happens influence and predetermine all the spheres of a person's life. As the result of being in such a condition for a long time a person loses the ability to enjoy life, loses all or nearly all that has been the basis for him/her.

The notion of fullness, life comprehension is correlated with the notion of life quality. Dissatisfaction with life quality can be both the cause and/or a consequence of a burnout. Life quality is usually described as a subjective satisfaction that a person can get from physical, mental and social situations even though there is lack of something. The feeling of subjective happiness plays a significant role in a normal physical condition of a person, and also influences an inner world of a person. Satisfaction with success and life achievements, with interpersonal relations and self-control, all this is closely connected with preservation of a positive attitude towards the sense of professional activity.

A burnout syndrome also causes physical and mental disorders. People having this problem reveal psychopathological, psychosomatic, somatic symptoms and symptoms of social dysfunction. They have chronic tiredness, cognitive dysfunction (dysfunction of memory and attention), sleep disorders due to difficulties to sleep and early awakening, personality disorders. These people can develop depression, psychoactive substance dependence, can commit a suicide. The general somatic symptoms are headache, gastrointestinal disorders (diarrhea, aching stomach syndrome), cardiovascular disorders (tachycardia, arrhythmia, hypertension).

As a result of a burnout syndrome people lose satisfaction in life quality, lose the sense of their professional activity and ability to feel sympathy for other people, they also lose sensitivity to personal emotions. People can not share their emotions, feel lonely, lose self belief and trust in life, do not have anyone or anything that would help in a difficult situation, everything seems senseless and aimless. Meanwhile, the ability to feel sympathy and to share emotions is a so-called buffer that stops the development of a burnout. It helps to avoid underestimation of the results and to increase confidence in personal professional opulence.

Reasons of a burnout syndrome and factors that influence its appearance

Literature provides information that personal and situational factors influence the danger of mental exhaustion. (Scale 1). Empirical research works show that situational factors have a stronger influence on mental exhaustion than personal characteristics. People who are overloaded at work and often deal with interpersonal conflicts for a long period of time are mostly exposed to emotional exhaustion.

Table 1. Factors that influence the appearance of a burnout syndrome.

Personal	Situational
Age (young people are more exposed to emotional exhaustion)	(Undetermined role and social responsibilities)
Too high personal expectations and those of the surrounding	Conflict between functional demands
High level of involvement, selflessness and idealism	Work overload
Necessity in a hard work	Work exertion
Necessity to demonstrate opulence	Interpersonal conflicts (with clients, family members, colleagues or leadership)
Behavior oriented on a goal achievement	Lack of necessary skills to fulfill work
Inability to say no	Lack of resources
Difficulties with responsibility delegation	Lack of social support
Predisposing to self-sacrifice	Lack of gratitude
A tendency to “give” and not to “take”	Factors connected with the place of work (for example, unrealistic goals, lack of independency in decision making, faultily organized time-table)

Analysis of the research works on the emotional burnout syndrome shows that the main efforts of psychologists are devoted to exposure of the factors that cause this syndrome. Traditionally they were divided in two big blocks: peculiarities of professional activities and individual characteristics of the professional workers. Some authors separated the third group of factors where they explore substantial aspects of activities as independent factors.

According to K. Maslach, the reasons for a burnout often depend not on a person but on a situation. Some personal peculiarities influence the development of this condition, for example,

high level of emotional lability (neurotism), high level of self control, especially, the wish to restrain from negative emotions, understanding of personal behavior motives, predisposing to a high level of anxiety and depressive reactions, related to unattainability of “inner standards” and blocking negatives emotions inside, rigid personal structure.

It can be asserted that a professional stress is the consequence of professional motivation decrease; a burnout and a saved interest in work: are two different poles of interrelations between a person and profession. A number of research works have shown that professional deformation that medical workers gradually develop often causes negative and even aggressive attitude to the clients, it forces occurrence of one-sided communication by means of criticism, evaluation, pressure which makes both parties, medical workers and clients, suffer. Nevertheless, the question what is the cause and what is the consequence is still open.

An absolute level of demands is not determinative for the professional stress to appear. What really matters is the mismatch between these demands and the subjective evaluation of personal resources, necessary for satisfaction of these demands that are often perceived rather irrationally and uncritically. A cognitive dissonance arises: the more a person works, the more he/she avoids the thoughts and feelings related to the inner burnout. Research works showed that many people consider stress at work as failure and their personal weakness. This is why it causes a denial, based on the feeling of guilty, and leads to the fact that people experience difficulties to admit existence of these problems. Therefore, it is hard for people to share the problems and solve them.

Professional stress – is not a problem of “hard” people, but a problem of ”difficult” (unsolved) situations in relationships as well as in the structure of interpersonal relations, unclear social determination of social positions and roles, lack of emotional support on the side of colleagues and leadership.

Inner factors of a burnout risk

1. Illiterate sympathy – total dilution in another person, depersonalization, getting “infected” with the condition of another person.
2. People who are not emotional or face difficulties communicating with the others
3. Rigid people.
4. Inability to express his/her feelings in words is always related to anxiety.
5. Complete egoists or altruists (a victim syndrome).
6. Morally depraved persons.
7. Workaholics. Some problem is concealed under work load.
8. People without resources.

Kinds of resources:

- social relations (friends', neighbors', team's support)
- relations with relatives, lifestyle, traditions of education
- love, joy without efforts
- professional opulence, skills
- economical stability
- sincerity of faith
- goal: who knows the answer "what for" will find the way "how"
- health and personality peculiarities
- accessibility of psychological support and medical help.

Industrial risk factors of a burnout syndrome

Stress at work – is a phenomenon that is expressed in physiological and psychological reactions on a difficult situation at work. Development of stress is possible even in progressive and well regulated mechanisms of organizations. It is related not only to the structural and organizational peculiarities, but also to the nature of work, personal peculiarities of staff and their interpersonal relations. In work psychology and physiology there is a great number of *stress-factors* that are known and studied:

- Physical factors: vibration, noise, polluted atmosphere;
- Physiological factors (shifting work schedule, lack of regular meals);
- Socio-psychological factors (role conflict and lack of clear role determination, overloading or shortage of working staff, not regulated informational flow, interpersonal conflicts, high responsibility and time deficit);
- Structural-organizational factors (organizational stress).

According to G. Selje's conception, work in a stress situation always leads to mobilization of the inner resources and can cause not only immediate reactions, but also can cause long-term consequences. According to the analysis of the statistic data on morbidity and mortality because of psycho-social factors, Brenner concluded that during the first 3 years under the influence of a stress-factor the amount of acute conditions and reactions arises (infarcts, psychosis), later, chronic diseases come to prevail (ischemia, depression, kidney illnesses, immunology diseases, etc.). The amount of stress-reactions arises because of the "acceleration principal" that can be particularly seen in labor collectives.

Many researchers try to find a connection between industrial stress-factors and burnout symptoms. Significant correlations were found:

- Between general (total) index of a burnout and characteristics of work: importance of a goal, productivity, wish to change a job;
- Between depersonalization and truancy (lack of discipline), bad relations with family and friends;
- Between emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic diseases;
- Between personal achievements and attitude to professional responsibilities, importance of work, and so on.

In many different scientific works all over the world there are common features of a burnout syndrome determination for representatives of different professions. Professional differences influence only the stress level of some factors.

Development of a burnout syndrome, its symptoms. Development dynamics

Psychologists determine three types of a professional burnout: *emotional exhaustion*, *depersonalization*, and *reduce of self-esteem*.

Emotional exhaustion is the basic factor for a professional burnout. This condition is characterized by the feeling of emotional overstrain and by a low energy level that is needed to meet a brand new day. Depersonalization – is an interpersonal part of burnout syndrome. A person feels emotional exhaustion and tries to protect against this by isolation, he/she starts to communicate with the others in a negative or aggressive way. Low self-esteem shows the inner side of the emotional exhaustion. This is characterized by the increasing feeling of discrepancy and might lead a person to see this as a personal collapse.

The below stated burnout symptoms can be divided into: physical, behavioral and psychological.

Scale # 2. Development of burnout syndrome symptoms

Physical symptoms	Psychological symptoms	Behavioral symptoms
Aches in the spinal column	Anger and frustration	Emotional outbreaks
Change of a gustatory sense	Loss of self-esteem and self consciousness	Moving away from friends/family
Diarrhea	Loss of interest in work, failure to carry out responsibilities	Loss of punctuality, neglect for responsibilities
Increasing blood pressure	A feeling of inadequacy, helplessness and guilt	Loss of ability of critical evaluation
Tiredness	Feeling of anxiety	Disability to concentrate

Gastroenterology problems	Depression	Sorrow
Headaches	Depression, overload	Continual/increasing use of alcohol or other substances (medicines, drugs)
Sleep disorders	Liability, frequent changes of mood	Difficulties to communicate, problems of being with other people
Muscular tension	Feeling of failure	Decrease of working activity
Loss of weight	Worries about the future	Disability to change

A burnout is a syndrome, a group of symptoms that develop all together. Nevertheless, all these symptoms do not occur simultaneously, because the development of a burnout syndrome is an individual process.

General feeling of tiredness, dislike for work, general indefinite feeling of anxiety, work that becomes harder and harder, that leads to more insignificant results, lack of interest, being out-of-body – are the first symptoms of a burnout. The next stage is development of irritation and anger aimed at clients and colleagues.

A person who faces a burnout syndrome could try to cope with the situation by avoiding clients and colleagues, making physical and emotional distance from them. Avoiding people and creating a distance can be done in different ways. For example, a person can often miss work, or to communicate with clients and colleagues in impersonal way. He/she could try to be less involved in contacts with clients and colleagues. As a result a person starts to avoid “real” people, acting automatically in most situations.

In the end a person gets into depression and starts to see the situation as “hopeless”. A person can leave a job or change the profession or can start taking alcohol or drugs.

Such type of a burnout syndrome includes *three levels and three stages*. According to Spanjel and Kaputo, a person with the first level of a burnout syndrome develops moderate, short-term and occasional symptoms of this process. These symptoms are developed in a slight way: a person starts to care about him/herself, by relaxing and making breaks at work.

At the second level of a burnout syndrome the symptoms become more regular and prolonged and are rather difficult to correct. Common ways of treatment are inefficient at this stage.

Symptoms of the third level of a burnout syndrome are chronic. There can be physical and psychological problems such as stomach ulcer or depression. At this level attempts to take care of oneself usually do not bring any results and professional help can not give fast relief.

According to Maslach, a burnout syndrome can develop in three stages. For example, on the first stage, an individual is emotionally and physically exhausted, might have headaches, colds, or any other types of health problems. For the second stage of a burnout syndrome, two other groups of symptoms are typical: a person can develop cynic and impersonal attitude to others (including members of the organization and clients), as well as he/she can develop negative thoughts and feelings about him/herself because of the emotions that a person feels for the others. To avoid these negative feelings a person usually “shrinks into his/her shell”, does minimal amount of work and does not want to have conflicts with anyone. An individual can develop the symptoms of only this single group or of the two groups simultaneously. The final stage is total burnout that does not happen very often, as Maslach points out. At this stage an individual has an aversion for everything – himself/herself, the whole world; life seems to be out of control.

At the first two stages it is possible to recover, but in order to do that a person should learn to cope with the existing situation or to change it. Maslach points out that a person at the stage of total burnout will hardly be able to change, yet, adds that additional research works in to this issue are needed to affirm this.

Ways of burnout syndrome prevention

Mental health assumes total emotional balance, an ability of self-control, skills of quick adaptation to difficult situations and an ability to overcome them as well know-how to restore the emotional balance in a short period of time.

Such qualities as self-control, self-appraisal, and stress-proof qualities: being physically trained, self-suggestion, an ability to control the emotions and to switch attention are very important. Self-control, which is considered in psychology to be the sign of emotional and social maturity of a person, is of a great importance. It should be mentioned that self-control is not only a quality of a person but it also regulates a person’s behavior in an extreme situation.

As Kondo suggests, professional help at a burnout syndrome could be provided by two types of therapies: work with people that face a burnout syndrome risks, and minimization of the influence of the organizational factor. Moreover, an important principle of a burnout syndrome prevention is maintenance of psycho hygiene by a social worker him/herself.

Professional and personal scenarios are tightly interrelated. Career – is a consciously chosen way of professional progress towards the intended status. It provides professional and social self-assertion according to the level of one’s qualification.

The factors from the outside could influence the career. Professional sphere could influence the professional growth and career, and an organization could influence the speed of its

development. It is important to take into account ambiguous influence of the environment on a career development and to choose the criteria of personal growth, and also to compare self-evaluation with that of your colleagues-professionals.

Health (both mental and physical), competence, and professionalism are the most important and valued features for the members of most spheres of activities. The competence of a specialist, his ability to solve the client's problems quickly and efficiently, is the factor of professional safety. Therefore, it is important to increase the level of professionalism with the help of self-education during practical activities, by sharing experience with colleagues, by visiting different short-time educational activities: courses, seminars, one-time programs, etc. One of the key factors in increasing the level of competence is one's cognitive motivation – to know and to perform tomorrow better than today.

Basic factors that prevent development of a burnout syndrome:

- development of skills and knowledge;
- improvement of work and rest conditions;
- development of a work content;
- development of work conditions;
- development of motivation;
- change of work payment;
- social protection of “protectors” themselves;
- system of a psychological discharge, stress relief after a working day;
- improvement of psychological atmosphere in the collective.

There are a lot of ways to stop development of a burnout syndrome:

- cultivating other interests;
- introducing novelties in one's work, creating new projects and their implementation without waiting for the approval from the leadership;
- maintaining one's health condition, keeping the regime of sleeping and feeding, acquiring meditation techniques;
- satisfying social life;
- having several friends (of different professions);
- a wish to achieve a result without becoming a winner every time, an ability to lose without self-disparagement and aggression;
- an ability to self-evaluation without thinking only of others' respect;
- openness to new experience;

- an ability not to hurry and to give oneself enough time to achieve positive results in work and in life;
- well-weighted responsibilities (for example, not to take a greater responsibility for a client, than he/she does);
- reading not only professional, but also other literature,
- participation in the seminars, conferences, where there are possibilities to meet new people and to share experience;
- periodical mutual work with colleagues, who differ in a professional and personal way;
- participation in the work of a professional group that gives a chance to discuss personal problems related to counseling work;
- hobby that brings joy and satisfaction.

Therefore, in order to avoid a burnout syndrome a person should necessarily evaluate his life from time to time, so that he realizes if a person lives the way he/she wants it. If the existing life does not satisfy, a person should decide what should be done to achieve positive results.

Professionalism is a whole continuous process of a professional's personality formation that starts from the moment of choice of the profession, and finishes when a person stops his/her professional activity. There are different aspects of professional growth discussed in literature. Special attention is given to working out the methods of professional destruction and critical situations prevention that are impossible to avoid during the process of professional growth. The main condition for a person's professional development is understanding of professional safety skills that are seen as the ability to withstand negative social-professional situations, to actualize a person's professional and psychological potential (in conditions of professional life instability), to oppose professional critical situations, stagnation, deformation, as well as the ability to professional change.

Many researchers in their works on creation of professional self-preservation programs that get their bearings from a humanistic approach in psychology make reference to A. Maslow's theory of self actualization and self-realization of personality. The theory suggests the following *ways of professional self-preservation*:

1. Realization of the intended professional plan (scenario of professional life).
2. Overcoming disintegrated mind. (Exclusion of the so called "false self actualization motives" that create unrealizable goals and dreams and damage stable integrity of a person).
3. Active position in professional life.
4. Preparedness for a constant self-modification, lability of settings.

5. Knowledge of a one's individuality and its use in the professional life.
6. Acquiring an individual system of the adequate ways to overcome negative conditions.
7. Withstanding the professional ageing.

A special attention should be dedicated to personal self-preservation that is called the realization of the intended professional plan. Personal professional plan is an important factor that regulates personal professionalism. It generalizes personal conception of goals and professional activity perspectives, basic stages and ways of its achievement, possible obstacles and ways to overcome them. Clear and deliberate life perspective stimulates a person to creative work, gives optimistic understanding of life, and forms an interest for future self realization. Biographic methods play an important role in formation of personal and socially valuable activity strategies. It induces person to analyze his/her life, activity, plans for the future, it helps to correct the life program.

The main prevention measure of personal professional deformations is a constant presence of creative moment in activities, widening the scope of professional goals, varying circle of communication. It is important to create additional degree of freedom, not to concentrate only on professional tasks during professional education process. It should be mentioned that significant professional deformations have a negative influence not only on all spheres of life, but also on the professional activity and reduce its efficiency.

The main *methods of protection* against deformation are:

- a) Increase of understanding – by means of increase of knowledge about own personality and professional problems that a person faces;
- b) Reevaluation of the individual's personality and individual's professional position – by means of evaluation of what a person thinks about him/herself and his/her profession;
- c) Transformation of cognitive components of communicative settings – by means of informational-motivational understanding of consequences (in the sphere of professional growth and personnel's retraining);
- d) Self-release from cognitive stereotypes – by means of presentation of the sense of communicative activity;
- e) Acquiring new skills of communicative activities by means of a special communicative-arcade training.

The value of these methods is closely related to the important role of personality in a professional sphere. Young employers require particular attention. Although their professional skills level is high, certain personal characteristics might not be well formed. Personality

formation is a long process. Therefore, at the initial stages of activities, i.e. starting the education process, it is important to take into account individual peculiarities of a person while setting professional goals and planning educational or training processes. For example, *observation of the following rules is recommended* for people with a weak nervous system, increased level of anxiety and an inadequately low self-esteem:

- 1) shorter tasks, longer breaks;
- 2) organization of an educational process starting from easy parts to difficult – to move to harder tasks after success has been in previous ones;
- 3) strengthening feedback – to inform about the results upon completion of each task;
- 4) maximum distinctness of external evaluations with a stress on positive features of the result;
- 5) using the extended algorithm – each task should be divided into the basic parts, should be carefully analyzed and exercised;
- 6) reducing the level of work stress – avoiding critics as well as excessive positive evaluation of activity;
- 7) avoiding competitive situations, it is better to compete with oneself according to the principle “today it is better than it was yesterday”;
- 8) organizing work in such a way that a person could periodically achieve success that leads to increase of self-esteem;
- 9) avoiding education and work in groups where people are more professionally developed;
- 10) setting aim not only on the result, but also on the process and means of task fulfillment;
- 11) periodical proposal of hypothetic tasks, which have no wrong decisions.

Different working conditions are preferable for people with a hyper strong nervous system, low level of anxiety and high self-esteem. Taking into account their personal peculiarities helps to optimize their professional and educational activity, to work out an individual style of activity. However, even an individual style is not always effective and possible. Therefore, it is important to purposefully form significant qualities of a person, and to simultaneously perform a psychological correction if it is needed. These two processes are closely interrelated with each other; the situation is more preferable when no correction is needed. For that purpose formation of a personality should be started as early as possible, it helps to avoid rooting of negative qualities.

Yet, this is only one constituent of a forming process of a professional. This process should not be limited to the frameworks of work. The ability of a creative expression is also very important. While development is a basis for personal growth, professional activity should always set new

aims for a person. If a person gets stuck at the same level, regardless of the fact that efficiency of the activity is very high, he/she occurs in a preserved vacuum; a very important stimulus for development disappears, i.e. contradiction between the high integral evaluation of oneself as a professional and the lower evaluation of separate professional tasks' fulfillment. This often leads to a gradual professional deformation.

For example, supervision was suggested as a method of a burnout syndrome prevention among the operators of "hot-line". A supervisor can be a specially educated person (and not only one) among the telephone operators or a coming psychotherapist. This helping instance should monitor the emotional balance of the working people, help to understand the subject, methods and goals of activity, change of everybody's attitude towards activities by means of rising qualification skills of the stuff.

Special attention should be paid to formation of protective mechanisms in each member of the stuff. Usually, it is possible to achieve only by means of training groups that are conducted by a psychotherapist. Basic protective mechanisms are formed when goals, methods, one's role (and its limits) and the concept of help by phone are clear and understood. Each person should answer the question "What do I do?", "Who am I?", "What for do I help?", "How do I help?"

An ability to cope with one's negative feelings, aggression, disgust, irritability, skills not to react emotionally on provocations from telephone subscribers – all this helps to prevent a burnout syndrome.

It should be underlined that personality develops not only under the influence of external environment. Tendency of self development plays an important role when personal features are formed out of personal needs that are aimed at achievement of certain level of self-realization. Acceptance of one's professional originality and his/her right to find their own professional path is especially important.

New technologies of professional stress prevention and its management attract more and more attention of the specialists. Some of them include adequate informing of communicative professions' representatives about a burnout syndrome and its risk factors. The most efficient prove to be such forms of group work: special trainings in groups of professional and personal growth and in groups on increase of communicative competency. A person can withstand strong stress without high risk of mental and somatic illnesses development when an adequate social support is provided.

The best practice examples of the program "Prevention of a burnout syndrome among harm reduction projects" that was implemented in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States in the period August,2004 – May,2005.

Section 2: Practical examples

Examples of burnout syndrome prevention in harm reduction projects

Prevention of staff drain among outreach workers

Saratov Regional Department of Russian Charitable Foundation “No to Drug and Alcohol Addiction”, Balakovo, Russian Federation

Problem

At regular intervals harm reduction projects experience staff shifting this includes out workers too. One of the main reasons for this is low salary and its inconsistency with the work done that presumes hard emotional obligation, which appears as a result of permanent contact with IDU's, sex workers, people living with HIV, inmates. Moreover, the surroundings where outreach workers are forced to be are likely to provoke a “breakdown” (relapse of problem drug use). All this leads to a burnout.

Goals

To reduce the level of a burnout syndrome, to increase self-esteem, to form team work skills in extreme conditions, to develop creative abilities while preserving personal integrity.

Activities

Organization and implementation of a training-marathon “Outreach- the leader!” that included trainings on the following topics: teambuilding, personal growth, creativity, as well as sport blocks: art-therapy, carnival, awarding the winners (*see chapter “Training Programs on Burnout Syndrome Prevention”*).

Preparation for the training started with signing an agreement with the project partners. Afterwards, the participants of the marathon were sent questionnaires and they were pre tested. The training took place in Saratovskaja oblast in a holiday home “Blue Bird”. Outreach-teams from Balakovo and Hvalynsk participated in the project. The first day was dedicated to team building and uniting as well as to working-out a team spirit. The participants formed two teams according to gender characteristics (males and females) and continued to compete in this permanent membership. The second day was marked by creativity. The participants were taught to communicate without words and to negotiate through mediators which developed flexibility in finding solutions in non-typical situations. The second part of the day was started with competitions in a swimming-pool; the female team won the contest. The day ended with a masquerade. The participants created marvelous masks on each others' faces and then with a big deal of humor and creativity they made unusual costumes. The training was crowned with

nominations of the outreach leader among females and among males. Afterwards the ceremony of rewarding of the team-winner took place.

Results

The main index for positive changes was the participants' evaluation of their personal condition – both physical and emotional – before and after the training, and also predictable postponed result.

Burnout management in outreach team

Regional Social Organization “Siberian Initiative”, Barnaul, Russian Federation

Problem

One of the peculiarities of outreach workers activities is daily interaction with IDU's. Visiting places of their residence always involves psychological and mental efforts, stress and possibility of a breakdown, especially, when outreach workers work in places where drugs are made and pushed. Taking into account that most of outreach workers are former IDU's, their work requires special physical and emotion discharge. In most cases outreach workers do not possess the skills of positive relaxing techniques as they have formed stereotypical behavior that does not allow them to overcome compulsive craving and often leads to a breakdown. Due to this there is a necessity to work out the skills of positive relaxing techniques, work with stressful situation, and prevention of breakdowns. Moreover, outreach workers are always in a constant state of a permanent stress and circumspection as police raids held in the places of their work are possible.

Personnel of organizations working in penitentiary are in contact with a large amount of HIV-infected people and people with tuberculosis. This situation causes a psychological feeling of hopelessness and despair, leads to understanding of limited environment in an attempt to change the situation. It causes anxiety, dissatisfaction with work, apathy and indifference, decrease of motivation and work capacity. All these factors lead to exhaustion of human resources, stress, development of chronic tiredness, development of psychosomatic diseases; lack of interest to work, low self-esteem, and finally result in a burnout syndrome. Tense relations between colleagues at work, frequent disputes and disorganization can be the consequences of such a condition.

Goals and Aims

Goal:

To increase effectiveness of work in a harm reduction project

Aims:

- burnout syndrome prevention
- creating conditions for positive relaxing skills development
- forming a long-run mechanism of psychological defense in stress conditions
- breakdown prevention among former IDU's

Activities

The activities that were held in the framework of this project can be divided into two groups: creative rehabilitation and sport competitions.

Creative rehabilitation. In the course of the project meditative painting took place; the paintings made in this process are available at (<http://www.sibin.barnaul.ru/rus/?id=76>). This was one of the art-therapy elements that gave an opportunity to decrease emotional stress of the outreach workers. The project members regularly organized poetry evenings, visited plays at Altai State Drama Theatre. Aromatherapy took place every week with the aim to relax and to improve mood.

Sport competitions. Members of the project visited a swimming pool ‘Ob’ once a week.

Results

Diagnostics of a psychological condition of the organization members was carried out before and after the project. The results have shown that it became more stable and serene.

The main criteria for evaluation and comparison of the participants' psychological condition were:

1. Determination of stress amount - according to the risks of stress development there were no breakdowns among outreach-workers;
2. Determination of team unity – changing the level of self-esteem from low to higher;
3. Evaluation of team unity – common values, similar settings and activity motivation;
4. Increasing work motivation;
5. Analyses of the general situation on the quality of work based on all the previous features, as well as evaluation of the general effectiveness of the implemented project. Possibility to apply the working experience gained in this project in other programs implementation.

Managing emotional stress

Charitable Foundation “Blagodijnost”, Nikolaev, Ukraine

Problem

Emotional stress of personnel working in the foundation projects; lack of a united team.

Goals and Aims

The goal of the trainings was to reduce the emotional stress of personnel members; to develop corporative culture of the organization; to form a united team.

Activities

On the first stage of the project a research was carried out to determine the level of emotional burnout among “Blagodijnost” foundation members as well as to find out their personal and professional peculiarities and the nature of their interrelations. The following methods were used for that purpose: a questionnaire to determine emotional burnout level; the test “Type of Personality”; S.Dellinger’s psycho-geometric test; Dj.Moreno’s “Sociometrics”; projective tests ”Self-portrait” and ”My job”. 20 foundation members took part in the research.

According to the received results it was decided to conduct two different trainings: one aimed at a burnout syndrome reduction among the workers, and the other aimed at teambuilding, that later transformed into the training on corporative culture.

A three-day training on a burnout syndrome prevention was conducted among the members of the three projects that deal with harm reduction among IDU’s in Nikolaev and its region, among inmates and those on trial. 24 people working in the three programs; “Enlargement of a harm reduction project in Nikolaev”, “Implementation of a harm reduction project in Nikolaev region”, “Development of a harm reduction project among people on trial and inmates (Gail # 20, Nikolaev and Olshansk prison # 53 of Nikolaev region) took place in the program. Not only socio-psychological games and exercises were included in the training programs, but also psychotherapy methods and techniques on such directives as symbols, neurolinguistic programming, and psycho-synthesis were included. After the training was finished the participants asked to conduct a two-day training on team building and corporate culture development among the “Blagodijnost” foundation workers.

Results

By means of the training on burnout syndrome prevention it became possible to unite the team, to share experience and ideas among the teams of different directions. The participants experienced the feeling of unity, many of them started to see perspectives of development and professional growth. According to the participants’ feedback they learned relaxation techniques, techniques of switching attention, techniques of protective mechanism development, reduced the level of anxiety, increased the level of confidence and trust in their work groups. They also decided to organize holidays together and to conduct regular joint trainings on burnout syndrome prevention once a month. A room of psychological relaxation was equipped in the context of the project. A document on corporative culture of the organization was worked out

and signed according to the results of the training. Goals and missions of the foundation and each of the projects were determined, strategies of communication and cooperation were mentioned, slogans were formulated and the plan of future measures was created in the scope of this document.

Prevention of burnout among volunteers

Social Foundation “Credo”, Karaganda, Kazakhstan

Problem

Development of a burnout syndrome among organization’s volunteers.

Goals and Aims

Goal:

Reduction of emotional burnout among people working with IDU’s, people living with HIV, sex-workers

Aim:

- to increase the level of work satisfaction
- to increase creativity of the workers
- to reduce subjective importance of situations
- to accent comprehension of activity
- to form a feeling of success

Activities

The project included establishment of a target group, testing, psychological diagnostics, site-visiting to the capital of Kazakhstan Astana and meeting with volunteers and harm reduction project members, psychological trainings aimed at burnout syndrome prevention.

Results

After the volunteer participants among the target groups were chosen (17 people), a psychological diagnostics to find out the level of psychological exhaustion was carried out. The diagnostics applied Spielberg and Hanin’s scale of self-esteem. The results showed a high level of personal disturbance which characterizes the group members as individuals that conceive most situations with awareness and react emotionally in situations of competence evaluation. The following symptoms of burnout were revealed: asthenization, poor mood, a feeling of contact incompleteness, feeling of guilt, sleep disorders, psychosomatic reactions, change of the attitude to work, standardization of communication, using stereotypical skills, substitution of creative activity with a formal attitude to responsibilities.

Site-visiting to Astana was held with the purpose to experience emotional relaxation and have a composite rest. It helped to create unify the team, raise work motivation and to improve a psychologist's contact with this target group.

Next stage was conducting of psychological trainings with the aim to reduce burnout syndrome by means of the following methods: role games, elements of body oriented therapy, vocal techniques, art-therapy and music therapy.

A number of trainings was aimed at four main tasks:

- 1) to reveal psychological conditions and spheres of the most emotional stress that need correction;
- 2) to use internal resources and ability to cope with psycho-emotional problems independently;
- 3) to remove body blocks, playing role games to work out behavioral strategies that can help to establish effective contacts and to achieve goals;
- 4) to develop abilities to use internal skills and resources, ability to tell apart constructive and destructive critics.

After the project implementation an express-diagnostics was made to determine psycho-emotional condition of volunteers. As the results have shown, it was possible to reduce the level of burn out syndrome and to increase the degree of subjective evaluation of personal activity effectiveness.

Thus, the project helped to determine presence of a burnout problem among volunteers. The implemented activities helped to decrease it. However, in order to secure the results an individual long-term work and personal help to each volunteer is required.

Improvement of outreach team work

Charity Foundation "Health of the Nation", Makeevka, Ukraine

Problem

A burnout syndrome in an outreach-team of a harm reduction project

Goals and Aims

To reduce a burnout syndrome in an outreach-team and to unite it; to make use of personal potential; to strengthen physical and moral health of harm reduction projects' members.

Activities

Activities during the project's implementation were the following: spending free-time together, informal communication, art-therapy, work in therapeutic groups with outreach teams, trainings on development.

1. Three psychological trainings with therapy elements were conducted to increase the level of information among outreach workers about burnout syndrome prevention, to teach them the methods of auto-training, self-relaxation, increase of emotional stability, as well as working out positive attitude and active life position.
2. Common trips to Sviatogorsk, to visit spiritual and recreational center of Doneck region, were organized for outreach workers from Makeevka and Doneck, 18 people – outreach workers, volunteers, foundation specialists that are involved in harm reduction programs took part in this trip. The trip lasted 2 days and included picnic, visiting a reserve and Sviatogorsk Lavra.
3. A club “World around Us” was established together with youth social organization “M.art.in Club”. There were organized three meetings in it; the meetings’ program included:
 - discussions, exchange of experience;
 - discussing the trip to Sviatogorsk;
 - watching and discussion of video films;
 - art-therapy (work with gypsum, collective paintings);
 - informal communication, coffee-breaks
4. The members of the foundation visited theatres, cinemas and a swimming pool in Doneck.

Results

1. Decrease in the level of personal and situational anxiety, decrease in stress-factors influence.

Preliminary psycho-diagnostic (Boiko’s method) results showed that 9 outreach workers out of 14 had a high level of burnout (including 5 people, whose burnout level was very high – their emotional condition was very unstable and that factor influenced the quality of their work. These people also applied for a specialized medical help). 4 people had a middle level of burnout and 1 person had a low level of burnout. Most probably it may be ascribed to the fact that all these 5 people were beginners in outreach-work (3-4 months of work in outreach). Further work showed that low level of burnout in one person might have been due to personal characteristics. In all cases a psycho-correctional work was conducted individually (consultations) and in groups (psychological trainings). The program of Individual management of emotional burnout syndrome was applied with all the participants.

2. Increase of group unity

There were conducted 10 celebrations (Birthday parties, a New Year party, Christmas, 8th of March) in the foundation from the moment of the project implementation. This united the

outreach-workers team, established more close and friendly relationships between group members.

3. *Reduction of conflicts in the team*

Starting with the moment of the project implementation the level of conflicts reduced twice. Many conflicts were solved openly and immediately, without being transformed into a secret confrontation. It often happened independently within the group without calling the organization's supervision.

4. *Lack of psycho-emotional breakdowns in outreach group, outreach workers did not apply for narcological and psychoneurotic help in the hospital.*

5. *Improving the quality of services provided in the outreach-sphere, increasing the level of harm reduction projects' efficiency.*

Effectiveness of the program can be evaluated according to the following indices:

during the project implementation new IDU volunteers joined the team; a lot of IDU's visit the organization's office and wish to become project's clients after they hear about the implemented projects from their friends. It became possible to attract additional human resources that allow to cover a large amount of IDU's with different services (the foundation participated in the project "Increasing Effectiveness and Accessibility of Drug Dependence Overcoming Programs by use of common recourses of NGOs in Eastern region of the Ukraine", partnership with the center of social services for youth – the program "Sites of trust for IDU's" etc.)

6. *Motivation of all outreach-members to further participation in the implemented projects*

During the project realization we got a grant for a probation period in a Kiev NGO that works in sphere of harm reduction (the program is supported by the Ukrainian Harm Reduction Association). 8 foundation members took part in the probation practice. The project was headed by Larisa Barinskaja – an outreach-worker of the project who successfully coordinated the project. Outreach workers reported that they were ready to continue their participation in the foundation's projects aimed at increase of quality service delivered in the sphere of harm reduction.

Decreasing professional deformation in team of prison-based program

Social Non-governmental Organization "Innovative Projects in Prisons", Chisinau, Moldova

Problem

Professional deformations among the project workers.

Goals and Aims

To increase the level of stability to professional deformation; improving psycho-emotional atmosphere in the team.

Activities

1. Working out an activity plan on professional deformation prevention.

The plan included the following chapters:

- the level, whom it depends upon
- important actions, what to do
- time
- aim to achieve

The most part of the planned activities was implemented, except for those activities that need constant and regular work:

- increasing the level of professionalism
- organization of free time activities

2. Questioning to find out the level of burnout before the training with the Mislach's test

The test determined the main levels of burnout among respondents, helped to understand the problems and to reveal the level.

3. Evaluation of psychological atmosphere in the team before the training

This information was necessary to plan and to correct the content of the following training.

4. Conducting socio-psychological training which aim was to:

- to acquaint the project's members with the term "burnout syndrome", prevention methods, techniques of psychological atmosphere improvement, managing professional deformation. Working-out recommendations on how to develop burnout stability was the most important for the participants:

1. To in a correct way ant to spend weekends purposefully;
2. To pick a hobby;
3. To plan work effectively;
4. To have short breaks during work (to have a cup of tea, coffee, to listen to music);
5. To make morning exercises (15 minutes);
6. To improve emotional balance by autotraining ("I am the best.., I believe in myself..., I'll get everything...");
7. To make presents and to say compliments to dear people and to oneself;
8. To visit sauna once a week;
9. To get rid of bad habits step by step;
10. To walk (1,5 – 2 km) once a day;

11. To organize cultural events (visiting theatre and cinema) often;
12. Not to take everything on one person, to divide work between other participants.

Results

Three weeks after the training a questionnaire was provided in order to determine a burnout level and atmosphere in the team. Analyzed results showed positive dynamics – a level of burnout reduced. Therefore, after the analysis of the results, it can be said that the goals of the project were achieved.

“Energizer” for social workers

Social Congress “Stalist”, Vinnitsa, Ukraine

Problem

Members and group volunteers of the social Congress “Stalist” faced burnout problems while providing services for their clients. Social workers developed emotional stress, depression and fast exhaustion. This condition became even more distinct after the organization started to work with people living with HIV. The quality of organization’s work reduced, the conflicts arose and workers became indifferent to clients.

Goals and Aims

To prevent burnout syndrome development among NGO workers and among active groups that realize harm reduction activities in Vinnitsa, the program “Energizer” was launched for social workers and volunteers.

Activities

At the beginning of “Energizer” program all members participating in it filled out a questionnaire – K. Maslach’s burnout test. This method gave information on presence or absence of a burnout syndrome among the organizations’ workers. According to the first research, 6 members (33%) had a formed burnout, 9 people (50%) showed a forming burnout syndrome and 3 people (13%) did not form a burnout. As the research showed, the members who had the longest working experience in harm reduction projects reveal highest levels of a burnout syndrome. To monitor psycho-emotional condition of the workers it was decided to carry out questioning in the middle and at the end of the project. On the basis of the 1st research a plan of primarily activities was made, recommendations from the organization leader were given.

The program “Energizer” consisted of 4 parts:

- To increase the level of professionalism by means of 4 monthly trainings “Skills of a social worker” on experience exchange among social workers and volunteers. Also, the

trainings on the following topics were conducted: “Skills to inform a person about HIV/AIDS and to organize work with a client”; “My mistakes” (interaction mistakes between NGO members with clients were discussed and recommendations on how to avoid mistakes and to overcome their consequences were given).

- To increase the level of psychological stability by means of personal growth trainings and acquirement of relaxation techniques. The trainings on the following topics were conducted “Breath relaxation”; “Jacob’s muscular relaxation”; 3 personal growth trainings on three directions: regulating mental condition, personal growth regulation, psychological portrait of the group.
- Improvement of physical health through making a one-day trip to nature including fishing, mushrooming, skiing in the forest and etc.
- Organization of cultural events and common visits to concerts of organ music, visiting exhibitions, the theatre and cinema.

Results

The project’s monitoring was made according to an anonymous questionnaire that was filled out three times.

The table of the emotional condition change in people working in harm reduction projects:

Level of emotional burnout	1st research	2 nd research	3d research
Formed burnout syndrome	6 people (33%)	2 people (11%)	-----
Forming burnout syndrome	9 people (50%)	4 people (22%)	2 people (11%)
Burnout syndrome is not formed	3 people (17%)	12 people (67%)	17 people (89%)

The table’s facts show the effectiveness of the “Energizer” program. It clearly seen that a burnout syndrome revealed during the first research (33%, 6 people) disappeared (according to the date of the third research). At the end of program the seminar “Summing up the results and working out the recommendations on burnout syndrome prevention” was conducted for all the participants. A psychologist explained to the participants the dynamics of their emotional condition changing. Together with all the participants the recommendations on burnout prevention were created:

1. To make a little break at work.
2. If it is possible, to change the activities of harm reduction work (For example, counseling and social work).
3. It is important to educate workers of the projects and to have a rest in order to improve health and life quality.

Comprehensive approach towards burnout management

Regional Charity Foundation “Step Towards”, Sumy, Ukraine

Problem

Burnout syndrome development among the foundation workers

Goals and Aims

Goal:

To form a healthy psychological atmosphere among the workers of the charity foundation “Step Towards”, to cope with a burnout syndrome among the workers.

Aims:

- To find the signs of burnout among the workers of the organization or to determine tendencies for its development, to determine the level of this problem
- To provide the activities aimed at burnout syndrome prevention and elimination of the syndrome among the workers
- To monitor and to evaluate effectiveness of the activities aimed at burnout management and prevention
- To find the most effective techniques and to work-out new methods of a burnout syndrome prevention

Activities

The following activities on burnout management and prevention among the organization’s staff were conducted during the time of the project’s implementation:

- 1) A meeting with a psychologist was conducted, where a burnout syndrome was discussed. The workers of the foundation expressed their wishes about the activities on this project. As a result a detailed plan was made and included each member’s opinion and the level of personal burnout was taken into account.
- 2) 6 workers of the foundation visited a fitness center: simulators-hall, aerobics, yoga, dances.
- 3) 3 workers had a course on PC skills development and got a certificate.
- 4) All workers had a two-day trip to a rest-home in the country side. This common trip was the first during the whole period of their work and got high appraisals of the workers as a good instrument of burnout syndrome prevention.
- 5) Monthly meetings of the workers were carried out in order to discuss mutual work, results, perspectives, problems and the ways of solutions. A psychologist discussed the methods of psychological defense and methods of a burnout syndrome management.

Results

After the project a meeting of the workers was conducted in order to discuss the results. All of the members came to a conclusion that the project played a great role in prevention and management of a burnout syndrome. Project's activities helped the members of the staff to spend their free time more interesting, they managed to forget about their problems related to their work and to improve their physical and emotional condition.

Training programs on burnout syndrome prevention

*Saratov regional division of Russian Social Charity Foundation “No to Drugs and Alcohol”,
Balakovo, Russian Federation.*

Training on burnout syndrome prevention among outreach workers of harm reduction projects

Goal: burnout syndrome prevention; to increase the level of stress stability.

Time	Activity	Equipment and kind of activities
1st day		
12.00 –13.00	Arrival	
14.00 –15.00	Lunch	
15.30 – 16.50	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting to know the plan 2. Filling out a questionnaire “entrance” 3. Choosing a name 4. Forming a team 5. Naming a team 6. Choosing the team captain 7. Rules of a team 	<p>«plans»</p> <p>questionnaires</p> <p>names on badges</p> <p>Male and female team</p> <p>3 min to name the team and ground the name</p> <p>4 pencils for each person</p> <p>Why I should become a team leader (1 min to think). 1 minute to explain, voting in pencils (2 min).</p> <p>paper, markers</p> <p>Working out rules according to which you want to play and live in this team (10 min). Voting in pencils for the rules that you liked the most.</p>

16.50 –18.30	<p>1. Who is faster to “sew” the team?</p> <p>2. Caps</p>	<p>2 strings, 2 tea spoons</p> <p>Number of caps equals the number of the participants + some spare hats</p>	<p>Team leaders have a string, a tea spoon, and they are supposed to sew themselves and all the team on some parts of their clothes.</p> <p>Each participant should have a hat on a head. Teams line up opposite each other at the stretched hand. The goal is to take off the hat from the opposite person, but to keep own hat. The participant puts hat in a box of his/her team. Moreover, there are several extra hats that a person who “lost” a hat can take and continue the game. After the game is finished the participants count hats. Wins the team that has more hats.</p>
	<p>3. Art-painting</p> <p>4. Mummy</p>	<p>Pencils, colors, paper</p> <p>2 rolls of toilet paper</p>	<p>The participants have pencils, colors and paper. Their goal is to create a portrait of the group without saying a word. After 20 minutes teams present their paintings.</p> <p>Male team chooses one member from female group and females choose one male member. This participant (male and female) is going to be a mummy. Each team posses a roll of a toilet paper and the aim is to reel it on the mummy, take it to another corner of the room and unroll the mummy. Wins the fastest team.</p>
19.00 – 20.00	supper		

20.30 –22.30	1. Theatre of pantomime	Cards with assignment	Fairy-tales (5 min. to think how to show a fairy-tale), demonstration to the member of the opposite team. Afterwards, he shows the same to another member of his team and etc. The last member is asked what fairy tale it was.
	2. Fairy-tales from a crypt	Roll of a toilet paper	Each participant is asked to pull some paper. Then a participant has to put these peaces of paper in a heap. Then participants are asked to think of some funny episode of his/her professional activity (1 min). Next a participant tells others this episode (1-2 min) and puts a piece of paper in the middle of a table. This continues till there are no pieces of paper left. If a participant is out of time remembering the episode he/she loses a move, and one piece of paper is being taken from the heap. Wins the team which has the biggest heap.

2nd day			
9.30 – 10.00	Breakfast		
10.30 – 11.30	1. Barter	4 sheets of cardboard cut into 20 parts, 4 boxes	Participants are informed that they will work in silence. So they have to work-out signs to communicate. (3 min). Moreover they need a mediator to communicate with an opposite team. A mediator can communicate with words only with a mediator from the opposite group. 1 min. to choose a mediator. 4 boxes, where there are 20 pieces of a cut rectangle in one color. Participants can take 8 elements. The assignment is to make a rectangle of one color. The mediator's goal is to find the missing parts from the other team. It is possible to take from the other team as many parts as the team gives by the mutual consent. If there is no mutual consent and a part was taken a team receives a fine – a red card. If both teams make rectangles simultaneously, the remained elements are counted. Wins the team which has fewer parts. Red card is counted as an element. The question is: what helped and what disturbed the teams.

11.30 – 11.45	2. a candle + an apple	2 candles, 2 apples	2 volunteers. Players sit in front of each other. In front of them there is a candle, a lighter and an apple. The task is to eat an apple as fast as possible, but you can eat an apple only while the candle is burning. An opponent can blow out a candle and another participant has to light a candle and then to eat the apple again.
11.45 – 12.00	3. “ a spider”	2 ropes	2 teams are at the start. Participants stand very close to each other and they are wrapped with a rope, thus two “spiders” appear. The aim is to reach finish as fast as possible and to take care about participants’ legs. So they have 2 min to think of a moving strategy Start.
12.00 – 12.30	4. Negotiations	Paper, pencils, markers	Participants discuss a topic they are going to negotiate about with another team. The negotiations with another team have to be in silence, it is possible to communicate only with the help of paintings. The aim is to find out what the opposite team wishes to speak about and to decide whether to speak about this or not.
12.30 – 13.30	5. Broom racing	2 broom, skittles	The first “flies” on a broom between the skittles and has to come back without touching skittles, than returns and takes the second person and they fly together till the whole team flies on the broom to the finish.
14.00-15.00	Lunch		
15.30-18.30	Swimming pool		
19.00-20.00	Supper		
20.30 – 22.30	1. Painting on a face 2. A trunk 3. Discotheque - carnival 4. Banquet	Gouache, colors, cosmetic pencils, facial cream, sponge, brushes A box with many different clothes	Two teams stand opposite each other, making pairs. In a pair during 15 min they paint each other’s faces. Participants stand or sit down, mix teams. Listening to the music they pass any object to each other, when music stops, the person who has the object goes to the box, closes his/her eyes, picks any piece of clothes and puts it on himself. Music continues.

3rd day			
9.30 – 10.00	Breakfast		
10.30 – 11.30	Results, rewards	Diplomas, markers, prizes	
12.00	Departure		

Charity Foundation “Blagodijnost”, Nikolaev, Ukraine

Training on burnout syndrome prevention among harm reduction project’s personnel.

Goal:

to influence development of partnership in a group and cooperation between workers.

Aims:

- understanding personal and others’ abilities;
- working-out skills to interact with oneself and the others
- stirring up communication within a group.

1st day

Introduction of the trainers and the participants.

Explaining the goals and aims of the training.

Acquaintance: the exercise “Threads of friendship”.

Participants wind a thread round a finger and after that say what they like the most and how do they usually take a rest, afterwards, through a clew to another person. As the result there is a “spider web” that connects all the participants. Next stage is to clew up a thread and to ask questions a person on the other side of the thread.

Preparation and presentation of the exercise “Knight’s Shield”.

Each participant paints a symbol on a piece of paper – “Knight’s shield” - the one that helps a person to integrate into the society on one side of the sheet, and the one that protects a person – on the other.

Creating group rules.

Waiting for the training participants.

Mini-lecture: “How does the stress appear and develop?”

Work in groups. Symptoms of burnout: physical, mental, behavioral.

Discussion: “Who can be exposed to a burnout syndrome?”

Work in groups. Reasons of a burnout syndrome.

Puzzle-stories: command interrelationship and teambuilding.

Goal:

To know the difference between a competitive and interactive behavior in a team, to learn the techniques of team interrelationship.

An exercise is done in the following way:

There were formed three commands of 6-7 people. They got numbers from 1 to 3. A volunteer is chosen from each group, who becomes an observer using the special instruction. Everybody read the tasks for the team. All receive envelopes with puzzles. The leader explains that the task is going to be considered unfinished till all the teams collect the puzzle parts and solve the puzzle. The command interrelation starts and lasts 1 hour till all the teams collected and solved the puzzles. The discussion starts, where each participant can give his point of view regarding the exercise. The observers present their feedback, emphasizing what helped and what disturbed the teams. The exercise is finished with a short lecture about inter-team interaction.

Getting to know relaxation techniques.

Summing up of the results of the day.

2nd day

Getting into the right mood: an exercise "Yesterday I was.. Today I am..."

Communication: "How to prevent stress?"

Techniques of psychological defense: "Plexiglass", "Safety costume", "Step away", "Clown", "Mirror", "A Circle of Power".

Group discussion: "An effective team member: an exercise to achieve consent".

Goal:

To learn characteristics of an effective team member.

To learn techniques of consent achievement when decisions are made.

To learn to observe dynamics of the processes in a team.

An exercise is done in the following way:

Training participants are divided in two groups. The "first" form an inner circle; the "second" form an outside circle. Each participant that is in the inner circle has to tell a partner from the outside circle about the skills a person would like to improve and which features need to be paid attention at. All the participants of the outside circle were given "Observer's guiding lines", which they should use. The participants from the inner circle got copies of "Characteristics of an effective team member". They discuss and arrange characteristics according to their value for an

effective team work. Group members are supposed to reach a consensus. This work lasts 40 minutes. Team members from the inner circle turn to the partners from the outside circle and discuss possibility for them to take part in the discussion; they receive feedback with a stress on skills they wanted to improve. Afterwards, the team from the outside circle gives general comments on the team work in the inner circle.

Taking a look at a “difficult situation” from different points of view. Methods of associations and dissociations.

An exercise “A present to a neighbor on the right” (by means of pantomime)

Summing up results of the second day.

3rd day

Getting into the right mood: an exercise: “My friend (a child, a parent, a partner) would tell about me that...”

Methods of mental condition management.

Exercises: “Coachman’s Position”, “I am a Tree”, “Hermes’s Gymnastics”, “Associated Conditions”, “Saint George Dance”, “Dolls and a Puppet-master”.

Group interaction: “Let People Carry Yourself”

Feedback: “Team Effectiveness Formula”

Goal:

To analyze basic skills acquired during the training.

To finish training positively.

To prepare basis for future exercises.

An exercise is done this way:

Each participant was supposed to write a letter about himself/herself, where the person should resume the skills acquired at the training. The leader explains that the letters are going to be sent in a month. Participants can include the things they would like to remember (for example, how to react in a new way on a stress situation or how to recover after a working day). Letters are put in envelopes with real addresses and are packed. After a month these letters are sent to the participants.

Exercise: “Group painting”

Summing up the results of the 3rd day.

Social NGO “Innovative Projects in Prisons”, Chisinau, Moldova.

Training on burnout syndrome prevention.

The 1st day

9 ³⁰ - 9 ⁴⁰	Theory “What is a burnout syndrome”
9 ⁴⁰ - 9 ⁵⁰	Greeting training participants
9 ⁵⁰ - 10 ¹⁵	Tree of waiting. Burnout test
10 ¹⁵ - 10 ⁴⁵	Coffee-break
10 ⁴⁵ - 11 ⁴⁵	Exercise “Slalom”
11 ⁴⁵ - 12 ²⁵	Exercise “If”
12 ²⁵ - 12 ⁴⁵	Theory “Conflicts”
12 ⁴⁵ - 13 ⁴⁵	Lunch
13 ⁴⁵ - 13 ⁵⁵	Warming-up “Hands –Legs”
13 ⁵⁵ - 14 ²⁵	Exercise “But”
14 ²⁵ - 14 ⁵⁵	Using positive motivation
14 ⁵⁵ - 15 ²⁵	Coffee-break
15 ²⁵ - 16 ¹⁰	Exercise “Group sculpture”
16 ¹⁰ - 16 ³⁵	Exercise “Dgeboksana”
16 ³⁵ - 16 ⁵⁰	Exercise “Broken telephone (misinterpretation)”
16 ⁵⁰ - 17 ⁰⁰	Exercise “Surprise”
17 ⁰⁰ - 17 ³⁰	Analysis of the first day
18 ³⁰	Supper
<i>The 2nd day</i>	
8 ³⁰ - 9 ³⁰	Breakfast
9 ³⁰ - 9 ⁴⁰	«Mood’s pantomime»
9 ⁴⁰ - 10 ²⁰	«Draw your job»
10 ²⁰ - 10 ⁴⁵	Coffee-break
10 ⁴⁵ - 11 ⁰⁵	«7 premises»
11 ⁰⁵ - 11 ³⁵	Questionnaire “Microclimate”
11 ³⁵ - 12 ⁴⁵	Game “Answer for the other”
12 ⁴⁵ - 13 ⁴⁵	Lunch
13 ⁴⁵ - 14 ⁰⁰	Game “Samurai”
14 ⁰⁰ - 15 ¹⁰	Game “Skyscraper”

15 ¹⁰ -15 ³⁵	Group work on determining a positive motivation
16 ¹⁰ -16 ⁴⁰	Discussion “What would you like”
16 ⁴⁰ -16 ⁵⁰	«Tree of waiting»
16 ⁵⁰ -17 ⁰⁰	Feedback plan
17 ⁰⁰ -17 ³⁰	Analysis of the seminar
17 ³⁰	Departure

Section 3: Recommendations on prevention of a burnout syndrome for people working with vulnerable groups

The existing practice of harm reduction projects gives convincing evidence that stress and the consequent burnout syndrome can be avoided by carrying out prevention measures of this problem and developing attitudes and abilities that would enable workers to get out of such situations with minimal losses. However, in the first place it is essential to know and be able to identify reasons leading to such situations.

There may be several causes for increased stress related to working with vulnerable groups:

- identification of oneself with clients as project workers belong to the same social and age groups;
- absence of effective treatment for clients or inability to influence their situation;
- lack of personnel and other resources needed to implement activities aimed to deliver help to clients;
- lack of training and knowledge in certain areas of work with clients.

Other causes of stress:

- gender: sometimes a male worker can encounter difficulties when working with a female client (and vice versa);
- experience: situations of increased stress often may be caused by lack of experience (especially when an inadequately trained person has to meet a large number of clients regularly); this is also a reason why high levels of burnout are common among younger workers;
- role conflict and uncertainty: such problems emerge when workers have no thorough understanding of their role in communicating with clients; what are their organization's and client's expectations of them; a conflict between these differing demands increases stress;
- workload: overly light or heavy workload may contribute to the development of stress, especially when there is obviously no opportunity to meet all the needs of clients;
- conflict between personal wishes/needs and requirements of one's organization: imbalance between what workers wish and find important to do and what the structure of their organization allows them to do.

The latter point can be complicated by the way this problem is treated in many organizations. Causes of workers' stress are often rooted in a structure and certain working conditions of an

organization that expects a person to adapt to these conditions. Any attempt to resolve such problems must be made on a regular basis and come within duties of people responsible for organization management. Another critical moment is that situational and organizational factors are often neglected or ignored due to the trend toward looking for burnout causes in personal qualities of this or that worker: colleagues may think that a worker had burned-out “just because... you see.. that the kind of man he is”, while another worker has a stress “just because she is too sensitive”. Personal characteristics may indeed play some role in burning-out, but real reasons are most often rooted outside – in working conditions or a certain situation.

These problems are complemented with stress related to what is going on and what attitudes and stereotypes are prevalent in a wider society:

- lurid reports on HIV/AIDS spread, drug use, etc., in newspapers;
- total unawareness of issues related to these problems among general public;
- anxiety on the part of workers about the possibility to get infected with HIV or involved in drug use; or – more often – anxiety on the part of workers’ parents, family members and friends who are afraid that their relatives or friends can get infected, infect their families, etc.;
- marginalization of representatives of vulnerable groups; this often creates a situation when workers are regularly pressed by their relatives and friends, urging them quit communicating and working in this area;
- frequently inevitable expansion of one’s role – in many cases: there are too many clients and too few people really able to do something for them. Each client has a range of problems and in an attempt to help them, workers often try to do much more than they can and are trained for;
- this situation results in activity being constantly widening on and on, and soon workers can not tell whether they do enough or too little; whether they perform well or badly.

Clients often enter into deep and intensive relations with people who work with them. This intensity may be positive (workers make clients feel that they are not alone, support them, and in return get a feeling that they do useful and valuable work), or negative (such relations often may be similar to those of quarreling and hurting each other lovers; the same emotional problems may emerge between workers and clients, especially when the latter start suffering serious pains and experience depression and oppression).

However, work with vulnerable groups has a number of positive aspects – people involved often find it quite favorable both humanly and professionally when they manage to find mechanisms to cope with stress and avoid burnout. Many of those working in this area feel that their activity

stimulates them emotionally and intellectually and this consequent satisfaction overweighs negative aspects of this kind of work.

Another problem is how duties and functions are distributed between staff members and volunteers; how they and their clients perceive the work they are involved in and how these factors influence stress and burnout in each of the groups. In many countries volunteers carry out the bulk of work related to education, support and provision of services to representatives of vulnerable groups, while they have had little or no training in this area and are often suppressed by amounts of work needed to help these people.

For both staff members and volunteers, one necessary condition of work is to know that they do good to someone. Therefore, each person working with representatives of vulnerable groups should feel that he/she really helps them. As clients start suffering from diseases or pass away, to maintain this feeling becomes more and more difficult.

Another problematic area is transposition of stress situation in one's office to one's home: to relations with relatives, friends, folks, spouses, etc. People whose work is associated with serious stress may encounter difficulties in their private life. Both of these problems contribute to disruption of balance between work and private life. Some methods, to be discussed below, may help to solve these problems.

*A worker's own role in coping with the problem is quite prominent. Following **recommendations** listed below, a worker can prevent the burnout syndrome, as well as reduce its intensity.*

I. Identification of short-term and long-term goals.

Not only does this help to establish feedback proving that a person is on the right track, but also increases long-term motivation. Achievement of short-term goals is a success helping to increase the extent of self-training. It should be remembered that a goal must be specific, measurable, achievable and realistic.

Example of working on goals:

GOAL (RESULT)	TERM OF IMPLEMENTATION	PRACTICAL GOAL	TERM OF ACHIEVEMENT	CONTROL

II. Use of 'time-outs'

'Time-outs', i.e. periods of rest from work and other loads are very important for establishing psychical and physical well-being. Sometimes there is a need to 'escape' from practical problems, dedicate one's time to pleasure and find an interesting and pleasant occupation.

III. Developing self-regulation abilities and skills

Acquiring psychological abilities and skills such as relaxation, ideomotor acts, goal identification and positive inner speech facilitate the decrease in levels of stress causing "burnout". For example setting realistic goals helps to establish a balance between one's professional activities and personal life.

Individual work on the burnout syndrome:

1. Identify your strongest emotion experienced within last 24 hours. Pay particular attention to emotional symptoms of stress.
2. Concentrate on this emotion. Let it emerge until you sense it quite distinctly. The emotion must not necessarily be very strong, marginal feeling is enough.
3. Identify a situation that caused stress. Remember, what was going on prior to the emergence of this emotion? Try to exclude judgments from the description. The situation is just what you would have on tape if you had decided to record all the events.
4. Then try to remember all your thoughts. What were the things you said to yourself in the situation that provoked those emotions? As a rule there is a number of thoughts – try to remember them all.
5. Identify what thought of those found can cause such emotions in a similar situation. Imagine another person. If you believe that another person would feel the same way if he/she had similar thoughts, then you are on the right track. If no, repeat steps 4 and 5.
6. Continue studying stressful thoughts for one or two weeks. Write down your thoughts in situations when you are experiencing stress. Once having collected enough information, you will note that some thoughts tend to recur. These are stereotypes of your thinking process that cause stress when you get into this or that situation.
7. Once you have found out what thoughts cause stress in this or that situation, try to find their contrary. Then carefully think over these contrary ideas both in a quiet situation and on the eve of expected stress. If you manage to do it properly, you won't experience stress in this situation anymore.

STRESSOR is a physicochemical or psycho-emotional factor that causes physiological or psychological tension and may be a cause of a disorder.

STRESS is a physiological and/or psychological tension caused by stressors interfering with the established balance.

Or, in other words: stress is a tension, while stressor is a factor causing such tension.

IV. Professional development and self-improvement

One of the methods to protect against the emotional burnout syndrome is to exchange professional information with the representatives of other services. In general, cooperation lets us see a broader world than that existing inside one team.

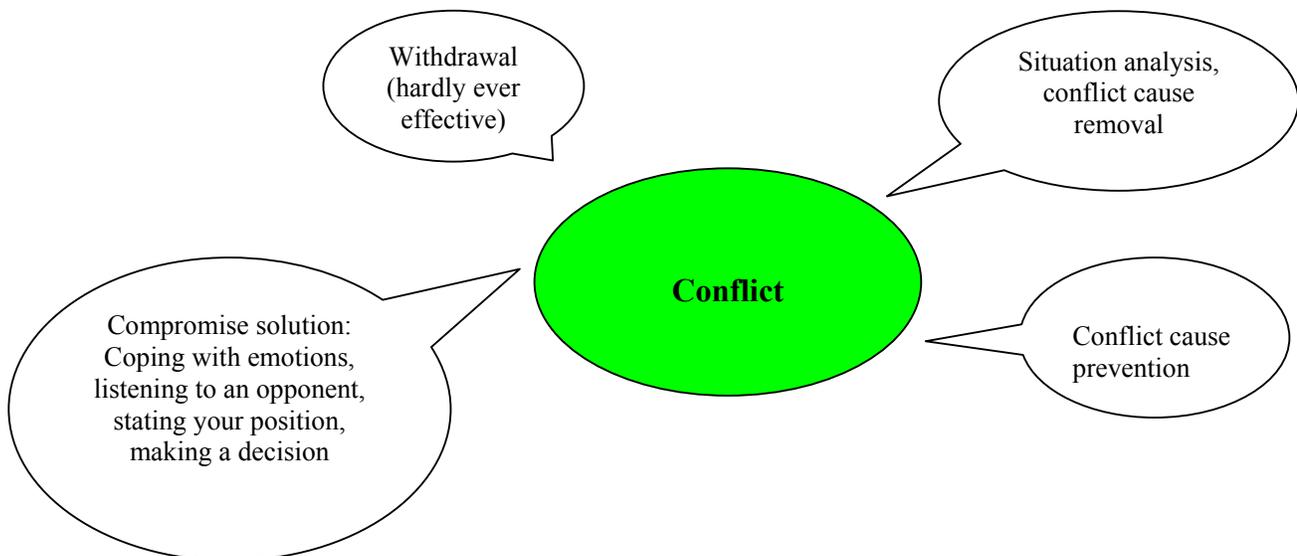
For this purpose there are various courses for further training, all kinds of professional informal associations and conferences that bring experienced people working in different systems together and give them an opportunity to talk with each other, including non-professional issues.

V. Avoiding undue competition

Life is full of situations when we can not avoid competition. Excessive commitment to winning creates tension and anxiety and makes a person aggressive, thus, contributing to the development of the emotional burnout syndrome.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SCHEME

<i>Extreme variant for A</i> B's winning		<i>Claims of A</i> Integrative solution
	Compromise solution	<i>Claims of B</i>
Loss for both		<i>Extreme variant for B</i> A's winning



VI. Emotional communication

When a worker analyzes his/her feelings and emotions and shares them with the others, development of burnout significantly decreases, or the process of burning-out is less expressed. Therefore, it is recommended that organization workers should exchange views with the colleagues in difficult working situations and seek professional support from them. When a worker communicates his/her negative emotions to the colleagues, they may find a reasonable solution of his/her problem.

VII. Maintaining good shape

Body and mind are closely interrelated. Chronicle stress impacts a person; therefore, maintaining good physical shape through physical exercises and a balanced diet becomes very important. Malnutrition, alcohol and tobacco abuse, weight loss or gain can contribute to worsening manifestations of the emotional burnout syndrome.

If the emotional burnout syndrome has become an integral characteristic of a worker, there is a need for professional psychological help.

Table 3. Prevention of the burnout syndrome in an organization.

№	Necessary skills, actions	Depends on	Comments, effects
	Clear formulation of tasks set before people	Manager	Increase satisfaction of work
	Detailed job description	Manager	Increase satisfaction of work
	Ability to divide tasks into smaller ones (weekly, monthly...)	Employee	Increase satisfaction of work
	Recognition of impossibility to achieve such goals as “saving the world”	Employee	Structuring of aims and their achievability makes it easier to achieve them and get more satisfaction of work
	Realistic apprehension of one’s abilities to help	Employee	Critical attitude to oneself and one’s ability to help will allow avoiding emotional and physical overtension. One should understand that it is not possible to know everything and answering “I don’t know” is not a problem at all
	Organization of team meetings	Everyone	-experience exchange on how to cope

			<p>with unfavorable situations/stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -stress release -opportunity to share with the others -opportunity to ask somebody's advice -improvement of a plan of further actions, specification of aims and objectives -identification of target group needs in order to deliver most effective help that would bring satisfaction to workers -organization of trainings on relaxation, planning -assessment of one's own needs
	Use of counseling by a psychologist	Employee	If you feel discomfort or stress immediately ask a psychologist to help you
	Ability to use one's spare time properly, to relax	Employee	Plan your leisure time activities properly, as if you do not rest well, efficacy of your work will be affected notably
	Resolution of conflicts within one's team	Employee, manager	Use the most effective ways to resolve a conflict as it arises, try not to aggravate a conflict, try to reach understanding, listen to both parties
	Ongoing advanced training (skill development)	Employee	Identification of target group needs in order to deliver the most effective help which would bring satisfaction to workers, organization of trainings on relaxation, planning, acquisition of new knowledge
	Ability to cope with stress, strengthening of resistance to stress	Employee	Do not force yourself into stressful situations, relax, go in for sports, take yoga exercises, do not lose your sense of humor, do not take things too seriously, do not take others' responsibility, be

			accountable for your own actions, plan your activities properly
	Development of personal skills for problem resolution	Employee	Treat your activity with due criticism, never fear to ask for advice, analyze your mistakes, develop more flexibility in yourself
	Use of social support mechanisms	Employee, manager	-self-help groups -meetings
	Understanding of psychological interrelation aspects within the team and with clients	Employee, manager	-development of communication skills -understanding of counseling mechanisms -development of empathy skills -working with limits

Ways to protect against stress

The most prominent way to protect against stress is a method of **complete rationalization** of a forthcoming event, i.e. repeated detailed conceptualization of the event to such an extent when it would create a sense of habitualness of a future situation and actions. As is known, habitual and familiar things worry us less than uncertain ones. This method is consciously put before all the rest. The fact is that negative emotions emerge when the whole process and outcomes of some important event are highly uncertain. The rationalization method serves to reduce such uncertainty.

Another method is **imitation games**. It suggests that all parties involved in future events practically play their roles. This is like a rehearsal before a performance. The more frequently and carefully you practice this method, the more likely is removal of impeding “locks” of your mind and successful regulation of your mental condition.

The third method is **selective positive retrospection** which deals with analyzing one’s most successful personal experience of coping with complex situations. Consistent and detailed mental reproduction of all possible subtle details of solved problems creates a rich base allowing to maintain a favorable psycho-emotional condition, the more so if you analyze a greater number of such ‘happy-end’ situations (when your mind is full of positive experience) and if these solved problems were really complex (conclusion: “I’ve manage to solve difficult problems, so I’m able to solve this one”).

The fourth mechanism is “**mirror**”. This method of regulating one’s mental condition in stress situation is alerting in its simplicity and encouraging in its potential was out of experience. It assigns a prominent role to a real mirror. What are those techniques based on the mechanism “mirror”? Basically one knows how his/her face changes depending on an inner condition; to a certain extent one is able to change his/her face expression appropriately for this or that situation. If you look at your face in the mirror in the state of stress – carefully and with no hurry – and then consciously try to change your expression into that of a balanced and steady person, then the well-known back action scheme may activate the mechanism of mental stabilization. The same may be done to one’s speech with the help of pre-recorded samples of his/her balanced speech. One may also work on his/her gestures, gait, position of body at the workplace, etc, in the same vein.

Dynamism of attitudes is the fifth way to protect against stress. Failing to achieve some vital (or perceived as vital) goal often causes serious stress when a person has no other goals to achieve, which could alleviate his/her disappointment. A person possessing a set of flexible attitudes and sufficiently great number of various goals and able to exchange them with each other in case of failure is better protected against stress than a person seeking to achieve a certain result and nothing besides.

The sixth method is ability to **re-evaluate** a goal you failed to achieve. A man making all possible efforts to achieve a certain goal commands respect and esteem. But what if he fails?! And there is no another goal to work on with such vigor? Stress and consequent performance impairment are inevitable. Ability to diminish the importance of what you were trying to achieve may help alleviate these effects. Sometimes this mechanism works by itself. One example may be found in Krylov’s fable “Fox and Grapes”. The Fox wanted to eat some grapes – this was her goal, but once having failed to gain this (as she couldn’t reach them), she diminished the importance of this failure by saying: “the grapes are sour”.

The seventh method is **objectification of stresses**. The essence of this method lies in ability to tell failures from a disaster, dislocation from trouble, error from overthrow of all one’s plans, etc. In other words, it deals with an ability to objectively assess the events that may seem catastrophic and tragic at the first glance.

Discrete communication is the eighth way to protect oneself. Routine observations (as well as psychological trials) confirm that communication repletion may often lead to tensions in relations between people. This suggests that there exists a *limit of communication time*, and going beyond this (as a rule for most people) may result in the loss of constructive essence of communication or even cause serious conflicts. Still it should be noted that this limit may vary in different groups of people. The law of communication repletion must not be neglected. In order

to avoid stressful relations between people, you should be firstly aware of some signs of such repletion (development or intensification of unfounded discontent with one's partner, irritability, nervousness, intemperance, touchiness, etc.) and be able to stop contacting with these people in due time to continue positive relations later. Otherwise, communication may turn from an anti-stress factor into a stressful one.

Humor – the last and the simplest method – is often listed among psycho-hygiene tools. R.Konechnyj and M.Bouhal ascribe humor to instruments enabling temporal respite from tensions, problems and conflicts, and while it cannot solve these problems, it still “turns distressful or tragic aspects of life into the contrary; humor allows to see complex situations in the abstract and is especially effective when the one producing it, is not excluded”.

According to A.N.Look, a sense of humor is an emotional response turning a potentially negative emotion into its contrary, i.e. into a source of positive emotions. In particular, humor function is to establish satisfactory internal conditions in a situation far from being satisfactory. And this function can be performed only if you are able to look at your situation and yourself from outside, to find funny sides in yourself as a person having got into this situation. Not groaning and moaning about what has happened, but a strong ability to see funny in what seems not funny at all at the first glance, is a powerful way to keep your mind balanced irrespective of problems encountered.

An additional point to be made here is that laugh as a form of humor manifestation contributes to formation of healthy conditions of a man who takes troubles through humor.

Relaxation techniques*

The more problems a person has, the higher tension he/she experiences. As a human being is impartible, nervous tension causes also the tension of muscles. Such person always feels weary even when he/she is not involved in vigorous activity. The wearier the person feels the less progress he/she is able to make and the more often he/she thinks about reasons and causes of his/her weakness. This strings the person up and he/she feels worse every day.

Relaxation techniques help human beings, who are physiologically able to live in a primeval forest, to live a better life in conditions of our civilization. While the human lifestyle has changed radically during the last fifty thousand years, fundamental physiological body reactions remained the same. In a natural environment the mechanism works quite simply: having found himself in a stressful situation, an individual turns to a tactics peculiar to all mammals, which is either escape or aggression. When meeting a saber-toothed tiger a man has to make a simple choice: either he will speed away or try to get a trophy. In both cases physiologically his body would react similarly: escape and aggression actions require substantial physical activity and release of energy resources. Our body “knows” how to do that.

Old physiological mechanisms have been running on empty for million years and adrenalin is about to slop over. Very often a person has no opportunity to help himself/herself through physical reduction of tension such as firewood splitting or playing tennis. At best a person may drink a cup of coffee with his/her colleague and cry on his shoulder. This is also a way to relax. Especially, if your colleague shows solidarity in your feelings.

Overall there is a catastrophic lack of relaxation. You can encounter stressful situations every now and then (many people travel in overcrowded buses, stand in queues to buy food, etc.) In fine people are encompassed with perils. However, there are people immune to various worries and stresses and able to maintain their mental balance and positive psychological condition even in situations that are deemed emergencies by most people. In general, people either suffer or use some simple and available means allegedly able to give some relief. These may often include drugs, such as alcohol, coffee, various medicines, heavy doses of vitamins and many other substances that can be harmful when taken regularly. Sleeping or intensive physical activity may be recommended as effective and harmless methods. However, these are unacceptable in many social situations.

One way to cope with internal tension is learning to relax. Relaxation is available to *all*, and some techniques require neither additional resources nor much time.

* <http://psy.agava.ru/relax.shtml>

All relaxation exercises are based on more or less conscious relaxation of muscles. We have mentioned that a human being is impartial and mental tension inevitably causes tension of muscles. The contrary is also the truth. If you manage to ease muscular tension, nervous tension will ease also. So the relaxed state has a psycho-hygiene effect in itself and some individuals find it quite sufficient. The one who wishes to go on may use this relaxation state when doing consequent exercises that help to deepen self-knowledge and improve psychical (and therefore physical) health. This is also a two-way process, as not only “a sound mind is in a sound body”, but also “a body is sound when sound is mind”.

It is recommended that the process of learning relaxation techniques be supervised by a specialist. However, this is not a compulsory condition. A criterion of correct learning is whether exercises give pleasure to a person and whether he/she feels good long after he has completed doing them. If pleasant emotions do not emerge, quickly fade away or change into fears, tension or muscle fatigue, it means that you made some mistakes and need to ask a specialist for help (today it is easy to find one; this must not necessarily be a psychologist or psychiatrist – rehabilitation specialist or yoga master will be just fine). The mistake may be rooted in the choice of a wrong relaxation exercise. They all must be tried in order to choose the most acceptable one.

Anti-stress relaxation

- 1) Lay down (or if not possible, sit down) comfortably in a quiet, softly lighted room; your clothes should not encumber movements.
- 2) Close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply. Take a breath and hold it for approximately ten seconds. Breathe out with no hurry, watch your muscle relaxation and silently say to yourself: “Inhaling and exhaling is like ebb and flood”. Repeat the whole procedure five or six times and rest for about twenty seconds.
- 3) Arbitrarily contract separate muscles or groups of muscles. Keep them contracted for up to ten seconds, and then relax. Do this to all muscles of your body and watch carefully what is happening to your body. Repeat the whole procedure three times, relax, cast all cares aside, do not think about anything.
- 4) Try to imagine as definitely as possible a feeling of relaxation penetrating your body from top to bottom: from your toes through calves, thighs, corpus to your head. Say to yourself: “I calm down, I feel pleasure and nothing worries me”.
- 5) Imagine that this feeling of relaxation penetrates all your body parts and tension goes away. Feel that your shoulders, neck, facial muscle relax (your mouth may be open.) Lie quietly as a “rag doll”. Enjoy the experienced feeling about thirty seconds.

6) Count to ten, saying to yourself that your muscles are relaxing more and more with each new figure. Now the only concern is how to enjoy this state of relaxation.

7) "Awakening" comes. Count to twenty. Say to yourself: "When I reach twenty my eyes will open and I shall feel vigorous. Unpleasant tension in my limbs will go away".

This exercise should be done two or three times a week. At the start it will take about fifteen minutes, but when you have a considerable hold of it, relaxation will be achieved faster.

Relaxation with concentration on breathing

This approach suggests physiological muscle relaxation at each exhale.

1) Lie down comfortably (following all basic requirements: quietness, loose clothes, moderate air temperature).

2) Close your eyes slowly.

3) Watch your breathing. Every new exhale brings a state of relaxation. Do this until you feel that you have reached a deep relaxation stage, which is what your body needs.

4) Lie and stay relaxed, realizing that your breathing became more quiet and deep. Feel relaxation in all your body. Lie without movement, limply, enjoy pleasant feelings. Feel that peace and relaxation penetrate your soul. Enjoy a feeling of quietness and light heart.

5) Your body will itself let you know when it feels vigorous enough. Relaxation will bring you no pleasure anymore and you feel eager to return into active vivacious state.

6) Do not be hasty, stretch yourself slowly and open your eyes leisurely. Sit down if you feel like it. Then breathe out quickly.

Muscle relaxation by G. Jacobson

This method is recommended to everyone – at least in an initial stage – who has difficulties with muscle relaxation. According to its author, urgent problems encountered by people living in our civilization are excessive haste, anxiety and abundance of factors they have to react upon. In these conditions physical and psychological loads result in overstress. The latter tends to be lasting and accumulate. As our soul and body constitute a unified whole, excessive neuromuscular stresses conduce to an increased psychological tension and irritability. If a person with this condition tries to relax, his/her efforts are often counter-productive. Complete relaxation (especially psychological) is possible only when all skeletal muscles are relaxed.

Exercises should be done in prone position; preferable if no one disturbs you during the process. As a rule more or less monotonous background sounds free from informational content (ticking of the clock, refrigerator noise, roar of trams passing by, etc.) are not supposed to disturb you. Still, if you feel harassed with them, you may just say to yourself in the beginning of each

exercise: «I am not interested in ambient noises, I am indifferent about them, and they don't interfere with my activity» (the phrase should be formulated individually, to your liking).

The place where you lie during your exercises must be wide enough so that you can put your hands along your body. If you have some spinal problems pillow your head and, if necessary, small of the back. In other words you should feel comfortable lying on the back with hands along your body. Your hands and legs must not fall numb. The clothes should be loose and non-hampering. Air temperature is also important: it must not be hot or cold. If it is cold you should blanket with a light cloth.

Lie comfortably on your back before each of the exercises. Your arms lie motionless along your body with your palms downwards. Your legs are a little bit drawn apart. Lie calmly, close your eyes slowly. The slower you do, the sooner you feel comfort and peace.

The author notes that the procedure should last for one hour a day but he does not recommend to set an alarm-clock. This must not be done. Everything must go without any violence against yourself, naturally and pleasantly.

Many people will object that they cannot find an hour of spare time each day. But where there is a will, there is time (you just should put in order your daily schedule). And the most important point is that no one says that Jacobson's method is the only one possible. Meanwhile, it can be useful in case when you can in no way relax; an individual is not able to cope with tension and make his/her muscles relaxed by himself/herself. According to the original description of the author of this method, it is designed for those people whose muscles are contracted to such an extent that nothing else can release them from overtension.

Questionnaire to determine the extent of emotional burnout

The questionnaire is developed by K. Lavrova

1. When you communicate to clients, you feel:

irritation;
exinanition, apathy;
indifference;
interest in clients' problems;
wish to help;
responsibility for clients' fate.

2. Do you believe your knowledge in medical issues relating to your activity are:

exhaustive;
sufficient;
needed to be improved;
not quite satisfactory.

3. You need psychological support:

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

4. Please check conditions that are characteristic of you in the last two months:

Backache	Anger and frustration	Emotional outbursts
Changes in taste likes	Loss of self-respect and self-confidence	Alienation from friends and family
Diarrhea	Loss of interest in work and default on working obligations	Loss of punctuality and neglect in the discharge of one's duties
Rise in blood pressure	Feeling of inadequacy, helplessness and guilt	Decrease in (self-)criticism
Weariness	Feeling of anxiety	Inability to concentrate
Gastroenterological problems	Depression	Sadness
Headache	Oppression and overpressure	Constant/increasing use of alcohol and other drugs (medical or illicit)
Insomnia	Lability, frequent mood changes	Difficulties in communication with people and being among people
Muscle tension	Feeling of failure	Decrease in working efficiency
Weight loss	Anxiety about future	Inability to change oneself

5. *You realize the meaninglessness of your work:*

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

6. *You feel satisfaction with your work:*

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

7. *You come into conflicts in your collective:*

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

8. *You feel incomprehension on the part of your relatives and friends:*

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

9. *You manage to relax well:*

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

10. *You believe your activity to be monotonous and uninteresting:*

hardly ever;
sometimes;
recently;
frequently.

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