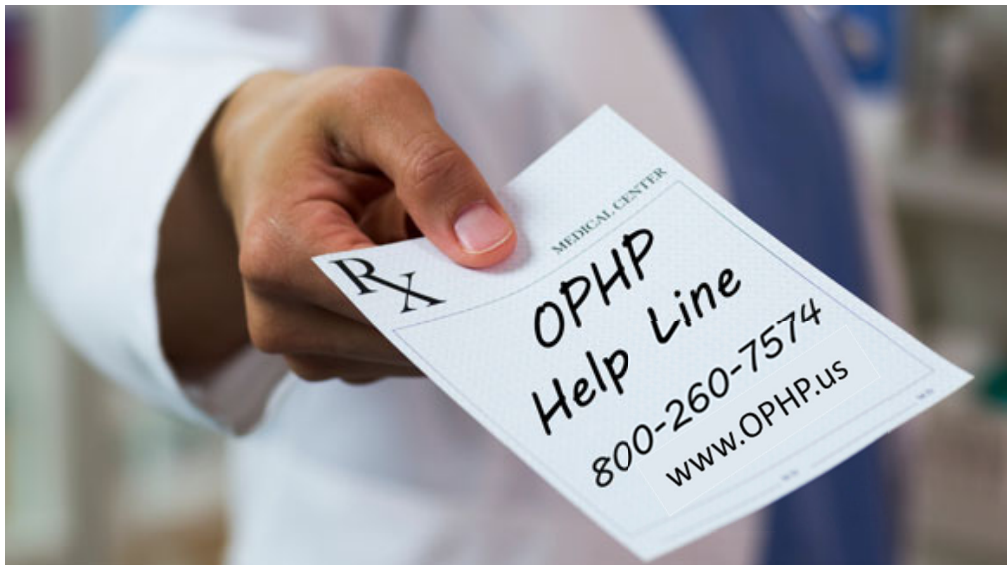




From the Executive Director

I hope all our readers had a joyous holiday season and having a prosperous New Year. It is hard to believe that spring time one of my favorite seasons is upon us; flowers blooming, trees budding and coming back to life, gardens being planted and yards beginning to signs of life. I challenge everyone to be aware there are some that struggle throughout the year

either due to substance use disorder (SUD), loneliness or mental health issues and I hope you are willing to reach out and offer support during this difficult time for those struggling. If you are missing a loved one or someone close to you, please know that Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) extends our heartfelt condolences. As those of us in the medical profession are considered essential, and suit up and show up remaining on the front lines during this cough, cold and flu season, in order to take care of our patient's medical needs. As pharmacists we played and continue to play a vital role as the battle against COVID-19, flu and other respiratory issues and I am very proud of my chosen profession and our contribution to this fight. We are all in this together.

In this issue I have included an article provided by Enterhealh a Dallas based treatment center for substance use disorder and/or co-occurring issues, that I hope you find informative "What is Burnout? Insights & Prevention". With the current climate of the pharmacy profession it is so important to take care of yourself regarding burnout and mental health issues. I feel it is so unfortunate that some have left the profession that they love due to the stress and burnout, but admire those that realize their mental health and well-being is much more important.

I hope positive changes are on the horizon for the pharmacy profession in regard to working conditions and I applaud the efforts of those working diligently for change I hope you can gain some perspective regarding this issue and, enjoy this article.



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From the Executive Director continued

When a pharmacist, student pharmacist or pharmacy technician enters the OPHP program, and begins their road to personal recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD) and/or co-occurring issue often times the family, friends or colleagues may not understand the vital role they may play in the OPHP participant's recovery. They may even verbalize that they knew something was wrong but couldn't identify it and were shocked to find that their loved one, friend or colleague suffered from a SUD or co-occurring issue. In this issue OPHP will include an article "Identifying the Problem" in hopes to help loved ones identify the issues in those suffering and what they can do to support their loved ones. Also it is important for the friends, family members or colleagues to get assistance since they also are impacted by this insidious disease.

OPHP has a free standing website at www.ophp.us Please visit our website to learn more about services OPHP provides the pharmacy profession in regard to assistance with a personal substance use disorder and/or mental health issues. Contact OPHP if you have any questions or need assistance.

Don't forget, take time for self-care, and if you are struggling with SUD or other mental health issue, or you know another pharmacist or student pharmacist who you think maybe suffering call the (OPHP) Help-Line immediately. There are those who struggle or have a hard time dealing with life on life's terms on a daily basis. These struggles are often magnified during the holiday season. Can I challenge everyone to recognize these struggles either in themselves or others and reach out for help or be willing to help if needed? If you find yourself struggling don't hesitate to reach out to (OPHP) for help that is readily available if needed. If you know someone struggling during this time, I hope you will be willing to be available for them if needed. If you are a pharmacist or student pharmacist and you are struggling personally with the substance use disorder or other mental health issues, I would encourage you to call OPHP today and self-report your issues now. The advantages of self-reporting your own issues substance use disorder or mental health issues are that you are able to get well or get in recovery, and if there are no legal issues or complaint the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy does not get involved. This is a tremendous opportunity, so don't let it slip away if you are suffering from substance use disorder or other mental health issues call OPHP before it is too late, resulting in disciplinary action on your intern/pharmacy license or other legal consequences.

I encourage any pharmacist or student pharmacist that may be struggling with substance use disorder or any other mental health issue, or if you know a pharmacist or student pharmacist you think may be struggling, to call the OPHP Help Line now.

AMERICAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION (APhA) INSTITUTE ON SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

APhA has set the dates for the annual APhA Institute on Substance Use Disorder (SUD) for May 29, 2024-June 1, 2024 at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT. I encourage any pharmacist, student pharmacist or pharmacy technician to attend this meeting. Substance Use Disorder is such a scourge and impact so many more than just the individual consuming the chemical and this institute offers support to all those impacted, friends, colleagues and family members. This institute offers four (4) days of education on the impact of SUD and solutions through counseling, 12-step meetings including alanon, etc.. I assure anyone that attends this institute will have their life changed in a positive way forever.

OPHP is sponsoring four (4) student pharmacists from OU and four (4) student pharmacists from SWOSU based on an essay contest where the student pharmacists indicate why they are interested in attending this institute and what they plan to bring back to each of their perspective colleges of pharmacy in order to make a difference. Also OPHP is sponsoring OPHP participants that want to attend as well as OPHP Board of Director members.

In the upcoming OPHP Newsletter in September 2024 watch for these student pharmacists and OPHP participants share their experiences at this institute often referred to as their "Utah Experience"

Identifying the Problem

Substance Use Disorder is a cunning, baffling, miserable disease. Denial is a major factor involved stopping those with this disease from seeking help for themselves. So often concerned family members, friends and colleagues, express knowledge that a problem exists, but are unable to identify it. The following *Impaired Pharmacist Symptom Inventory* may help to identify the problem, and get them the help that is so readily available before it is too late.

Impaired Pharmacist Symptom Inventory

- Overwork**
- Disorganized schedule
- Spasmodic work pace**
- Unreasonable behavior
- Inaccessible to patients and employer
- Prescription errors**
- Patient complaints
- Frequent absences
- Decreasing workload and tolerance
- Frequent days off for vague reasons
- Taking sexual advantage of coworkers or customers
- Filling illegal prescriptions
- Taking and/or using drugs from pharmacy without follow-up by physician**
- Taking/selling drugs to others or giving them to family or friends
- Often late, absent or ill
- Decreasing work performance
- “Pharmacy Gossip”
- Incommunicative/unavailable
- Alcohol on breath while in pharmacy

**early signs

What do you do if you suspect a colleague has a problem with substance use disorder?

Trust your instincts!!

Call Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)

immediately OPHP Helpline 800-260-7574

Do not confront alone

Left alone the problem will not go away.

If you or a pharmacist you care about is suffering from substance use disorder

There is a solution

Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)

Is readily available for help

Call the OPHP Helpline 800-260-7574

All calls are confidential.

Identifying Signs and Symptoms of Burnout

Article Provided By Enterhealth

Burnout manifests through a series of signs and symptoms that can be physical, emotional, and behavioral. Recognizing these symptoms early is crucial for preventing burnout from progressing to a critical level where recovery becomes a lengthy and challenging process.

Emotional Symptoms

- **Overwhelming exhaustion:** This is more than just physical tiredness; individuals may feel emotionally drained and depleted, unable to cope with daily stresses.
- **Detachment and cynicism:** An individual who was once enthusiastic about their profession may now experience feelings of indifference, cynicism, or even negativity towards their work. This sense of detachment isn't confined to the workplace; it can also permeate into personal relationships and hobbies.
- **Feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment:** A prevailing sense of futility emerges, feeling that one's work doesn't matter or make a difference. This sentiment frequently coincides with a noticeable downturn in performance and productivity.

Physical Symptoms

- **Sleep disturbances:** Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, or waking up feeling unrefreshed, are common indicators of burnout.
- **Chronic fatigue:** Even after taking a break or getting a good night's sleep, the feeling of exhaustion persists.
- **Headaches and muscle pain:** Stress-related physical symptoms include frequent headaches and muscle pain without a clear physical cause.
- **Gastrointestinal issues:** Stress and anxiety can manifest as stomach aches, indigestion, or changes in appetite.

Behavioral Symptoms

- **Withdrawal from responsibilities:** Avoiding work tasks, procrastination, and a general decrease in responsibility-taking can signify burnout.
- **Isolation:** Retreating from interactions with coworkers, family, and friends, and engaging less in social gatherings and activities.
- **Increased irritability:** Small frustrations escalate into significant annoyances, noticeable to colleagues, clients, and family members, as patience wears thin and tempers get shorter.
- **Changes in habits:** These signs may manifest as heightened alcohol or substance consumption, alterations in eating patterns, or neglect of one's physical well-being.



Continued on page 5

What Is Burnout? Insights & Prevention

Due to the relentless speed of today's work landscape, burnout has become a pervasive issue cutting across various industries, notably impacting individuals in demanding, high-pressure roles.

The pursuit of success, coupled with the demands of balancing a personal and professional life, makes burnout not just a possibility but a reality for many working in sectors where there's pressure to perform. Many in these types of occupations find themselves at a juncture of high expectations and the inherent challenges of their field, each of which carries unique stressors that can lead to this state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion.

That's why it's important to understand burnout, not just for the individuals experiencing it but also for the organizations they serve. It's a condition that doesn't merely affect personal health and well-being; it has tangible impacts on productivity, job satisfaction, and on the bottom line of businesses across sectors. Enterhealth and OPHP wants to help demystify burnout by exploring the primary causes and symptoms within high-stress occupations. We also want to offer practical, actionable strategies that individuals can adopt to prevent it, offering a path to not just survive but thrive in the face of professional challenges.

Unlocking the Depths of Burnout

Burnout is more than just an occasional feeling of being overworked or tired, it's a prolonged state of being that arises from chronic exposure to job-related stress.

It's characterized by three main dimensions:

- Overwhelming exhaustion
- Feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job
- A sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment

These dimensions represent not only isolated instances of workplace stress but a broader, systemic concern that impacts individuals' capacity to perform effectively both within and beyond their professional domains. In high-stress, high-stakes occupations, the risk of burnout is significantly heightened. Professionals in these roles often face intense pressure to meet deadlines, achieve targets, and maintain high performance levels under conditions of constant scrutiny and competition.

What Causes Burnout?

The underlying factors contributing to burnout in these fields can differ, but they often include a lack of control over one's work, unclear job expectations, dysfunctional workplace dynamics, extremes of activity (monotony or chaos), lack of social support, and work-life imbalance.

When the job constantly demands high energy and emotional investment without adequate recovery time and resources, employees begin to lose their sense of self-worth and identity within their roles, which leads to burnout.

Effective Strategies for Preventing Burnout

Preventing burnout in high-stress professions requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on individual actions and lifestyle adjustments. These strategies are designed to empower professionals to manage stress more effectively, improve work-life balance, and enhance overall well-being.

Establish Work-Life Boundaries

- **Set clear work hours:** Establish and adhere to defined work hours. Consciously disconnect from work-related duties and communication channels once these hours are over, allowing yourself dedicated time to rejuvenate.
- **Create physical and digital boundaries:** If possible, dedicate a specific area for work and avoid using it for personal activities. Similarly, using different devices or profiles for work and personal life to help mentally separate the two.

Develop Stress-Relief Routines

- **Regular exercise:** Incorporate physical activity into your daily routine. Exercise is not only beneficial for physical health but also for reducing stress and improving mental well-being.
- **Mindfulness and meditation:** Practices such as yoga, meditation, and deep-breathing exercises can help center your thoughts and reduce stress levels.
- **Pursue hobbies and interests:** Engage in activities outside of work that bring you joy and relaxation. Whether it's reading, painting, or gardening, hobbies can provide a necessary escape from work pressures.

Seek Professional Help When Needed

- **Therapy and counseling:** Don't hesitate to seek the help of a mental health professional if you feel overwhelmed. Therapy can offer new coping mechanisms and perspectives on managing work stress.
- **Stress management workshops:** Several organizations provide workshops focusing on stress management techniques. Engaging in these workshops can furnish you with valuable tools while also demonstrating that you're not alone in navigating workplace stress.
- **Foster relationships:** Maintain and nurture relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. A strong support network can provide emotional support and practical advice when work gets overwhelming.
- **Professional networks:** Join professional associations or groups related to your field. These can be a great source of advice, mentorship, and camaraderie.

Prioritize Health and Wellness

- **Nutrition:** Eating a balanced diet can have a significant impact on your energy levels and resilience to stress. Avoid excessive caffeine and sugar, which can lead to energy crashes.
- **Quality Sleep:** Prioritize getting enough sleep. Quality rest is crucial for recovery, mood regulation and cognitive function.
- **Regular check-ups:** Regular medical check-ups can help identify and physical health issues before they become serious.
- **Continuous Learning and Skill Development**
- **Professional development:** Continuously improving and updating your skills can increase job satisfaction and efficiency, making work feel less stressful.
- **Time management skills:** Effective time management can help reduce work overload. Prioritize tasks, delegate when possible, and break projects into manageable steps.

By integrating these strategies into daily life, professionals can create a more balanced and sustainable approach to work. Preventing burnout is not just about reducing work hours or taking vacations – it's about making fundamental changes to how we work and live. It involves setting boundaries, prioritizing self-care, seeking support when needed, and continuously learning and adapting to the challenges of our professions. Though proactive measures, it's possible to find fulfillment and success in even the most demanding careers without sacrificing our health and well-being.

Discover How OPHP Can Support You

Addressing burnout, especially for those in high-stress professions, is a significant issue that necessitates proactive management. By recognizing the signs and implementing personalized strategies to prevent burnout, professionals can safeguard their mental and physical well-being, ensuring longevity and success in their careers. Remember, self-care isn't merely about personal welfare—it's an integral element of professional achievement.

For those already grappling with burnout, substance use disorder or other mental health issues and seeking professional assistance, an integrated approach, contact OPHP immediately. Left along the issue will not go away.



To learn more, call OPHP today 405-557-5773 locally or statewide 1-800-260-7574, help is readily available.



**WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT A COLLEAGUE
HAS A PROBLEM WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**

Trust your instincts!!

**Call Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) immediately
at the OPHP Help Line 1-800-260-7574 statewide or
405-557-5773 locally**

**Do not confront alone
Left alone the problem will not go away.
*If anyone has questions or needs assistance
with a chemical dependency problem
either for a friend or themselves please call
Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)
405-557-5773 (local) 1-800-260-7574 (statewide)***

There is a solution.

All calls are confidential and OPHP is readily available for help



If you haven't already contributed to OPHP this year, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. These contributions help OPHP continue to assist and provide scholarships to pharmacists, pharmacy students and pharmacy technicians during the recovery process. Please [click here](#) to make a donation online. For those who have made a contribution this year, please accept our sincere thanks.