# From Burnout to Balance

Effective strategies for alleviating and preventing burnout in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environments

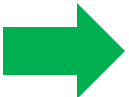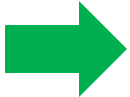**Presented by**

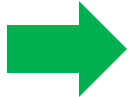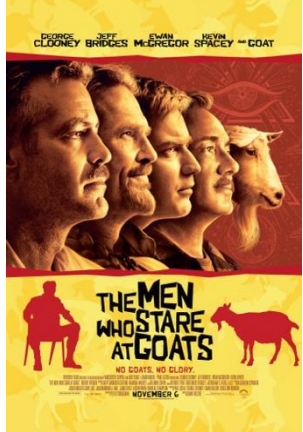Steve Shelton

CEO – Green Shoe Consulting

# Desired Outcomes

- Understand stress (different types) and burnout
- Identify burnout symptoms (in yourself and your team members)
- 2 real time stress management techniques
- What can you do from here?

# Why Am I Here?
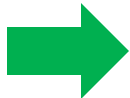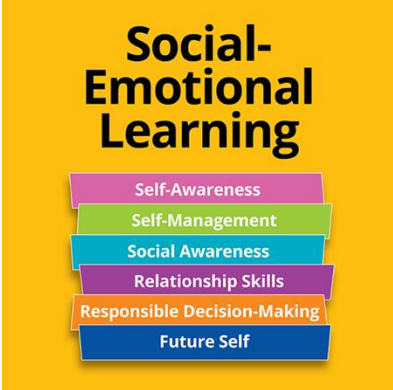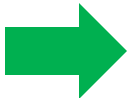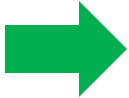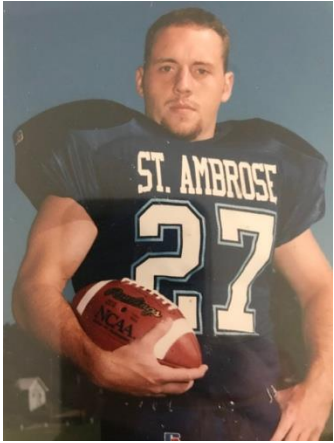
# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

## According to Gallup Poll of US Workers
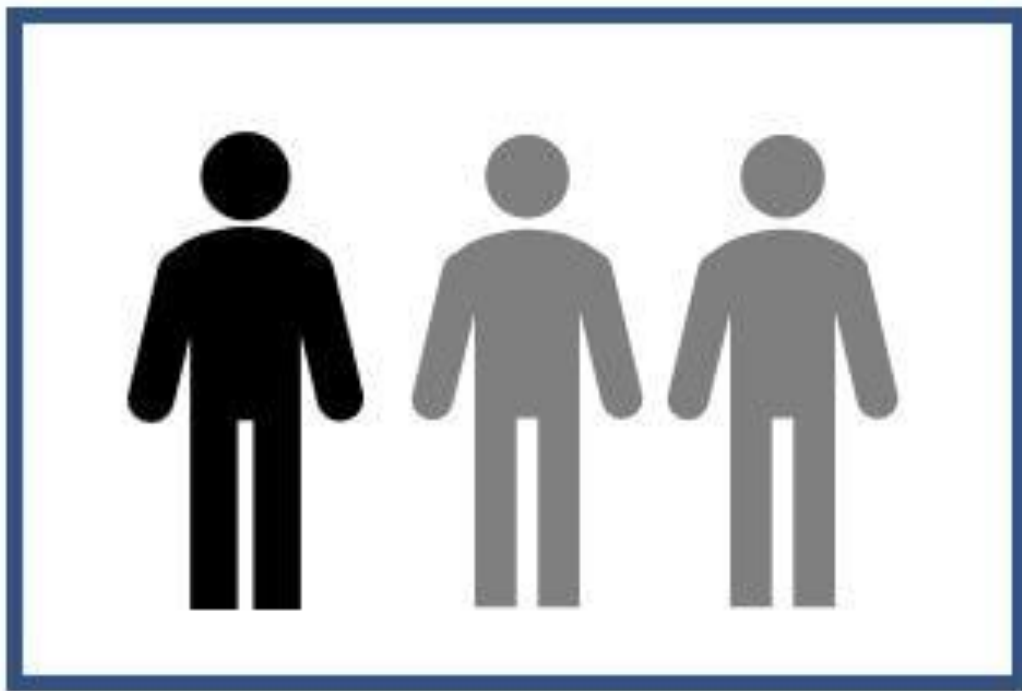
For every 1.8 engaged employees

We have **1 actively disengaged employee**

Engagement = productivity, employee retention, customer service, safety incidents, quality of work and profitability

# CYBERSECURITY ENGAGEMENT

**1.8 years**
Avg. CISO tenure

VS

**4.3 years**
Avg. CIO tenure

**83%** Made an error in their cyber roles due to burnout

**75%** CISOs interested in a job change

**500K**
Cybersecurity roles open in US

**73%**
CISOs experienced burnout in 2022

**30 – 40%**
Of salary

Cost to replace an employee

Set the Stage

# Set the Stage

**What is Stress?**

A state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives.

Stress = your response

*Stressors can be psychological or physical*

**What is Burnout?**

A response to chronic stressors in the workplace, which have not been managed successfully.

What Stresses You Out?

# State of Stress in Cybersecurity

**71%** of CISOs identify stress related to their roles as their most significant personal risk

- up from 59% in 2022

**54%** identified burnout as their most significant personal risk

- up from 48% in 2022

To address this, organizations must prioritize *succession plans* and/or *retention strategies* to prevent CISOs from **exiting unnecessarily**

*Heidrick & Struggles 2023 Global CISO Survey*



THE STATE OF STRESS
in IT Security

2023

www.greenshoeconsulting.com
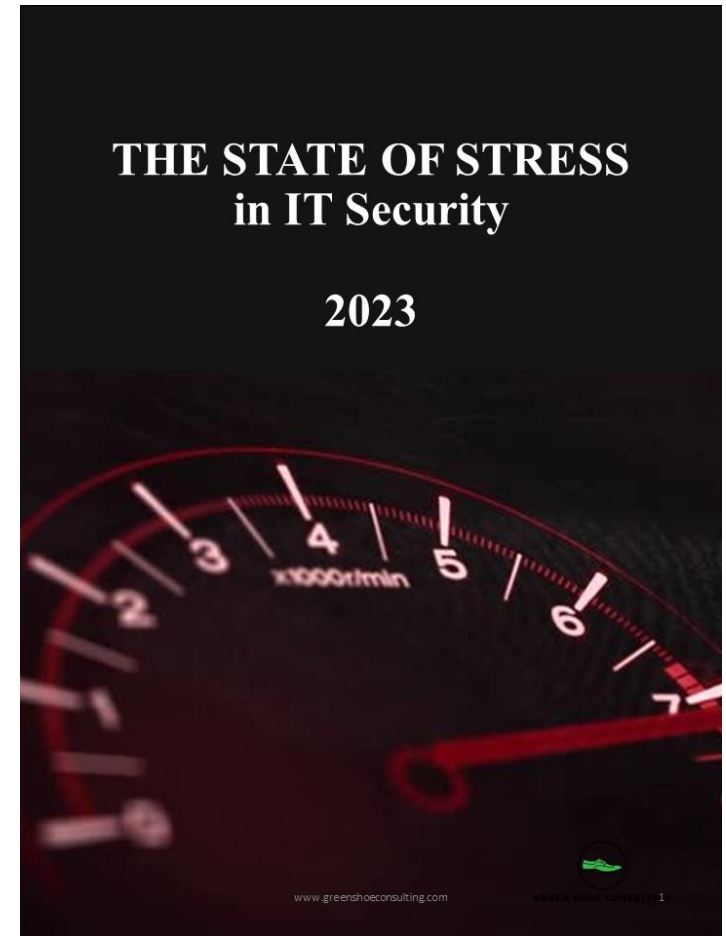
# What Stresses You Out?

Sacrifice Syndrome

Misunderstood (not valued) by business

**Communicating effectively**

**Unrealistic expectations**
Block 100% of bad stuff

**Layoffs –** job uncertainty and do more with same or less budget

**Poor leadership**

Unnecessary meetings, **time management**

**Work / Life Balance**

# Types of Stress

**DISTRESS**

**EUSTRESS**

- Starting a new job
- Getting married
- Learning a new hobby/skill
- Buying a home
- Personal fitness goals
- Scary movies
- Public speaking
- A first date
- Travel
- Networking events

**ACUTE**

- Traffic jams
- Crowds
- Loud noises
- Running late
- Argument with loved one
- Impending deadlines
- Losing essential items (wallet)

**CHRONIC**

- Workload
- Autonomy
- Values
- Community (relationships)
- Fairness
- Reward (recognition)
- Trauma / PTSD

# What Shapes Our Reality?

## Our Decisions

**FOCUS** (Thought) → **MEANING** (Emotion) → **ACTION** (Behavior)
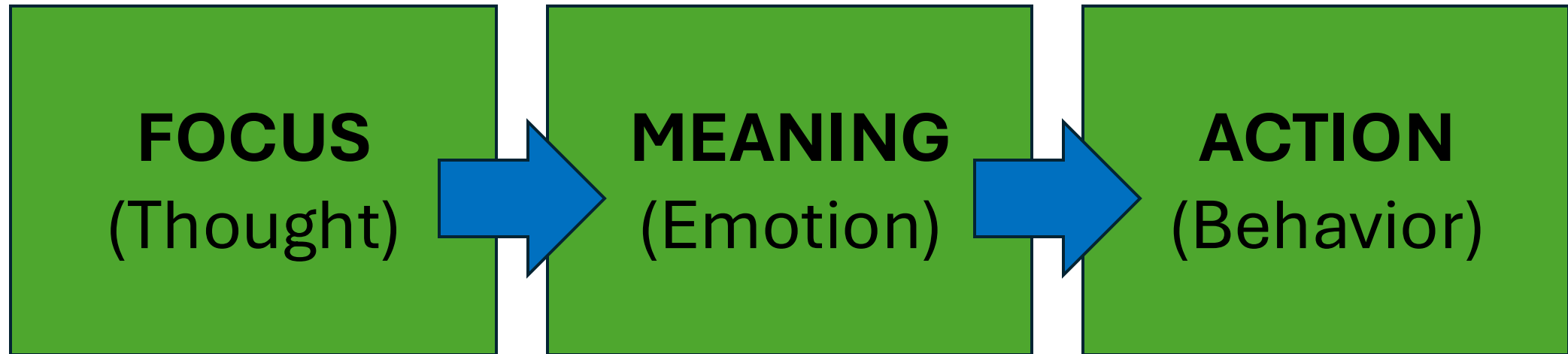
# Two Primary Patterns That Shape Us

**Your State**

In the Moment
Physical / Emotional

**Your Map of the World**

Long term
Beliefs

Disillusioned
Perplexed
Astonished
Awe
Eager
Energetic
Aroused
Cheeky
Free
Joyful
Curious
Inquisitive
Successful
Confident
Respected
Valued
Courageous
Creative
Loving
kful

Startled
Confused
Amazed
Excited
Playful
Content
Interested
Proud
Accepted
Powerful
Peaceful
Trusting
Optimistic

Tired
Stressed
Busy
Bored

Surprised

Bad

Happy

Sad

Scared
Anxious
Insecure
Weak
Rejected
Threatened

Fearful

Angry

Disgusted

Lonely
Vulnerable
Despair
Guilty
Depres
Hurt
Repelled
Awful

Let down
Humiliated
Bitter
Mad
Aggressive
Frustrated
Distant
Critical
Disapproving
Disappointed

Persecu
Nervous
Exposed
Betrayed
Resentful
Disrespected
Ridiculed
Indignant
Violated
Furious
Jealous
Provoked
Hostile
Infuriated
Annoyed
Withdrawn
Numb
Sceptical
Dismissive
Judgmenta
Embar

# How Our Brains Work

**Stimulus** ➡️

**(Appraisal)**

**Threat Vs Challenge**

➡️ **Decision / Behavior**

**Flipping Your Lid**

Hand Model of the Brain

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

CEREBRAL CORTEX

LIMBIC REGIONS (HIPPOCAMPUS & AMYGDALA)

BRAIN STEM (BASE OF SKULL)

SPINAL CORD

Optimal performance

focused

Energised

challenged

excited

Fatigue

exhausted

bored

Burnout

**CALM**  **EUSTRESS**  **DISTRESS**

Performance

Level of stress
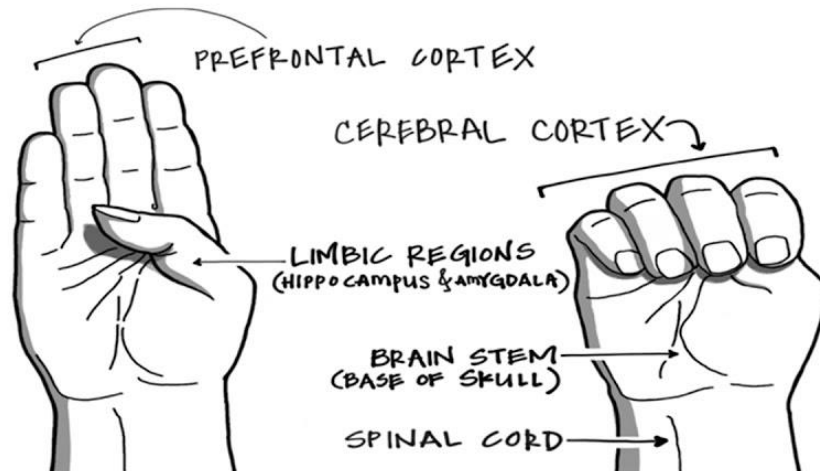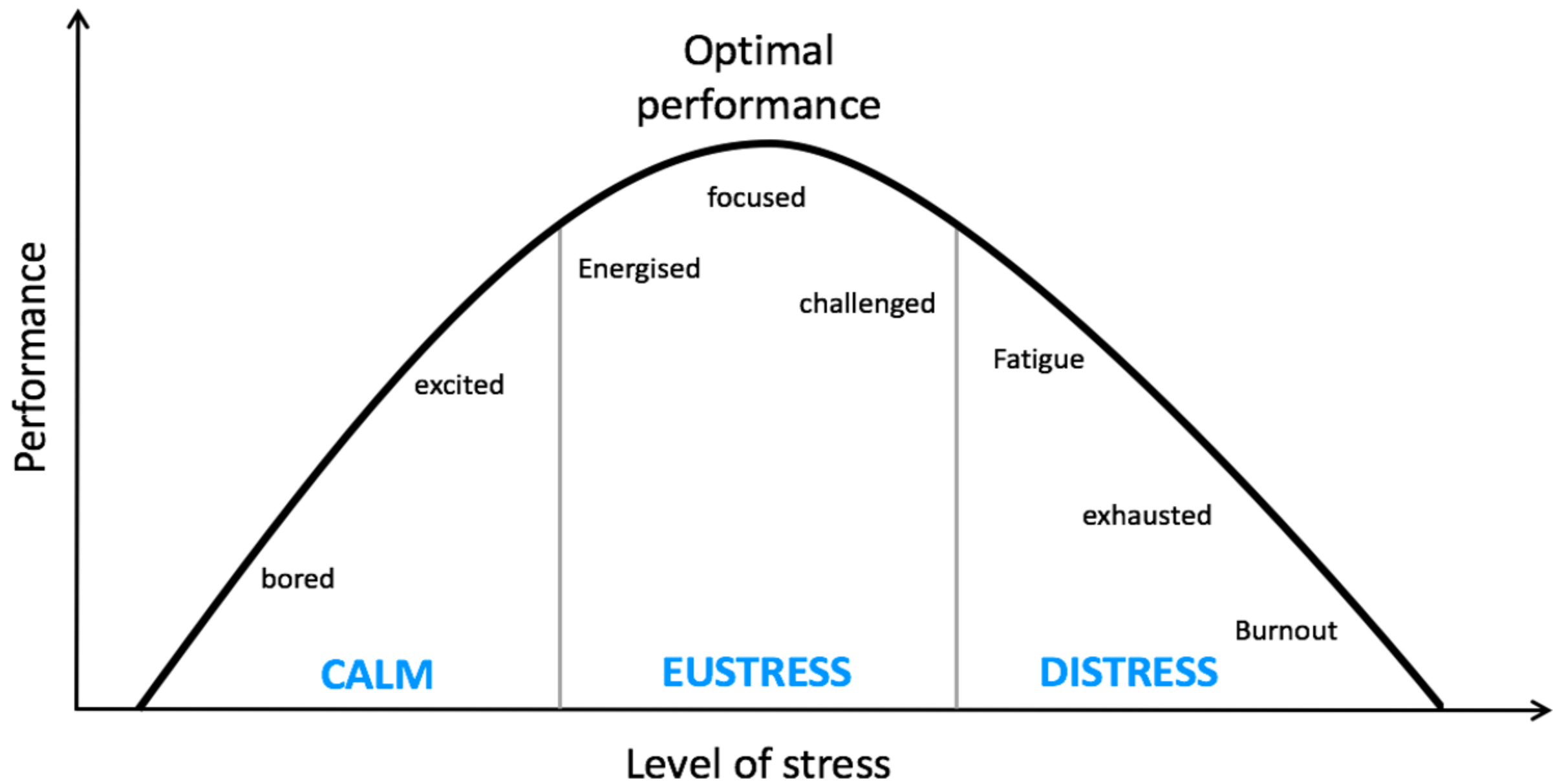
What Leads to Burnout?

# Job Fit Criteria

### Workload

a lot of demands, not enough resources. Do you have the resources to handle the tasks / demands required?
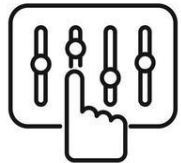
### Control

How much autonomy, decision-making, enforcement ability, choice do you have? Are you boxed in and can't make those decisions?

### Reward

social rewards, Recognition for what you do, someone notices (sees) you, "thank you for saving us"

### Community

good, positive support? Team cohesion? Trust? You can count on those around you

### Fairness

policies and procedures, are they fairly administered? Are the people doing certain things the ones getting promoted or getting the opportunity?
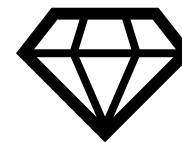
### Values

this is what gives meaning to the work we do, it allows us to feel like we are making a difference, the things that keep you going through hard/bad times.

Workplace ENTRAPMENT

# Burnout is a combination of

**MOTIVATION** **+** **STRESS**

Autonomy

Competency

Belonging

(Williams & Krane, 2021)

# Burnout Symptoms



**Emotional & Physical Exhaustion**

**Cynicism**
Negative response to job
Reduced concern for performance quality
Question the value/meaning of role

**Professional Inefficacy**
Negative self-evaluation
Decreased feelings of achievement
"no future"

♪♫ Take this job and shove it ♪♫

# Is This a "You" Problem?



Yes ☐
No ☐
It Depends ☑

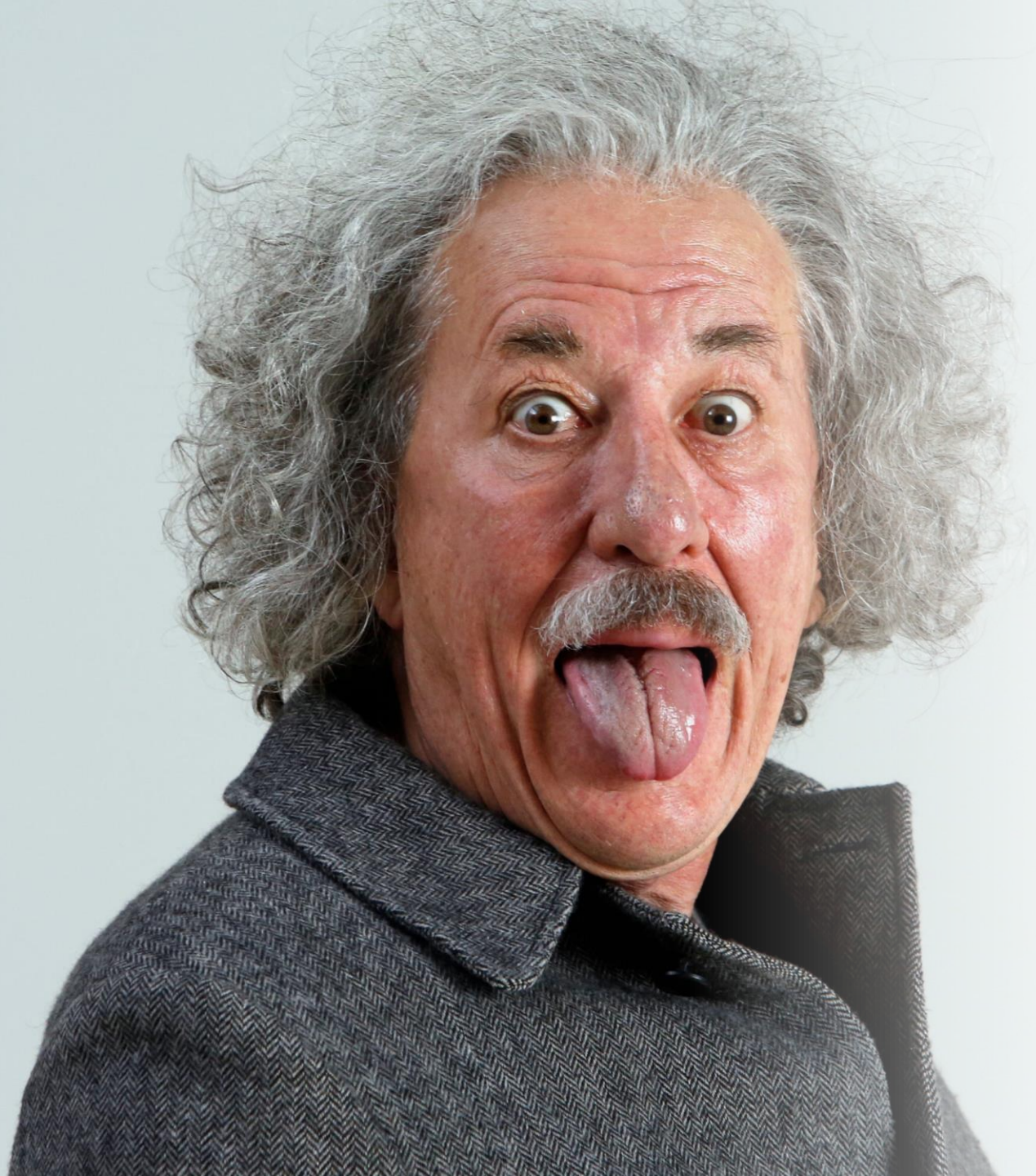● YOU

● YOUR
ORGANIZATION

What Can You Do About It?

"The thinking that got us to where we are is not the thinking that will get us to where we want to be"

- Albert Einstein

When asked what would help most in preventing burnout, workers most common response is:

"I wish I had someone I could talk to, safely and privately"

———

THE BURNOUT CHALLENGE

# Burnout Perspectives

| Perspectives | Key Variables | Intervention Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| *Overtraining* | Training Volume | Ensure appropriate work loads based on age, capacity, and skill level. |
| | | Continuously monitor individual workload responses and feeling states. Prolonged fatigue and mood disturbance are warning signs. |
| | | Avoid a "one size fits all" approach to workload design. |
| | Recovery | Reduce workloads after a period of intense workloads or if employees are experiencing prolonged fatigue. |
| | | Educate employees about maladaptive responses to work efforts and emphasize the importance of recovery. |
| | | Ensure employees receive adequate recovery, including passive rest and more active forms of recovery. |
| | | Ensure employees engage in pursuits outside of work that increase vitality. |
| | Nonwork stress | Provide resources and training in strategies to cope with sources of stress beyond work (e.g., personal health, family life, romantic relationships) |
| | | Do not increase workloads when nonwork stressors are on the rise. |

# Burnout Perspectives

| Perspectives | Key Variables | Intervention Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| *Psychosocial Work Stress* | Demands | Identify key stressors and develop a plan for dealing effectively with them. |
| | | Adopt a positive coaching / managing style and help leadership maintain realistic expectations and positive support of employees. |
| | | Emphasize skill development is a continuous process with highs and lows. |
| | Resources | Increase coping resources such as through effective lifestyle management. |
| | | Encourage employees to form strong social support networks. |
| | | Build self-regulations skills through mental skills training. |
| *Self-Determination Theory* | Self-determined Motivation | Promote a stimulating work climate that emphasizes effort, learning, accomplishment, and enjoyment of the work / job. |
| | Autonomy | Allow employees choices in their training, execution of work, and well-being plans. |
| | | Provide a rationale for decisions so employees understand why they are doing things a certain way. |
| | | Employ democratic coaching / managing that involves group decisions when appropriate. |

# Burnout Perspectives

| Perspectives | Key Variables | Intervention Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| *Self-determination Theory* | Competence | Structure work so employees have opportunities to succeed with effort. |
| | | Aid employees in focusing on successes as well as areas in need of improvement. |
| | | Establish effective goal-setting strategies. |
| | | Continuously develop fundamental mental and emotional work skills by reinforcing effort, learning, and improvement, as well as treating mistakes as part of the learning process. |
| | Relatedness | Foster a productive and supportive manager-employee relationship as well as positive relationships between employees. |
| | | Provide programming that builds teammate relationships and support positive social interactions. |
| | | Incorporate team building activities within the practice structure and encourage outside social activities. |
| *Workplace Entrapment* | Benefits | Help employees recognize the benefits of their work involvement that may not be evident to them or that they overlook. |
| | | Assess what makes work rewarding to employees and incorporate those elements into work experience. |

# Burnout Perspectives

| Perspectives | Key Variables | Intervention Strategies |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Workplace Entrapment* | Costs | Acknowledge personal costs of work involvement and help employees develop strategies for managing them effectively. |
| | | Explore alternatives for employees in dysfunctional workplace environments. |
| | Enjoyment | Find ways to create work variety and limit monotony. |
| | | Structure work to foster competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Refer to self-determination theory in earlier section. |
| | Investments | While recognizing the time and energy required by work, encourage employees to maintain nonwork interests and hobbies so they do not feel they are missing out on other important life opportunities. |
| | Social Constraints | Promote employee social relationships with both work and nonwork associates. |
| | | Ensure directors, managers, and peers are sources of support and not pressure. |
| | Attractiveness of Alternative Activities | Support employee exploration of other work and nonwork activities as a means of personal exploration and validation of work involvement. |
| | | Encourage employees to reflect on the meaning and value of work in their lives, including what they would miss if not in their specific role. |

# Burnout Perspectives

| Perspectives | Key Variables | Intervention Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| *Workplace Entrapment* | Job Identity | Communicate that one can strongly identify with multiple roles (e.g. job, family, personal, responsible citizen) |
| | | Encourage employees to develop other aspects of their lives beyond work and support their doing so. |
| | | Help employees put work performance into proper life perspective. |
| | Work Control | Refer to autonomy in the earlier section of this table. |

# Assess Your Stress

| Profile | Emotional Exhaustion | Depersonalization | Personal Accomplishment |
|---|---|---|---|
| Engaged | Low | Low | High |
| Ineffective | | | Low |
| Overextended | High | | |
| Disengaged | | High | |
| Burnout | High | High | |

# Personal Stress Response Plan

- Know Your Triggers

- Know Your Response to Stress

- Control the Controllables

- Replace Unsupportive Thoughts with Empowering Thoughts

- Have a List (and toolbox) of Healthy Coping Skills

# Awareness – Who am I…?

| | At My Best | When I Struggle |
|---|---|---|
| Body Language | | |
| Focus | | |
| Self-talk | | |

# Stress Management Strategies (Toolbox)

**Train Your Mind**
- Create a stress management plan
- Develop resilience
- Identify your stressors
- Develop coping mechanisms for stressful situations
- Identify Negative Thought Patterns and challenge them

**Sleep**
- Prioritize quality sleep by establishing a consistent sleep schedule.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Limit screen time before bed.

**Mindfulness**
- Mindfulness involves being present and focused on the current moment.
- Regular meditation can reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance emotional regulation.
- Apps like Headspace or Calm can provide guided meditations.

**Physical Activity**
- Regular exercise helps reduce stress hormones and boosts mood.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week.

**Time Management**
- Prioritize tasks: Focus on high-impact tasks and delegate or eliminate less important ones.
- Time blocking: Allocate specific time blocks for different activities, including breaks.
- Set boundaries: Establish clear work hours and avoid overworking.

**Community**
- Maintain strong social relationships for emotional support.
- Spend quality time with loved ones.
- Join professional or social groups.

**Nutrition**
- Eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Limit caffeine and alcohol consumption.
- Stay hydrated.

**Switch off**
- Read fiction
- Spend time in nature
- Find a hobby
- Watch tv / movies

**Relaxation Techniques**
- Body scans
- Progressive relaxation
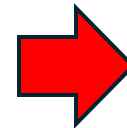- Meditation
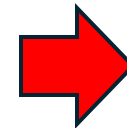- Breathwork
- Visualization
- Imagery

Progressive Relaxation

# Self-care

**SLEEP WELL**

**THINK WELL**

**MOVE WELL**

**EAT & HYDRATE WELL**
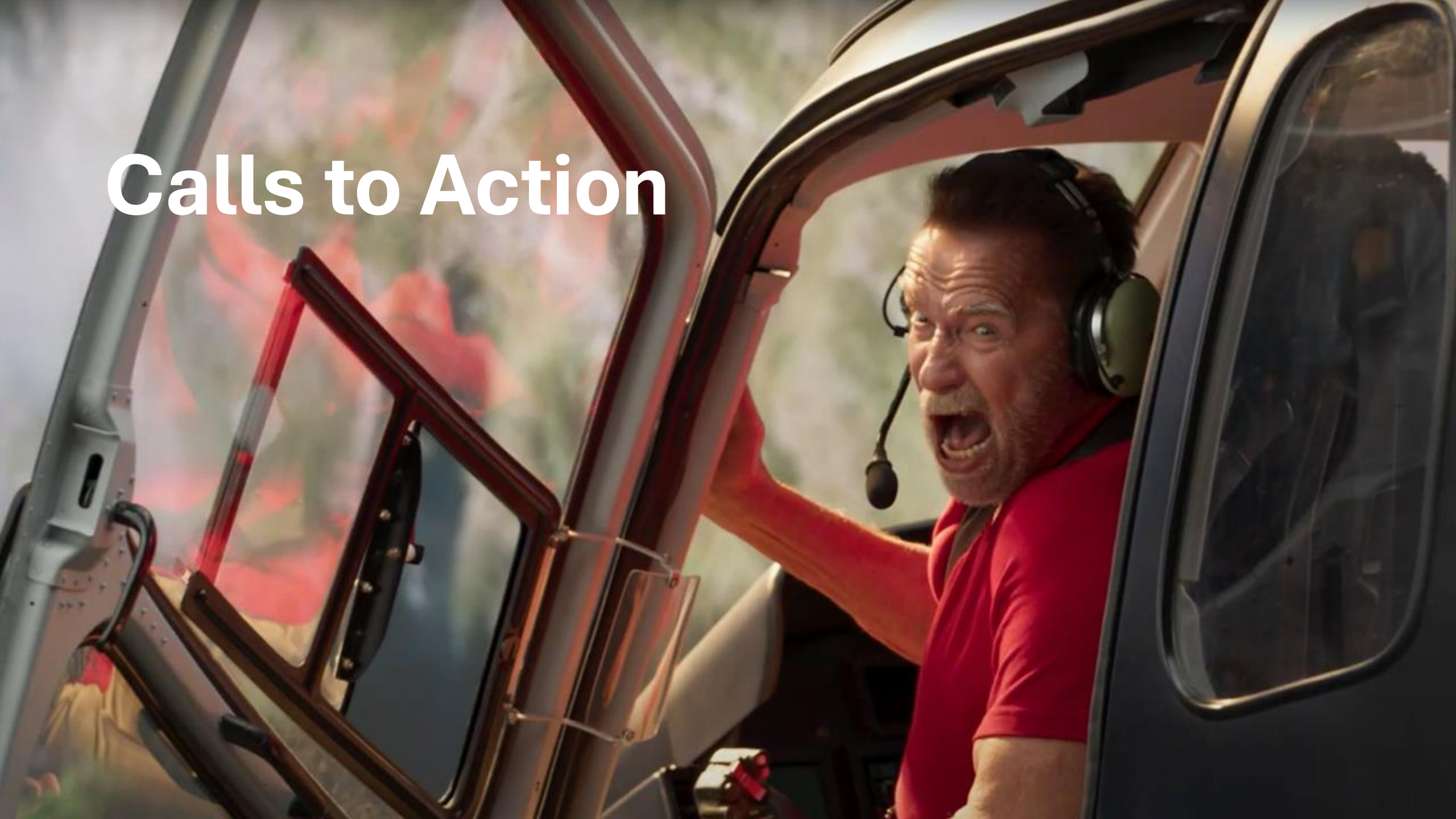
Calls to Action

# Calls To Action

- Assess your Stress - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q1mZPQmzCDBg1FRtBmxgTywizZhpjQhQ5SnNbeDTIUs/edit

- What cybersecurity communities would benefit from this information? Conferences, podcasts, etc.

- Help us with our research – we are looking for 500 CISOs to complete the burnout assessment this year.  Please let me know if you are willing to participate

- We are looking for 2 cybersecurity organizations to take part in an 8-week study

- Ask me questions

Thank you