
ARRIVAL ACTIVITY

Four Dots Before We Begin

Place one dot on each flip chart

- 1 Do you have a hobby?
- 2 Do you take work home after hours?
- 3 How often do you work outside scheduled hours?
- 4 What is your burnout level today?

No names. No explanations required.

Helping Others Without Losing Yourself

Burnout Prevention for Housing Counselors

2026 Housing Action Illinois Conference

Tuesday, September 29 | 2:30–3:45 p.m.
Workshop II

Julie Chavez
Principal, TJ Group



Facilitator: *Julie Chavez*

Julie Chavez is an experienced community leader committed to public service.

She has a strong background in designing and implementing strategic community-based programs, excellent communication skills, and dynamic leadership.

Julie has worked with several organizations, including RCAC, NWA, UNIDOS US, and NCRC, and is an expert in homeownership education, program management, real estate, property management, compliance, and financial capability.

She provides virtual training and technical assistance to municipalities, financial institutions, and non-profit organizations.

Julie holds licenses and certifications in homeownership, real estate, and banking and has partnered with local non-profits and government agencies to combat predatory lending and foreclosures.



A Respectful Space for Reflection

1

PASS

You may decline any activity or question

2

PRIVACY

Share only what feels appropriate

3

CURIOSITY

Notice patterns without judging yourself or others

4

BALANCE

Consider personal practices and workplace conditions

What You Will Leave With

RECOGNIZE



Notice personal warning signs earlier

DISTINGUISH



Separate stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue

PRACTICE



Use a brief reset and respectful boundary language

PLAN



Choose one personal action and one workplace support

Poll Questions???



Do You Have a Hobby?

☐

Yes, regularly

☐

Sometimes

☐

I used to

☐

Not currently

Do You Take Work Home After Work Hours?

☐

Never

☐

Sometimes

☐

Often

☐

Almost always

How Often Do You Work From Home Outside Scheduled Hours?

☐

Never

☐

1–2 times per week

☐

3–4 times per week

☐

Five or more times per week

Burnout Level: Where Are You Today?

Choose the number that best reflects how you feel right now



0

Energized



1

Managing



2

Strained



3

Stressed



4

Exhausted



5

Burned out

GROUP DEBRIEF

What Do We Notice?

- 01 **What patterns stand out?**

- 02 **Is anything surprising?**

- 03 **What connection do you see between after-hours work and burnout?**

- 04 **What happens to hobbies during demanding periods?**

HOUSING COUNSELING

Purpose and Pressure

PURPOSE

- Helping families protect housing
- Solving urgent problems
- Supporting informed decisions
- Seeing clients regain stability
- Productive

PRESSURE

- ☐ Large caseloads and deadlines
- ☐ Limited control and resources
- ☐ Exposure to crisis and loss
- ☐ Responsibility without clear limits
- ☐ Reactive

Caring deeply supports the work. Carrying every outcome drains the counselor.

Burnout

Burnout happens when ongoing work stress leaves us feeling exhausted, disconnected from our work, and less effective in our professional role.

A person wearing a blue and white striped shirt is resting their head on their hands on a desk, suggesting exhaustion or burnout. The desk is cluttered with various items including a laptop, a glass of water, a coffee cup, and some papers. The background is blurred, showing an office environment with windows and plants.

*The World Health Organization
classifies burnout as an
occupational phenomenon, not a
medical diagnosis.*

BURNOUT

A Workplace Pattern

EXHAUSTION

Energy feels depleted

DISTANCE

**Cynicism or emotional
withdrawal grows**

EFFECTIVENESS

**Confidence or work
performance declines**

COMMON EXPERIENCES

Stress, Burnout, and Compassion Fatigue

STRESS

Urgency, tension, and feeling that too much needs to happen

May ease when the demand passes

BURNOUT

Ongoing exhaustion, disconnection from work, and reduced effectiveness

Requires recovery and changes around the work

COMPASSION FATIGUE

Emotional strain connected to repeated exposure to other people's suffering

Calls for support, recovery, and limits on exposure

Which distinction feels most useful in your work?

SOURCES OF PRESSURE

What Contributes to Burnout?

LIFE DEMANDS

Caregiving, finances, health, and limited recovery time

JOB DEMANDS

Caseloads, deadlines, paperwork, and urgent client needs

WORKPLACE

Low control, unclear roles, turnover, or punitive supervision

CLIENT EXPOSURE

Repeated contact with crisis, trauma, anger, and loss

LOW SUPPORT

Isolation or limited peer and supervisory support

EARLY RECOGNITION

Personal Warning Signs

BODY

Headaches or tension
Sleep changes
Fatigue before work

THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Irritability
Helplessness or dread
Difficulty concentrating

WORK HABITS

Working through lunch
More mistakes
Avoiding difficult cases

PERSONAL LIFE

Canceling plans
Giving up hobbies
Little patience at home

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Your Private Warning-Sign Scan

Circle two signs you have noticed recently

1

What does your body tell you?

2

What changes in your attitude or attention?

3

What happens to your routines and relationships?

You will not be asked to share your answers

PREVENTION

Personal Practices and Workplace Support

PERSONAL PRACTICES

- ✓ Notice signs early
- ✓ Protect breaks and recovery
- ✓ Clarify priorities
- ✓ Ask for help
- ✓ Delegate
- ✓ Use boundaries

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- ❖ Realistic caseload expectations
- ❖ Supportive supervision
- ❖ Clear roles and priorities
- ❖ Flexible work arrangements
- ❖ Peer support

Recovery skills help. Work conditions still matter.

GUIDED PRACTICE

A Two-Minute Reset

- 1 Place both feet on the floor
- 2 Release your shoulders and jaw
- 3 Breathe in gently
- 4 Let the exhale last slightly longer
- 5 What is the next manageable action?





KEEP

CALM

AND

LET'S

PRACTICE

CASE STUDY

Nia's Workday

Nia is a housing counselor with 32 active cases. Four clients have foreclosure sale dates within the next two weeks. A coworker recently left, and the agency has not filled the position.

Nia checks email at night, receives client texts on her personal phone, and often works through lunch. She stopped attending her weekly exercise class. Lately she feels impatient, has trouble concentrating, and made an error in a follow-up letter.

NIA TELLS HERSELF

"These families need me. I can rest after things slow down."

GROUP ACTIVITY

What Would Help Nia?

1

What warning signs do you notice?

2

What can Nia do before the end of today?

3

What could she request from her supervisor?

4

What longer-term workplace change would help?

CASE DEBRIEF

Control, Influence, and Workplace Responsibility

CONTROL

- Pause between clients
- Use approved communication channels
- State availability
- Ask for priorities

INFLUENCE

- Discuss workload
- Request supervision
- Propose team coverage
- Document recurring barriers

WORKPLACE RESPONSIBILITY

- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Caseload expectations
- ☐ Policies and technology
- ☐ Supportive supervision

Boundaries



Boundary Practice

AFTER-HOURS CLIENT

A client texts at 8:30 p.m. and wants an immediate response.

ANOTHER URGENT CASE

A supervisor asks you to accept another case while three deadlines are approaching.

REPEATED INTERRUPTION

A coworker needs help while you are completing time-sensitive work.

Responses???



BOUNDARY LANGUAGE

Respectful and Firm Responses

CLIENT

I understand this feels urgent. I respond during business hours and will review your message tomorrow morning.

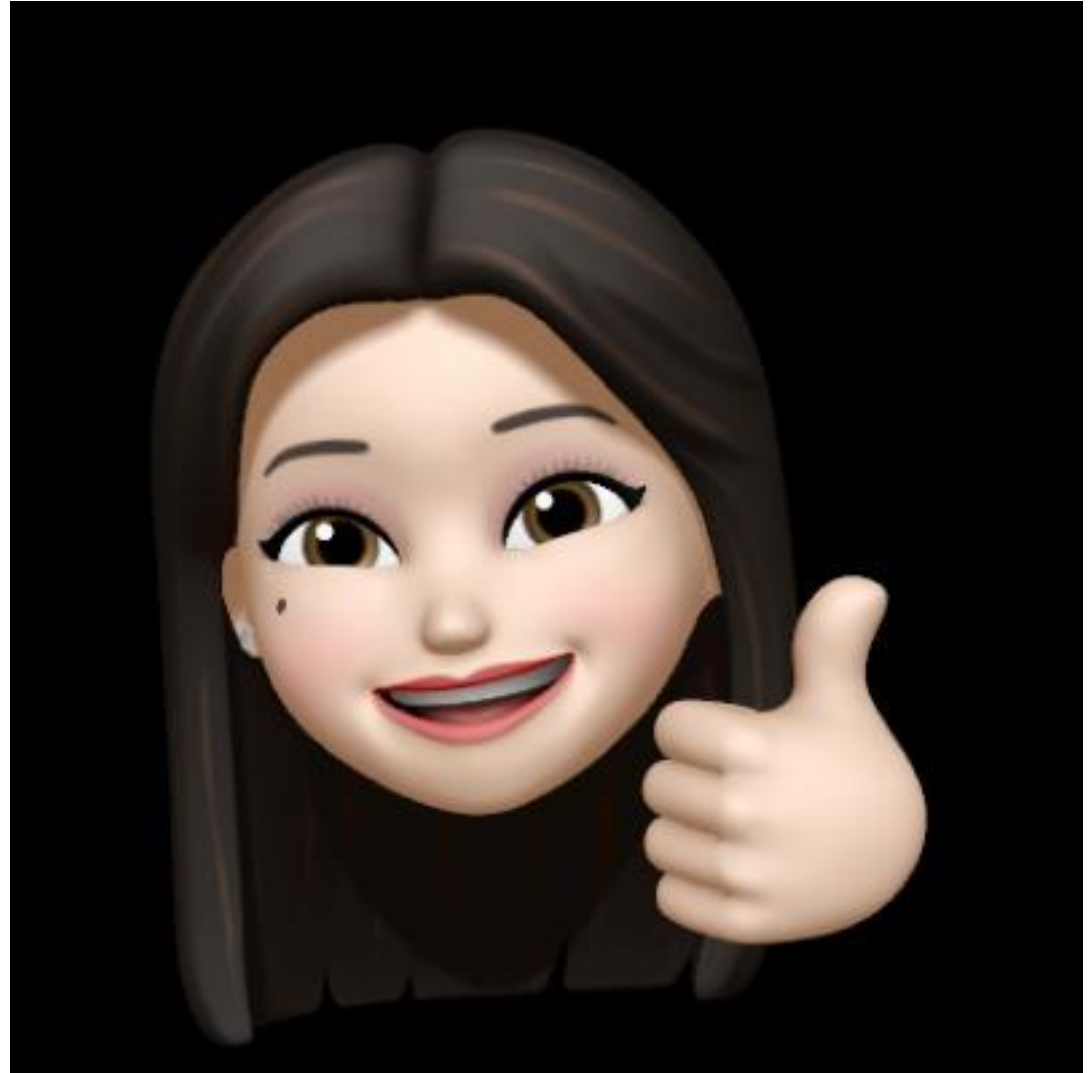
SUPERVISOR

I can accept this case. Which current deadline should take priority, and what can be reassigned?

COWORKER

I want to help. I need to finish this deadline first. Can we meet at 3:00 for 15 minutes?

*Thank you for
your responses*



Let's Plan!!!

INDIVIDUAL PLANNING

My Burnout-Prevention Plan

1

My earliest warning sign is...

2

One boundary I need to strengthen is...

3

One recovery activity I will protect is...

4

One workplace support I will request is...

5

The person who can help me stay accountable is...

Choose one personal action and one workplace support

One Commitment for Next Week

One thing I will do differently next week is...

Write it down. Share it if you choose.

You can care deeply without carrying every outcome alone.

Closing Reflection

“Your commitment to clients matters. Your well-being also matters. Sustainable counseling means offering skilled and compassionate support while recognizing that no single counselor can carry every client crisis alone.”

Resources

World Health Organization	Burnout as an occupational phenomenon who.int
CDC / NIOSH	Organizational approaches to reducing burnout risk cdc.gov/niosh
SAMHSA	Compassion fatigue and self-care resources samhsa.gov
Washington State HCA	Banishing Burnout by Exploring Self-Care Practices YouTube webinar, December 15, 2023

QUESTIONS

ANSWERS

**Thank You for Your Attendance &
Participation Today**

thank you!
