



An environmental scan summary:

Staff burnout resources for the aged care sector

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Key Points

- An environmental scan of the grey literature was undertaken to identify resources for organisational approaches to staff burnout applicable to the Australian aged care sector.
- Two approaches were taken to find resources: 1) an online search using Google Advanced Search with a series of search terms; and 2) a more targeted approach of key organisational websites for items of relevance and potential use to the aged care sector workforce.
- A set of 19 resources have been curated. These include reports, booklets and information sheets, news articles, websites, and tools.

Background

The aim of this environmental scan was to undertake a limited desktop review to identify existing tools and resources on organisational models pertaining to staff burnout in the aged care sector. Reported here are brief methods and findings that can be read alongside the resources that have been provided on the ARIIA website.

Methods

A structured search for Australian organisational approaches to staff burnout in aged care was conducted using the Google Advanced Search (Chrome browser in incognito mode to avoid previous search history impacting results). Searches for resources that support the workforce and organisational models were run to identify webpages, websites, pdfs, video resources, and non-peer-reviewed articles originating from Australia primarily but including a global context where the resource was applicable to an Australian aged care context.

Search strategy

A structured search was designed to identify information and educational resources for aged care organisations and their workers with a focus on staff burnout. The search was run on 15 November 2022. For inclusion, resources needed to be available or accessible through online (e.g., a kit that can be ordered). We aimed to screen the first 50 relevant resources for suitability. The search strategy was as follows:

- The search terms "aged care" OR "residential care" OR "home care" OR "homecare" OR "residential aged care" OR "nursing home" were entered into Google Advanced Search and combined with three separate search terms: "staff burnout", "staff resilience", or "healthy workplace"
- Australia was selected from the Region drop-down menu
- Only resources in English were reviewed.

To broaden our search capability and to not rely on the Google Advanced Search alone, a targeted approach to searching organisational websites relevant to the aged care sector workforce was undertaken. The following websites were examined:

- Australian Government My Aged Care
- Australian Mental Health Commission
- Beyond Blue
- CareSearch palliative care knowledge network
- Phoenix Australia
- World Health Organisation

Results

Overall, 19 resources were identified. Ten were Australian, three were from the UK, two each from Canada and the USA, and two written by the World Health Organisation. These resources have been especially chosen as they provide easy to read, implementable advice aimed at individuals and/or organisations. These are now available on the ARIIA website.

No organisational models of care in the aged care sector were found that addressed staff burnout or supporting aged care staff from burnout. Therefore, it was necessary to include resources that are available now and that can be used in the short term to help mitigate the consequences of burnout for aged care workers. These include:

- Two tools to assess level of burnout – one at a personal level and one at the organisation level
- Eight resources providing information on mental health, burnout and COVID-19 impacts and strategies for aged care workers
 - two booklets, one addressing anxiety associated with coronavirus and the other a guide to doing what matters in times of stress
 - two reports, a COVID-19 workforce wellbeing survey and 'Our duty of care' from the WISH 2022 Forum on the Mental Health of Health and Care Workers
 - three webpages with advice and general information regarding burnout in the workplace.
- Four specific self-care resources relevant to aged care
- Five resources with information specifically aimed at managers, administrators, and service providers to support the workforce, including a call to stop framing wellness programs in terms of self-care and a mental wellbeing at work guideline.

Given the paucity of specific guidance on organisational models to support workforce burnout in the Australian aged care sector, an additional search has been undertaken to identify organisational approaches to staff burnout in healthcare more generally, and organisational approaches that address staff burnout in other Australian industries (e.g., military, emergencies, first-responders). A series of

potentially transferable approaches that may inform and support organisational change in the Australian aged care sector were identified. Resources identified in this broader environmental scan have been summarised in 'Preventing staff burnout: Industry wide approaches and practices' available on the ARIIA website.

Conclusion

This scan found no resources presenting organisational models to address staff burnout, and few articles written about mitigation strategies for burnout within the Australian aged care context. Resources that were identified present self-care and organisational support approaches that may be useful to the Australian aged care sector in the absence of more targeted information. In the wake of COVID-19 and given the continuing impact of the pandemic and other factors influencing staff burnout, additional evidence to support the workforce and the sector is needed.

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ARIIA was established as an independent, not-for-profit organisation, set up to lead the advancement of the aged care workforce capability by promoting and facilitating innovation and research to improve the quality of aged care for all Australians.

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