An environmental scan summary:

Staff burnout resources for the aged care workforce

This report describes the methods and findings of the original environmental scan conducted in November 2022. This scan was conducted again in October 2023 and collected the latest resources on the topic of staff burnout. We will continue to repeat the scan process at scheduled intervals to ensure content currency.

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.

- Three approaches were taken to find resources: 1) an online search using Google Advanced Search with a series of search terms; 2) a more targeted approach of key organisational websites; and 3) requesting Evidence Advisory Group (EAG) members for items of relevance and potential use to the aged care sector workforce.

- A set of 31 resources have been curated. These include webpages, reports, webinars, blogs, toolkits, podcasts, videos, e-learning materials, and policy reports.

Background

The aim of this environmental scan was to undertake a limited desktop review to identify existing staff burnout resources available within Australia for use by the aged care sector. These might include educational, informational, or support tools. High quality resources will eventually be made available to the sector through the website of the Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (Knowledge and Implementation Hub). This report presents the methods and findings of a scan completed by the Knowledge and Implementation Hub team.
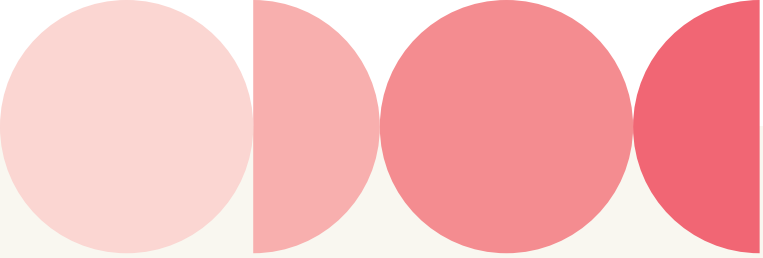
Methods

We identified resources on staff burnout within the Australian aged care context. These processes are explained in further detail below.

Search strategy

The initial environmental scan undertook a two-pronged approach in identifying relevant resources. This updated environmental scan adopted a three-pronged approach by additionally inviting Evidence Advisory Group (EAG) members in the environmental scan process.

Google advanced searches

Structured searches for Australian staff burnout resources were conducted between the 18 to 20 of October 2023 using the Advanced Search version of Google (Chrome browser in incognito mode to avoid previous search history impacting results). Searches for both concepts of staff burnout and aged care to identify webpages, websites, and PDF resources originating from Australia, including each of its states and territories.

The search was structured 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.

For each search term variant run in Google Advanced, we aimed to retrieve relevant resources from up to 50 pages of search results (10 results per page, i.e., up to a total of 500 webpages would be assessed).

Scanning key Australian aged care websites

A list of aged care organisations was compiled for more targeted website searching. Organisations were identified during the scan or were already known to the researcher group.

They included:

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

Evidence Advisory Group

An Evidence Advisory Group (EAG) was formed with the aim of securing additional resources pertaining to staff burnout in aged care. Comprising individuals actively involved in researching and addressing the issue of staff burnout in aged care was asked to provide additional resources on this topic. The identified resources were subsequently assessed against the eligibility criteria outlined in the environmental scan.

Eligibility Criteria

Resources were considered for inclusion if they:

- Were available online or could be ordered online, providing resource is free of charge.
- Provided training or educational information on how to alleviate staff burnout or improve wellbeing for the aged care workforce.
- Were of an informative, educational, or instructional nature.
- Could be easily understood by a non-academic audience and in the English language.
- Were produced by a peak body or a reputable aged care organisation.
- Met criteria for website quality including authority (government sites) and currency.

Modified eligibility criteria

In November 2022, the eligibility criteria for the environmental scan were broadened to include industry-wide approaches and practices. This decision arose from a shortage of resources, particularly in relation to organisational approaches. Despite the initial expansion, the updated scan effectively identified additional resources, including organisational strategies in mitigating burnout for aged care workers. In order to streamline the scan's outcomes and deliver targeted and pertinent resources to end users, we subsequently refined the eligibility criteria to exclude other populations and to only include Australian aged care resources.

The World Health Organisation was initially considered a key scanning website for aged care staff burnout resources. However, due to refined eligibility criteria focusing solely on Australian resources, we have excluded the World Health Organization from the key websites for screening.

Data extraction

The following data fields were captured for included resources:

- Provider/author of resource
- Resource title
- URL
- Description of resource(s)
- Audience
- Resource type
- Year published

Results

Overall, 31 resources were identified as potentially useful. The links within each resource were also further investigated, however, no additional resources were added to the list of resources. These resources are now available on the KIH resources page for staff burnout.

Target audience

It was found from mapping the resources by target audience that there are multiple populations to consider when providing information about staff burnout within the Australian aged care context.

The following populations were identified:

- Researchers/policy makers
- Service providers
- Health professionals (e.g., nurses, allied health professionals)
- Care workers
- Community care coordinators

Types of resources found

The environmental scan identified a variety of resources, encompassing webpages, reports, webinars, blogs, toolkits, podcasts, videos, e-learning materials, and policy reports. These resources provided details on topics such as the prevalence and determinants of burnout in aged care, along with insights into burnout within the context of COVID-19. They also covered organisational interventions and initiatives aimed at fostering workplace wellbeing. Additionally, the resources encompassed individual interventions and strategies, which were tailored to address either pandemic-specific challenges or everyday issues faced by aged care workers. While the resources were designed to benefit managers, service providers, and a diverse audience (i.e., a mix of aged care professions such as managers and healthcare professionals), the majority were specifically crafted for aged care workers and healthcare professionals who work in aged care settings.

Conclusion

Staff burnout has a detrimental impact on workers, and this is a significant concern, particularly among the aged care profession given the prevalence of burnout experiences. The identified resources from the environmental scan may serve as an asset for individuals and organisations to seeking information and support in addressing burnout within the aged care sector. This environmental scan identified a total of 31 resources related to staff burnout within the aged care context. These resources are accessible on the KIH resources page.

This summary report describes the initial process used to identify resources capable of informing, training, education, or generally supporting the aged care sector in its work. This is part of an ongoing process to build the resources of the Knowledge Hub. We will repeat the scan process on a scheduled basis to ensure new resources are identified and included so that Hub content remains relevant to the sector's needs.

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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.