



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BURNOUT

From GEMM, the Gender Equity in Museums Movement

Use the **5 Things You Need to Know** for information on building and sustaining your career, dealing with gender bias in your workplace, and making change. Share this resource with colleagues and friends.

Museum professionals are not immune to the pressures of the fast-paced, non-stop work culture that seems to have become the expected norm. Staff at nonprofits—a field rife with highly dedicated professionals, often working long hours for low pay—are highly susceptible to burnout. Below are 5 things you need to know before stress and exhaustion hits:

- 1. Analyze why you're feeling burned out.** Is it you or is it the job? Are you underutilized and under-challenged or too busy and stressed? Is it seasonal or chronic? When was the last time you took a vacation? Identifying root causes can lead to a swifter solution and help you to avoid future burnouts.
- 2. Stay on mission.** Keeping your own and your organization's mission in mind will help you to stay on track in a manageable way. Ask yourself if what you're doing is helping to achieve these missions, and if the answer is no, re-focus or move on to a task worthy of your time and dedication.
- 3. Disconnect and take time for yourself.** It is easy to fall into a vicious cycle of feeling as though you have to be "on" 24/7—arriving early, staying late, and answering work emails and texts after hours and on weekends. Help break this cycle by disconnecting your work email from your phone, having plans before or after work so that you'll arrive and/or leave on time, or having lunch away from your desk or taking a walk to recharge.
- 4. Talk to HR about a wellness program.** Human resources can be a great place to look for help with impending burnout. Some museums and nonprofits have wellness programs built into their health coverage, offering group yoga during the workday, discounts to nearby gyms and fitness classes, or access to outside professionals to help with stress-management and general wellbeing. If your museum doesn't have these resources, talk with your human resources department or director about implementing them, and you'll be helping yourself and your organization.
- 5. Build your personal Board of Trustees.** Colleagues and friends at work are great, essential even, but it's important to stay grounded and have a support system outside of your museum too. Your personal Board of Trustees can be friends who help you to relax and have fun, a mentor you can call for advice, or family members that remind you of the importance of life outside of your job. Whomever you choose, make sure that they are people you trust and who can provide unconditional support.