

**Opinion Article***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Beatrice Buss*

# Aromatherapy for Burnout

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**Opinion**

As the English word implies, people with burnout feel burned out, empty and lacking in energy. Burnout is usually the culmination of a prolonged period of stress at work and in private life, high pressure to perform, and lack of rest or relaxation.

There are complaints associated with burnout that are clustered and usually relate to three areas-emotional exhaustion, cynicism/distancing/depersonalization (in the sense of increased emotional distance from clients), and decreased work performance-although there is no uniformity in the pattern of complaints [1].

Possible signs include:

- Exhaustion, lack of energy, sleep disturbances, concentration and memory problems, feelings of insufficiency, inability to make decisions.
- decreased initiative and imagination, indifference, boredom, disillusionment, tendency to cry, feelings of weakness, restlessness, despair.
- Reproaches against others, loss of empathy, cynicism, loss of idealism, bitterness.... "Dehumanization," greater distance from clients, emphasis on jargon,
- Partnership and/or family problems
- Feeling of lack of recognition.
- Physical discomfort such as: Tightness in the chest, difficulty breathing, back pain, nausea, increased smoking

According to Hillert A, et al. [2], the way one deals with stresses and with oneself has a significant impact on whether one "burns

out" or not. Research indicates that the following personality styles are associated with an increased risk of "burning out" perfectionistic attitudes, having low expectations of competence, having a very pronounced need for harmony, having an externalizing conviction of control.

**Effects**

The quality of life is drastically reduced. A vicious circle can ultimately result from depressed mood or from various symptoms experienced as physical or psychological, reduced work performance, internal resignation and increasing conflicts, which can no longer be broken by those affected alone. Supportive, de-escalating measures at the workplace may be indicated here, as well as psychotherapeutic support [2].

As long as there is no pronounced depression or other manifest mental illness - which should be determined or ruled out by a specialist in case of doubt - sick leave, even if it is initially perceived as relieving, does not make sense but often contributes in the medium term to a further aggravation of the underlying professional conflict constellations.

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies, such as aromatherapy massage or massage, have anti stress effects in the literature.

Wu Ch, et al. [3], investigated in a randomized clinical trial with triple blinds is to evaluate the immediate effects of lavender aromatherapy massage for improving work stress, burnout and HRV parameters of female employees in a university. A total of 53 subjects in experimental group whereas 57 subjects in control

group completed interventions and measurement and led to power of 0.98. For burnout, a significant lower personal burnout and work-related burnout were reported after aromatherapy massage whereas only increased client-related burnout was reported in control group. The researcher concluded both the lavender aromatherapy massage and massage did show immediate effect on different dimensions of work stress, burnout, and HRV [4].

Karner I [5], points out that for years the number of mental illnesses has been increasing. The exploitation of the olfactory senses has the advantage that it is directly connected to our emotional center and can therefore be helpful in the treatment of depression, stress symptoms or anxiety.

Scents work in two ways: On the one hand, certain ingredients in essential oils have a relaxing and anxiolytic effect on a pharmacological level (e.g., monoterpene esters, monoterpenols); on the other hand, fragrances can evoke pleasant memories and thus generate positive, mood-enhancing feelings.

Hanns Hatt Professor of Cell Physiology at the Faculty of Biology and Biotechnology at the Ruhr University in Bochum has been researching the modes of action of fragrant plant essences for many years. The olfactory cells send impulses directly to the brain and he posits that "essential oils are natural mixtures of substances consisting of up to 500 different plant substances", Certain aromatherapeutic effects could be explained by smelling. The olfactory cells of the nose send impulses to our brain. Scents can influence our sensitivities, moods, and feelings, trigger pleasant memories, and thus relieve anxiety and tension. Special chemical properties also mean that they are easily absorbed into the body. At many places they become effective also completely without intervention of the sense of smell, explain the cell biologist and Smell researcher from Bochum.

Varny & Buckle [6], conducted a pilot study. The objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of a mixture of essential oils (peppermint, basil, and helichrysum) on mental exhaustion, or moderate burnout (ME/MB) using a personal inhaler. This was a randomized, controlled, double-blind pilot study. Participants used a personal inhaler at home or at work. While both groups had a reduction in perception of ME/MB, the aromatherapy group had a much greater reduction. The results suggested that inhaling essential oils may reduce the perceived level of mental fatigue/burnout.

Emasealu GD [7], investigated the Workplace stress can induce physical and emotional burnout symptoms in nurses working in long-term care facilities. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of aromatherapy to relieve burnout symptoms among nurses and nursing assistants working in long-term care facilities. After six weeks of aromatherapy, there was a statistically significant reduction in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization burnout rates: EE:  $t(26) = 8.85, p = <.001$ ; DP:  $t(26) = 4.61, p = <.001$ . There was also a statistically significant increase in personal accomplishment rates:  $t(26) = -3.05, p = .005$ . The use of aromatherapy to relieve burnout among long-term care facility nurses may alleviate the physical and emotional symptoms

of stress and improve overall work performance.

The Viennese Otto Wagner Hospital therefore introduced a health promotion program against stress and burnout with essential oils for all professional groups in the Viennese Otto Wagner Hospital. An SOS stress deodorant is used to significantly reduce stress-associated impairments. No allergic reactions or intolerances were observed. Selected high-quality essential oils can be recommended for the prophylaxis and treatment of stress and burnout.

Campbell SA [8], stated the caregiver stress is contributing to the burnout of nurses at a rapid pace and putting nurses at an increased risk for developing a stress-related illness due to being in a constant state of fight-or-flight where cortisol is released. Continuous release of cortisol inhibits nonessential body functions such as decreasing immune responses, inhibiting digestion, or altering hormones, and can have detrimental effects on the body. Essential oils have been around for many years and the benefits of aromatherapy have been studied extensively on patient use in the hospital. Using those same principles on caregivers will enable the practitioner to provide an additional tool for stress relief to nurses. Utilizing the perceived stress scale before and after essential oil use is a way for the individual to measure the effectiveness of aromatherapy use. Periodic assessments should be performed to validate mitigation of caregiver stress.

Aluani P [9], describes the combination of aromatherapy and TCM. The application of essential oils to the functional circuits' kidney with Atlas cedar, heart with lavender and liver with bergamot has a positive effect on the success of treatment. It is recommended to combine aromatherapy with TCM. It is often believed that men are more likely to be affected than women.

When women who are already in pre menopause or menopause are affected by burnout, the hormonal imbalance is often estimated. The imbalance of estrogen can cause symptoms just as it does with burnout. Experience shows that these are misjudged, and no holistic treatment approach is taken. The body, the soul and the mind should be brought into harmony.

A randomized study by Moris N [10], showed in 80 healthy women that lavender oil can be effective for anger and anxiety. This study investigates the use of lavender baths to improve these aspects of psychological well-being. A single blind, randomised control trial. The participants' home and interview rooms at the University of Wolverhampton. Eighty women not receiving treatment for psychological disorders who were staff or students at the University of Wolverhampton. Forty participated in Study 1 and 40 in Study 2. Intervention: Participants were randomly allocated to use either grapeseed oil or 80% grapeseed oil and 20% lavender oil in their bath for 14 days. In Study 1, the UWIST mood adjective checklist. In Study 2, the MacLeod and Byrne Future Events procedure. In Study 1 psychologically positive mood changes were found after the bathing regimen for energetic arousal, tense arousal, hedonic tone and anger-frustration. Only anger-frustration showed a selective effect for lavender oil. In the second study negative responses about the future were selectively reduced after lavender oil baths.

These results are encouraging and suggest further investigation using potential patients may result in the development of a useful procedure for improving psychological well-being [11].

## Conclusion

That's why it's especially important for burnout patients to take a holistic approach. In addition to effective psychotherapy, aromatherapy helps people to better process and let go of processes in order to make a fresh start. The new beginning is central to shedding old patterns, developing new beliefs as well as a new way of thinking. The effects of plant oils are manifold, and their research is still in its infancy. In the critical review of the available research results, it must be stated that aromatherapy is an effective method to support burnout treatment.

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## Conflict of Interest

Authors declares no conflict interest.

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