

# BYE BYE BURNOUT

A researchers guide to  
thriving in work & life





# My (first) burnout





Elevated  
expectations

Unhelpful  
tendencies

Far away from  
home





Often working  
80 hour weeks

Efforts to  
reduce  
workload failed

Started to  
doubt myself

2010-11





Unhelpful coping  
strategies

Reached a point  
of exhaustion

Leaving was the  
only option





2023



Learned from it

Pursued personal  
development &  
coaching

Sharing my  
experience



20 YEARS AS A MARKET  
RESEARCHER & OVER 15 YEARS  
LEADING TEAMS

•  
NOW a Certified Coach: ACC, CPQC

•  
SUPPORT RESEARCHERS WITH  
PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT

Hi I'm Lara, a researcher turned coach



# WHAT WILL YOU LEARN TODAY?



- The signs and symptoms of burnout
- Debunking common burnout myths
- Preventing and recovering from burnout
- What individuals, career managers and HR teams can do
- Q&A







## The signs and symptoms of burnout



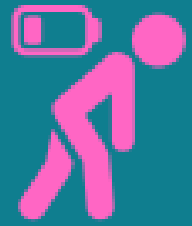
# Burnout is characterised by three factors

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related work
- reduced professional efficacy





# Spotting burnout symptoms



**Feeling completely drained / exhausted**



**Lacking energy to complete chores / tasks**



**Loss of interest in doing activities you usually enjoy**



**Physical symptoms like headaches**



**Being cynical about work and colleagues**



**Performance issues at work**



**Feeling numb about your work**



**Negative thoughts towards doing tasks**



**Unable to cope with life / people around you**

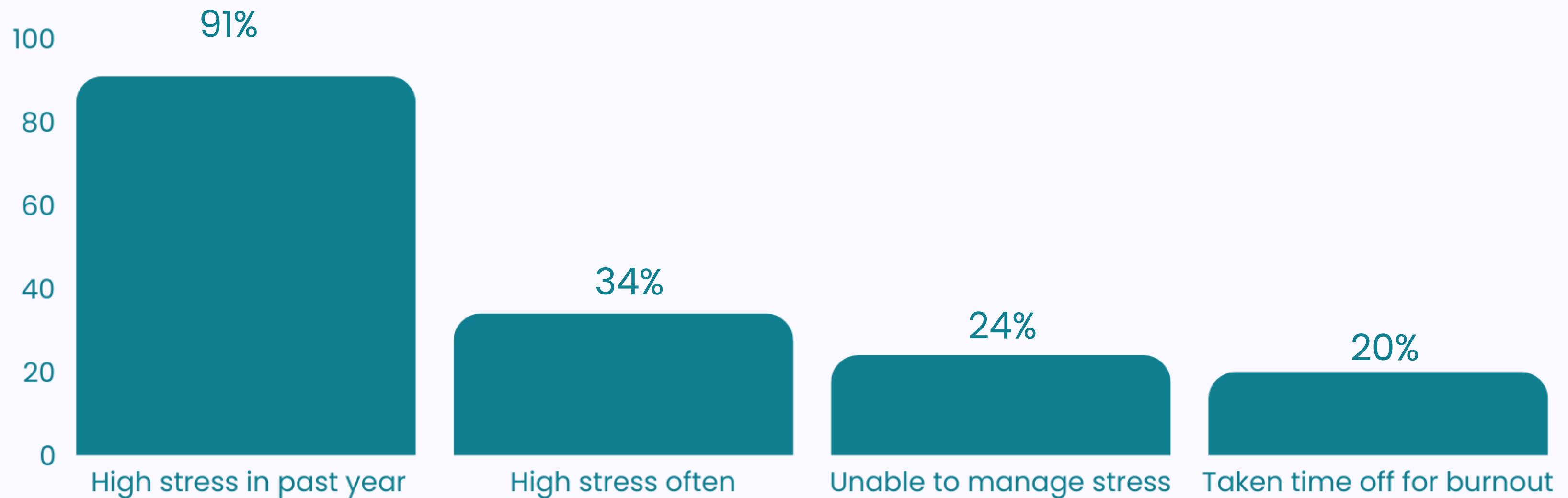


Burnout is the  
same as being  
stressed



# Many of us experience stress but only 1 in 5 reach burnout

% UK Adults recognising stress vs burnout



Source: [The Burnout Report by Mental Health UK, 2024](#)



# Characteristics of stress



Can be both positive and negative – ie a small amount of stress can motivate you

Stress is normally short-term, or at least ebbs and flows

Characterised by over-engagement and is associated with overactive emotions



# Characteristics of burnout

Impact of chronic stress, lack of support  
spilling into wider areas of life

Gradual progression from chronic stress  
to being depleted

Characterised by disengagement and  
muted emotions





# The match test



Which match best represents how you are feeling?



# If we want to prevent burnout we have to learn to cope better with stress



**Eating well**



**Sleeping well**



**Physical Fitness**



**Mental Fitness**



Mental Fitness is...  
your capacity to  
respond to life's  
challenges with a  
more positive mindset





**Burnout is caused  
by working  
excessive hours**



# Longer hours CAN lead to burnout

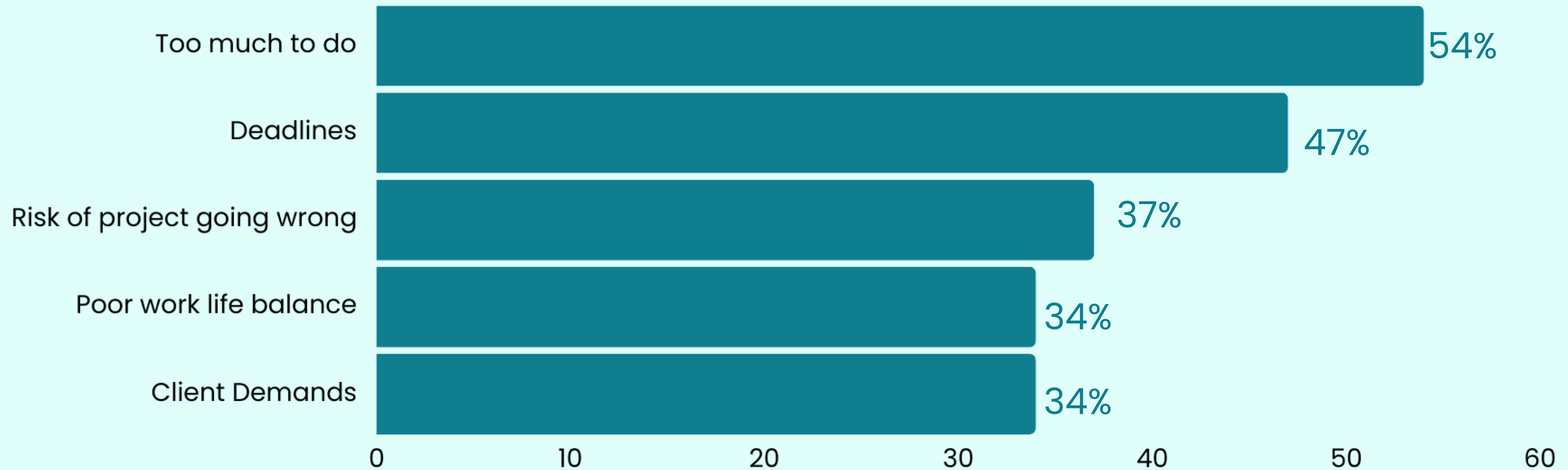
Risk factor for burnout by increasing hours worked





# There is always too much to do!

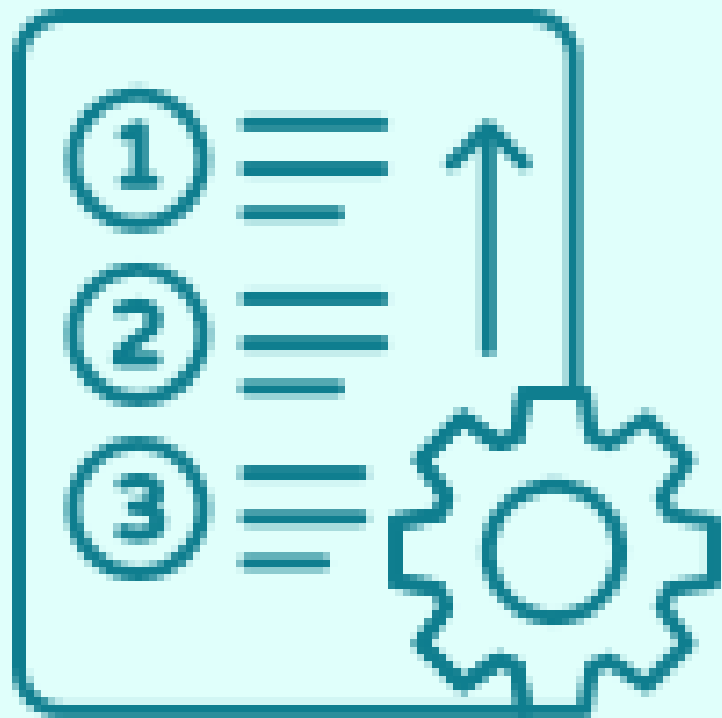
## Stress Drivers among Insight Professionals



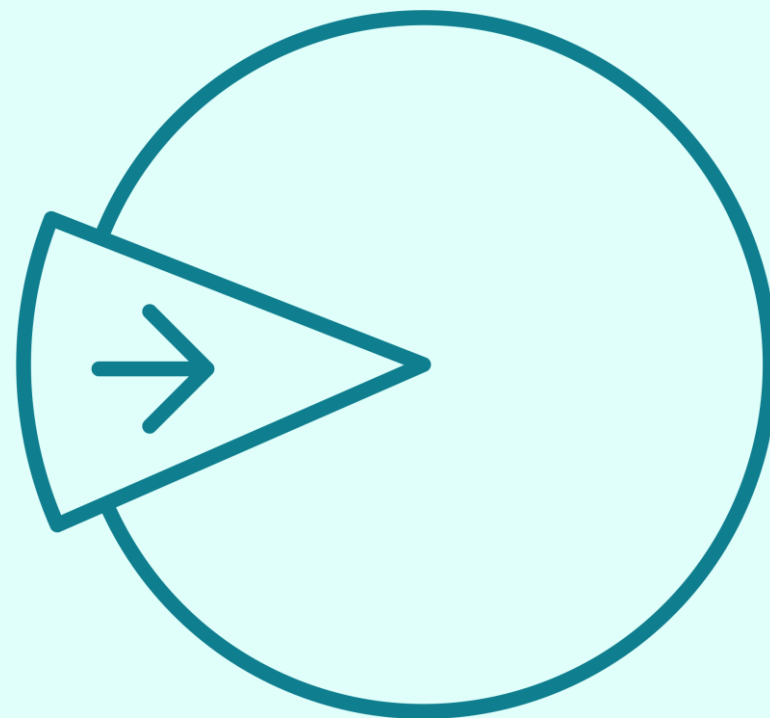
[Source: Wellbeing in Research by Opinium and MRS 2022](#)



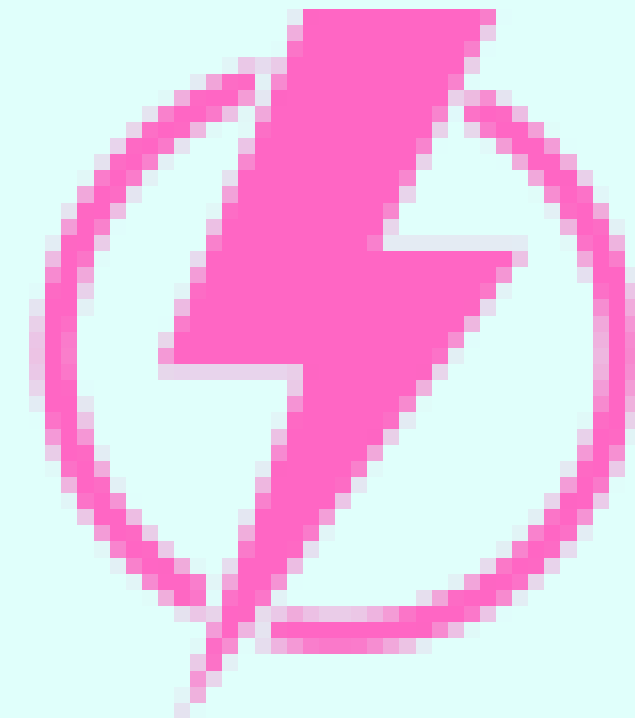
# If we want to prevent burnout we have to approach workload differently



**Prioritising  
work and  
tasks**



**Saying "good  
enough" is  
good enough**



**PhysicManaging  
energy rather  
than time**

# Managing time

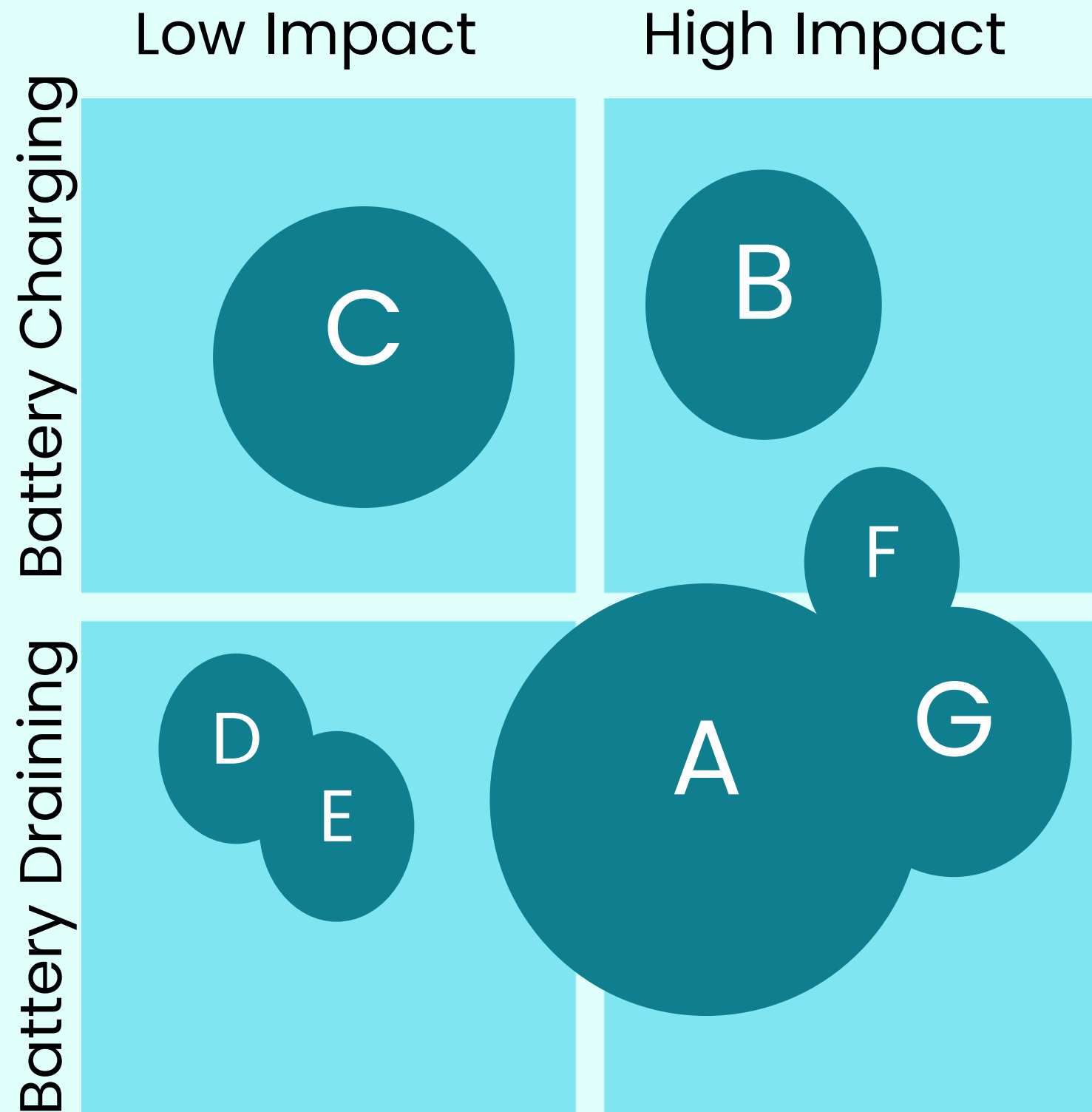
	Not Urgent	Urgent
Important	SCHEDULE	DO
Not important	DELETE	DELEGATE



# Managing energy

	Low Impact	High Impact
Battery Charging	IN MODERATION - USE AS A BREAK	OPTIMAL WORK AIM FOR 75% OF TIME HERE
Battery Draining	WASTE OF TIME. DELETE!	OBLIGATIONS - TOO MUCH CAN LEAD TO BURNOUT

# From mostly draining tasks



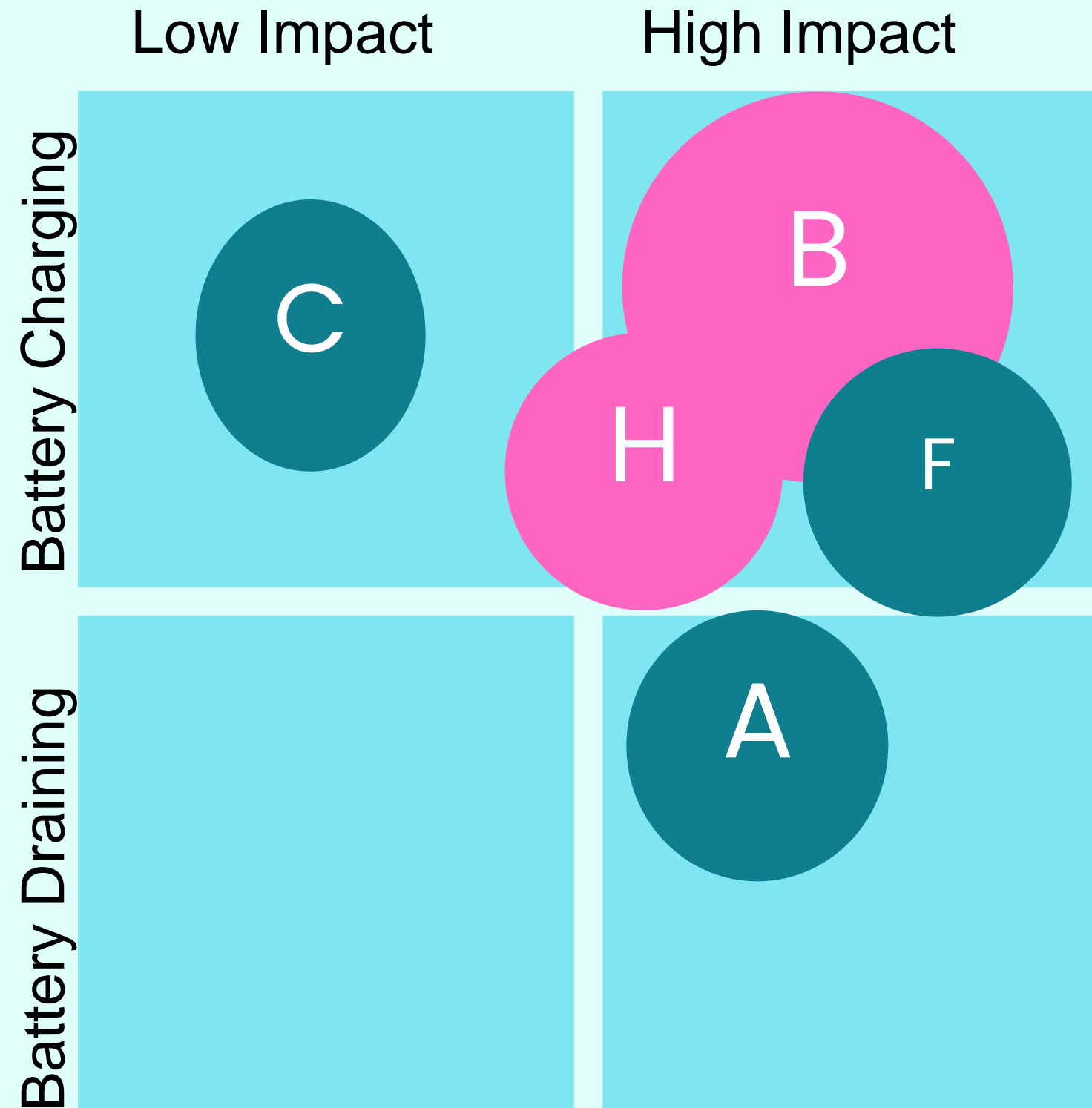
## Research Director Tasks

- A Report Writing
- B Managing clients
- C LinkedIn Updates
- D Document Formatting
- E Meeting organising
- F Proposal Writing
- G Data Analysis

● Bubble size represents time spent



# To energising and impactful



## Research Director Tasks

- A Report Writing
- B Managing clients
- C LinkedIn Updates
- D ~~Document Formatting~~
- E ~~Meeting organising~~
- F Proposal Writing
- G ~~Data Analysis~~
- H Speaking at conference

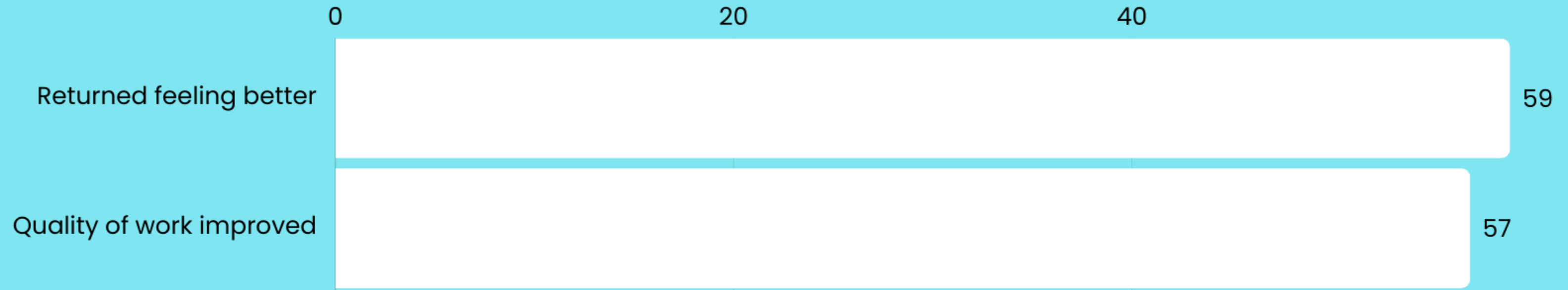
● Bubble size represents time spent

Taking time off  
cures burnout



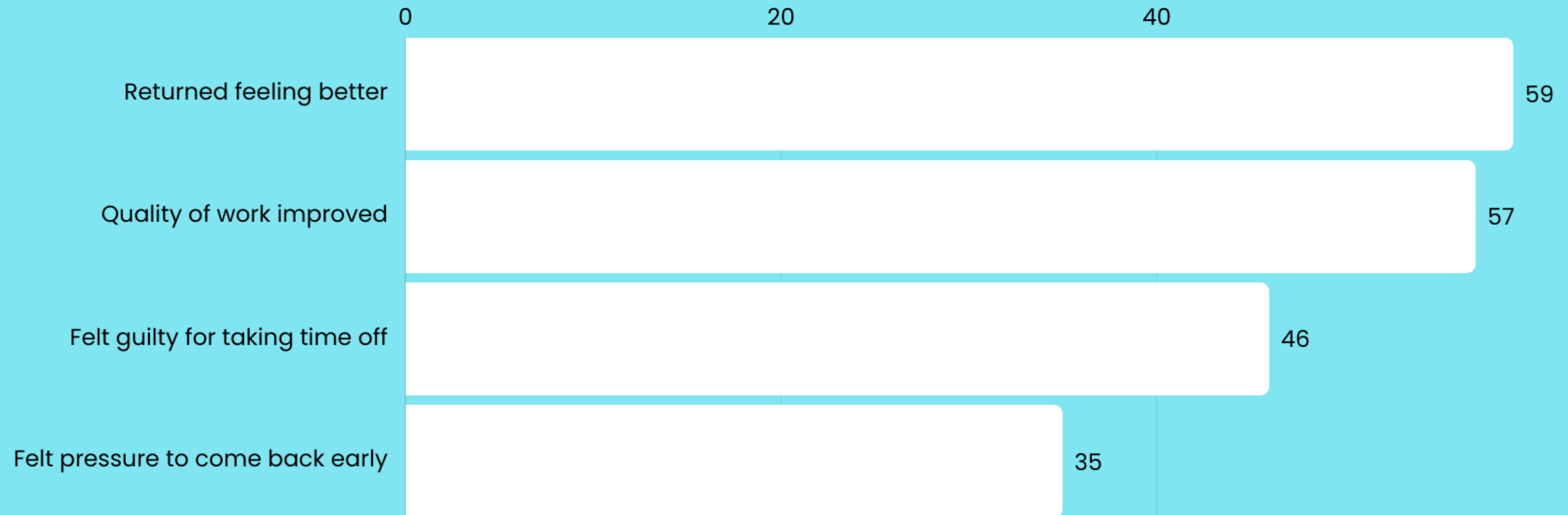
# Taking time off can be worthwhile

Impact of taking time off for mental health\*



# Taking time off can be worthwhile

Impact of taking time off for mental health\*





# Why won't we take a break?

Fewer than  
**1 in 5**

researchers take  
time off for mental  
health

“I just wouldn't be up for taking time off [even though I am exhausted and my boss is encouraging it] because I know it will be just as bad or worse when I come back... I'd rather leave completely”

Senior Director - Research Agency

If we want to prevent burnout we have to encourage regular recharging



# There are 7 ways to recharge (and 3 are most effective)



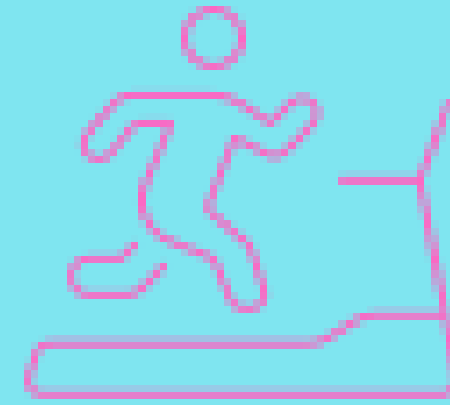
Spiritual



Creative



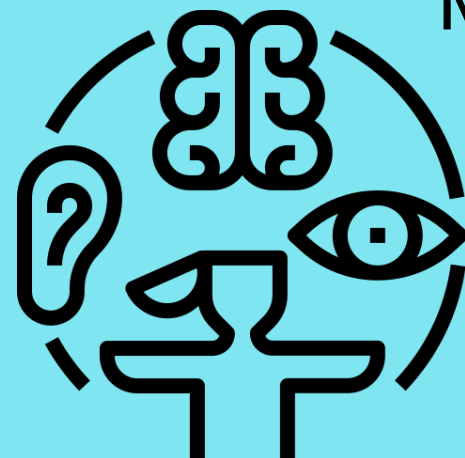
Mental



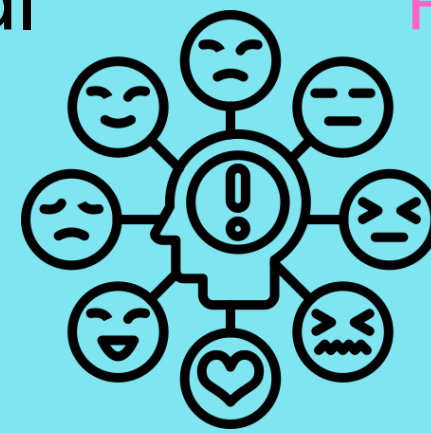
Physical



Social



Sensory



Emotional





What individuals,  
managers and people  
teams can do

# What can we do to thrive?

## For Individuals:

Engage in regular exercise, meditation, and hobbies for stress management.

Establish clear work-life boundaries to prevent work from encroaching on personal time.

Reach out to colleagues, friends, or professionals for support when needed

## For Managers:

Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing workload and stressors.

Monitor and adjust workloads to ensure they are manageable and realistic and aligned to strengths.

Be a positive role model in talking about and managing your own stresses and work life balance

## For People Leaders:

Check in with employees on how they are feeling using the match test

Invest in training programs for managers and employees focused mental fitness

Offer ways for employees to recharge through creative, social, physical activities outside work



# BYE BYE BURNOUT: a researchers guide to thriving in work and life

- Build a solid foundation of a well balanced life with good nutrition, sleep, physical and mental fitness
- Accept there will always be more work to do - and focus on managing energy instead
- Be kind to yourself. Give permission to yourself and others to properly recharge





Practice mental  
fitness

Manage your  
energy

Prioritise  
recharging

ANTI BURNOUT PERMISSION SLIP

I, \_\_\_\_\_

Give myself full permission to

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Without shame, guilt, or embarrassment  
from this day forward.

Signed

Dated

\_\_\_\_\_



It is not stress  
that kills us, but  
our reaction to it  
— Hans Selye





Keep in touch for more content, tips and support



[Lara \(Biddiscombe\) Meyer](#)



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Q&A | Thank You!