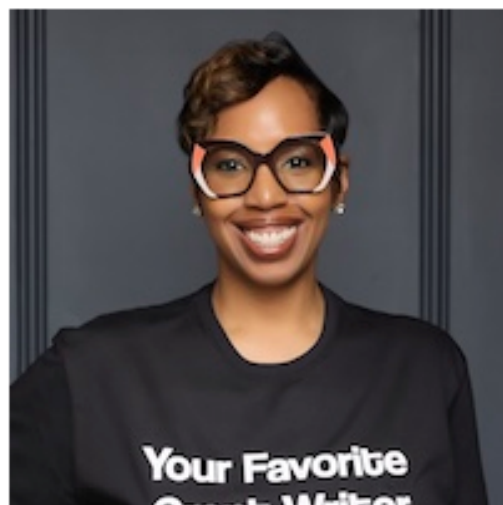


Closing Session with Main Stage Speaker and Conference Wrap-Up



Join us as we close out GrantSummit 2025, and listen to Main Stage Speaker, **Dr Brandi Rae Hicks** talk about taking care of yourself as a grant professional.

Beyond Burnout: The Grant Writer's Survival Guide to Balance and Resilience

In a profession built on deadlines, high stakes, and mission-driven intensity, grant professionals often sacrifice personal wellness to meet the needs of others. However, the cost of chronic stress is high, being linked to diminished productivity, poor health outcomes, and high turnover in the nonprofit sector. The demands of this work are real, and so is the need for intentional care.

This keynote provides a practical, evidence-informed survival guide for sustaining your passion and well-being over the long term. We'll explore proven strategies for managing stress, setting healthy boundaries, and building the kind of resilience that keeps you grounded during chaotic times. You'll also learn how to identify early warning signs of burnout, develop routines that support mental and emotional health, and foster a culture of wellness within your organization.

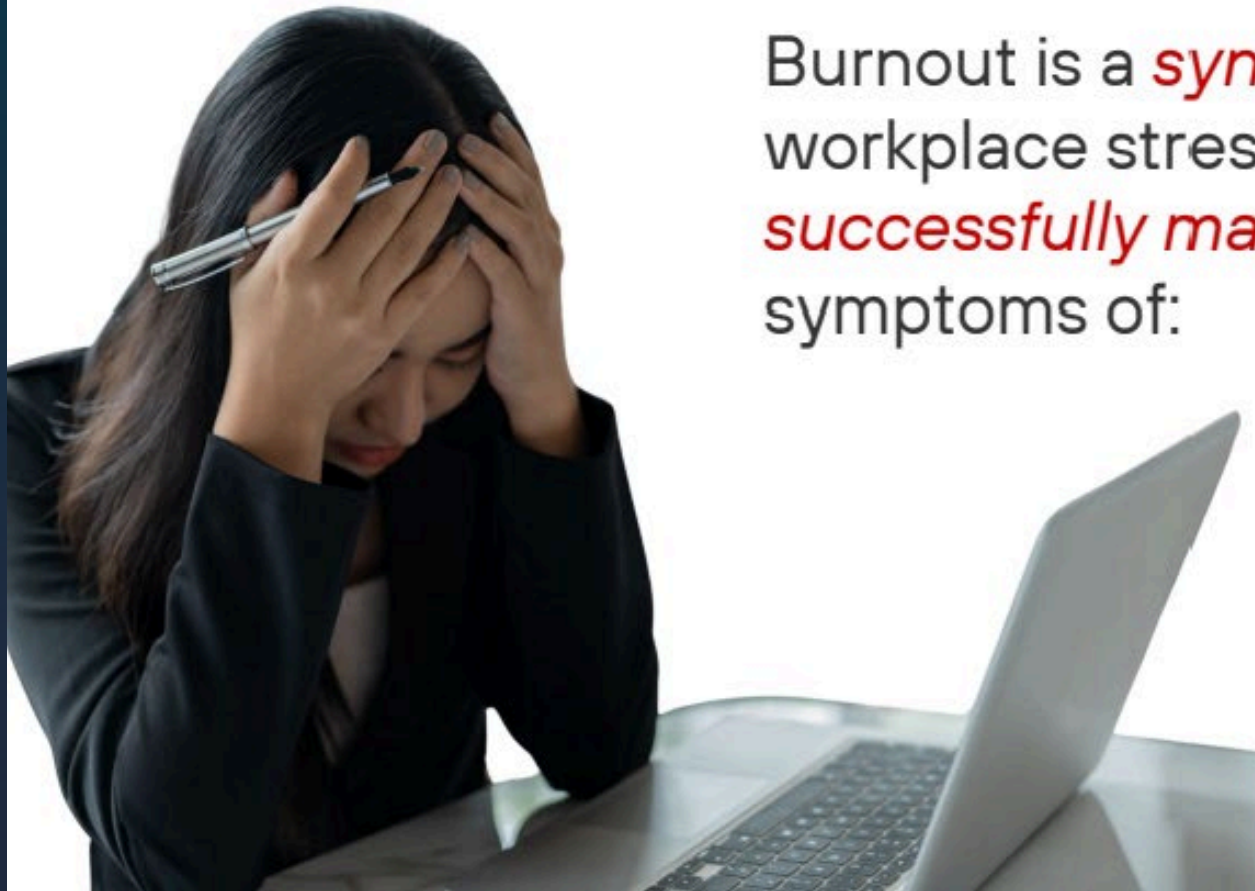
Whether you're feeling overwhelmed, nearing burnout, or simply seeking a more sustainable approach to work, this session offers actionable tools, a fresh perspective, and meaningful encouragement. Because when grant professionals take care of themselves, the missions they serve grow stronger, and so do the communities they impact.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Burnout is a *syndrome* resulting from chronic workplace stress that has *not been successfully managed*, characterized by symptoms of:

- Emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism or detachment
- Reduced professional efficacy

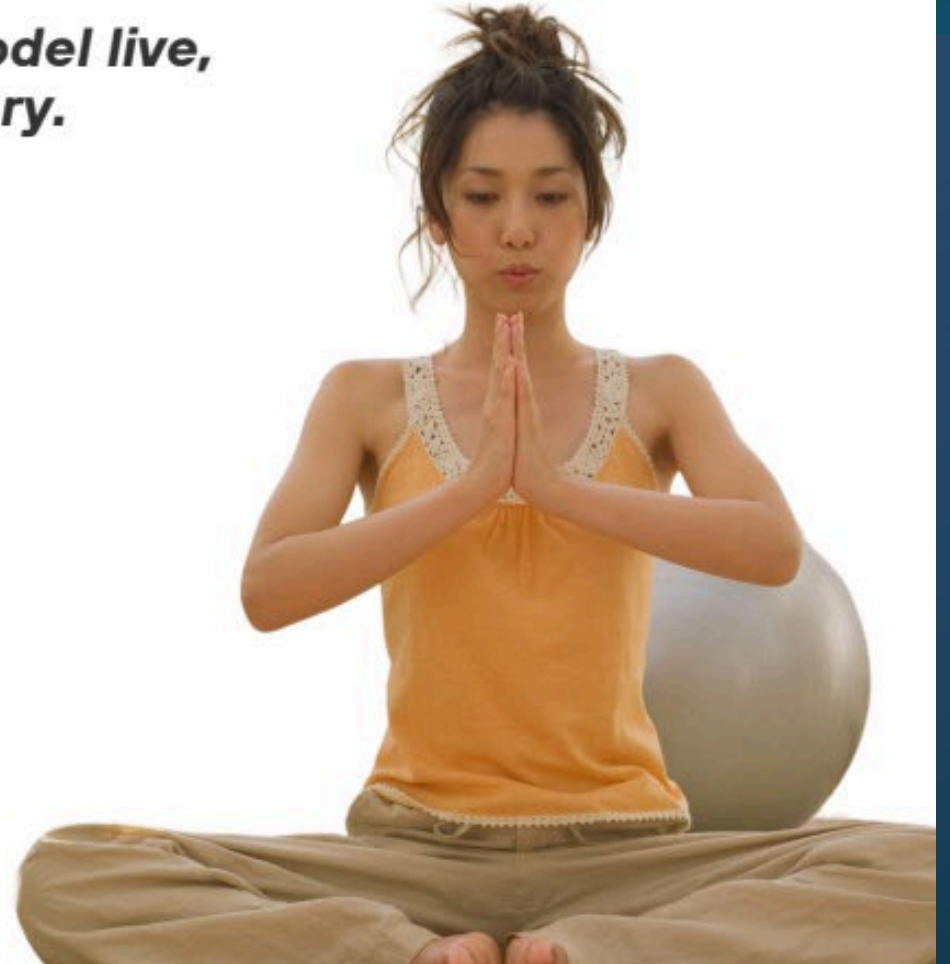
World Health Organization, 2019



THE SCIENCE OF SURVIVAL & RECOVERY

Focus on five evidence-backed practices you model live, blending neuroscience + applied leadership theory.

1. Recovery Rhythms
2. Cognitive Reframing
3. Boundary Architecture
4. Community Reciprocity
5. Values Alignment

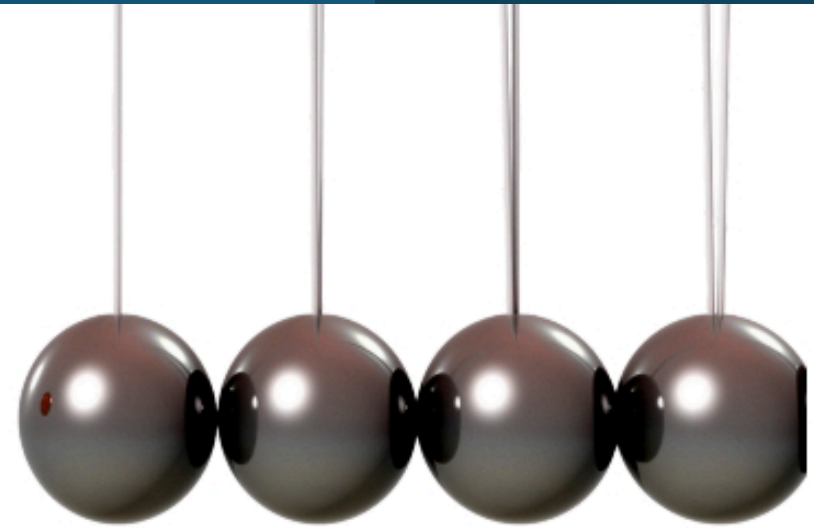




RECOVERY RYTHMS

(Biological Rest Cycles) (Kleitman 1963)

- **Science:** Humans follow ~ 90-minute ultradian rhythms
- **Application:** Schedule "focus → finish → pause" cycles.
- **Tool 1:** Use 90-minute work blocks + 5-minute transition rituals (breathe, stretch, step outside)
- **Tool 2:** Use 4-hour work blocks
 - 30-60-90-30 minutes workblocks



COGNITIVE REFRAMING

(Mindset Science) (Crum et al., 2013)

- **Research:** Reframing stress as "effort toward purpose" reduces cortisol
- **Exercise:** Rename the feeling – not "I'm stressed," but "I'm invested."
- **Grant application:** Use reflection prompts after deadlines → "What did this challenge teach me?"

GRANTPRO SURVIVAL TIPS

- Adjust lighting
- Blink consciously
- Use blue-light filters or night mode
- Limit screen time before bed
- Take a movement break
- Reclaim Your "Why"
- Schedule Recovery Like a Deadline
- Redefine "Productivity"
- Set Boundaries Without Apology
- Rediscover Joy Outside the Job

Burnout is a signal, not a sentence.

When we heal individually, we strengthen our organizations' collective resilience.

You are the storyteller of someone's tomorrow - guard your own story with the same compassion.

YOUR WELLNESS
IS YOUR SURVIVAL PLAN



FROM NONPROFIT RESILIENCE → PERSONAL RESILIENCE

NONPROFIT RESILIENCE QUALITIES	PERSONAL PRACTICE
Mission Commitment	Reconnect to your “why” weekly to prevent mission fatigue
Improvisation	Prototype one new workflow each quarter
Community Reciprocity	Build a trusted peer network of 3-5 colleagues
Servant & Transformational Leadership	Lead with empathy; share transparently when stressed
Fiscal Transparency	Communicate capacity limits - model ethical sustainability
Hope and Optimism	Keep a “Grant Wins List” to record daily progress

30-DAY SURVIVAL GUIDE



BOUNDARIES

First Step: Disable work email notifications at 7 PM

Timeline: 14 days

Support: Supervisor buy-in



RECOVERY RHYTHM

First Step: 30/60/90/30 minute Workflow

Timeline: 3 days/week

Support: Choose 4 tasks every time block



COGNITIVE REFRAMING

First Step: What is this month teaching me about grantsmanship?

Timeline: 30 days

Support: Track weekly milestones and challenges



VALUES ALIGNMENT

First Step: Develop a Personal Mission Statement

Timeline: 1-2 weeks

Support: Set aside two hours and share with network

“I EMPOWER CHANGEMAKERS TO TURN BOLD VISIONS INTO FUNDED REALITIES BY WRITING GRANTS THAT INSPIRE, CONNECT, AND CREATE LASTING IMPACT.”



**WHAT PRACTICE
WILL YOU START
TOMORROW?**