



Your Path to Thriving

A Practical Framework for Measuring and Managing Employee Stress

Based on research conducted in 2015-16 by Austen Advisory Limited

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Introduction by Lead Researcher

The modern work environment is evolving rapidly—and with it, new pressures are emerging that contribute to rising stress levels:

- Volatile market conditions and frequently shifting organisational priorities create uncertainty, pressure to adapt quickly and a persistent sense of instability
- Greater diversity is enriching organisations, but also creating cultural friction and communication challenges
- Remote work has increased isolation and reduced opportunities for informal reassurance and feedback
- Communication is more digital and less personal
- Mobile technology and social media add constant pressure to be "always on"

Together, these factors create a perfect storm for burnout.

Most organisations are attuned to the tangible costs – productivity loss, absenteeism, turnover and healthcare claims. But the intangible impacts are more insidious – and often more damaging over time:

- Disengagement that quietly erodes performance and innovation
- Cultural decline, where cynicism and emotional exhaustion spread silently through teams
- Loss of leadership capacity, as emerging leaders burn out or disengage before reaching their potential
- Reputational risk, especially when burnout results in visible breakdowns, public resignations, or whistleblowing – which can damage employer brand, stakeholder confidence and internal morale
- Team dysfunction, where collaboration breaks down under pressure, damaging trust and psychological safety

There is also a moral imperative. Employers have a duty of care to ensure that employees are not placed under prolonged or excessive stress that could compromise their psychological or physical health. Creating a psychologically healthy workplace is not just good practice – it's a fundamental ethical responsibility.

When people are healthy, supported, energised and mentally well, they are more engaged, innovative and resilient — and the organisation thrives alongside them.

One of the greatest risks is that unhealthy stress often goes unrecognised until a crisis — when an employee breaks down, burns out or engages in destructive or risky behaviours.

The true cost of stress and burnout is often hidden — embedded in presenteeism, subtle drops in performance, interpersonal conflicts and elevated turnover. At its core, burnout is a problem of **recognition** and **measurement**.

In 2014–15, I experienced a serious burnout myself—and I didn't see the warning signs until it was too late. Looking back, the signals were there - and had been creeping up on me over the course of 2 years. Had I known what to look for, I could have prevented the damaging consequences on my physical health, emotional wellbeing and relationships.

More importantly, I wasn't alone—my entire team was under similar strain, which led to a peak of attrition as well as other costly business impacts. I reflected that had my employer had the tools to identify our team as a stress “hotspot,” they could have intervened sooner and addressed some of the underlying causes—mitigating both the personal and business risk.

Having designed and worked with psychometric assessments for many years, I saw there was an absence in science around the measurement and assessment of stress in the workplace. That's what led to me embarking on this research which aimed to develop a rigorous yet practical framework and approach to enable stress and resilience to be identified and measured, as a platform for targeted actions to prevent burnout and build healthier, high performing workplace.

I hope you find this white paper, the research behind it and the AURA assessment tool useful in enabling proactive and effective management of stress in your organisation enabling your employees to thrive.

Thank you,

Rachel Austen

BSc (Hons), MSc, CPsychol.
CEO, Austen Advisory Ltd



About the Research

Aims

This research set out to explore the following core questions to deepen our understanding of burnout and identify practical pathways for early recognition and prevention:

1 Understanding Burnout

- What is burnout and what are the warning signs?
- What are the underlying causes—both individual and organisational?

2 Barriers to Recognition

- Why are the early signs of burnout so difficult to recognise—both personally and organisationally?
- How do psychological, physiological and cultural factors affect self-awareness and our stress perception?

3 The Science of Resilience and the Role of Thriving

- What role does resilience play in preventing burnout?
- What does it mean to thrive at work — and how is this different from resilience?

4 Measuring Stress

- Can we create a reliable, scientifically grounded framework to assess stress and burnout risk in individuals and teams?

Methodology

Our approach was as follows:

Step 1: Literature Review

- We did an extensive literature review of existing academic research to understand more about the constructs of stress, burnout and resilience.
 - Over 400 research studies on stress, resilience and burnout were reviewed in the meta-analysis. These included longitudinal studies of the stages and manifestations over time, models of the burnout construct, scientific theories of stress and other measurement tools of burnout and related constructs.
 - We also reviewed research from neuroscience to understand more about the impacts on the brain of stress and burnout.

Step 2: Interviews

- We conducted interviews to understand burnout and how it manifested from different perspectives, comprising;
 - 25 people who had experienced burnout
 - 6 clinical psychologists who were experts in stress and burnout
 - 5 doctors who had working with patients experiencing burnout

Step 3: Develop Model

- Based on the insights, we developed a draft model of the burnout journey that could be psychometrically assessed based on the insights from the data collection phase.

Step 4: Test & Validate Model

The AURA model was validated in 3 main ways;

- **Content Validity:** Through reviews with the subject matter experts in step 1, we validated the model in terms of its theoretical accuracy - in other words, is it an accurate representation of the burnout journey.
- **Face Validity:** Gaining feedback from those involved in step 1 to review for perceived relevance
- **Construct Validity:** A draft questionnaire comprising items to measure the model was developed and statistical testing using factor analysis was used to validate the construct based on trial data with 250 people.

Additional statistical methods were used to evaluate the tool's reliability and further refine the AURA questionnaire as a robust psychometric instrument.

Our Findings

This section summarises the key insights drawn from the various data sources described in the methodology structured around the core research questions.

1 Understanding Burnout

This section explores:

- What is burnout and what are the warning signs?
- What are the underlying causes—both individual and organisational?

The research identified the following insights:

What is Burnout?

Burnout is a state of mental, emotional and physical exhaustion that leaves individuals unable—and often unwilling—to continue expending effort at work.

It goes far beyond occasional tiredness or short-term stress. Burnout is a chronic condition that gradually erodes a person's energy, motivation, and sense of purpose—ultimately impacting their wellbeing, relationships and performance.

The Origins of the Concept

The term “burnout” was first introduced in 1975 by American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger, who observed it among healthcare workers and volunteers in high-pressure roles.

He defined burnout as:

“Becoming exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources in the workplace.”

Freudenberger identified three key characteristics:

- **Emotional exhaustion** – the fatigue that comes from caring too much, for too long
- **Depersonalisation** – a sense of detachment or cynicism towards the people you work with
- **Reduced personal accomplishment** – a pervasive feeling that your work no longer makes a meaningful difference

Psychologist Christina Maslach later built on this framework, defining burnout as a **psychological syndrome** arising from **chronic interpersonal stressors** at work.

Her research with human service professionals led to the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), still widely used today. She emphasised that burnout is not just about workload but also how people relate to their work, colleagues, and their sense of meaning.

How Does Burnout Develop?

Burnout doesn't happen overnight. It's a process that develops over time due to an accumulation of unmanaged stress. It typically begins with high levels of energy and drive to achieve which if not balanced with recovery, deteriorates into fatigue, detachment and eventually complete exhaustion. This process can unfold over weeks, months or even years.

What Does the Burnout Journey Look Like?

Our analysis of the existing longitudinal studies together with our interviews with people who had lived experiences of burnout, revealed consistent patterns in how the journey unfolds over time.

From this, we identified five distinct stages that typically mark the progression toward full burnout (see next page).

The 5 Stages Of Burnout

Stage	Description
1 Overdrive	Working harder to cope with ongoing pressure and demands, feeling the need to prove oneself. Signs of strain appear.
2 Questioning	Perception that demands faced are too much and additional effort does not make a difference. Typical signs are self-doubt and questioning ability to cope.
3 Detaching	Detachment from daily pressures sets in, marked by apathy, low motivation, negativity and cynicism. Typical signs include starting to withdraw socially, denying emerging problems and projecting frustration onto others.
4 Losing Control	Everything feels overwhelming — a skewed perspective makes small challenges seem insurmountable. Anxiety, panic or depression may arise, clouding judgment and making it hard to see a clear path forward. This can lead to irrational or unpredictable behaviour.
5 Crisis	Complete physical and emotional exhaustion which can take years to fully recover from. Typical signs include feeling lost, hopeless and a sense of inner emptiness, as well as broken relationships.

Key Observations:

- Stages 1 and 2 are easily reversible with deliberate and focused action.
- Stage 3 marks a critical turning point—beyond this, recovery becomes significantly harder and longer
- Those who reach Stage 5 often report taking two or more years to fully recover, with many describing long-term impacts on health and relationships.

What Are The Warning Signs?

Our research revealed that the signs of burnout tend to cluster around five core dimensions (see below). These build upon the foundational work of Freudenberger and Maslach but extend the model to better reflect the full, modern experience of burnout—especially in relation to today’s always-on, cognitively demanding work environments.

The 5 Dimensions of Burnout

Attitudinal	Mindset and thinking patterns
Cognitive	Capacity to think clearly and process information
Emotional	One’s mood and emotional state
Behavioural	Behaviours and interpersonal relationships
Physical	Health, sleep and energy levels

We identified 84 specific indicators and mapped them across the five stages to give a structured, measurable view of the burnout journey. These dimensions and indicators offer a comprehensive, multi-faceted picture of how burnout develops—reinforcing the importance of early detection and holistic intervention.

How Does Burnout Relate to Depression and Anxiety?

While burnout shares many symptoms with depression and anxiety, they are not the same. Research shows a high co-occurrence, with many individuals meeting clinical criteria for one or both conditions during burnout (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2015). However, not everyone experiencing burnout is clinically depressed or anxious.

Key differences:

- Burnout is a work-related stress response, not a standalone mental illness
- Depression and anxiety can exist independently of work context
- Burnout symptoms often improve when work-related stressors are addressed

What Are the Underlying Causes of Burnout?

Burnout doesn't stem from a single source — it emerges from a complex interplay between personal, lifestyle and workplace factors. Research consistently supports this multi-factorial model.

Contributing Factors

- **Lifestyle:** poor sleep, lack of rest and recovery, poor nutrition and overcommitment outside of work increase susceptibility to chronic stress. Studies show that insufficient sleep alone is strongly correlated with emotional exhaustion, a core component of burnout (Åkerstedt et al., 2012).
- **Personality:** Certain traits have been found to increase burnout risk. For example, individuals with high levels of perfectionism, a strong need for achievement or low self-compassion are more likely to ignore early warning signs and push through stress until it becomes damaging (Hill & Curran, 2016)
- **Workplace:** Organisational factors play a major role. Our research identified 16 workplace contributors grouped into four main categories:
 - Culture - the style of the workgroup/ organisation
 - Management - the way work is designed and organised
 - Work Environment - the social and physical environment
 - Demand-Resource Fit – the balance between what the job requires and the individual's skills, challenge level and access to tools and support.

Our validation study showed that combined, these factors accounted for **55%** of the variance in burnout levels—mirroring findings by Leiter & Maslach (2004) showing that mismatches in these domains significantly increase risk.

The Role of Perception

Stress isn't just about external demands—it's also about how those demands are perceived. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), stress arises when perceived demands exceed perceived coping resources. Therefore, **assessing individual perception is essential** when evaluating workplace risk factors and getting to the heart of the root causes.

2 Barriers To Recognition

Here we examine:

- Why are the early signs of burnout so difficult to recognise—both personally and organisationally?
- How do psychological, physiological and cultural factors affect self-awareness and our stress perception?

Our research provided the following insights:

1 Stress is normalised

In many workplaces, stress is accepted as just part of the job—often downplayed as “normal” or even worn as a badge of honour. This distorts our ability to gauge what’s healthy, making it difficult to recognise when stress is becoming harmful.

2 Stress impairs self-awareness

Research shows that people often underestimate their own stress levels and chronic stress further disrupts this self-awareness by impairing interoception—the brain’s ability to perceive internal bodily signals (Craig, 2009). In one study, executives rated their stress levels 35–40% lower than what was indicated by physiological biomarkers.

Over time, your nervous system can even adapt to this dysfunction, recalibrating to stress as the “new normal.” As a result, the signs of burnout build quietly in the background, easy to dismiss or overlook.

Chronic stress can also lead to cognitive distortions, denial and avoidance behaviours, all of which further reduce a person’s ability to recognise and acknowledge their stress.

3 Stress is complex

Stress is multi-faceted and there are subtle signs that many people don’t connect to stress, therefore they dismiss or attribute them to other factors.

4 Stress is personal

Like a fingerprint, each person's experience of stress is shaped by their unique coping patterns, past experiences and personal vulnerabilities. Some feel it primarily in their body—through fatigue, tension, or illness—while for others, it shows up more emotionally, as anxiety, irritability or low mood. This variability makes it inherently difficult to recognise — until you learn to interpret the signals. Stress is like a language your body speaks - and recognising it starts with learning the language.

5 Stigma prevents honest disclosure of issues

In many high-performance environments, admitting you're struggling is seen as a weakness. This stigma silences honest conversations about stress and mental health, both internally and with others. When you're in the thick of burnout—exhausted, disconnected or simply surviving—it's hard to see clearly. And if no one around you is asking how you're really doing, the warning signs are easy to miss.

6 Unhealthy cultures keep you moving too fast to notice

In fast-paced work cultures, there's rarely time—or permission—to slow down and check in with yourself. Resilience is often mistaken for simply “pushing through,” so people keep going, running on adrenaline and willpower. When you're operating on stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, your body stays in a heightened state of alertness.

This can give you a false sense of energy —even as your underlying resources are being depleted. This state dulls your awareness of stress and makes it easy to miss early warning signs. It's why so many people only realise how depleted they are when they finally stop—like getting sick on the first day of holiday.

3 The Science of Resilience and Thriving

To define the positive end of the burnout continuum, we explored two key questions:

- What role does resilience play in preventing burnout?
- What does it mean to thrive at work — and how is this different from resilience?

Our research led to the following insights:

What is Resilience?

Resilience has long been studied as the capacity to withstand, adapt to and recover from stress or adversity. Early research conceptualised resilience as a protective factor—an individual’s ability to “bounce back” from hardship (Masten, 2001).

However, more recent research has expanded this understanding, highlighting resilience not only as recovery but as a dynamic process that can lead to growth and flourishing (Southwick & Charney, 2012; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

Importantly, resilience is not a fixed personality trait but a dynamic capacity that can be developed over time (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). It emerges from the interaction between the individual and their environment, shaped by how people experience and respond to setbacks, stress and adversity (Cooper et al., 2013). This capacity relies on the ability to tap into both internal resources—such as mindset, skills and emotional regulation—and external resources available in the surrounding environment—including workplace culture, social support and organisational systems. Neuroplasticity research shows that resilience can be strengthened as the brain adapts to mental, physical and environmental challenges (Weibrecht et al., 2010).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that resilience reduces the risk of burnout, particularly in high-stress environments (Jackson et al., 2007; McCann et al., 2013).

At work, fostering **collective resilience** is essential, enabling teams and organisations to adapt flexibly and creatively to ongoing changes and challenges, thereby sustaining wellbeing and performance over time.

What is Thriving?

Contemporary research across psychology, neuroscience and organisational behaviour reveals that thriving is not simply resilience or survival. Rather, it is a state of growth, activated and sustained across multiple dimensions of human functioning.

Thriving is increasingly recognised as the highest expression of resilience capacity, representing not just recovery but positive transformation and well-being (Spreitzer & Porath, 2012). Several key theories support this idea are:

- **Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001):** Positive emotions, which are abundant during thriving, broaden cognitive and behavioural repertoires, building enduring personal resources such as social connections, skills, and psychological resilience. This upward spiral distinguishes thriving from mere survival.
- **Post-Traumatic Growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004):** Experiencing adversity can lead to growth beyond pre-crisis functioning. Thriving reflects this transformative resilience, where individuals report enhanced appreciation for life, personal strength and a renewed sense of purpose.
- **Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000):** Thriving aligns with the fulfilment of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—highlighting how resilience capacity enables individuals not only to manage stress but to engage in meaningful, growth-oriented behaviour.
- **Psychological Capital Framework (Luthans et al., 2007):** This model includes self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience as core components of psychological resources that drive performance and well-being. Thriving represents the full activation and integration of these resources.

In practical terms, thriving individuals exhibit vitality, optimism, confidence, purpose and proactive engagement — qualities that surpass mere adaptation.

Research shows these qualities correlate with better health outcomes, higher job performance, greater life satisfaction, and more effective coping strategies (Carver & Scheier, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Summary

- Resilience is the capacity to recover from stress, adapt flexibly to change and grow stronger through challenges.
- At its highest expression, resilience goes beyond recovery to manifest as thriving — a vibrant state characterised by vitality, purpose, confidence and continuous personal growth.
- Resilience is not a fixed personal trait; it is developed and accessed through a range of internal and external sources—such as mindset and coping strategies, and supportive relationships and organisational conditions.

4 Measuring Stress: Building a Psychometric Model for Action

The goal of this stage of our research was to translate the scientific understanding of stress, burnout and resilience into a practical, reliable tool that could be used by both individuals and organisations to measure, quantify and identify stress early before it leads to more complex problems.

It was clear from our research that stress can be measured in a meaningful, scientific way since it was defined by measurable constructs.

We aimed to design a model to capture the following insights from the research:

1. There's a difference between acute and chronic stress. Acute stress in the short term can be useful, even motivating. The problem occurs when stress becomes chronic and goes unmanaged. A robust measurement model should specifically identify and address the harmful impacts of chronic stress.

2. Burnout is not a binary state. It develops gradually under chronic stress that has not been properly managed, with 5 clear stages marked by typical indicators

3. Resilience is the antidote to burnout—a capacity that can be cultivated and strengthened.

Resilience is increasingly viewed as a spectrum or dynamic process, not a fixed trait. So a continuum-based model fits.

4. Thriving is the highest expression of resilience — a vibrant state characterised by vitality, purpose, confidence and continuous personal growth.

5. Signs of Stress and Resilience manifest across five core dimensions:

- Mindset & thought patterns
- Cognitive function
- Emotional state
- Behaviour & Relationships
- Physical health and energy regulation

6. To foster resilience and prevent burnout, a practical psychometric model must account for both internal and external factors.

Resilience is shaped by the dynamic interplay between inner resources — such as mindset, coping strategies and emotional regulation — and environmental sources like workplace culture, leadership and social support. Similarly, burnout is driven by both personal vulnerabilities and organisational stressors. A meaningful assessment must therefore consider the full context in which stress is experienced and resilience can be developed.

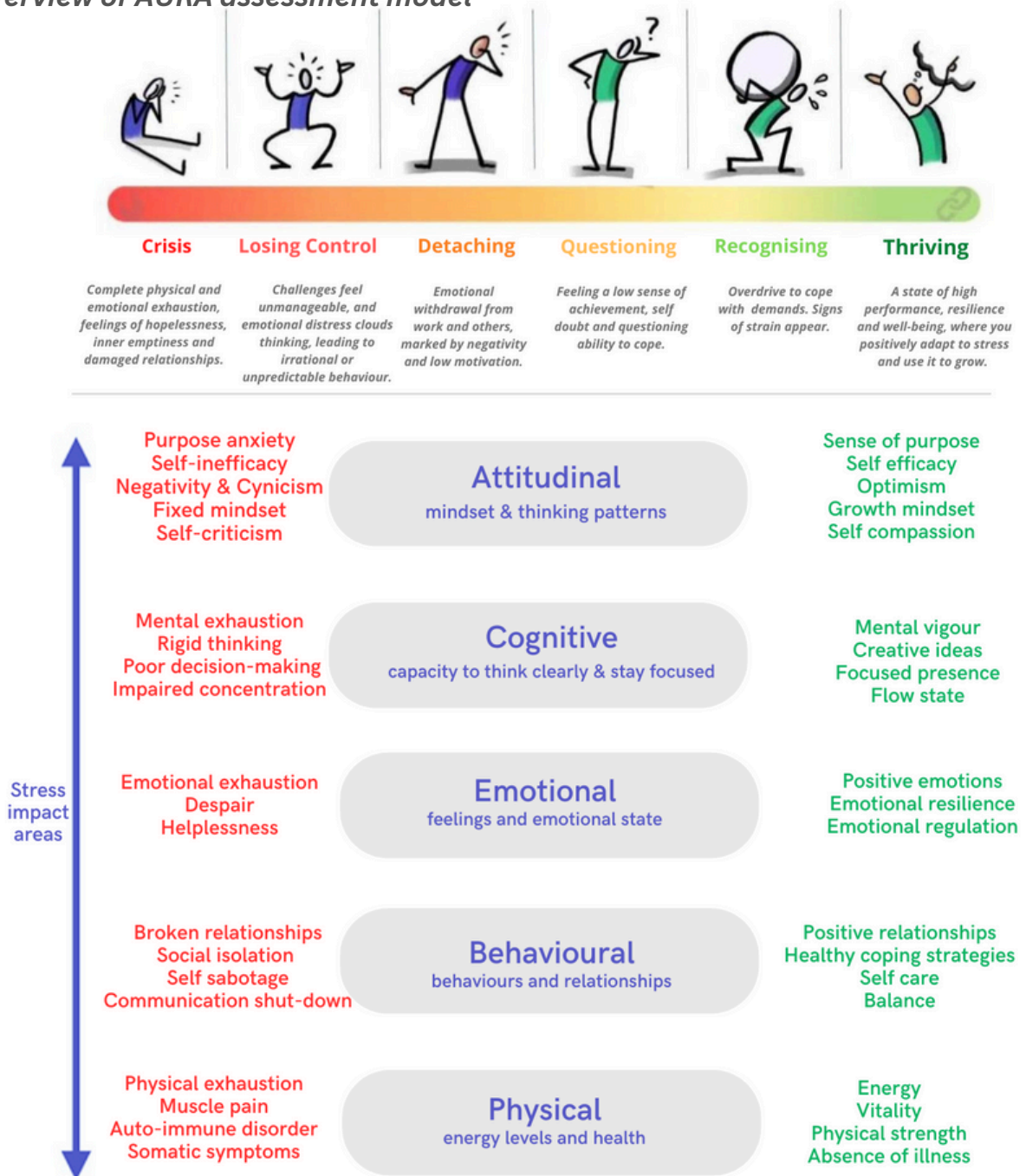
7. Understanding how employees perceive their demands—and their capacity to cope—is critical to assessing stress and burnout risk.

Stress is not determined solely by external conditions, but by how individuals interpret those demands in relation to the resources they believe they have, both internally (e.g. coping skills, energy, mindset) and externally (e.g. support, tools, time). Meaningful measurement must capture this subjective experience in order to effectively prevent burnout and support resilience.

The AURA Psychometric Model

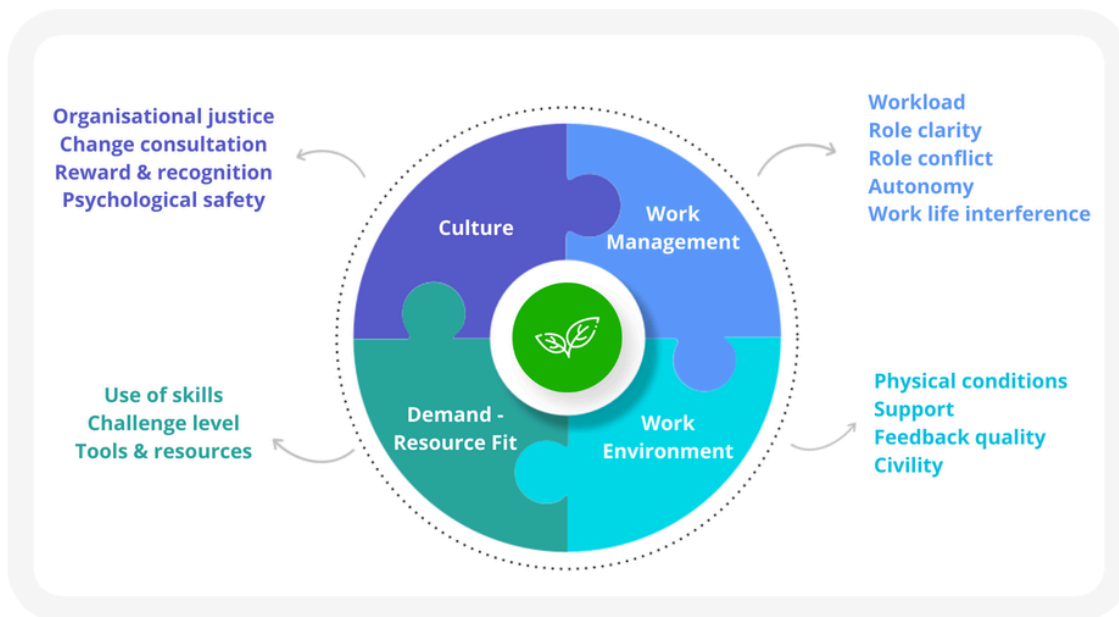
We developed the AURA model—a psychometric framework that measures an individual’s stress level along a continuum ranging between burnout crisis and thriving. Results are expressed as a simple index and ranked according to risk levels. Each stage of the continuum is defined by 84 evidence based indicators across the 5 dimensions identified.

Overview of AURA assessment model



We also developed a framework to measure 16 workplace factors identified in the research as key contributors to burnout and external sources of resilience. These factors were organised into 4 core categories, enabling a structured assessment of workplace conditions that either drive burnout or support resilience—highlighting the importance of evaluating these elements in parallel.

AURA workplace factors model



Validation of the model

The validation studies found the AURA model and questionnaire to be a robust measure of the construct and therefore can be used with confidence:

- Statistical analysis supported the model's construct validity, confirming clear factor structures aligned with the model's design.
- The questionnaire showed high internal consistency reliabilities for the different dimensions measured
- User feedback also confirmed strong content and face validity, with participants reporting that the framework was both relevant and reflective of real experiences with stress and burnout.

As a result, the AURA tool can be confidently used as a psychometric measure to identify burnout risk and guide interventions at both individual and organisational levels.

5 Conclusions and Implications

Burnout is not an inevitable consequence of modern work—it is a preventable, measurable and manageable risk. Our research highlights that burnout is a progressive condition, with early warning signs that are too often missed due to normalisation, stigma and the very nature of chronic stress itself.

The AURA model offers a scientifically grounded framework to identify and address burnout before it reaches crisis. By moving away from reactive approaches to stress management and adopting proactive, systemic interventions, organisations can mitigate risk from burnout and sustain long-term performance.

The research shows that when employees thrive, so does the organisation. When employees are in a state of thriving, characterised by growth, vitality, purpose and engagement, organisations benefit from higher productivity, innovation, and retention.

Key Implications for Organisations

1. Burnout must be recognised as both a personal and organisational issue.

While individual coping skills matter, organisational and cultural factors play an important role in burnout prevention. Leadership must address systemic drivers.

2. Early detection is critical. The five-stage burnout journey highlights the importance of recognising the early "overdrive" and "questioning" phases—before detachment and the latter stages occur.

3. Measurement is prevention. Tools like the AURA assessment can uncover hidden stress "hotspots" and guide targeted interventions at the personal, team and workplace level.

4. Rigorous analysis and independent reporting provides a fact-based platform for action. Evidence-driven insights enable organisations to move from anecdotal concern to targeted, systemic solutions.

5. Stress is sensitive in any management system. Disclosure must be confidential to ensure employees feel safe and supported in raising concerns.

6. Management commitment to reducing stress and increasing resilience is essential for success. Leadership buy-in is vital to embed meaningful and lasting change.

7. Resilience must be developed at both the personal and collective level. Whilst individual resilience matters, it is not enough on its own. A sustainable approach to burnout prevention requires building collective resilience—through psychologically safe environments, supportive leadership, fair workloads and workplace systems that enable people to adapt flexibly to change together.

8. Thriving—not just functioning—should be the goal. Burnout prevention is not only about avoiding harm. It's about creating the conditions where individuals and teams can grow, feel energised and sustain high performance over time.

9. Regular monitoring and refinement is needed. The recognition and measurement of stress should not be a once off exercise. It takes focused and consistent effort to improve the resilience of individuals. Exercises to recognise stress and inform resilience should not be one-off but should be incorporated into the standard management practices and monitored on an ongoing basis.

In Summary

Recruiting and retaining top talent—and becoming a 'destination employer'—is now a major competitive frontier. Organisations can no longer afford to overlook employee mental health and have a moral duty to identify and reduce workplace stress. But the goal should go beyond reactive support and be to creating the conditions in which people can truly thrive.

As the saying goes, you can't manage what you don't measure. Our research indicates that measuring, managing and monitoring stress—and its positive counterpart, thriving—should be more critical than simply measuring engagement. With recent advances, proper insight and practical approaches are now available—and enlightened employers will act on it.

About the Author

Rachel is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist with deep expertise in psychometric assessment and over 18 years of experience evaluating leaders to inform selection decisions, succession planning, and development strategies.

She has partnered with many of the top FTSE 100 companies and led projects across more than 25 countries. Her diverse international experience has given her strong cultural awareness, which she brings to her consulting work.

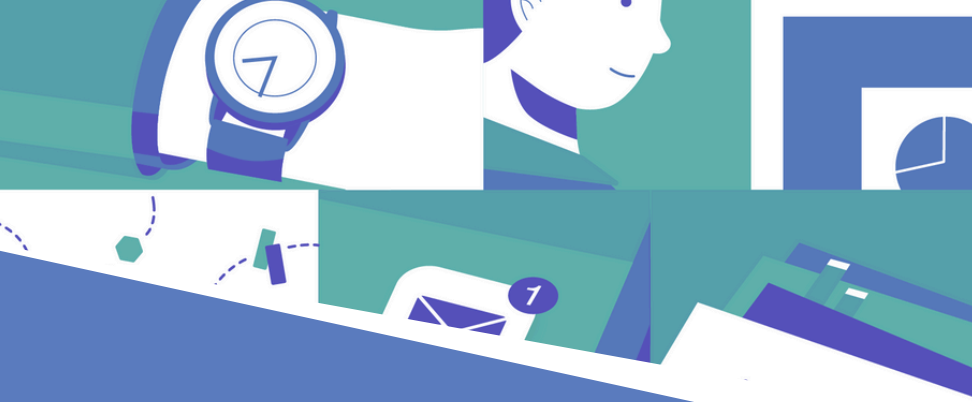


Rachel is the founder of Austen Advisory, a consultancy specialising in burnout prevention and leadership assessment. The company delivers large-scale programmes in collaboration with a network of trusted associates. Its proprietary product, AURA, is distributed globally through a network of partners.

Earlier in her career, Rachel held senior roles at two leading consultancies—SHL and Mercer—and spent a decade based in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Rachel studied for her Masters degree at the Institute of Work, Health & Organisations, Nottingham University, recognised for its leading research into work-related stress. Rachel holds certifications in psychosocial risk assessment, positive psychology and a wide range of psychometric tools.

She is a published author, including several articles in academic journals on the topics of employee engagement, measurement of mood and cultural differences in managerial styles.



AURA Assessment Questionnaire

A Proven Path To A Thriving Workplace

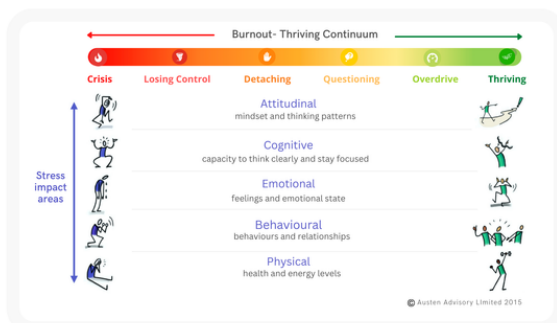
By using AURA, you can:

- ✓ Prevent burnout.
- ✓ Increase resilience
- ✓ Optimise performance

Developed in 2015 by Rachel Austen, the AURA assessment questionnaire is grounded in scientific research and designed to help individuals understand their overall risk of burnout. It enables early identification of warning signs, empowering people to take proactive, preventative steps.

Recognising the workplace's significant role in both contributing to and mitigating burnout, AURA also includes a confidential, action-oriented reporting system. This enables teams and senior leaders to have informed, practical conversations and develop targeted strategies to address the root causes of stress.

The AURA Assessment Model



The AURA assessment model is based on a well-defined continuum that spans from burnout to thriving. It is underpinned by 5 scales that measure the key areas where stress typically manifests and resilience can be increased. Results can be benchmarked against specific industries, role levels and countries.



For large employee groups, the assessment can also include a workplace risk section, offering insights into burnout drivers and the conditions that support resilience. This section evaluates 16 workplace factors, organised into 4 overarching categories.

How Does It Work?

Users complete a secure, online questionnaire which typically takes 15 minutes. Upon completion, they receive a comprehensive, interpretative report offering actionable insights and personalised tips.

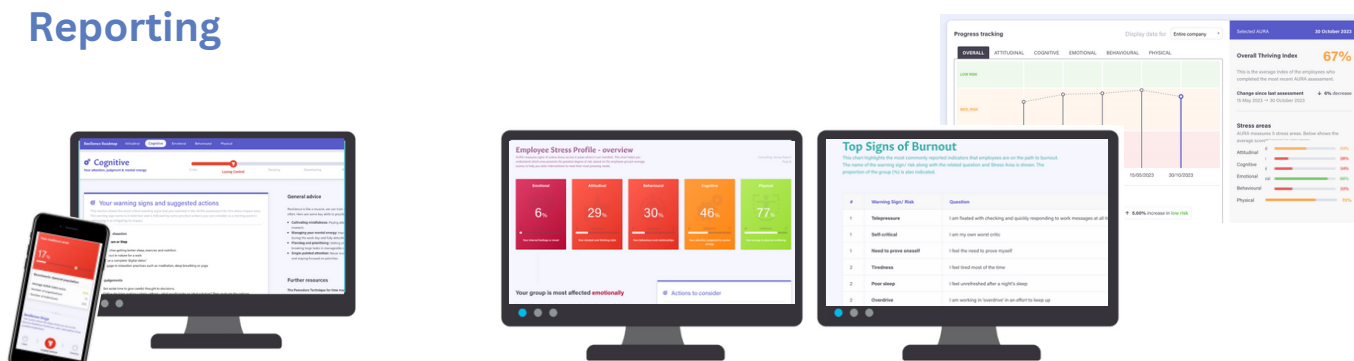
Managers can receive anonymised, aggregated data reports, segmented by team, department, country or other organisational groupings—providing a clear view of employee's burnout risk levels and where support is most needed.

Implementation is supported through tailored communication materials, briefing sessions, and facilitated action planning workshops. Additional support—such as manager training, targeted skills development, or individual coaching—is also available to help embed lasting change.

AURA

Stress Intelligence

Reporting



Personal reports include:

- Resilience Index & Burnout Risk Level
- Comparison vs benchmark
- Profile across Stress Areas
- Top Signs of Thriving & Burnout
- Personalised tips

Team and manager reports include the same on an aggregated level as well as:

- Distribution across Continuum
- Hotspots Analysis
- Comparison by role level
- Workplace stress triggers
- Action Planning guide

A simple dashboard feature enables employees and managers to track progress over time.

Resources library

Just like improving physical fitness, learning to manage stress effectively and developing resilience takes consistent effort and commitment.

To support this journey, AURA's platform offers a curated library of science-based, practical tools and resources that empower employees to create personalised action plans and discover strategies that work best for them.

In addition, the platform equips managers with the skills and guidance needed to make stress management part of everyday conversations and foster an environment where employees can thrive.





AURA

Stress Intelligence

What Are The Benefits of Using the AURA Assessment?

Integrating AURA into your organisation enables you to

- ✓ Measure and benchmark stress levels against a healthy baseline
- ✓ Raise awareness of burnout risks amongst employees and managers, encouraging proactive action
- ✓ Create safe, confidential channels for surfacing concerns
- ✓ Establish a shared language to openly discuss the root causes of stress and unhealthy workplace culture
- ✓ Provide teams and senior leaders with data-driven insights to identify and prioritise areas of concern
- ✓ Implement targeted action plans tailored to the specific challenges within each team, department, or region
- ✓ Equip individuals with practical tools and strategies to build sustainable habits and support long-term performance

How much does it cost?

The cost of the AURA questionnaire ranges from £15 to £25 per person, which includes aggregated reporting across up to three organisational levels (e.g., organisation > country > business area), covering up to 12 groups. A tailored team-level offering is also available for smaller groups looking to assess and address burnout risks.

To ensure a successful and impactful assessment, a level of implementation support is required. This is offered for a fixed fee based on your specific needs, starting from £1,500. While the majority of support is typically needed during the initial rollout, ongoing guidance can be provided as needed.

Subscription options are also available for organisations with large numbers of employees, which include progress tracking.

Become an AURA Partner

Consultants and coaches can become a certified users, gaining access to a comprehensive set of resources to help them incorporate AURA into their services. Get in touch for more information.

Get in touch

To learn more about the AURA model, pilot it in your organisation or book a keynote/workshop, visit www.austenadvisory.com or contact Rachel directly at rachel@austenadvisory.com

Gain Insight. Take Action. Thrive.

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🌐 www.austenadvisory.com

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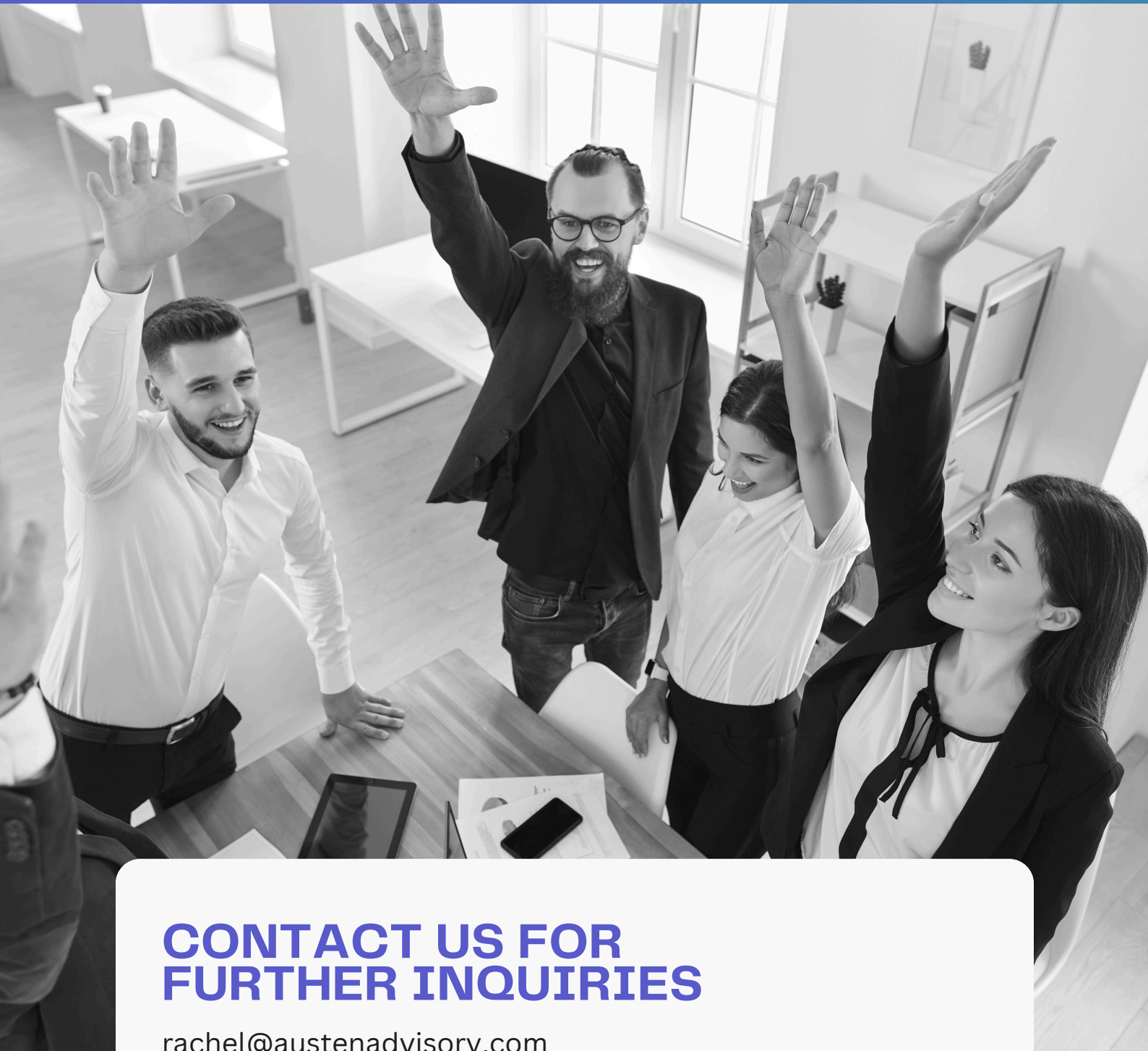
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