



The Risk Professional's Burnout Paradox: Charting a Course to Well-Being

Gregg Timmons, RN • MA • JD • CPHRM • FASRHM
Honolulu, HI

"I'm too busy to be burned out!"

The Rules I Lived By

- Succeed.
- Achieve.
- Outperform expectations.
- Be the calm one.
- Be the pleasant one.
- Fix everything.
- Don't show strain.
- Never be the one who breaks.



Beginning of the Rules:

FFA → RN → JD



GREGG TIMMONS

Football 1-4; class pres. 1, most popular 3, Stud. Counc. rep 2; Stud. Counc. pres. 4; FFA 1-4, treas. 3; literary participant (UIL) 1-2; junior-senior play 3; Centennial King; UIL One-Act play 2-3; annual staff, editor 3-4.

Achievement meant:

- *Safety*
- *Approval*
- *Love*



Early Career to Peak Performance

Competence → *Gravity* → *Over-functioning*





When the Cracks Began to Show

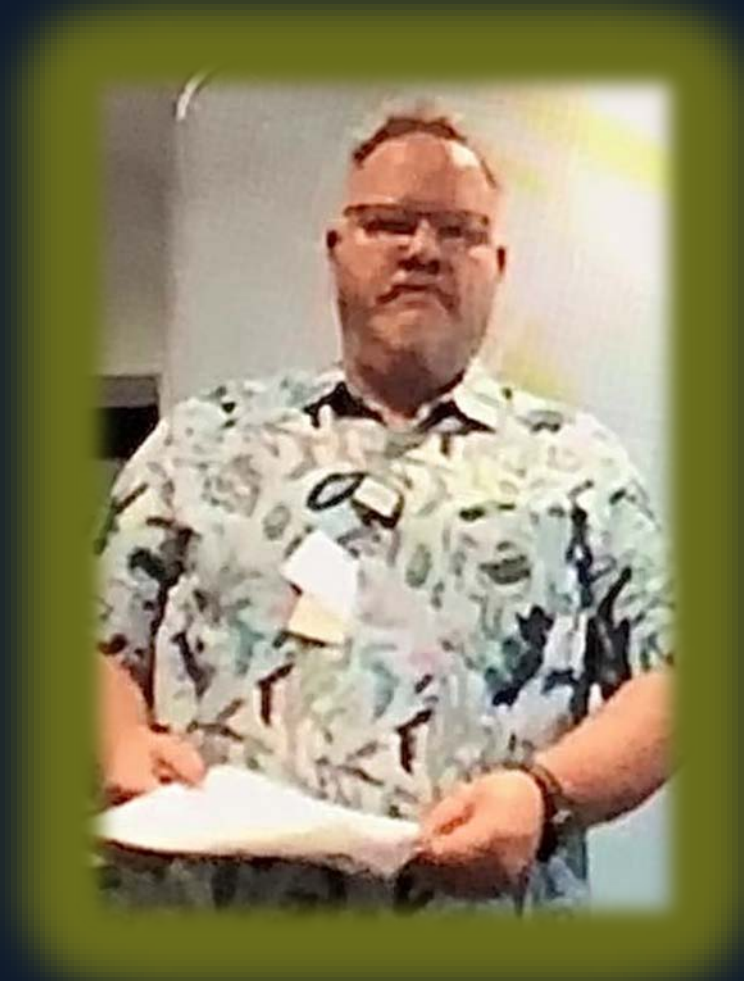
Physical strain • Emotional depletion • Identity tension





The Pandemic:

Acceleration of the Burnout



*You can improve your health,
but if the system and your rules stay the same...
the burnout continues.*

The Breaking Point

Battlefield Promotion • Imposter Syndrome

**Hawaii Pacific Health
appoints Gregg Timmons
to lead insurance**



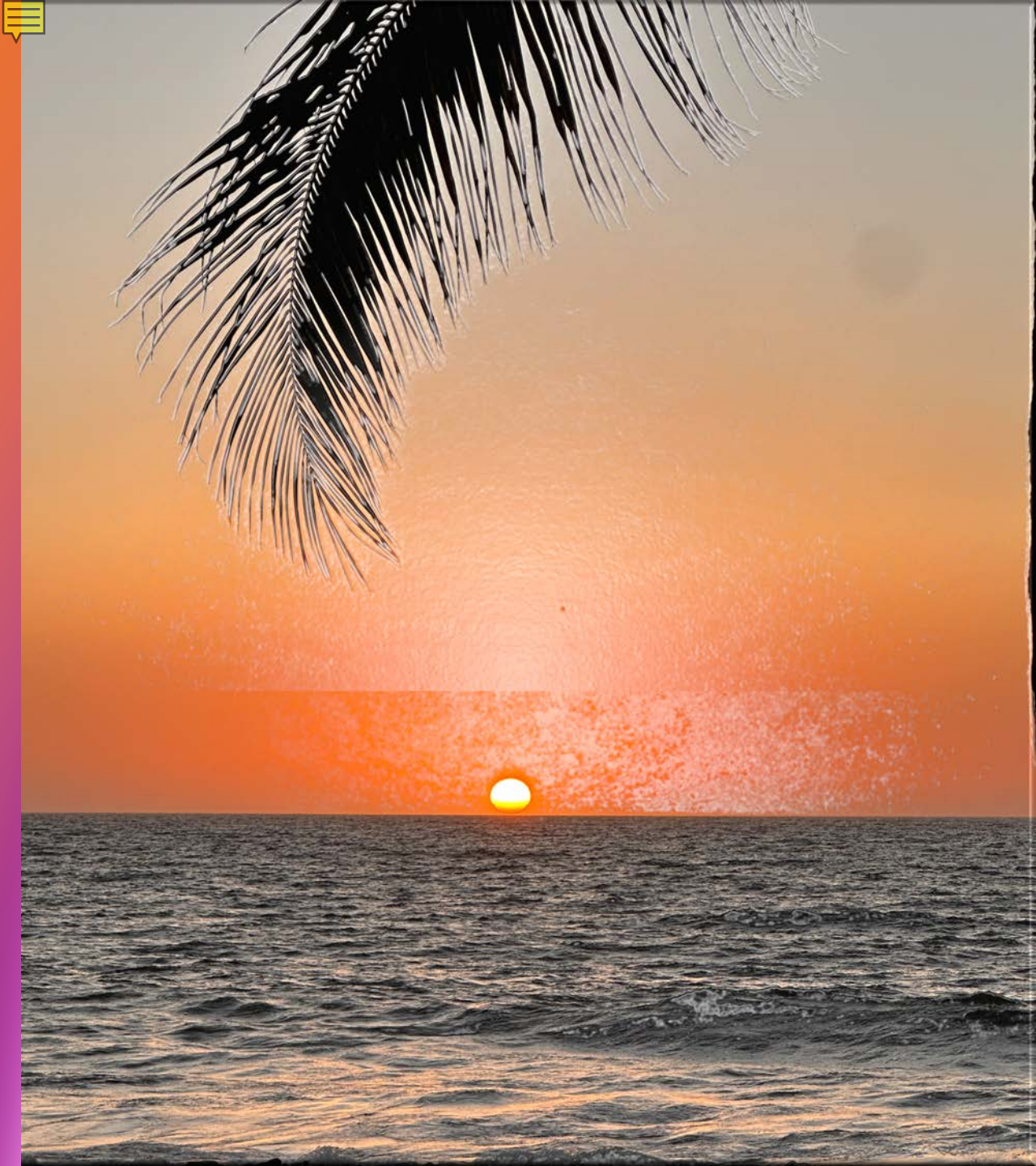
Hawaii Pacific Health (HPH), the not-for-profit healthcare provider, has promoted Gregg Timmons to executive director for corporate insurance and risk management. Timmons, who has been at the organisation for over five years, was director of risk management at Straub, one of the four medical centres that make up the network.



The Paradox – Too busy to be burned out

- “If you’re unhappy, why are you still trying to do the job?”
- Recovery clarity: burnout is
 - Not a failure of resilience
 - Not a lack of grit
 - Not a moral failure
- Burnout is structural, not personal
- Internal rules and structure no longer align to current situation





Reflection: Where Do Your Rules Come From?

- What early messages shaped your identity?
- What rules did you inherit — not choose?
- Which rules have helped you?
- Which rules now take more than they give?



Reflection: What Effect Are Your Rules Having on You?

- Where are your rules breaking down?
 - Boundary stress
 - Impostor syndrome
 - Emotional labor overload
 - Values misalignment
 - Something else
- What impact is this having on your life?



A large, stylized graphic on the left side of the slide. It consists of several concentric, overlapping rings in shades of light green and teal, forming a cloud-like shape. The text 'Reflection Word Cloud' is centered within this graphic.

Reflection Word Cloud

Type one word that captures what you've been feeling most recently at work:

- Boundary stress
- Impostor thoughts
- Emotional labor – load
- Values misalignment
- Something else
- None (Are you in the right session? The right conference?)



What one or two words captures what you've been feeling most recently at work?



Burnout/Resilience Research



Maslach

- Exhaustion
- Cynicism
- Inefficacy

Shanafelt

- Moral distress
- Role overload
- Emotional residue

ASHRM White Paper

- Negative perception
- Emotional suppression
- Imposter phenomenon

Risk Management Reality

- Chronic vigilance
- Values misalignment

The Five Resilience Tools



Values Realignment

Shift from old rules → actual priorities

Emotional Labor Mapping

Who/what are you carrying — and why?

Boundary Micro-Skills

Say less • Say sooner • Say clearer

Impostor Disruption

Separate role performance from self-worth

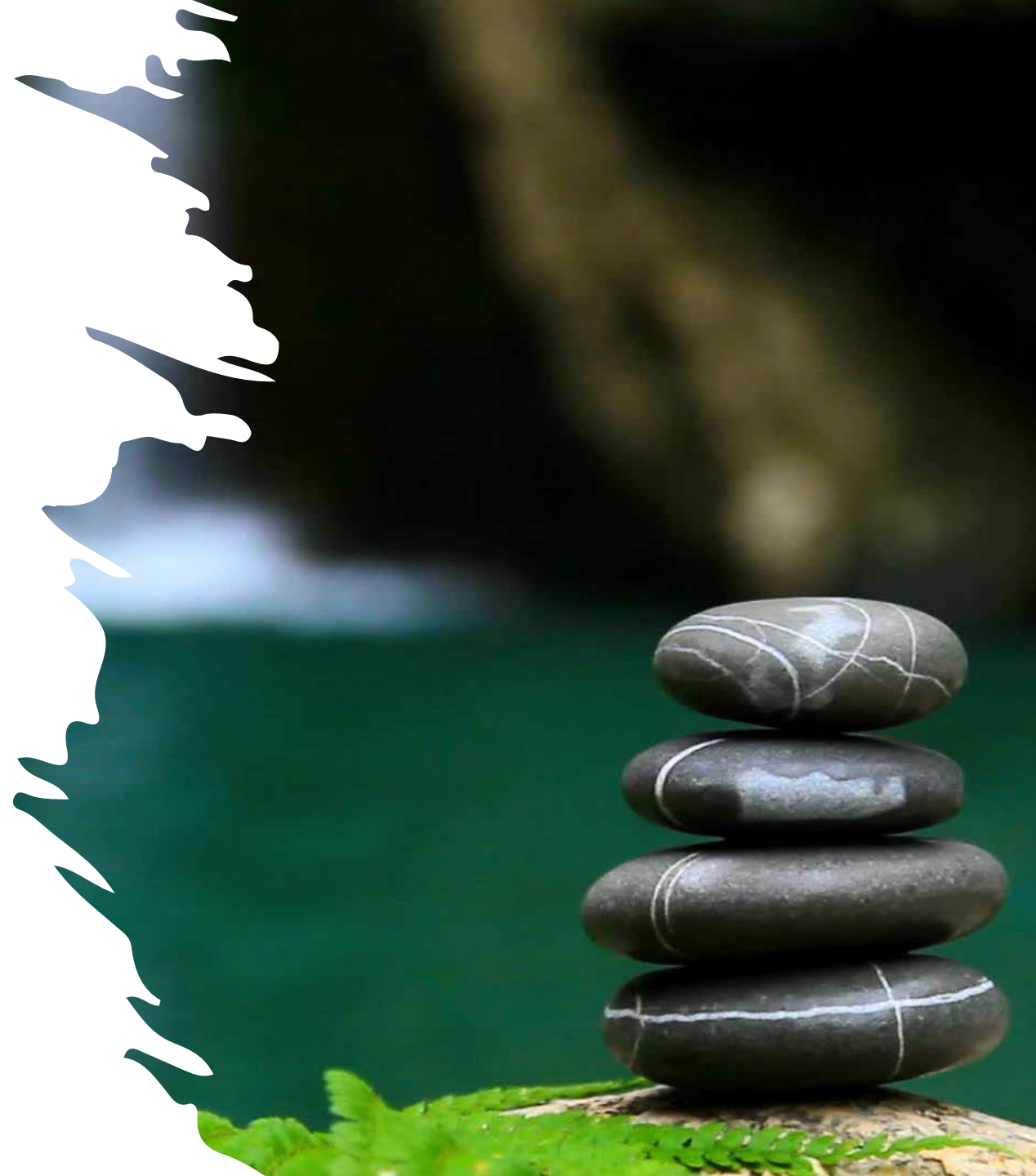
Real Recovery Practices

Restore, don't numb



What “Real Recovery” Can Look Like

- Not perfection
- Not escape
- Not performing wellness
- A life that fits —
sustainably



Change: Recovery Inside or Outside the Organization

- Healing began when I let go
- Leaving old rules wasn't weakness → it was wisdom
- Space created: clarity → identity → a new rulebook

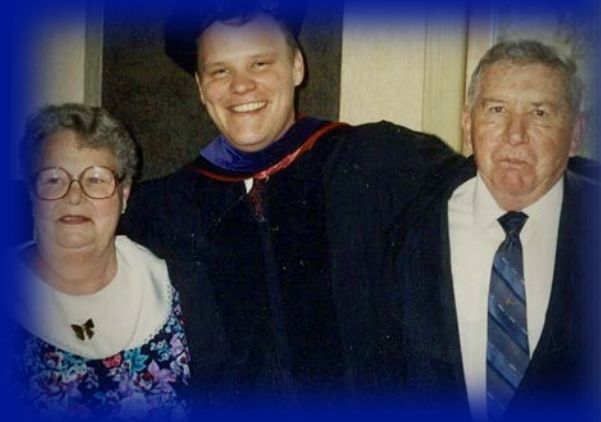


The rules/values I inherited

Achievement = Safety

Achievement = Approval/acceptance

Achievement = Love



The rules/values I now choose

Defining myself

Approving of myself

Accepting myself

Loving myself

> Any achievement

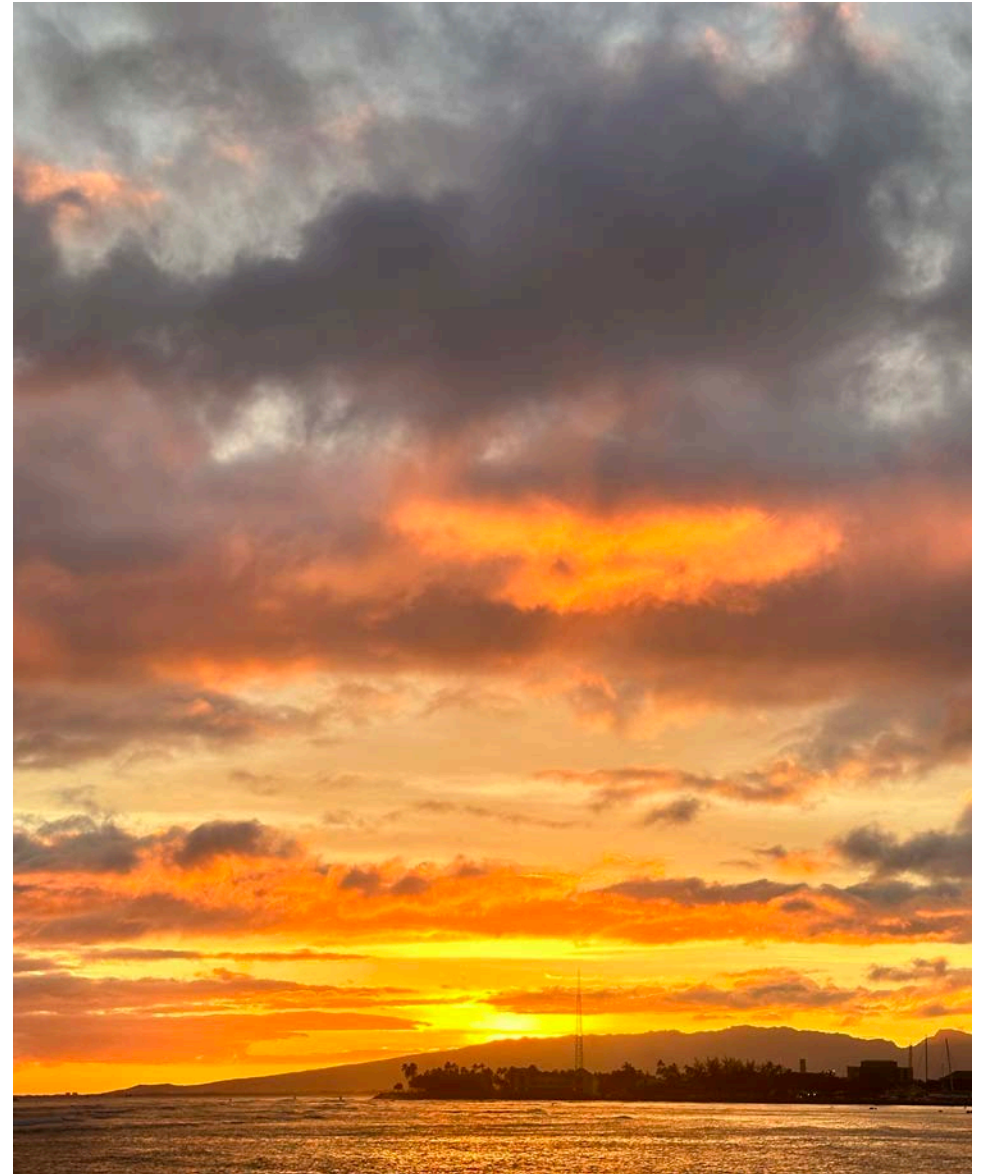
Where I Landed

- A sustainable pace
- Joy & presence
- Movement — ocean, travel, curiosity
- Connection — with people, places, myself
- A new rulebook to fit this stage of life



The Paradox Revisited

- **Too busy to be burned out**
- **Too burned out to keep going**
- **There *is* another path**





Your Turn: A Three-Part Action Plan



One rule to re-examine



One value to protect



One practice to begin



One-Word Action Commitment

One Word: What Will You Choose Next?

Type one word into the poll:

- A rule you want to loosen
- A value you want to protect
- A practice you want to start





In one word: What Will You Choose Next?

A rule you want to loosen

A value you want to protect

A practice you want to start

Thank You

Your rules can change

- Your path can change
- You can change — without failing

- Your work matters
- You matter





References

Brassey, J., Coe, E., Dewhurst, M., Enomoto, K., Giarola, R., Herbig, B., & Jeffery, B. (2022, May 27). *Addressing employee burnout: Are you solving the right problem?* McKinsey Health Institute.

Edú-Valsania, S., Laguía, A., & Moriano, J. A. (2022). Burnout: A Review of Theory and Measurement. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(3), 1780. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031780>

Mayo Clinic Press Editors. (2023, April 6). *Breaking down burnout in the workplace.* Mayo Clinic Press. <https://mcpres.mayoclinic.org/mental-health/breaking-down-burnout-in-the-workplace/>

McKinsey & Company. (2023, August 14). *What is burnout?* McKinsey.

O'Sullivan, T., Al Hamamsy, A., Amori, G., & Curtin, M. (2025). *Strategies for Promoting Risk Management Professional Resilience* [White paper]. American Society for Health Care Risk Management (ASHRM).

Ozturk, Y. E. (2020). A theoretical review of burnout syndrome and perspectives on burnout models. *Bussecon Review of Social Sciences*, 2(4), 26–35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.36096/brss.v2i4.235>

Pacheco, J. (2025, December 15). *The Burnout Risk: Strengthening Your Midlevel Leaders.* Harvard Business Publishing.

Sumathi, P. V. (2025, April 22). Employee Burnout and Chronic Stress: Understanding the Silent Epidemic in the Workplace. *Healthovation*.