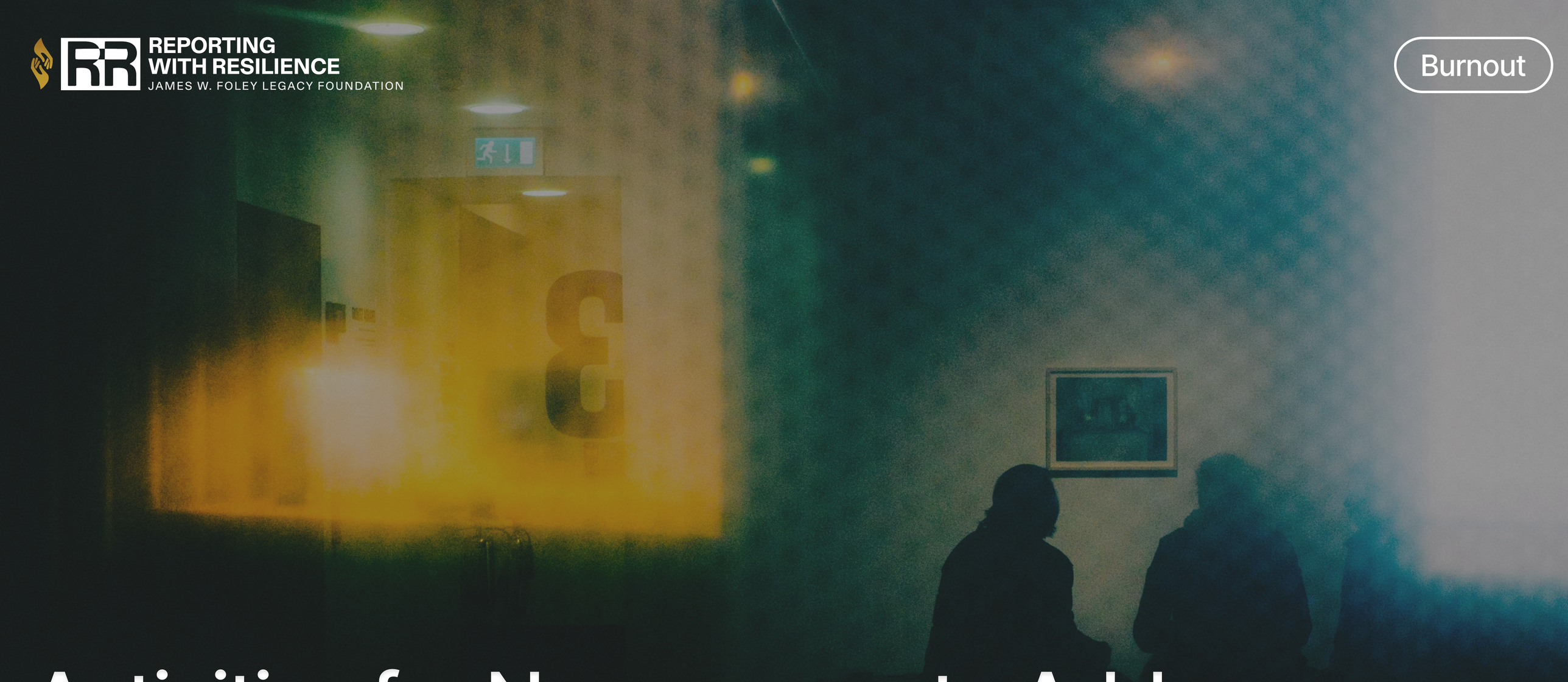
REPORTING WITH RESILIENCE
JAMES W. FOLEY LEGACY FOUNDATION

Burnout



Activities for Newsrooms to Address Unhealthy Levels of Stress

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Directions

Use the questions on the following pages to discuss how newsrooms can better support freelancers, particularly around workload, financial stress, and wellbeing.

1. Hold Regular Wellbeing Check-Ins

Objective

Create intentional opportunities for staff to discuss workload, stressors, and support needs in a structured, nonjudgmental environment.

How to Do It

- Schedule brief wellbeing check-ins during staff meetings or one-on-one conversations.
- Ask questions such as:
  - What has been challenging lately?
  - What is helping?
  - What support do you need?
- Encourage active listening and confidentiality.
- Identify recurring themes and follow up on concerns.

✓ Why it Helps

Regular check-ins normalize conversations about wellbeing, help identify issues before they escalate, and reinforce a culture of support.

2. Conduct Workload and Expectations Reviews

Objective

Facilitate discussions about workload distribution, deadlines, staffing needs, and after-hours expectations.

How to Do It

- Review current assignments and responsibilities as a team.
- Discuss what tasks can be delayed, delegated, or deprioritized.
- Clarify expectations regarding availability outside of work hours.
- Reassess workloads following major breaking news events or high-impact coverage.

✓ Why it Helps

Burnout often stems from chronic overload and unclear expectations. Regular reviews help ensure workloads remain realistic and sustainable.

3. Invest in Recovery and Peer Support

Objective

Create opportunities for staff to process difficult assignments and access support following challenging coverage.

How to Do It

- Hold voluntary debriefs after traumatic or emotionally demanding stories.
- Encourage and model the use of vacation time and mental health days.
- Develop peer-support systems such as buddy programs or mentoring relationships.
- Share information about available mental health and wellness resources.

✓ Why it Helps

Recovery is a critical part of resilience. Providing space for reflection, connection, and support helps reduce isolation and strengthens long-term wellbeing.

Discussion Questions for Newsrooms

Questions

- What aspects of our work are currently causing the most stress?
- How do we recognize when someone may be approaching burnout?
- What barriers prevent staff from taking time off or seeking support?
- What practices help us recover after difficult assignments?
- How can we create a newsroom culture that prioritizes both excellent journalism and employee wellbeing?

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