A woman with curly hair and glasses is holding a coffee cup. The text 'THE SELF-AWARE LEADER' is overlaid on the image.

THE SELF-AWARE LEADER

Preventing Burnout
from the Inside Out

SESSION OVERVIEW (MARKETING BLURB):

Employee engagement is often treated as a culture initiative. But engagement cannot be sustained when individual capacity is steadily declining.

Burnout doesn't arrive all at once. It develops gradually, beginning with subtle shifts in energy, focus, and resilience that are easy to overlook until they begin affecting performance, relationships, and team dynamics. By the time most organizations notice, the damage has been compounding for months.

In this interactive and data-informed session, Samm Smeltzer helps participants understand exactly how burnout unfolds along a continuum and how personal capacity shapes everything about how people show up at work.

What makes this session different: using Samm's proprietary Burnout Stages Assessment — completed by participants during registration — attendees don't just learn about burnout in the abstract. They explore anonymized group insights drawn from their own audience, gaining a real-time picture of where their people are actually operating right now.

Participants leave with a deeper awareness of their own capacity, a shared language for the burnout continuum, and a renewed understanding of why sustainable engagement begins, and ends, with self-aware leadership.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain how burnout develops along a continuum and how individual capacity influences employee engagement and performance
2. Interpret group burnout assessment data to identify patterns affecting engagement within their teams or organizations
3. Recognize foundational principles of energy capacity and how they support sustained engagement and workplace well-being

WHAT MAKES THIS SESSION UNIQUE

Before this session begins, participants complete Samm's proprietary Burnout Stages Assessment during registration. This short assessment identifies where each participant is operating along the burnout continuum — Stressed, Disconnected, or Disengaged.

Samm anonymizes and aggregates the results before the session. The data becomes part of the experience, giving the audience a real, honest look at the collective capacity of the room rather than a hypothetical case study.

For event organizers: this requires a brief registration step prior to the event. Samm handles all assessment logistics and data preparation. Simply include the assessment link with your registration confirmation.

SAMM SMELTZER

Doctor of Medical Qigong · Author · Founder, The HRart Center

Samm Smeltzer knows that when leaders take care of their own energy, everyone benefits. With more than a decade of experience as an award-winning HR leader, Samm now leads The HRart (pronounced "heart") Center — where she helps individuals and organizations create workplaces where people feel valued, balanced, and energized.

Blending her background in HR and Chinese Medicine, Samm bridges the gap between well-being and performance through her work as a Doctor of Medical Qigong. She draws on the Five Element framework — a system developed over thousands of years in Chinese medical tradition — to help leaders and organizations understand how energy moves, depletes, and restores itself.

She is the author of five books, including *Unstuck* and *Renewed: Healing Burnout and Finding Lasting Balance*.

Through her writing, speaking, and practice, Samm helps leaders and teams cultivate energetic awareness, recover from burnout, and reconnect with the vitality that drives sustainable growth and genuine human connection.




OVERVIEW

Sustainable engagement begins with protecting and restoring capacity. That's the central argument of this session — and it's one most engagement strategies never reach.

This session helps leaders and HR professionals understand burnout not as a sudden crisis but as a gradual progression that follows predictable patterns. Using the Burnout Stages framework — Stressed, Disconnected, and Disengaged — participants learn to recognize where people are operating long before the most visible symptoms appear.

What distinguishes this experience from a standard burnout workshop is the use of real audience data. Participants complete Samm's Burnout Stages Assessment prior to the session. Anonymized group results are woven into the session itself — creating a shared, honest conversation about the actual capacity landscape of the room rather than a hypothetical one.

Participants leave with clarity, language, and practical direction for sustaining engagement in themselves and the people they lead.



CONTENT OUTLINE FOR SHRM + HRCI ALIGNMENT

10 MIN

OPENING + FRAMING THE ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGE

- Focus: Introduce the connection between employee engagement, individual capacity, and burnout. Establish why self-awareness is the foundation of sustainable leadership — and why engagement initiatives consistently fall short without it
- Method: Lecture with audience reflection

15 MIN

UNDERSTANDING THE BURNOUT CONTINUUM

- Focus: Explain how burnout develops gradually along a continuum and how shifts in personal capacity influence motivation, decision-making, and workplace engagement. Introduce the three-stage framework — Stressed, Disconnected, and Disengaged — and what each stage looks and feels like from the inside.
- Method: Lecture with examples

15 MIN

BURNOUT STAGES ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

- Focus: Participants review results from the Burnout Stages Assessment completed during registration. Facilitator explains the assessment structure and how to interpret burnout stage indicators at both the individual and group level
- Method: Guided interpretation

CONTENT OUTLINE FOR SHRM + HRCI ALIGNMENT

20 MIN

GROUP CAPACITY INSIGHTS

- Focus: Analyze anonymized group assessment results to identify patterns in capacity and engagement across the audience. This is the signature moment of the session — a real, data-informed conversation about where this specific group of people is actually operating right now, and what that means for leadership, communication, and team dynamics.
- Method: Data interpretation and facilitated discussion

15 MIN

BREAK

20 MIN

ENERGY CAPACITY + ENGAGEMENT

- Focus: Introduce foundational concepts of energy capacity and how they support sustained engagement, resilience, and leadership effectiveness. Explore the factors that accelerate or slow burnout progression
- Method: Lecture with guided reflection

15 MIN

LEADERSHIP SELF-AWARENESS + CAPACITY PROTECTION

- Focus: Discuss practical ways leaders can recognize early warning signs of burnout and protect their personal capacity to sustain engagement and team performance
- Method: Facilitated discussion and reflection

CONTENT OUTLINE FOR SHRM + HRCI ALIGNMENT

10 MIN

KEY TAKEAWAYS + APPLICATION

- Focus: Summarize key insights, reinforce the connection between personal capacity and engagement, and encourage participants to apply self-awareness practices immediately
- Method: Lecture and participant reflection

RECOMMENDED COMPETENCIES

SHRM

- Primary Behavioral Competency: Relationship Management

This session focuses on how leaders influence employee engagement through their own capacity, communication, and awareness of burnout signals. Participants explore how declining personal capacity impacts engagement, trust, and workplace dynamics — and how leaders can strengthen relationships and team effectiveness by recognizing and addressing burnout patterns within themselves and the people they lead.

- Secondary Behavioral Competency: Leadership + Navigation

Participants examine the role of self-aware leadership in shaping workplace culture and sustaining engagement. The session equips leaders to recognize burnout trends, interpret real assessment insights, and guide their teams toward healthier and more sustainable work practices that support long-term engagement and performance.

HRCI

- Primary Functional Area: Employee Engagement

This session explores how burnout progression and declining individual capacity influence employee engagement, motivation, and workplace performance. Participants examine how engagement is shaped not only by organizational initiatives but by the personal capacity and well-being of leaders and employees. Through interpretation of live burnout assessment insights, attendees develop a deeper understanding of the factors that drive disengagement — and how leaders can support sustained engagement within their teams.

- Secondary Functional Area: Leadership + Strategy

Participants explore the role of self-aware leadership in recognizing burnout trends and responding strategically to declining capacity within teams. The session encourages leaders to consider how leadership behaviors, decision-making, and workplace expectations influence employee well-being and long-term organizational effectiveness.

SETUP REQUIREMENTS



PREFERRED ROOM SETUP

- Vibe: Comfortable and engaging — ideal for conversation and reflection
- Demo Table: Small table at front of room
- Room Type: Flexible setup preferred (rounds for 5-6)
- Lighting: Soft, dimmable lighting preferred
- Extras: Space for participants to stand/move during practice examples

AV + TECH REQUIREMENTS

- Wireless lav or handheld microphone (if in a large room)
- Slide clicker + projector/screen (standard 16:9 format)
- HDMI Projector connection
- Access to play light music (optional during reflection activities)

FINAL NOTES

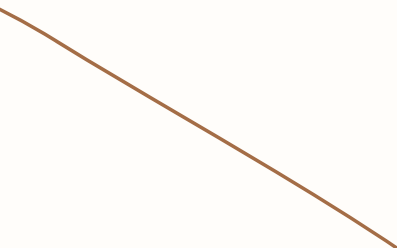
Samm's sessions are grounded and engaging — never performative. Participants are gently invited to reflect, move, and explore ideas in a way that feels safe and accessible.

A note on session logistics: This session requires participants to complete the Burnout Stages Assessment prior to the event. The assessment link should be included with registration confirmation. Samm handles all data collection, anonymization, and preparation. Please confirm the expected number of attendees at least one week before the event so results can be prepared in advance.

This session pairs naturally with [Engagement is a Lie](#) and [The Pathology of Burnout](#) for organizations building a multi-session learning experience.

Samm makes her books available for purchase at events and is happy to sign copies following the session. Unlike many speakers, Samm remains fully accessible to participants after her sessions — the book signing is an open, unhurried conversation, not a brief handshake. If connecting with your audience matters to you as much as the content does, that commitment comes standard.

Please let Samm know in advance if you'd like to incorporate book sales so she can plan accordingly.

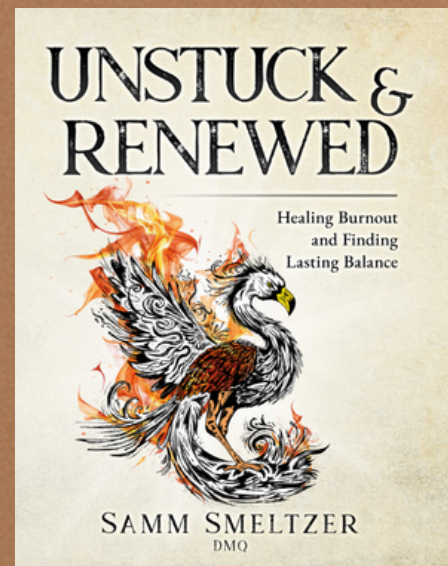
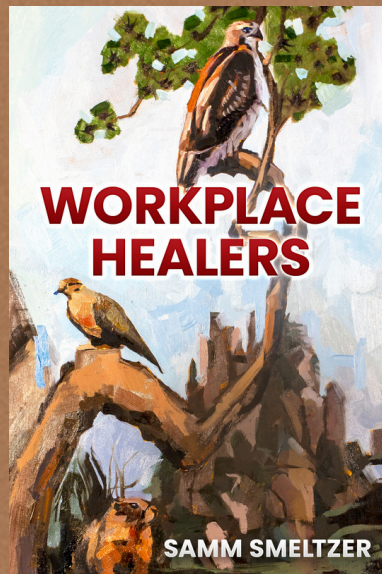
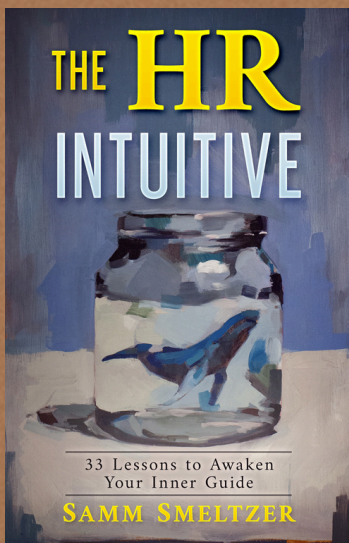


BOOKS BY SAMM

In addition to her work as a speaker and organizational development practitioner, Samm Smeltzer is the author of five books exploring burnout, workplace healing, leadership, and personal renewal. Her books give attendees the opportunity to continue the conversation started in her sessions — deepening their understanding of energy, engagement, and what it actually takes to sustain well-being at work.

Unstuck and Renewed: Healing Burnout and Finding Lasting Balance is the title most directly connected to the themes explored in this session and is available for purchase at the event.

Select titles may be made available depending on the event format and available space.



BOOK SALES + SIGNING

ON-SITE SALES

Samm can provide books for sale at the event. A small table near the session room or registration area is typically sufficient.

PRE-PURCHASED BOOKS FOR ATTENDEES

Organizations may choose to purchase copies in advance as part of the event experience — a meaningful takeaway that extends the learning beyond the room.

BOOK SIGNING + OPEN CONVERSATION

Samm signs books following the session and remains fully available to participants during that time. This is an open, unhurried conversation — not a brief handshake. Attendees are welcome to ask questions, share reactions, or simply connect. Please allow approximately 15–20 minutes after the session for this.

EVENT PLANNING NOTES

If book sales are planned, please consider:

- A small table for book display near the speaking area or registration desk
- 15–20 minutes following the session for book signing and open participant conversation
- Advance notice if bulk copies are requested for attendees

Additional ordering details can be coordinated prior to the event.

SPEAKER CONTACT:

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