



## Mental Health Tips for Managing Burnout

Fall is finally here! The weather is cooling off and the holiday season is approaching. As if that is not stressful enough, Covid is still here constantly changing things with no end in sight. Our professional lives are busy and family activities or responsibilities only seem to increase. There is never enough time in the day to complete the entire list of chores and celebrations that take place around this time of the year. With these stresses comes an overwhelming feeling of burnout. Burnout seems to be growing like wildfire lately amongst many people on a professional or personal level.

**What is burnout?** According to Web MD “Burnout is a form of exhaustion caused by constantly feeling swamped. It’s a result of excessive and prolonged emotional, physical, and mental stress.” It is something that happens to everyone at some point throughout their life or career. There are several different types of burnout that can stem from many different stressors and life events. People may feel overworked, undervalued, or experience stressful life situations that are difficult to manage or cope with. Burnout affects a person’s mental and physical health. It makes it challenging for people to cope with day-to-day stress and responsibility.



### What are the symptoms of burnout?

- Exhaustion or feeling tired/ drained
- Insomnia or struggle sleeping
- Stress or feeling overwhelmed
- Falling behind at work or decrease work performance
- Headaches and muscle tension
- Loss of motivation
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability or increase in negative outlook/ cynicism
- Procrastination
- Withdrawing from others
- Loss of concentration
- Skipping work or showing up late/ leaving early
- Substance use

**How do you identify burnout?** In the mental health profession, it is common to be so busy taking care of others that you don’t take care of yourself. Being mindful about the changes in your emotions and physical wellbeing, can help you identify the beginning signs of burnout. Asking yourself questions such as: Have I felt overworked or undervalued at home or at my job? Am I falling behind or keeping up with life? Am I sleeping? Am I taking care of myself? Am I taking time for myself? Have I been coping with the stress and situations in life?

**What are the risks of untreated burnout?** Burnout can create problems in every aspect of a person's life. Burnout can lead to physical and mental exhaustion. It can also create feelings of depression and anxiety. Substance use, isolation, and relationship difficulties or divorce are some risks of untreated burnout.



**How do we prevent burnout?** Burnout is not generally something that goes away on its own. It is important to be intentional about taking time to balance your life. Ask yourself, “What am I doing for myself?” Things such as exercise, eating a balanced diet, and having good sleep habits can prevent burnout. If you are experiencing burnout, it is okay to ask for help. Talking with family and friends or seeking professional help to manage your needs can be an important step to managing burnout and mental health. It is acceptable to take a step back and give yourself some time to rest. It is okay to say “No,” so as not to stretch yourself too thin, or put more on your plate than you can handle. This would be a good time to use some of the vacation time or personal days you have banked. It is important to take some time for yourself and engage in things that you enjoy. Find a relaxing activity such as taking a walk, reading a good book, or binge watching your favorite Netflix series. Meditation and guided mindfulness are other great ways to unwind and relax your mind and body. Engaging in activities that are important to you or bring you joy can help decrease the stress of everyday life.

Burnout is something that many people experience. I have personally experienced burnout several different times throughout my life. It is naturally occurring and okay. I had to learn how to balance my mental health and the day-to-day stresses that life throws at me. This was not easy and took time. I learned to take time for myself. I engaged in activities such as fishing, going outside, talking about my feelings/ situations, and making sure I went to bed on time (I stay up way too late on my phone or watching television). Take care of yourself and reach out to those around you that you trust. We are all in this together.



#### Sources:

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