

KELLY MENTAL HEALTH

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Burnout, Self-Care and Self-Awareness Overview

WHAT is burnout?

- To deplete oneself
- To exhaust one's physical and mental resources
- To wear oneself out by excessively striving to reach some unrealistic expectation imposed by oneself or by the values of society
- "Super Achiever Sickness" - Whenever the expectation level is dramatically opposed to reality and the person persists in trying to reach expectation, is where you will find yourself on the path to burnout

WHO does burnout effect?

- People in the helping profession are particularly prone to burnout
- Despite this, anyone can experience high levels of stress and demand that has an impact on their mental health, therefore, burnout is not exclusive to any one particular profession

WHEN does burnout occur?

- Burnout begins with high ideals and expectations
- Experiencing chronic stress, cumulative effects of this stress can cause burnout
- The sequence continues when these people continually and increasingly put out a high amount of energy to pursue their goals and/or to achieve rewards (such as praise, promotions, raises and satisfaction)
- If expected reward is still not forthcoming, symptoms start to appear

WHY should we be aware of burnout signs?

- Many of the warning signs are missed along the way
- 1 in 4 Canadian workers reported feeling stressed, with 60% of these identifying work as the primary stressor
- Major source of: absenteeism, mental health problems and unhealthy work environments
- The main factors contributing to burnout are:
 - Unrealistic expectations
 - Over identifying with job, career, or title
 - Single-minded pursuit of goals
 - Limited interests and activities beyond the area of focus

What Causes Job Burnout?

- **Lack of Control:** this is an employee's lack of influence on decisions that affect their job. Examples include hours of work, which assignments they receive, and an inability to control the amount of work that comes in
- **Unclear Job Expectations:** Examples include uncertainty over what degree of authority an employee has and not having the necessary resources to complete work

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- **Dysfunctional Workplace Dynamics:** Examples include working with an office bully, being undermined by colleagues or having a boss who micromanages your work
- **Mismatch in Values:** If personal values differ from the way an organization does business or handles employee grievances, it will wear on employees
- **Poor Job Fit:** An employee working in a job that doesn't fit their interests and skills is certain to become more and more stressed over time
- **Extremes of Activity:** When a job is always monotonous or chaotic, an employee needs constant energy to remain focused, leading to energy drain and job burnout

Three Stages of Burnout:

Stage 1 (early)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatigue• Decreased performance• Stress symptoms
Stage 1 (later)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exhaustion• Frustration• Disillusionment
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Denial• Impaired judgement• Blaming others• Defensiveness• Apathy• Cynicism• Depression
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disorientation• Despondency• Despair• Disengagement• Distancing• Dullness

Preventing Burnout:

- **Balance:** Involvements with family and friends, and activities such as exercise and hobbies all prevent burnout
- **Monitor and Manage Your Energy:** Fatigue and exhaustion are stage 1 symptoms of burnout. Get enough sleep, eat well, exercise regularly
- **Realistic Expectations are Critical:** Realize everything won't always go smoothly. We need to evaluate our goals and expectations and do a reality check so that we don't over-invest

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our time and effort in quests that will be futile. If you cling to unrealistic goals, failure to reach them will be devastating

Questions you could ask yourself if you believe you are experiencing job burnout:

- Have you become cynical or critical at work?
- Do you drag yourself to work and have trouble getting started once you arrive?
- Have you become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients?
- Do you lack energy to be consistently productive?
- Do you lack satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
- Are you using food, drugs or alcohol to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep habits or appetite changed?
- Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, backaches or other physical complaints?

What are some ways to handle job burnout?

- **Manage the stressors that contribute to job burnout:** Once you've identified what's fueling your feelings of job burnout, you can plan to address the issues
- **Evaluate your options:** Discuss specific concerns with your supervisor. Perhaps you can work together to change expectations or reach compromises or solutions. Is job sharing an option? What about flexing your time? Would it help to establish a mentoring relationship? What are the options for continuing education or personal development?
- **Adjust your attitude:** If you've become cynical at work, consider ways to improve your outlook. Rediscover enjoyable aspects of your work. Recognize co-workers for valuable contributions. Take short breaks throughout the day. Spend time away from work doing things you enjoy
- **Seek support:** Whether you reach out to co-workers, friends or loved ones, support and collaboration might help you cope with job stress and feelings of burnout. If you have access to an employee assistance program (EAP), take advantage of the available services
- **Assess your interests, skills and passions:** An honest assessment can help you decide whether you should consider an alternative job, such as one that's less demanding or one that better matches your interests or core values
- **Get some exercise:** Regular physical activity can help you to better deal with stress. It can also help you get your mind off work and focus on something else
- **Get some sleep:** Sleep restores well-being and helps protect your health. Aim for at least 7-8 hours each night

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What is Self-Care?

Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Self-care is something that refuels us, rather than takes from us.

10 Self-Care Tips for Avoiding Burnout:

1. Be Proactive	6. Learn to Say No
2. Schedule Self-Care	7. Consider the Company You Keep
3. The Little Things Count	8. Step Away from the Screens
4. Make your Health Top Priority	9. Reach out For Help
5. Tune In	10. The “I’m too busy” Excuse is not Valid

What is Self-Awareness?

- Self-Awareness involves being aware of different aspects of the self, including: Traits, Behaviors, Feelings

Why Self-Awareness?

- When you are self-aware, you can see where your thoughts and emotions are guiding you
- It also allows you to take control of your actions so you can make the necessary changes to get the outcome you desire

How to Develop and Increase Self-Awareness:

- Look at yourself objectively as possible
- Keep a journal
- Write down your goals, plans, and priorities
- Practice meditation and other mindfulness habits
- Take personality and psychometric tests
- Ask trusted friends to describe you
- Ask for feedback at work

Resources:

Canadian Mental Health Association (<http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/workplace-mental-health-core-concepts-issues/issues-in-the-workplace-that-affect-employee-mental-health/job-burnout>)

Wonder Counseling (<http://wonderscounseling.com/burnout/>)

Develop Good Habits (<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/what-is-self-awareness/>)

Very Well Mind (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-awareness-2795023>)