

BEATING BURNOUT

Many of us have experienced the feeling as though we have been pushed to our limits. Life's hassles simply become too much to handle and stressful feelings continue to build until it feels as though we are ready to explode. If you have ever felt this way, you may have experienced *burnout*. Burnout is defined as "the exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation, usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration" (www.m-w.com). Although burnout is typically referred to as something that happens in the workplace, it can also happen to those who are struggling to deal with stressful situations in other aspects of their lives. The effects of burnout can be devastating—costing jobs, relationships, and even personal well-being.

In today's society, burnout appears to be on the rise. What are the reasons for this increase? Most likely, contributing factors include a combination of longer work hours, higher expectations, and the pressure to succeed, while still managing to strike a balance between work and family

Are you at risk for burnout?

Whether a person is at risk for burnout depends on a number of factors. A person's personality and coping skills can have a significant impact on how they react to and deal with stressful events. Here are some of the most common signs of burnout:

- * Feelings of being emotionally drained
- * Lack of energy
- * Feeling that you never have enough time
- * Feeling as if you aren't achieving enough
- * Easily irritated/frustrated
- * Headaches
- * Negative thinking
- * Feelings of being unappreciated
- * Frequent illness
- * Depression
- * Difficulty sleeping

Here are some suggestions on what you can do to overcome and prevent burnout:

Get some support—talk to a friend or family member
Give yourself a break—relax, take a vacation
Have realistic goals and expectations
Take care of yourself—eat right, keep fit, get enough rest
Be assertive—don't be afraid to say "no"
Learn to effectively manage and deal with your stress

Remember, there is nothing wrong with asking for help. Contact your health care provider if you need information on how you can deal with burnout.

Reference:

Hutman, Sheila, et.al (2005). Burnout: Signs, Symptoms, and Prevention.

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