

Growth & Wellness

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BRING ON SPRING!

Benefits of Sunlight and the Outdoors

As the weather warms up, it's more enjoyable to be outdoors. Make it a goal to get outside and soak up the sun!

Much like a plant, our body takes in the sunlight to help make physiological essentials that help regulate our mood and sleep. Being outdoors also increases our physical activity and social interactions, keeping us healthy and connected. I encourage everyone to make spending time outside part of their routine. You can incorporate a specific outdoor activity, like walking the dog, or you can take a regular activity outside, like having a meal on the porch. There is no wrong way to catch those rays!



Provides Vitamin D
Boosts Immunity
Helps Regulate Circadian Rhythm
Increases Physical Activity
Promotes Serotonin Synthesis
Improves Mood
Raises Energy Levels
Relaxation

THERAPY IN A BOX

Service Spotlight

Jennifer Kirkpatrick LPC, has created a Therapy Box with research-based, Holistic tools to promote relaxation. This box is perfect as a gift for a loved one or yourself as an affordable way to engage in self-care and relaxation!

Follow her on Etsy so you don't miss out on her upcoming themes!

https://www.etsy.com/shop/TherapyBoxByCRS?ref=shop-header-name&listing_id=1280650038&from_page=listing



Therapy Box By CRS

Strategies & Tips to Manage BURNOUT



*You're not lazy –
you're burnt-out.*

Burnout is a syndrome caused by prolonged stress resulting in total exhaustion. Burnout can be caused by stress from work, school, or having too many responsibilities with not enough support.

According to the American Psychological Association, rates of burnout have been on the rise since 2020. This article will help you understand and identify burnout, and give you ways to manage and prevent it.

Understanding Burnout

Burnout is more than just stress, it's a state of complete mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion. Burnout creates feelings of emptiness and hopelessness. Burnout leaves us devoid of motivation, fostering feelings of apathy- even about things that we normally care about.

Burnout is most commonly associated with work and educational stress, but any area of life with high demands and little support can cause burnout.

Causes of Burnout

Burnout is most well known for being caused by stress in the workplace, but it happens across all areas of life. Burnout can happen when someone experiences increased stress, workload, and/or responsibilities and they do not get an equivalent increase in support. Additional, and often unrealistic, expectations have compounding negative effects when there is also poor compensation and/or an unhealthy environment. A lack of control and autonomy also increase the likelihood of burnout, as this often leads to more frustration.

With more responsibilities there is less time left to take care of individual needs. People will often feel pressured to prioritize the additional demands, leading to things like: working later, skipping meals, or sleeping less. While these may be temporary solutions, there are significant consequences long-term. Our bodies and minds can only operate if we meet our physiological and mental needs.

Regular exposure to stress can have significant effects on our health and wellbeing. Chronic stress triggers stress hormones, like cortisol, that create a “flight, fight,” or “freeze” response. These stress hormones negatively impact our immune system, digestion, cognition, and sleep-wake cycles. When our needs are neglected we will have less resources, and our ability to function declines.



Prevention

The best way to defeat burnout is to develop a prevention plan. Having a plan will not only decrease the likelihood you will experience burnout, it will also remind you of some options to meet your needs when life demands inevitably increase. Here are some options to consider when developing your plan. If you have other ways that work for you, add those to your plan. The goal is for you to develop a routine that helps you feel your best.

Symptoms of Burnout

- Fatigue
- Cynicism
- Reduced Productivity
- Inability to Cope
- Disturbed Sleep
- Irritability & Anger
- Changes in Appetite
- Headaches
- Stomachaches & GI Distress
- Poor Immune Function
- Inability to Relax
- Detachment
- Dissociation

Prevention Strategies

Create a Routine:

Establish a routine that allows time to meet your needs.

Routines can help ease decision fatigue, making it easier to engage in healthier behaviors. Try to create a balanced routine that allows for things like enough sleep, social connection, & proper nutrition.

Set Boundaries:

Boundaries take many forms: time, material items, physical space, & emotional. Identify where you need to set limits in order to have a balanced routine. Assertively communicate your limitations & expectations.

Time Management:

Prioritize tasks & manage time efficiently. Use your time on tasks that require your attention & delegate other tasks. Get comfortable de-prioritizing less essential tasks, even if you were taught that they must be done. (I promise, your loved ones do not care if that shelf is dusty.)

Stress Management:

Engage in regular relaxation activities like mindfulness & gratitude. Engage in regular physical activity or movement. Use coping skills to get through difficult moments, like deep breathing. Eat foods that fuel your body, talk to your doctor about using supplements to meet your physical & nutritional needs.

Have Fun:

Make time to be with friends & loved ones. Find ways to incorporate activities you enjoy into your day. Taking time to engage in pleasurable activities will help replenish your energy.

Coping Strategies

Polyvagal Toning:

Polyvagal Toning is the process of deactivating the nervous system from “flight, fight,” or “freeze” to calm, safe, & connected. These strategies can include cold exposure, ear massage, deep breathing, humming & singing.

Connect with Supports:

Ask your supports for help to reduce some of your responsibilities- even doing the activities together can be helpful motivation. Talk to your supervisor or instructor to identify solutions to reduce your demands. Simply take some time to enjoy the company of a loved one; laughter is a great stress reliever.

Take Regular Breaks:

Build regular breaks into your daily routine to ensure you get what you need, both physically & mentally. The breaks can be short, but a 10 minute rest can be the reset you need to keep going.

Connect to Your Values:

Identify what is most important to you & focus putting your energy into your values. Although you will likely still have to complete tasks that don't fully align with your ideal values, give those tasks the minimum energy necessary so you can pour more into the areas that are meaningful for you. Make sure your routine includes engaging in activities that are fulfilling & important.

Change Your Mindset:

Use mindfulness to stay focused and engaged with the present.

Compartmentalize tasks to their allotted time. Focus your thoughts on things you can control. Practicing gratitude for the things that are good, no matter how small, can help keep the negative emotions at bay.

When to Seek Professional Help

It's easy to invalidate our burnout signals by saying things like "Everyone deals with stress." While burnout is easily dismissible, it is a serious concern. Without intervention, it can develop into chronic depression, substance misuse, or even self-harm. It is essential that we tune in to those internal cues to find a way to meet our needs.

If you are experiencing ongoing burnout or it has been getting worse, it may be time to get professional help. Consider meeting with a licensed mental health professional if you are experiencing some of the following:



Feeling Stuck Or Incapable

Don't Have The Energy To Problem Solve Alone

The Strategies You're Using Aren't Helping

Advice From Loved Ones Hasn't Helped

You Just Can't Get Started

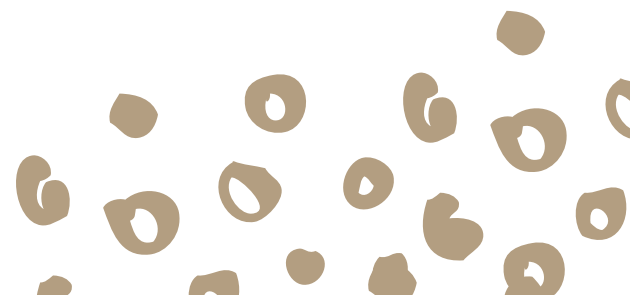
Suicidal Ideation Or Thoughts Of Self-Harm

Stress Has Taken Over Your Entire Life

Social Withdraw/Isolation

Unmanageable Anxiety

Feeling Hopeless



Employee Assistance Programs



If you are worried about the added cost of professional mental health services, ask your employer if your benefits include an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Typically, EAPs allow employees, and sometimes family members, to attend mental health services at little to no cost. EAPs include mental health assessments and short-term counseling services with a licensed mental health professional. EAPs

can also include additional benefits like financial & legal services, educational opportunities, and critical incident response.

Talk to your employer or Human Resource Department so you can better understand your benefits. Take advantage of all compensation offered to you.

Workplace Accommodations

Unfortunately, most settings are designed to be “one size fits all.” I firmly believe that each person’s needs are unique, making this approach inequitable. Don’t waste energy trying to fit the standardized flow; do what you can to make the environment better suited for you. Consider what you need to be successful in your position and talk to your supervisor about how those changes can be implemented so you can be successful and avoid burnout.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) offers protections for individuals who need accommodations. The ADA was set up to ensure that people with disabilities could have equal opportunities, and states that employers must provide “reasonable accommodations,” meaning they must allow accommodations that do not cause excessive expense or undue work for the employer.

The ADA does not provide a list of recognized disabilities, but defines a disability as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, OR a history or record of such an impairment (such as cancer that is in remission), OR is perceived by others as having such an impairment (such as a person who has scars from a severe burn).

Possible Accommodations

Consistent Shift Schedule

Regular Breaks

Written Communication

Reserved Parking

Environment Adjustments
(Lighting, Seating, Temperature)

Modified Equipment

Mentorship

Visual Reminders

Remote Work Options

Commonly Recognized Disabilities

Anxiety Disorders

Asthma

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Bipolar Disorder

Diabetes

Major Depression

Migraine Headaches

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Substance Abuse Disorders

Job Resources

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) has great resources for employees seeking support. JAN has a section titled “A to Z,” containing a comprehensive list of recognized disabilities. Here, you can just click the label that matches your needs to find a list of common reasonable accommodation examples.

Adjusting an environment to meet your needs directly decreases the risk of burnout.

Website: www.askjan.org

Change Your Perspective

If you have been struggling with burnout and think that you are just “lazy” Dr. Devon Price has a great book to challenge those ideas and help you be kinder to yourself. *Laziness Does Not Exist* explains that there is nothing wrong with you, but companies benefit by making you believe there is. Corporations and systems in our society have a lot to gain by telling you to “hustle harder” or “grind it out” rather than addressing the real problems in our corporate structure.

Book: <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Laziness-Does-Not-Exist/Devon-Price/9781797120591>