

Understanding Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual exhaustion caused by excessive prolonged stress. It can take weeks, months, and even years to fully recover from, depending on the severity of the imbalance, but it can be reversed.

Some of the most important things someone suffering from burnout can have on their side are time to recover, a plan for self-care and recovery, a solid support network, compassion for themselves, good boundaries, and a new, more balanced schedule to step into.

Common signs of burnout:

Physical symptoms:

Feeling exhausted most of the time
Change in appetite
Change in sleep patterns
Loss of focus and mental clarity
Low immunity and frequent illness
Physical issues: headaches, joint/muscle pain, ulcers, heart palpitations, chest pains

Emotional symptoms:

Loss of joy
Sadness/depression
Increased irritability and anger/rage
Feelings of continuous overwhelm and anxiety
Feelings of failure and self-doubt
Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated
Feeling alone in the world
Feeling detached
Loss of empathy
Loss of motivation
Increasingly cynical and negative outlook
Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment

Behavioral symptoms:

Withdrawing from responsibilities
Isolating yourself from others
Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done than in the past
Using food, drugs, alcohol, television, or other forms of escapism to cope/numb
Taking out frustrations on others/short temper
Skipping work, coming in late, leaving early

In May of 2019, The World Health Organization classified “burn-out” as an “occupational phenomenon”, not a medical condition.

True You Tapping with Angela Hed Vincent

Causes of Burnout:

Little or no control over your work/schedule
Lack of recognition or reward for your work
Unclear or overly demanding job expectations
Monotonous or unchallenging work
High-pressure or chaotic work environment
Lack of self-care/personal time
Lack of boundaries
Lack of balance in work/play/rest/sleep time
Lack of close, supportive relationships
Being on the receiving end of bullying or gaslighting

Chronic excessive stress leads to burnout, but stress and burnout are not the same...

Stress	Burnout
Characterized by over-engagement	Characterized by disengagement
Emotions are overactive	Emotions are blunted
Produces urgency and hyperactivity	Produces helplessness, hopelessness
Loss of energy, balance, and calm	Loss of motivation, ideals, hope, creative impulses, sex drive
Leads to anxiety, panic, paranoia, depression	Leads to detachment, depression
Exhaustion affects physical energy	Exhaustion affects motivation, drive, joy
May kill you prematurely	May make life seem not worth living

Information derived from:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm>

https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/burn-out/en/

<https://www.pastoralcareinc.com/articles/stress-burnout/>

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