

Burnout Prevention

Burnout is caused by chronic, unmanaged stress related to school, work, and/or relationships. It is characterized by emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that can negatively impact your health, relationships, and daily life.

Common symptoms of burnout

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| ✓ Physical exhaustion | ✓ Difficulty concentrating | ✓ Feeling incompetent |
| ✓ Frequent illness | ✓ Irritability | ✓ Procrastination |
| ✓ Head or stomach aches | ✓ Cynicism or negativity | ✓ Missing classes/work |
| ✓ Appetite or sleep pattern changes | ✓ Depressed or anxious mood | ✓ School dissatisfaction |
| ✓ Alcohol or substance use | ✓ Self-doubt or sense of failure | ✓ Decreased motivation |

Common causes of burnout

Stress is at the root of burnout, but stress can have a variety of causes. Learning to recognize factors that contribute to stress and burnout helps you know how to seek support and solutions.

1. **Lack of control:** being micromanaged, little control over schedule or tasks, feeling stuck in a particular role, lack of ownership or autonomy.
2. **Unclear or overly demanding expectations:** undefined role, feeling unsure about what's expected of you, accountability issues, unrealistic expectations of you.
3. **Inadequate support:** lack of resources to accomplish your tasks, negative or complaining peers, unhealthy relationships, unsupportive professors or supervisors.
4. **School-life imbalance:** low social support, long hours of studying, not being able to mentally disconnect from school assignments, taking on too much responsibility.
5. **High-pressure school environment:** unrealistic school expectations, perfectionistic culture, demanding or strict professors, heavy class load, financial burdens.

Managing and preventing burnout

As you begin to recognize the sources of your stress, you can learn to bring your life into balance by managing your stress and attending to your own wellness needs.

1. **Supportive relationships:** Increase your contact with trusted, caring friends and family. Seek support from good listeners by sharing your concerns. It's also important to decrease the frequency of interactions with negative influences, especially cynical or complaining peers and family members.
2. **School or work support:** Seek support at school or work by talking with a professor, discussing your concerns with your supervisor, or utilizing resources at school like tutoring, mental health resources, and social groups.
3. **Attend to your self-care needs:** Assess your current self-care practices and needs. Where do you need to re-prioritize or establish healthy habits? Make sure you are getting enough sleep, staying hydrated, and attending to your physical health.
4. **Give yourself a break:** Increase balance in your life by taking regular breaks from studying, working, etc. Establish vacation routines (even if it's a staycation) in which you do things to re-energize your body and mind during school breaks and holidays.
5. **Care for your mental health:** Seek professional support if you are experiencing unmanageable school stress or burnout.

[Sign up and talk to your therapist to discuss how to handle burnout](#)