

Self-Care and Burnout

Overcoming burnout involves a commitment to better health and living. There is no quick-fix solution, but there are some steps you can take to help you on your way. This fact sheet aims to help you identify the stressors or triggers to burnout and the actions you can take to help you to better health and wellbeing. Please speak to your health care professional or book in to see one of our counsellors if you would like to discuss this and get support. Remember, self-care is different for everyone, so it's important to find what works for you and to prioritise it in your daily routine.

Burnout and being tired are different concepts, and while there are similarities, there are some key differences, outlined below:

- **Duration:** Being tired is usually a temporary state that can be resolved with rest, while burnout can last for an extended period of time, and is often accompanied by a lack of motivation and fulfillment.
- **Causes:** Tiredness can be caused by physical or mental exhaustion, while burnout is typically caused by chronic stress and an overload of responsibilities and expectations.
- **Symptoms:** Fatigue and exhaustion are common symptoms of being tired, while burnout is characterised by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.
- **Impact:** Tiredness can impact your energy levels and ability to focus, while burnout can have more far-reaching effects on your mental and emotional well-being, as well as your work and relationships.
- **Treatment:** Getting adequate rest and taking care of your physical and mental health can help alleviate tiredness, while burnout often requires a more comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying causes of stress.

Common signs of burnout:

- **Emotional exhaustion:** Feeling physically, emotionally, and mentally drained from work.
- **Decreased job satisfaction:** Feeling unfulfilled, disengaged, and disinterested in work.
- **Depersonalisation:** Detaching from work and viewing colleagues, clients, and patients with cynicism and detachment.
- **Reduced sense of personal accomplishment:** Feeling a lack of progress, accomplishment, and recognition in your work.
- **Physical symptoms:** Experiencing headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, and insomnia.
- **Cognitive difficulties:** Struggling with focus, concentration, and decision-making.
- **Negative outlook:** Feeling negative, irritable, and critical towards work and others.
- **Decreased work productivity:** Struggling to complete tasks and meet deadlines.
- **Avoiding work:** Feeling a lack of motivation to go to work or perform your responsibilities.

Burnout can also impact your personal life and relationships, causing you to withdraw from social activities, feel irritable and emotional, and have difficulty sleeping and eating.

Self-care tips to overcoming burnout:

- **Recognise the signs:** Understanding that you are experiencing burnout is an important first step.
- **Get adequate sleep, exercise, and nutrition:** Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help support your physical and mental well-being.
- **Prioritise self-care:** Make time for activities that help you relax and recharge, such as exercise, meditation, and hobbies; and develop strategies for managing stress, such as time management, setting boundaries, and delegating tasks.
- **Manage stress:** Identify the sources of stress in your life and take steps to manage them, such as practicing mindfulness, meditating, or engaging in stress-relieving activities like yoga or exercise.
- **Connect with others:** Spending time with loved ones and building strong relationships can improve your overall well-being and provide a support system when you need it.
- **Limit screen time:** Spending too much time in front of screens can be draining, so make sure to take regular breaks and limit screen time before bed-time.
- **Pursue your interests:** Engage in activities you enjoy, such as reading, playing music, or practicing a hobby, to help you relax and recharge.
- **Take time for yourself:** Make sure to take time for yourself each day, whether it's a long bath, a walk in nature, or simply quiet time to reflect.
- **Seek support:** Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or therapist about your experiences. Joining a support group can also be helpful.
- **Re-evaluate your work-life balance:** Consider reducing your workload, delegating tasks, or seeking a new job if necessary.
- **Set realistic goals:** Focus on achievable goals and prioritize tasks that are most important and meaningful to you.
- **Practice mindfulness:** Engage in mindfulness techniques, such as meditation and deep breathing, to reduce stress and anxiety.

How to help prevent burnout

- **Manage your workload:** Set realistic goals and prioritise your tasks to reduce stress.
- **Take breaks:** Regularly taking short breaks to help refresh your mind and reduce stress.
- **Regular exercise:** Helps reduce stress and improve overall physical and mental health.
- **Maintain a healthy work-life balance:** Make sure to set boundaries between work and personal life, and prioritize activities that bring you joy and relaxation outside of work.
- **Stay organised:** Having a clear and organised schedule can help reduce stress and ensure that you are able to complete tasks efficiently.
- **Connect with others:** Building strong relationships with friends, family, and coworkers can provide support and reduce feelings of isolation.
- **Learn to say no:** It's okay to set boundaries and say no to additional responsibilities.
- **Practice self-care:** Taking care of your physical and mental health through activities such as mindfulness, exercise, and self-reflection can help prevent burnout.
- **Seek support:** If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek support from a friend, family member, or mental health professional to help manage stress and prevent burnout.