



Recognizing Burnout Guide

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A Balanced Way Forward

Burnout Signs and Symptoms

Burnout can present itself in many ways, sometimes making it difficult to define. Use this checklist to help identify signs and symptoms of burnout. You do not have to have all of these to have burnout. If you have 5 or more, it is likely you have entered the Burnout Gateway™.

- Physical exhaustion that does not go away or fully resolve with extra rest.
- Emotional exhaustion has set in. Having out-of-character feelings of not caring and losing the ability to express empathy.
- Cognitive dissonance between wanting to still perform and achieve, but not having the physical and/or emotional stamina to give it your all.
- Feelings of depersonalization. A sensation of being an outside observer of your life and feeling detached from your experience. A “floating” sensation.
- Immune system impact. Vague, ambitious physical health symptoms that are hard to identify or diagnose. Likely repeated colds, sickness, illnesses.
- Decreased sense of effectiveness and accomplishment. Going through the motions and actively doing the minimum to survive.
- Feelings of increased cynicism, helplessness, and disempowerment.
- A values mismatch between self and employer.
- High level of work demands, and personal demands and responsibilities. A growing gap between expectations and results that creates overwhelm. Wanting and needing to take time off, but it seems impossible given the workload/demands.
- Negative work conditions such as: lack of autonomy, flexibility, inclusion, equity, lack of fairness, no job growth or development opportunities a chaotic work environment, and/or poor leadership.
- Little to no support or understanding for your personal values, health, and well-being.
- Wanting to quit or runaway. Thoughts of throwing in the towel, or a new career, or retiring early. Perhaps some darker wishes/fantasies of getting sick just so you can rest.

Burnout Root Causes

Why is burnout happening? There can be obvious external reasons for burnout, like high-work demands and a bad work environment. What we've found is that there are also many subtle, internal, maybe non-conscious root causes of burnout. These internal root causes are important to identify.

- Passion & Purpose: You are on a mission and are passionate about what you do. You have a strong desire to achieve, serve, and be successful therefore you work extra hours to achieve this.
- Pioneer: You are the first. The first in your family, job, industry, team, company. You are on a mission to lead the way. This leads you to work extra hours and push beyond your physical and emotional limits.
- Problem Solving: A desire to solve problems to make things better. A strong capacity to solve, execute and deliver results.
- Performance Drive: Being a high-capacity performance machine.
- Perseverance Overdrive: A history of having to overcome and persevere through obstacles, loss, early defining moments, trauma, and ungrieved grief.
- Perfectionism: Placing high demands on self or others to have a flawless level of behavior, performance, results, and appearance.
- Pursuit of power, status, achievement, and pleasure: When pursuing these external rewards, a denial of other personal, internal needs and desires gets overlooked.
- Pretending: Pretending you have it all figured out. Imposter syndrome fits here. Code-switching fits here. Wearing masks to fit in fits here.
- Pleasing: People-pleasing. A desire to help/serve. A servant's heart/mindset. Human Givers. Over-functioning and over-giving. Historically you have been rewarded for giving and pleasing.
- Pressure: High, personal, work, relational demands and responsibilities. Prejudice: Not belonging or feeling like you belong. Overt or covert/conscious/unconscious prejudices and biases impacting how one feels and performs.



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