

BURNOUT: IS IT HAPPENING TO YOU?

Have you been calling in sick at work a lot? Or not wanting to go to work? Or maybe you are going home exhausted every day? If so, you might be experiencing burnout.

Burnout is physical or emotional exhaustion, as a result of long-term stress. Burnout is most often related to work situations, but family or volunteer work may cause burnout as well. There may be many needs and demands placed upon you. Burnout can occur for a number of reasons.

Examples of a few situations that can foster burnout include:

- * being responsible for critical decisions
- * dangerous work situations
- * repetitive or boring work
- * long work hours
- * or a change in shifts

Take this test:

- * Do you feel emotionally exhausted, like you just cannot give any more of yourself than you already have?
- * Do you feel depressed or discouraged about what you are doing at work or at home?
- * Do you treat friends, family, customers, clients, or patients like objects?
- * Are you feeling more cynical, callous, or negative?

If you answered "Yes," you may be burned out. What can you do?

- * Try to sit down and identify three major ways you could improve your job or home situation. Write them down, and list the steps you will need to take. Commit to making the changes.
 - * Give up what you can. Put aside extra work, projects, and volunteer time for a few months. Give yourself a break. Just say "No."
 - * Vow to get some form of recreation or exercise daily. Take a walk, a bike ride, throw a frisbee, or play golf, or other fun activities.
 - * Identify 15 small things that give you pleasure. Write them down. Pick one each day, and do it. Read that book, take that nap, visit your friend, or see that movie.
 - * Focus on one thing you are grateful for each day when you wake up, and again when you go to sleep.
 - * Get out of your rut. Plan a surprise picnic, or a moonlight hike.
 - * Try yoga, deep breathing, or other relaxation techniques.
 - * Eat a well-balanced diet, and take a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement daily.
- Life is too short to let it get you down. Take control. Evaluate your situation. Do what you can, and try to accept what you cannot change. If you still feel despondent, reach out and get help.

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