All Work and No Play - Avoiding Burnout

Presented by
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Objectives

• Define Burnout
• Learn the differences between stress and burnout
• Identify the causes of burnout
• Consider the outcomes of burnout
• Get tips for avoiding and recovering from burnout
What is Burnout?

• A state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion

• Caused by excessive and prolonged stress but different from stress
Stress versus Burnout

**STRESS - Physical**
- Overdoing it
- Urgency, hyperactivity
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Primary damage is physical

**BURNOUT - Emotional**
- vs Detachment
- vs Numbness and blunted emotions
- vs Fatigue
- vs Helplessness, hopelessness
- vs Primary damage is emotional
Life’s Top Stressors

(In descending order)
- Death of a spouse
- Divorce
- Jail term
- Death of close family member
- Marriage
- Fired at work
- Retirement
- Gaining a new family member
- Large mortgage or loan
- Trouble with boss
- Change in residence
- Vacation
- Christmas
Effects of Stress

• Stress is necessary in nature
• Modern stress more likely to be chronic
• Body’s reaction is the same to modern stressors as to physical threats
Effects of Stress

- Adrenalin dump
- Increased cortisol & fatty acids
- Increased blood sugar
- Increased insulin
- Increased LDL, decreased HDL

Which can be responsible for:

- Decreased immune functions
- Hypertension
- Atherosclerosis
- Increased platelet reactivity
- Abdominal obesity
- Bone demineralization
- Atrophy of neurons in hippocampus and prefrontal cortex (memory loss, all sorts of mental disorders)
- Increased activity of amygdala (gland that controls fear and all other emotions)
Signposts on the Road to Burnout

• You’re always exhausted
• It feels like a waste of energy to even care about work or home life
• You spend most of your time on tasks that are boring or overwhelming
• You feel unappreciated
• Every day feels like a bad day
• Feels like you’re swimming upstream
Signs You May Be Burned Out

• Physical
  – Headaches
  – Muscle Aches
  – Tired/lethargic
  – Appetite grows OR shrinks
  – Eat more OR less
  – Sleep more OR less
  – Get sick more often
  – Forgetful
  – Unable to concentrate
Signs You May Be Burned Out

• Emotional
  – Feel like a failure
  – Doubtful
  – Defeated
  – Hopeless/helpless
  – Lonely
  – Cynical
  – Dissatisfied
  – No joy
Signs You May Be Burned Out

• Behavioral
  – Withdrawing
  – Procrastinating
  – Turning to food, drugs or alcohol
  – Taking out frustrations on loved ones
  – Coming in late or leaving early
Outcomes of Burnout

• Lose motivation at home and work.
• Productivity drops.
• You feel like you have nothing more to give to anyone.
• You may suffer more illnesses due to prolonged stress.
• Burnout spills over into all areas of your life.
• Relationships may suffer.
• You may feel depressed.
What Factors Can Lead to Burnout?

• **Lifestyle**
  – Not making time for family & friends
  – Not making time for social events
  – Not taking time for yourself
  – Not taking time to decompress

• **Work style and circumstances**
  – Working too many hours
  – No control over work circumstances
  – Being dumped on
  – Not being appreciated or recognized
  – Unclear expectations
  – Monotonous work conditions

• **Personality**
  – Type “A”
  – Control Freak
  – Unforgiving of yourself and others
  – Perfectionist
  – Juggling too much
Preventing Burnout

• It’s critical to note the warning signs.
• They will only worsen if left unattended.
• Taking steps can help prevent a full-blown collapse/breakdown/meltdown.
Steps for Preventing Burnout

- Nurture yourself (at least as much as you nurture others)
  - Set aside a morning ritual
  - Incorporate things you like to do each day.
- Eat healthy foods
- Get enough sleep
- Exercise
Steps for Preventing Burnout

• Reduce the intensity and pace of your life
  – Set boundaries
  – Realize your limits
  – Say “No” and mean it
  – Lunch break every day
  – Walk
  – Turn off your “gadgets” at least an hour a day and reconnect with yourself
Steps for Preventing Burnout

• Spend time with family, friends and other important people in your life
  – Join a club
  – Sign up for a class
  – Exercise
  – Go to a dog park
Steps for Preventing Burnout

• Feed your creativity and imagination
• Learn and practice stress management techniques
  – Deep breathing
  – Relaxation tapes
  – Meditation
  – Yoga
Are You Already Burned Out?

• Take it seriously
• Don’t try to push through the symptoms
• Focus on recovery (= healing)
Steps Toward Recovery

1. SLOW DOWN

- Force yourself to put the brakes on.
- Cut back on commitments and activities.
- Learn to say “no” and mean it.
Steps Toward Recovery

2. Acknowledge your losses.
   • Joy
   • Pleasure
   • Physical and emotional energy
   • Sense of control
   • Sense of purpose
   • Self-esteem

3. Mourn those losses – then move on to the next step.
Steps Toward Recovery

4. Re-examine your goals and priorities

• Burnout means something is not working right.
• Take time to think:
  – Am I overlooking something important?
  – Am I taking care of what really matters?
  – Do I need to adjust my goals?
  – Am I putting the most important people first (including myself)?

YOU ARE A PERISHABLE ITEM.
LIVE ACCORDINGLY.
5. Get support and help.
   • Don’t isolate yourself
   • Communicate to those you trust
   • Open up and share to relieve your burden
   • Seek professional help
Steps Toward Recovery

6. **Tips for on-the-job burnout**
   - Talk to manager, supervisor, HR or someone else in authority
   - Clarify your job description and expectations
   - Ask for new duties if you’re bored
   - Take time off if you need it
THANK YOU

It was my pleasure