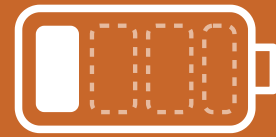


Career Burnout

Understand what is wearing you down, and what you can change.



Welcome. Burnout is what happens when work demands outrun your resources for too long. It is not laziness or a character flaw, and it often hits the most committed people. Use this handout in session, in a group, or on your own.

THE THREE SIGNS RESEARCHERS LOOK FOR

1. EXHAUSTION

Running on empty, in body and mind. Rest does not seem to touch it.

2. DISTANCE

Cynicism, dread, or feeling detached from the job and the people in it.

3. DOUBT

Feeling less effective, less capable, and less proud of your work.

ENGAGED

Energy to spare.
Work feels good.

more energy

STRETCHED

Tired but recovering.
Rest still restores.

DEPLETED

Rest is not enough.
Dread, irritability.

BURNED OUT

Drained and distant.
Doubting your impact.

less energy

Burnout is a slide, not a switch. Circle the zone you are in today. Most people move between zones over time. **FILL IN**

Culture and context: Some people carry extra load: discrimination, caregiving, or financial pressure to stay. Burnout can be a reasonable response to conditions.

START HERE, 60 SECONDS

Place both feet on the floor. Rate your energy from 0 (empty) to 10 (full) and write the number. Name one thing at work that drained you today and one small thing that did not.

IF IT GETS TO BE TOO MUCH

Stop. Look around and name 3 things you can see. Feel your feet. Every practice in this handout works with eyes open, and you can pause at any time.

Please read: this handout is education. It is not a substitute for therapy or medical care, and it does not diagnose or treat any condition. Skip anything that feels like too much.



Understand: how burnout builds

UNDERSTAND

Chronic stress, not managed

The World Health Organization describes burnout as an occupational phenomenon from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is not a medical diagnosis, and it can overlap with depression or anxiety.

It is not only about you

Researchers Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter describe six areas of work life that shape burnout. When several are mismatched for long, self care and days off can only do so much.

SIX AREAS OF WORK LIFE: CIRCLE 1 (MISMATCH) TO 5 (GOOD FIT)

Workload

Too much, too fast, for too long?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Control

Do I have a say in how I work?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Reward

Do pay and thanks match my effort?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Community

Do I have real support?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Fairness

Is my treatment fair?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Values

Does the work match what matters to me?

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Notice your lowest two. Long mismatches drive burnout.

FILL IN

COMMON SIGNS

BODY

- Constant fatigue
- Headaches, tight muscles
- Poor sleep, frequent illness

FEELINGS

- Dread on Sunday nights
- Irritability or numbness
- Feeling ineffective

THOUGHTS

- 'What is the point?'
- Cynicism about work
- 'I am not good at this'

BEHAVIOR

- Procrastinating
- Withdrawing from coworkers
- Numbing with alcohol or screens

MYTH VS REALITY

MYTH

Burnout means you are not cut out for this.

REALITY

It often hits committed people, and reflects a long mismatch.

MYTH

A vacation will fix it.

REALITY

Rest helps. If the causes stay the same, the exhaustion usually returns.

MYTH

Quit and you will feel better right away.

REALITY

Sometimes a change is right. Without rest, burnout follows.

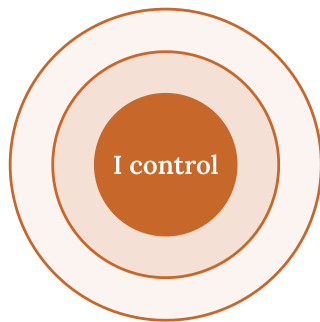


My energy audit

List four things you do at work in a typical week. Mark each as a drain (minus) or a gain (plus), and whether you can change it.

WHAT I DO	DRAIN OR GAIN	CAN I CHANGE IT?

Circles of control



I control

My boundaries, breaks, and asks

I can influence

Workload, priorities, team habits

For now I cannot change

Company policy, the market

What I need most

Tick your top three.

- ☐ Rest and recovery time
- ☐ Fewer demands
- ☐ More say in how I work
- ☐ Fair pay, credit, or thanks
- ☐ Better support or community
- ☐ Work that fits my values

Stay, adjust, or explore?

Tick the ones that are true. A guide, not a verdict.

- ☐ If my workload changed, would I feel better?
- ☐ Do I believe this workplace can change?
- ☐ Do I still care about the work itself?
- ☐ Do I have a financial cushion for a change?
- ☐ Is my health being affected?

First three ticked: adjusting may help. Few ticked: explore options. Health affected: talk with a provider first.

If your workplace is discriminatory or unsafe: document what happens, and consider advice from a trusted mentor or an employment attorney.



Take care and make a change

COPING TOOLS

Too much? Stop. Look around the room, name 3 things you can see, feel your feet, and reach out to someone you trust. Every practice works with eyes open.

2 min



Downshift

Between meetings, or after a hard message.

1. Stand and look away from the screen.
2. Feel your feet on the floor.
3. Breathe out slowly, twice.
4. Ask: what do I need in the next hour?

10 min



Close the Loop

Stress is stuck in your body after a hard day.

1. Pick movement you can do now.
2. Walk fast, climb stairs, or dance for 10 minutes.
3. Finish with one long exhale.
4. Rate your tension before and after.

30 min



Draw One Boundary

One drain keeps coming back.

1. Pick one drain from your audit.
2. Choose one small change: an end time, muted alerts, or one no.
3. Write the exact words.
4. Try it once this week.

WHAT YOU MIGHT SAY

TO ASK FOR LESS

I want to do this well. To meet X, I need to move Y. Which comes first?

TO ASK FOR SUPPORT

I am at capacity and it is affecting my work. Can we review workload?

TO TAKE TIME OFF

I need to take these dates to recover. Here is my plan for coverage.

Rest works best with change. Small, repeated recovery counts.

When to reach out: Burnout can overlap with depression and anxiety. Consider a therapist or doctor if symptoms last weeks or you cannot function. If you have thoughts of suicide, call or text 988 now.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

Books: Burnout, Nagoski and Nagoski (2019). The Truth About Burnout, Maslach and Leiter (1997). The End of Burnout, Malesic (2022).

Research: WHO (2019), ICD-11, burnout as an occupational phenomenon. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), Annual Review of Psychology, 52.

Therapist or facilitator

Next session

Questions:

soulflotherapy.com/contact

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT RIGHT NOW

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988 **Crisis Text Line:** text HOME to 741741

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

This handout is education and does not replace therapy.