



FALL TOOLKIT 2021: DEALING WITH BURNOUT



OCTOBER

Are you experiencing burnout? Burnout is related to stress, specifically work-related stress, and it can significantly impact your quality of life. Ask yourself these questions:

Do you find it hard to stay focused or productive?

Have your sleep patterns changed?

Do you feel tired, lethargic or irritable on a regular basis?

Have you started self-medicating with food, drugs or alcohol?

Do you have any physical ailments such as unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel issues?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be experiencing job burnout, according to researchers with the Mayo Clinic. Unfortunately, burnout has become the new normal for many workers over the past few years. Possible causes of burnout may be a work-life imbalance, lack of control, unclear job expectations or lack of social support.

Other stressors outside of work can also lead to burnout. For example: During the pandemic, many schools shifted to online learning, placing more demand on the student's parental caregivers. This can significantly increase the stress for any working parent and have a devastating impact on their job.

Whether your burnout stems from stress due to work or the pandemic, it is no way to live life. The next few months are a great time to address, learn about and find positive ways to cope and grow with potential burnout.

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes ... including you.”

– Anne Lamott

ACTIVITY:

Take a night this month to unplug from work, social media and technology. Read a book, take a walk in a park that you've never been to, play with your pet or have a nice dinner with a friend or significant other. Better yet, do all of the above!

October is also National Walking Month: Get outside and enjoy the beautiful Oklahoma October weather! An outdoor walk can be beneficial to our physical, mental, environmental and social health. Your dog will enjoy it too!



NOVEMBER

Check out these statistics from Society for Human Resource Management on employee burnout across the United States:

- 67% of workers experienced burnout before the pandemic.
- Feelings of burnout were exacerbated during the pandemic.
- 76% of workers are currently dealing with burnout.
- Feelings of being trapped, isolated and lonely were common among workers.

Spend the next month taking steps to alleviate the burnout phase. Here is a schedule for a month of abolishing burnout. Each week, focus on following the newest goal:

WEEK ONE:

Consider your situation. Is there an issue you can resolve by talking with your supervisor, peers or employees? Try and work out your issues by finding a change or compromise. If your stress is coming from deadlines, consider what needs to get done daily and figure out what can wait. Once you have decided a work project can wait, leave it at work. Find the work-life balance that is necessary for alleviating burnout.

WEEK TWO:

Find support. Support is crucial in any aspect of life. Science has told us how beneficial social support is for our moods, minds and our bodies. Reach out to your friends and family, and make lunch dates to get out of the building for an hour or two. Find people you work with who may also be experiencing burnout. It can help to talk out loud about the things that are bothering us, especially with those who can relate.

WEEK THREE:

Take breaks. Find a break technique that reminds you to pause during the

workday. One example of this is the Pomodoro Technique. This technique creates productivity while also forcing you to take breaks. It is scheduled into 25 minutes of work with 5 minutes of break in-between. After four or five 25-minute chunks, take a longer well-earned break of 15-20 minutes. This technique can help you avoid working non-stop all day while also stimulating productivity.

WEEK FOUR:

Find the joy in little things. If you are truly living every moment to its fullest, it'll be much easier to find joy in monotony. Think about how long your life is and realize that you don't need more time to live a meaningful life, you only need more depth in each moment. While you're at your job, think about the difference you're making. Big or small, you are impacting people all around you. When you're with family and friends, realize how much you're loved and in turn how deeply you can give love. Focus on little things to enjoy the bigger picture.

“Burnout occurs when an individual has experienced prolonged demands, chronic stress, fatigue, a lack of support and a decrease satisfaction in what they are doing.”

– **ASA DON BROWN**

ACTIVITY:

This month's activity is to write down or just think about all of the things you love about fall. Hopefully this activity can help your mind relax or wander to relieve stress. Here are some prompts to help you get creative: Have you noticed the temperature cooling off? What was your favorite candy when you were a kid trick-or-treating? Are you a fan of the pumpkin spice craze or do you prefer your treats without pumpkin? If you could dress up for Halloween this year, what would you be and why? What's your favorite season?

DECEMBER

December is a notoriously difficult month for dealing with burnout. The pressure of a year coming to an end, holiday season, family visits, increased spending on gifts, wrapping up work projects or starting on new ones; this can be a time of immense stress and anxiety that can lead to or intensify the feeling of burnout.

- Remember to take some time to yourself. While family and friends are important, too much time with friends and family can be a stressor. Try and find time in your day to take a bath, watch your favorite TV show, or take a walk around the block for some much-needed silence.
- Watch what you eat. One of the great things about the holidays is the good food we eat and share with loved ones. However, emotional or stress eating can be a huge risk around the holidays. The food we eat affects our body, mood and mind. Before you start snacking, ask yourself if you are actually hungry or just bored, stressed or emotional?
- Schedule your time. The holidays are about being with your loved ones, but we don't always get a solid break from work. At the beginning of the month, prepare your schedule. Whether writing it in a planner or utilizing a calendar on your phone, scheduling your time can help reduce the feeling of juggling too many things at once. Figure out what works for you.
- Learn to say no. During the holidays, it seems as if everyone is moving 100 miles a minute. There are things to bake, presents to wrap, dinners to have, friends to visit – the activities are endless. Remember, no one is perfect, even if it seems like they are. If you don't have the time or energy to do something, you can say no.

“In essence, not exercising is like taking a depressant.” – Tal Ben-Shahar, from his book, “Short Cuts to Happiness: Life-Changing Lessons from My Barber”

ACTIVITY:

It is so much easier to stay in bed all bundled up than it is to go to the gym or for a run in this cold weather. However, exercise is profoundly beneficial to our bodies and overall well-being. This month's activity is an at-home

workout. The easiest way to get in a good sweat from the comfort of your own home is YouTube. The website has a great selection of workouts ranging from cardio, core and even dance workouts!

