

## Workplace Relationships

### **How to Avoid Burnout**

'Burnout' is a stress condition brought on by being involved in an intense situation for a long period of time, without adequate rest and recreation. Although most commonly thought of in relation to a job, burnout can also occur in other situations, such as when we are a primary caregiver to small children or elderly parent. Overall it is often the result of feeling overworked and under-appreciated.

Learning to understand burnout can help you to avoid it. Try to know your own limits and develop coping strategies for periods when stress overload seems unavoidable. Here are some great tips to help you stay on top of things:

#### **Know your limits**

- Learn to control a situation that has the potential for burnout by recognizing it at the outset. .
- Some professions, such as those involving life and death situations, are more likely to have high burnout rates.
- Some people thrive on stressful situations while others are easily overwhelmed.
- Try to know yourself well enough to avoid situations that could lead to burnout.

#### **Taking care of yourself**

- When you ignore your physical and emotional needs during a period of constant or severe stress, burnout may result.
- Good self-care includes eating nutritious, well-balanced meals at regular hours.
- Regular exercise is also important. Try walking or jogging around the block at lunchtime.
- Try to ensure you have adequate and satisfying sleep.
- Regular rest and recreation will help to avoid burnout. Recognize that you are not doing anyone a favour by depriving yourself in these areas.
- If you are in a stressful situation and realize that one or more of your self-care habits has gone by the wayside, it might be time to take a look at what is causing the stress and take action to change it.

#### **Talking with others**

- Share your feelings with others in the same or a similar situation.
- Listen to what they say about the strategies they use to cope.
- Consider joining a support group for people in your situation. For example, a support group for caregivers or new mothers. Sometimes communicating with others about your own situation is a positive step away from stress and burnout towards greater health

- Talk with someone from outside the situation who is objective and might also offer new ideas.
- If burnout is becoming severe and is affecting your ability to function properly, talk to your doctor or to a confidential EAP counsellor.

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