



Beware of Burnout

What is job burnout? Burnout is a state of physical and/or emotional exhaustion that results from a long period of unrelenting stress. Employees experience burnout when they find themselves in “no-win” situations that dissolve their feelings of competency and motivation.

Positive motivation comes from feeling that you have the power to succeed. Motivation disappears when you feel you have no influence over your work, your working conditions or the future of your career.

What Causes Job Burnout?

✓ *a critical boss*

A supervisor who constantly criticizes your work can leave you feeling frustrated and angry.

✓ *an incurable patient or client*

Social workers and others in the helping professions frequently encounter clients who never seem to change. Working repeatedly in these situations can cause burnout.

✓ *lack of recognition*

If you work hard but are inadequately compensated, you may lose motivation. Similarly, it's nearly impossible to be motivated when your job is far below your skill level and education.

✓ *lack of information and goals*

It's hard to do a good job when you don't have enough information or when the objectives of your project are unclear.

✓ *value conflicts*

If you work for a company whose values you don't embrace, your motivation may dissolve.

✓ *overwork*

Exhaustion from too many work hours over a long stretch can cause you to throw up your hands.

✓ *lack of flexibility*

If your employer doesn't allow you to take the personal and family time you need, it can cause frustration with your job.

Change Burnout Into Satisfaction

Know Yourself

The first step is to recognize that you can undo the negative effects of burnout and experience growth and satisfaction in your career.

- Identify the reasons for burnout and then try to change the situation.
- Set small goals and objectives that are easy to achieve.
- Make contracts with yourself to start working on your goals at a specific time.
- Determine rewards for yourself when you accomplish your goals.

Manage Stress

It's impossible to escape stress, even in a positive work situation.

- Keep track of what causes stress in your life.
- Learn relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and visualization to take the edge off stressful situations.

Tailor the Job

Everyone brings different strengths to the workplace.

- Change the job to fit your talents, skills and work style.
- Expand your job by identifying other problems you can solve.
- Suggest more efficient ways to get the job done.

Build Support Networks

Establish and rely on support teams at work and in your personal life.

- Coworkers can help you get your job done.
- Strong support networks build your confidence and help you solve problems.
- Find a mentor who will work with you.

Build Your Skills

The demands of the workplace are constantly changing. Instead of thinking of yourself as a person to fit a job category, think of yourself as having a set of skills to offer to the workplace. Evaluate how you can transfer your skills to different jobs in your company and other organizations.

Negotiate for More Flexibility

Work with your supervisor to find ways to change your schedule, such as working from home on occasion. Take a sabbatical from your job.

Change Jobs

Sometimes the best way to prevent job burnout is to change jobs. You're more likely to find a new job that's a better fit if you understand what's causing burnout in your present job.

Practice Detached Concern

If your job is distressing and you can't change or leave it immediately, strive for an attitude of detached concern until you find another solution. Learn to focus on the present. View problems as opportunities to be creative and apply your skills, knowledge and ingenuity.