

# Building Resilience: One Step at a Time

## Avoiding Burnout

Burnout is described as “a break between *what people are* and *what they have to do*, and it is typically experienced as emotional exhaustion or depersonalization (Olson et al., 2019; Kolomiro et al., 2019)”

Writing about burnout in Psychology Today, Paula Davis said this: “Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “Too many people die with their music still in them.” After finding this quote in another article I wrote, one of my readers asked me, “What if the problem is that people are still alive, but their music has died?” And that my friends, is what burnout feels like—being alive but feeling like your music has died.”

Healthcare workers are known to be at elevated risk for burnout symptoms. Following are a few common characteristics of burnout. Remember, the signs and symptoms of burnout are unique to each person.

- Regularly arriving late to work or increase absenteeism
- Reduced goals, aspirations, and commitment
- Increased cynicism and apathy
- Relationship difficulties
- Increase in smoking, eating and alcohol consumption
- Making careless mistakes
- Uncooperative attitudes
- Overspending

Following are a few strategies that have been shown to help people prevent or overcome burnout and stay vital in life and career.

1. Have other hobbies and passions outside of work – you can’t have a good work-life balance without having a life. Find those things that create passion, relaxation, or happiness in you and make time for them.
2. Schedule non-work time - Schedule non-work and compensatory time for yourself. Don’t wait for your vacation to make time for yourself. Schedule an hour or two each day. Use your PTO.
3. Have a cutoff time for work – Strengthen the boundaries around your personal time and space.
4. Meditate or practice solitude – mindfulness, prayer, and “nature-bathing” (spending time in the outdoors doing simple, grounding activities) are all shown to reduce stress, invigorate, heal, and refresh.
5. Get enough sleep – Stop the work, the screen time, dim the lights, limit caffeine and alcohol, and hit the rack early enough to catch-up. We would process our stress more effectively if we would sleep more.
6. Slow down and sit down to eat – Make eating a break, a quiet time, and a mindful time. It may help to cook more meals as opposed to eating meals cooked elsewhere, as the cooking slows us down and makes us mindful.
7. Get some exercise - Walk to your destination when you can, get outside and walk on your breaks, and schedule walking, biking, or gym time into your week.