



*Protecting our Natural
Resources:
Avoiding Burnout*

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What do you think when you hear....

- ❖ “The JCAHO inspectors are here two days early”
- ❖ “The arrest warrant has been issued, I know they are waiting for me at home-what do I do?”
- ❖ “Unfortunately our numbers are so low we have to make some cuts...”
- ❖ “I told the group that in confidence, now the world knows what I did, I am going to sue you...”
- ❖ “We have another meeting scheduled and yes you have to be there”
- ❖ “Yes, you have to take the exam, pay for it and it is scheduled for Monday”
- ❖ “You are behind on your charting and progress notes...AGAIN!”

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What is Burnout? How does it differ from stress?

Burnout occurs when you feel:

- ❖ **Overworked**
- ❖ **Underappreciated**
- ❖ **Confused about expectations and priorities**
- ❖ **Concerned about job security**
- ❖ **Overcommitted with responsibilities**
- ❖ **Resentful about duties that are not commensurate with pay**

❖ *“Recognizing Burnout” American Counseling Association, A.L. Canaff*

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Burnout can occur when you feel:

- ❖ **unable to meet constant demands**
- ❖ **increasingly overwhelmed and depleted of energy**

Symptoms of Burnout:

- ❖ **once enjoyable work activities now feel like drudgery**
- ❖ **more cynical or bitter about your job, boss, clients or agency**
- ❖ **your relationships with friends and family are affected by your feelings about work?**

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Symptoms of Burnout:

- ❖ **Dread going to work in the morning?**
- ❖ **Easily annoyed or irritated by your so very nurturing co-workers**
- ❖ **Envious of those happy with their work**
- ❖ **Care less than you used to about doing “a good job” at work**
- ❖ **Do you experience low energy/fatigue at work**
- ❖ **Are you easily bored**
- ❖ **Depressed on Sunday afternoon about Monday and the work week coming up**

Five or more may indicate you are suffering from job burnout.

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Is it Stress or Burnout?

Burnout is not excessive stress.

It is a complicated human reaction to *ongoing* stress.

Focus on sense of inner resources as inadequate for the tasks at hand.

Though the signs and symptoms of burnout and stress are similar, burnout includes:

- an emotional exhaustion**
- increasingly negative attitude toward your work**

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❖ Causes for Burnout:

According to the American Counseling Assoc.

❖ Many counselors feel anxious about inability to control their careers.

❖ Ask yourself:

- Have you faced changes in your agency, supervision, the industry in general?
- Was there a pivotal occurrence that changed how you view your job? New boss, co-workers or responsibilities?
- Have you changed? Are your interests or values changing?
- Are your skills and abilities not being used by your agency?

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- ❖ Unrelieved stress can become burnout.
- ❖ Action Steps:
 - Empowerment: Can any of these causes be addressed?
 - Can you speak to your supervisor about:
 - Transferring a possibility?
 - Ask for an update to your job description listing all the *real* responsibilities you have.
 - Do some Internet homework and see what others in your position have for job descriptions and reimbursement ranges.

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- ❖ Burnout pervades every occupation, but it seems to be more prevalent among service providers who “attend to the emotional needs of others.
- ❖ Burnout includes feeling no longer able to give of oneself.
- ❖ Unrealistic goals, thinking working hard enough will get anything done, taking on too much all lead to an intensity of work that cannot be maintained over time.

Kemp, Dumke 05

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- ❖ Worsening burnout may include feeling:
 - Powerless
 - Drained
 - Bored
 - Resentful about workload
 - Like a failure
 - Withdrawn from co-workers
 - Insecure about competency
 - Cynical
 - Anxious



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- ❖ Under conditions of prolonged stress leads the body into the downward progression to burnout.
- ❖ Prevention and treatment of Burnout include:
 - Be familiar with the symptoms
 - Try to identify the causes
 - Preventive strategies are like those for stress management- practice what you preach!
 - Tend to the mind and the body for mental, physical and social needs
 - If you are the supervisor support staff by monitoring signs and symptoms and offering support.

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- ❖ Physical:
 - See your doctor for a check up
- ❖ Sleep:
 - Your body needs not just quantity but quality sleep
- ❖ Eat properly:
 - Develop healthy eating patterns
- ❖ Exercise:
 - Learn stretches you can do in your office, take walks at lunch, consider yoga, swimming, hiking, 10,000 steps etc.

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❖ Mental:

- Improve your coping skills
- Increase self-knowledge-say no without the guilt
- Monitor Depression
- Improve time management-schedule more small breaks, take your vacation,
- Set realistic goals-long and short term, sense of purpose
- Put yourself first- set aside time for you and do things you like, schedule “me time” and honor it as you would other appointments

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❖ Social:

- Nurture your closest relationships friends and family
- Get involved with a cause that has meaning to you
- Address your dissatisfaction to explore options for change- permanent or short term
- Consider a job or career change if need be
- Practice healthy communication. Vent and collect some validation for your ma

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- ❖ Resources:
- ❖ Preventing Burnout- (Coping.org)
- ❖ The Road to Burnout- (Healthyplace.com)
- ❖ Recognizing Job Burnout- (ACA)
- ❖ Burnout-Is it a burning issue in your company? (workplaceissues.com)
- ❖ Antidotes for Workplace (Vibrant Life Magazine)

- ❖ Shop this site for helpful links:
- ❖ www.helpguide.org/mental/burnout_sings_symptoms.htm

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*Only you can prevent counselor burnout-live, laugh and love,
wear purple, red hats and dance as if no one was watching.*