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The Warning Signs of Burnout

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Overwhelming Stress

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place.

Does the stress you are experiencing recently seem to be so overwhelming that you feel powerless, helpless, and unusually worn out? Well, take these feelings seriously, because it's probable that you are suffering from burnout. In this article, we will venture on what burnout really is, what causes it and how we can cope with burnout.



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What is Burnout?

If there's one word that can be associated with the term "burnout", it has to be "exhaustion". Whether it is emotional, physical or psychological exhaustion, the state of being exhausted due to long periods of exposure to excessive stress is called burnout. [1] Simply put, you experience burnout whenever you feel that stress is too much for you to handle, and that you cannot satisfy constant demands even if you want.

Effects of Burnout

Feelings of inability to manage the stress and meet the constant demands of the stressor lead to various effects on physical, emotional, social and mental health of an individual. Since a person thinks he is unable to handle the stress, he starts to feel that there's no need to exert too much effort because he perceives that there's really nothing he can do about the stress. As a result, productivity is reduced, feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and resentment emerge. Relationships with others might be negatively affected, and even the tendency to stop taking good care of oneself, such as poor hygiene or loss of appetite, is increased. In addition, spiritual health can also be damaged, as many people experiencing burnout tend to blame God for the overwhelming stress they experience.

Causes of Burnout

For better prevention and management of burnout, one should be aware of the different causes of burnout, which mostly include:

- Feeling of little or no control over the stressful situation or the stressor
- Lack of rewarding experience (recognition, benefits, etc)
- Vague and/or too heavy role expectations
- Overly demanding stressors
- Unchallenging or monotonous activity
- Superior, peer, or environmental pressure
- Lack of time for relaxation and socialization
- Too much responsibilities
- Lack of social support
- Lack of sleep
- Problems on personality, such as perfectionism, pessimism, authoritarianism, Type A personality

Most psychologists agree that the "Three R" Approach is one of the most effective ways to treat and manage burnout. These include:

1. **Recognize** - The key to manage burnout is early detection, so make sure you assess yourself regularly regarding the warning signs of burnout.
2. **Reverse** - After recognizing that you are experiencing burnout, immediately seek the help of a psychiatrist to assist you in undoing the effects of burnout and manage the stress you have been encountering.
3. **Resilience** - Once the effects of burnout are reversed, and the stress are started to become manageable, it's time to become flexible in your daily responses to stress by means of good management of your physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual health.

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Links

[1] http://www.helpguide.org/mental/burnout_signs_symptoms.htm