

FREE WORKSHEET · STRESS & BURNOUT

Am I Heading for Burnout?

A self-check, and what to do with the answer

Burnout rarely arrives all at once. It builds over months, often in the people who care most, and by the time it is obvious it has usually been there a while.

The World Health Organization describes burnout as resulting from chronic work stress that has not been successfully managed, with three dimensions: exhaustion, growing mental distance or cynicism about your work, and a sense that you are no longer effective. The same pattern can build in other demanding roles, such as caring for someone or running a business.

This is a self-check, not a diagnosis.

IF YOU NEED HELP NOW

If there is an immediate risk to life, call **999**. The Samaritans are available free, 24 hours a day, on **116 123**. In England, NHS 111 (option 2) connects to an urgent mental health service.

01

Stress or burnout?

STRESS	BURNOUT
Too much: too many demands	Not enough: energy, motivation, hope
Emotions run high	Emotions feel flattened or numb
Urgency and over-engagement	Detachment and disengagement
You can picture things improving	It is hard to see anything changing
Comes and goes	Creeps up until it feels normal

02

Self-check

Over the last month, how often have you experienced the following?

0 = never, 1 = occasionally, 2 = often, 3 = most days

	0	1	2	3
Feeling exhausted, even after rest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dreading the start of the day	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feeling that nothing you do makes a difference	☐	☐	☐	☐
Struggling to concentrate or decide	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feeling cynical or detached about your work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Less satisfaction from things you used to enjoy	☐	☐	☐	☐
Irritability with the people around you	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relying more on caffeine, alcohol or food to get through	☐	☐	☐	☐
Withdrawing from people	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working longer but achieving less	☐	☐	☐	☐

There is no pass mark. A pattern of 2s and 3s, especially across exhaustion, detachment and feeling ineffective, is a reason to act now rather than wait.

03

Where are you, and what next?

STAGE 1

Enthusiasm

What it looks like: High energy and commitment, taking on more.

What helps: Build sustainable habits now, while it is easy.

STAGE 2

Onset of stress

What it looks like: Some days harder; sleep, focus or patience slipping.

What helps: Name it, and look at what has changed.

STAGE 3

Chronic stress

What it looks like: Stress most of the time; cynicism, procrastination, withdrawal.

What helps: Talk to someone, and change the load where you can.

STAGE 4

Burnout

What it looks like: Exhaustion, self-doubt, physical symptoms; usual coping no longer works.

What helps: More than a weekend off: see your GP.

STAGE 5

Habitual burnout

What it looks like: Symptoms have become part of daily life.

What helps: Professional support matters. Recovery is very possible, but not alone.

EXERCISE

Next step

1. The stage that fits me best, and why:

2. One change I will make this week:

3. Who I will talk to:

FURTHER READING

- Burn-out an “occupational phenomenon”: International Classification of Diseases, World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases>)