

THREE STAGES OF BURNOUT

Burnout is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

- Stage 1. Stress Arousal
- Stage 2. Energy Conservation
- Stage 3. Exhaustion

Stage 3 is where most people finally get a sense that something may be wrong, but the process begins much earlier and can be stopped at any point. The sooner you can recognize the sequential progression through the stages, better the opportunity to recognize symptoms and take the necessary steps to prevent it.

STAGE 1: STRESS AROUSAL



- Persistent irritability
- Persistent anxiety
- Periods of high blood pressure
- Bruxism (grinding your teeth at night)
- Insomnia
- Forgetfulness
- Heart palpitations
- Unusual heart rhythms (skipped beats)
- Inability to concentrate
- Headaches

Includes any two of the following symptoms

STAGE 2: ENERGY CONSERVATION



- Lateness for work
- Procrastination
- Needed three-day weekends
- Decreased sexual desire
- Persistent tiredness in the mornings
- Turning work in late
- Social withdrawal (from friends and/or family)
- Cynical attitudes
- Resentfulness
- Increased coffee/tea/cola consumption
- Increased alcohol consumption
- Apathy

Includes any two of the following symptoms

STAGE 3: EXHAUSTION



- Chronic sadness or depression
- Chronic stomach or bowel problems
- Chronic mental fatigue
- Chronic physical fatigue
- Chronic headaches
- The desire to "drop out" of society
- The desire to move away from friends, work, and perhaps even family
- Perhaps the desire to commit suicide

Includes any two of the following symptoms

Girdin, D.A., Everly, G.S. and Dusek, D.E., Controlling Stress and Tension, Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, MA, 1996
From the Continuing Medical Education website of the Texas Medical Association
<http://www.texmed.org/cme/phn/psb/burnout.asp>



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