

DISASTER SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE TIP SHEETS

<p>Topic:</p>	<p>Recognizing and Preventing Burnout in Yourself</p>
<p>Aim:</p>	<p>This tip sheet provides guidance on recognizing when you are at risk of burning out, or starting to burnout, including what to do when you see the key signs of burnout.</p>
<p>General Information:</p>	<p>Burnout is a state of emotional, physical and spiritual exhaustion from prolonged stress. When you are in a situation where the demands exceed your resources and it continues for a long time hen you are at significant risk of burnout.</p> <p>It is important to recognize, prevent and treat burnout because it destroys your productivity, saps your energy, and in extreme cases can lead to a total collapse. This starts with understanding the difference between stress and burnout. Stress is a state of <i>activation</i>. We face challenges or threats and our bodies activate for action. Signs of stress include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Sleeplessness • Pressure • A sense that life would be OK if you just got things under control. <p>Burnout comes from prolonged stress and is a state of <i>deactivation</i> that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal • Depression • Feeling hopeless • Discouragement about life
<p>Ways You May Be At Risk:</p>	<p>There are many factors that put us at risk of burnout, including personal, social, and work-related factors.</p> <p>Personal factors include being a perfectionist or demanding near perfection from self and/or others; being pessimistic or negative, quick to find fault, feeling the need to personally be in control of everything around you, multiple physical ailments, and being a Type A personality with great demands for achievement. You can see that these personal factors increase stress and make it difficult to relieve constant stress.</p> <p>Social factors include unresolved marital or family problems, many people with expectations for you to help them, lack of friendships or close relationships, insufficient sleep, lack of exercise, or feeling that you have many demands with little help or support from others.</p> <p>Work factors include working extended periods of time without a break, unclear or poorly defined expectations, a sense of failure or fear of losing your job, working in a disorganized or chaotic environment, or working with little or no recognition or support.</p> <p>You may see that these signs can describe the life of many other helpers.</p>

<p>Signs You are Experiencing Burnout:</p>	<p>There are multiple signs of burnout in addition to the few mentioned above. They can be grouped as physical, emotional and behavioral signs:</p> <p>Physical signs of burnout include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic fatigue • Low energy • Low immunity; Frequently ill • Poor or changing appetite <p>Emotional signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self doubt or a sense of failure • Constant self-doubt or questioning • Flat affective, lack of enjoyment in things that usually make you happy • Sense of defeat and discouragement <p>Behavioral signs of burnout include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procrastination or avoidance of responsibility • Withdrawal or isolation of yourself from others • Turning to excess food or drugs • Lack of discipline in your self-care, such as exercise, hygiene or grooming <p>Spiritual signs of burnout include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual disconnection and isolation (e.g., “God has abandoned me.”) • Religious strain (e.g., “God is so far away from me.”) • Major changes in spiritual meaning-making (e.g., “Why would a good God let such a bad thing to happen—I don’t think I can believe in that God anymore.”)
<p>What To Do about Burnout:</p>	<p>You address burnout with the three “Rs”: Recognition, Reversal, and Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition – Learn the warning signs of burnout (above). Ask yourself if you are someone who tends to ignore your personal needs. If the answer is “yes”, then ask someone who knows you and whom you trust to watch you for signs of burnout. • Reverse – When you see the signs of burnout, then start to reverse the burnout by making rest, care, and lowered stress a high priority. That does not mean you have to stop everything you are doing. It does mean that no one can function at a state of high stress without a break. Take these steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lower the demands on yourself, at least temporarily. In the long term you will accomplish more if you vary the demands and stress. ○ Emphasize tasks within your control. Feeling out of control is distressing. If your work places demands that you cannot fulfill, then you must renegotiate them. ○ Build in a regular time when you are away from the demands. ○ Take up alternate activities that are satisfying and low stress ○ We all have multiple areas of our life, such as marriage, family life, career, social life, etc. Make it a priority to ensure that you do not face great stress in more than one area at a time. If there are problems in marriage or family as well as work, then deal with the personal areas of your life first and lower the conflict or stress.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience – Examine your life style and look for ways to build your ability to withstand stress. Activities that provide rest and improve your self-management. Seek out spiritual and social support.
<p>Other Resources:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harding, S. (2007). <i>Spiritual care and mental health for disaster response and recovery</i>. New York: New York Disaster Interfaith Services. • National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2006). <i>Psychological first-aid: Field operations guide for community religious professionals</i>. Los Angeles, CA: Author. • National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. (2009). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Points of Consensus</i>. Arlington, VA: Author. • National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. <i>Light our way: A guide for spiritual care in times of disasters</i>. Arlington, VA: Author. • Roberts, S., & Ashley, W. (2008). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Practical clergy responses to community, regional, and national tragedy</i>. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing.

CITATION: Boan, D. & Aten, J. (2012). *Tip sheet: Recognizing and preventing burnout in yourself*. Wheaton, IL: Humanitarian Disaster Institute, Wheaton College.

