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Avoiding Job Burnout

Some think burnout on the job is just an excuse used by the weak to get out of responsibilities. Recent experiences in the workplace suggest this is not necessarily so. Stress and burnout can affect your immune system and has been linked to migraines, digestive disorders, skin diseases, high blood pressure and heart disease. It can cause emotional distress as well.

"Job burnout is a response to work stress that leaves you feeling powerless, hopeless, fatigued, drained and frustrated," writes Dr. Audrey L. Canaff, an Assistant Professor in the Counseling Program at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, on WorkplaceBlues.com. "But since job burnout is not an overnight occurrence, it's important to recognize its early signs and to act before the problem becomes truly serious." Consider these five warning signs of burnout:

Sign No. 1: Your co-workers are walking on eggshells around you.

If you find yourself becoming cranky and irritable with co-workers you used to get along with, it may be more than just typical interpersonal dynamics.

Sign No. 2: You come in late and want to leave earlier.

You used to wake up in the morning excited for another day, but now every day you dread heading into the office. Once lunch passes you start watching the clock, counting the minutes to the end of the day.

Sign No. 3: Apathy has replaced enthusiasm.

You feel no motivation, no sense of accomplishment and have no desire to be challenged. Those who have burnout lose their motivation to perform, as well as their feelings of pride for a job well done.

Sign No. 4: You've lost camaraderie with co-workers.

You're no longer interested in the company network. You used to go to lunch, go out for drinks and participate in other company functions but now have no desire in socializing in or out of the office.

Sign No. 5: You're feeling physically sick.

You always feel exhausted, have headaches, feel tension in all of your muscles and are having trouble sleeping. These physical signs are common indicators of job stress, and demonstrate that this can turn into a physical problem.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, it's time to make some changes. You can start by talking to your manager about how you can confront the problem together by redefining deadlines or delegating more. You can contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#).

In her book "Stress Management for Busy People," Carol A. Turkington recommends taking these proactive steps:

- Learn to say no
- Reevaluate your goals
- Reduce your commitments at work and at home
- Learn stress management skills
- Get plenty of rest and eat a healthy diet

Finally, give yourself a break. This means taking your vacation days, no matter how important your job is, and taking little breaks every day to re-group, re-energize and unwind. Remember, if you don't take care of yourself in the office, your work and staff morale will suffer and your health may pay the price, too.