

# Reducing the Risk of Burnout



## What is Burnout?

Burnout results when excessive and chronic workplace stress is not successfully managed. The most common signs of burnout include:

- Feeling physically, mentally and/or emotionally exhausted
- Feelings of negativity or cynicism
- Reduced effectiveness and productivity; difficulty performing your usual duties
- Feeling disconnected or disengaged from your job
- Feeling overwhelmed, and/or emotionally drained

Burnout can spill over into your personal life, manifesting in tiredness, irritability, mood swings or increased emotional sensitivity, sleep difficulties, and difficulty coping with usual activities, etc.

Mind Tools has a quick screening tool for assessing burnout on their website [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)

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## Tips for Managing or Reducing the Risk of Burnout

- Take regular leave. Decide when to take leave, ahead of time, and make sure that you book that time off.
- Engage in self-care in your personal time: getting enough sleep, regular exercise, eating well, taking time to do what you enjoy or the things that relax you, etc.
- Prioritise your work tasks – find a system that works to identify what needs to be done, and what can wait. It might be a traffic light system such as
  - Green** = today/this week,
  - Amber** = can wait/non-urgent,
  - Blue** = not a current priority and/or can be delegated.



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## Setting Boundaries

- Don't volunteer for additional tasks if you don't have capacity.
- Learn to say "no" or "later" to requests, when appropriate.
- Delegate tasks to others where possible.
- Get organised – for example block out specific times for specific tasks such as checking emails. Spontaneously responding to emails as they arrive interrupts workflow and it takes additional time to recover from the interruption. Decide your boundaries for checking emails and work systems (e.g. not on weekends, after hours, after 4pm on Fridays).
- Decrease other interruptions (e.g. notifications, spontaneously responding to non-urgent requests, etc).
- If possible, close your office door for certain periods through the day or the week to focus on specific tasks.
- Make sure you take a lunch break and any other allocated breaks (e.g. morning tea breaks if they are a part of your working conditions). Don't eat at your desk, instead get outside or away from the office during your break when you can.

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## Implement Changes

- Speak to a manager or supervisor to problem solve issues, e.g. systems issues, excessive workload.
- Consider changing your work hours or shifts if possible, even if just temporarily.
- Utilise the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other counselling options if you would like confidential external support.

**Remember:** Your mental health and wellbeing are important, and taking time off, taking care of yourself, and prioritising your needs so that you can function without symptoms of burnout will result in benefits, not just for you but also for your colleagues, boss(es), the organisation, and your family/loved ones.

See our website [www.hummingbirdcentre.com.au/our-team](http://www.hummingbirdcentre.com.au/our-team) for further information on our team members and services including EAP, and please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or queries.

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