

Identifying and addressing signals of burnout

The World Health Organization says that burnout is a state of chronic stress that leads to:

- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Cynicism and detachment
- Feelings of distraction or hopelessness

Our bodies and minds give us signals that we are risking burnout. These signals can include:

- You're exhausted but can't sleep.
- You feel cynical.
- You feel detached at your job.
- You get irritated easily.
- You find it hard to focus.
- You have headaches or stomach issues.
- You use food, tobacco or alcohol for comfort.
- You feel apathetic or hopeless.
- You find it difficult to do your work.



When you're feeling these stress, it's important to do what you can address it and avoid burnout.

- **Move your body.** Stress is a neurological response to a real or perceived threat. Your muscles will contract, your focus will narrow, and other body systems will slow down. To move through this, you can move your body – a walk or run, jumping jacks, or taking a bike ride – which will signal to your body that you have escaped the threat.
- **Practice good sleep and resting habits.** Science tells us we need to spend about 10 hours a day in total with sleep and rest. Restful activities are individual. It may be a nice bath, going for a walk, reading a book or talking to a friend on the phone.
- **Adjust your diet.** Adding foods rich in omega-3s like flaxseed oil, walnuts and fish may help give your mood a boost.
- **Connect to others.** Connection to others is as important as food and breathing. We co-regulate when we connect to others - our heart beats may synch and our moods change. So, a friend or family member who is happy or calm can help you to relieve stress.
- **Ask for help.** During stressful times, it's important to reach out for help from friends, family or professionals.
- **Find what rejuvenates your spirit.** This may be a hobby, time with family, exercise, or nature. Take the time to do the things that bring you joy.