



WORKBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Effective Stress Webinar!

The aim and purpose of our time together is three-fold

- 1) Explore what stress is, our particular stressors and how to manage them
- 2) Define and identify signs of compassion fatigue
- 3) Employ strategies to avoid burnout

King Solomon wrote more than 3,000 years ago . . .

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” Proverbs 4:23

Above all else is a big claim and suggests this is vital for life!

You can't “guard your heart”, unless you are *deliberately, continually intentional*.

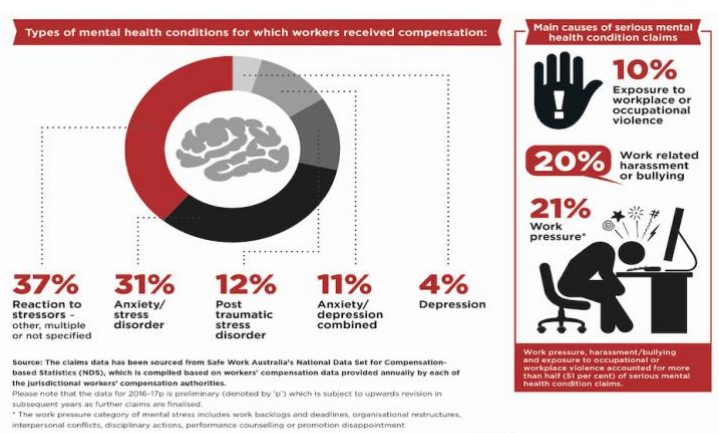
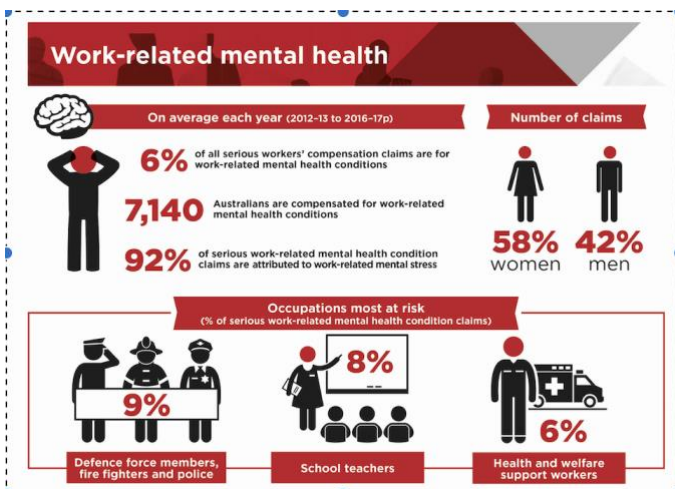
So we are going to focus on how do you react when you are under stress, signs to look for that indicate your life is out of balance, strategies to regularly use that will reduce the risk of being overly stressed and not able to cope.

Of course, there no program that you can do, or faith that you can muster, that will “stress proof” or “burnout proof” your career – but putting in place these strategies will help you and normalising these issues we all face in caring will support you.

For some the idea of “self-care” can seem selfish, our whole focus in life as an employee or employer, a friend, a spouse, a parent, a neighbour can be “care giving” rather than “care receiving”. If wonderful to have an others focus and provide care, support & love to those in your sphere of influence. ***We do not wish to paint educating & caring with rose coloured glasses ...caring costs!***

In order for self-care to be effective in the long term it needs to be:

- Deliberate
- Continual
- Intentional



Source: The claims data has been sourced from Safe Work Australia's National Data Set for Compensation-based Statistics (NDS), which is compiled based on workers' compensation data provided annually by each of the jurisdictional workers' compensation authorities. Please note that the data for 2016-17p is preliminary (denoted by 'p') which is subject to upwards revision in subsequent years as further claims are finalised. * The work pressure category of mental stress includes work backlogs and deadlines, organisational restructures, interpersonal conflicts, disciplinary actions, performance counselling or promotion disappointment



Source: Safe Work Australia



One in five Australian employees report that they have taken time off work due to feeling mentally unwell in the past 12 months.



As reported by Beyond Blue 2020

Stress Management

We live in a busy world where there are a lot of demands and pressures on us, which can tax or stress us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Stress is common in daily life and may be associated with our work, family or other personal relationships.

What is Stress?

Stress is a response to an event or situation. It can be positive or negative. It usually means that something is happening that's causing worry and affecting how we are thinking and feeling. It includes changes in how I view things, how I feel about things, how I respond to things and also changes in the physical functioning of my body.

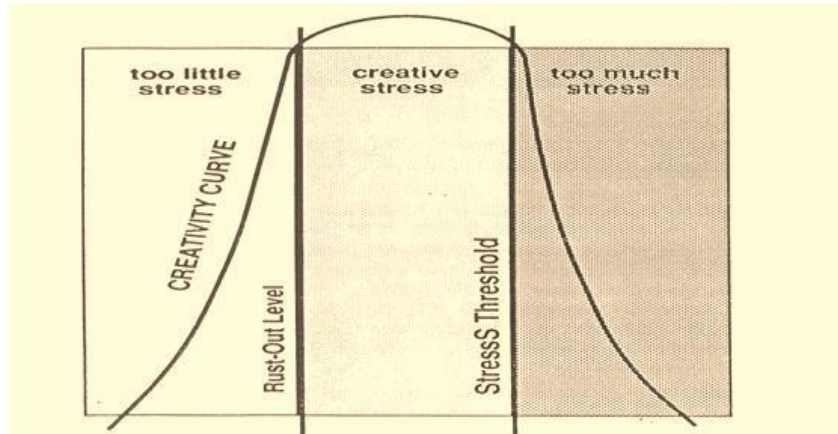
Distress is:

- Being stretched beyond your limits
 - Extending yourself without adequate time for recovery
 - Over arousal of your adrenal system
 - If not managed . . . Accelerated dying!

Activity

What are some sources of stress in your life?	
Work	
Family	
Personal Relationships	
Other	

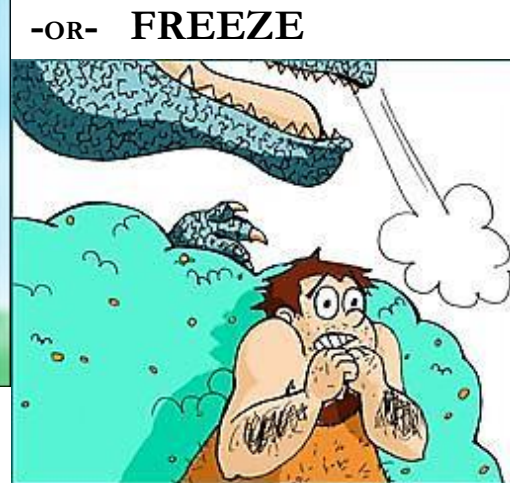
We can't live without stress, but too much stress is also not good for us. It affects our creativity and our performance.



Fight, Flight or Freeze

You may have heard of the fight, flight or freeze response of our bodies when faced with stress.

Our body responds with both **noticeable** effects and **hidden** effects



See Video on Fight Flight Response - www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2GywoS77qc

Notes from Video:

What is ATP?

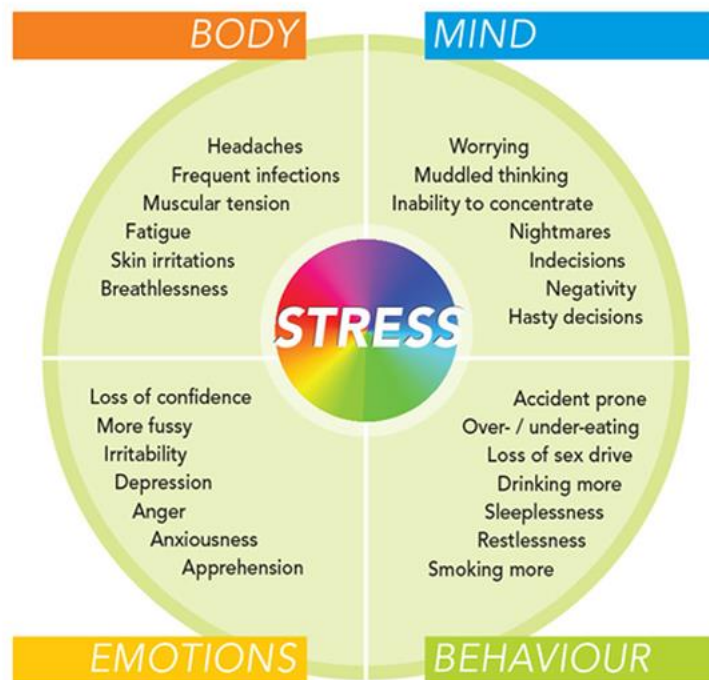
Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) is a multifunctional nucleotide used in cells as a coenzyme. It is often called the "molecular unit of currency" of intracellular energy transfer. ATP transports chemical energy within cells for metabolism.

**What changes you have noticed in yourself when you are faced with stress?
How do you react when under stress?**

How could you manage stress reactions?

Impact of Stress

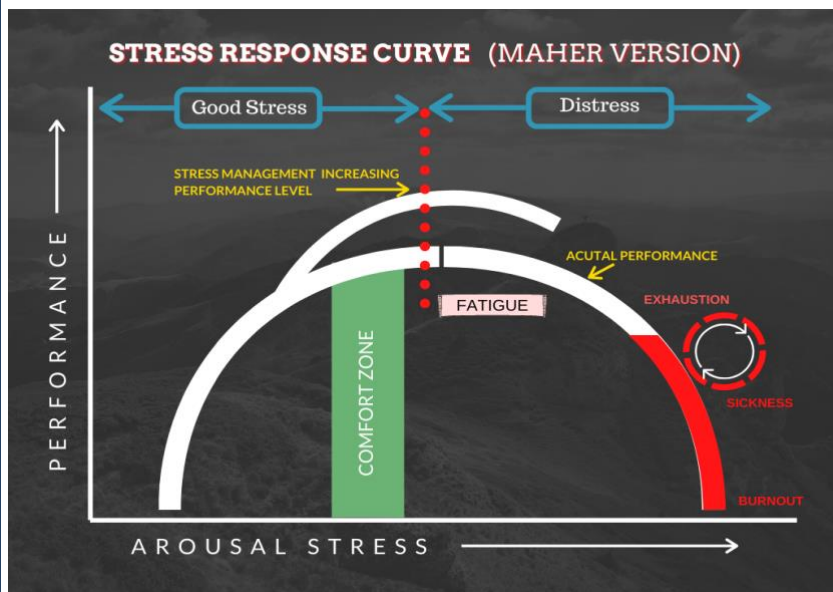
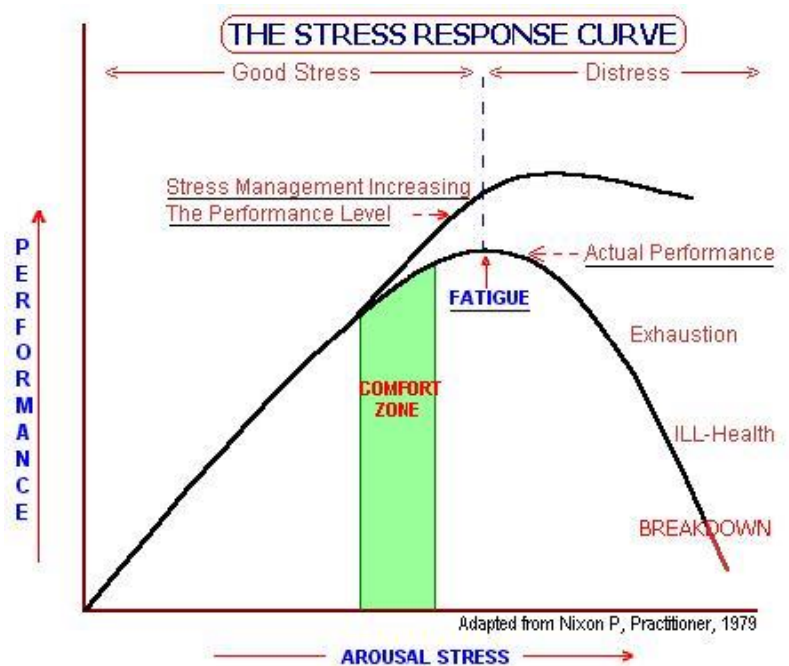
The impacts of stress listed here may occur as a result of a stressor. The higher the level of stress experienced the more impact it will have on your body and mind.



Stress – OK in the short term

Our body is designed for a short-term stress response. You can see from the diagram below that some stress is good for you and when at the right level can optimize performance.

On the other hand, too much stress results in adverse effects such as much poorer performance and can lead to exhaustion, and ill health.



Why the revision of Nixon's diagram?

There is a definite cycle experienced between exhaustion and sickness particularly when fatigue and the required rest/recovery period are not adhered to.

When the underlying causes of fatigue are not identified and dealt with, people tend to end up in a cycle of dealing with exhaustion by becoming sick, then being forced to rest. Feeling better but still in fatigue.

The potential is for this cycle to go on for quite some time.

But continual "burning the candle at both ends" eventually leads to burnout!

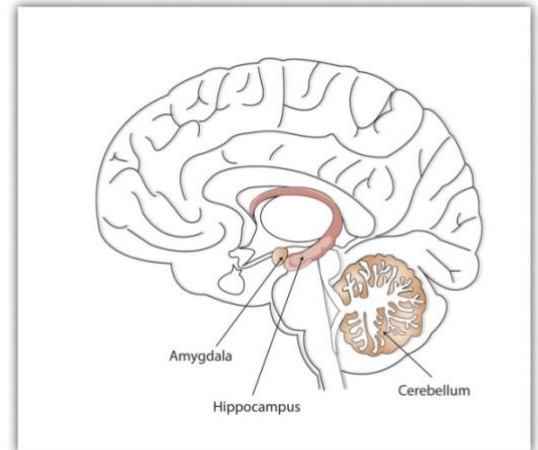
How stress affects us in the long term

When a person is experiencing stress over a long period of time, there is prolonged release of the adrenal steroids (glucocorticoids) and these are damaging to the body in the long term.

In the short term glucocorticoids help us survive by preparing us for fight or flight. In the long term these hormones can cause hypertension, ulcers, affect our immune system, cause us to experience anxiety and panic, affect our cholesterol levels, and affect our memory.

The hippocampus is the part of the brain that has a primary role in learning and memory and the production of new nerve tissue. It is crucial in consolidating short term to long term memory.

When this part of the brain is bombarded by prolonged exposure to glucocorticoids, it atrophies and the memory is affected.

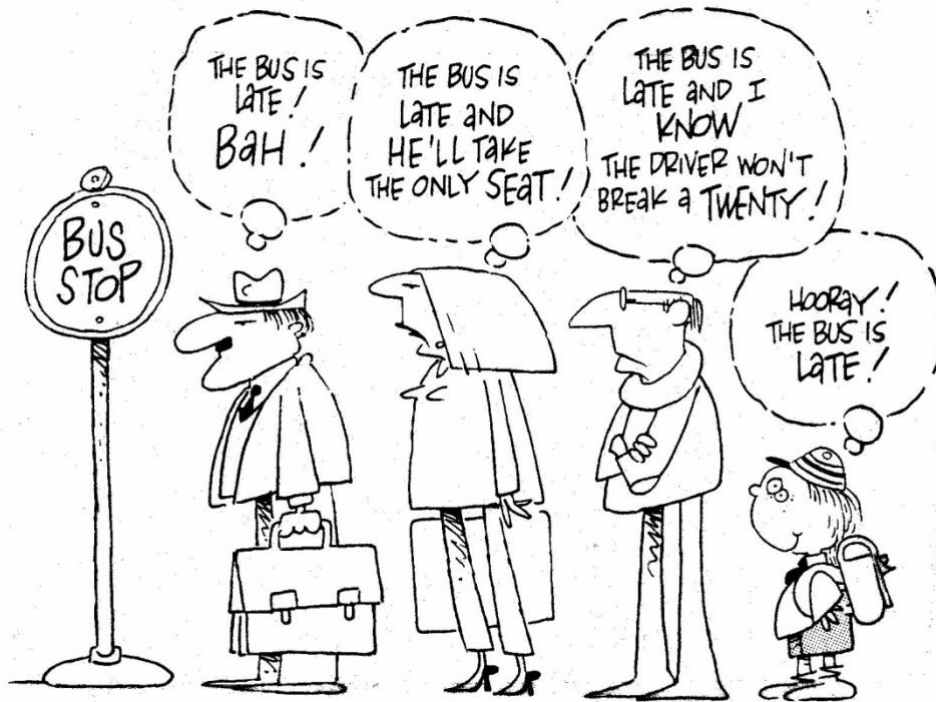


Stressors affect people in different ways.

What stresses you may not be a stress to someone else. This is because each stressor is passed through our own individual filters before producing a response. If our experiences of that stressor have been positive, our response will be different from if we have had a negative experience of that stressor or if we have had no experience of that stressor.

Event (Stressor) → **Filter (Unique to individual)** → **Response**





This cartoon demonstrates four different responses to the same stressor.

Living with Stress

In order to live well with stress, we need to look at both the stressors and our responses in order to identify what we can change and where we need to make changes.

Thinking

- Check out your thoughts to challenge any irrationality. Ask yourself is this true, is this always true, what evidence do I have for this? Do you need to change what you have been thinking in the light of the evidence?
- You also need to be kind to yourself, be reasonable, practice what you preach, take good advice, check if your attitude is helping or hindering you.



Feelings

- It is important to acknowledge feelings
- Accept them
- Work with and or through them
 - reflection, journaling, talking to someone are some of the ways to do this.





Journaling

Journaling allows you to reflect on the experiences you have had during your day or week. You can learn from the things that you have been through. Journaling allows you to be aware of your life, to look at your feelings, hurts, ideas and struggles and to honestly review what has been happening.

However, there is no right way or time to journal. You can journal daily, weekly, monthly or whenever it suits you. You need to discover what is right for you and establish your journaling that way. If you don't enjoy writing, you may choose to show your journey through photos, drawings or articles and jot key words or thoughts around the entries.

Journaling is not about being eloquent or being able to create beautifully structured thoughts. Journaling is about being real. Be honest as you write, review what you have written on a regular basis and discover the things that appear over and over again.

Applying the principles of Journaling to your Teaching Role.

You may use your journal to help you identify areas in your work role which may need further learning or development. In order to achieve this include in your journal:

- your feelings about contacts you have made during the week
- any issues which may need to be addressed
- Possible issues and topics you wish to discuss with your supervisor / colleagues

Even though it may not at first be evident that your journal will help you to identify areas for personal and professional development.

What is Compassion Fatigue?

*Compassion Fatigue is a state of **emotional and physical exhaustion** caused by **excessive and prolonged stress** as one seeks to **care for others**.*

It can occur when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest or motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Compassion Fatigue reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly hopeless, powerless, cynical, and resentful.

The unhappiness compassion fatigue causes can eventually threaten your job, your relationships and your health.

How can you tell if you're heading towards compassion fatigue?

Because compassion fatigue doesn't happen overnight — and it's difficult to fight once you're in the middle of it — it's important to recognize the early signs and head it off.

Compassion Fatigue usually has its roots in stress, so the earlier you recognize the symptoms of stress and address them, the better chance you have of avoiding compassion fatigue.

The signs of compassion fatigue include:

- Exhaustion
- Reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- Anger and irritability
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Dread of working with certain, or most, if not all – students/colleagues/parents
- Diminished sense of enjoyment of career
- Disruption to worldview, Heightened anxiety or irrational fears
- Intrusive imagery or dissociation
- Hypersensitivity or Insensitivity to emotional material
- Difficulty separating work life from personal life
- Absenteeism – missing work, taking many sick days
- Impaired ability to make decisions and care for clients/patients
- Problems with intimacy and in personal relationships

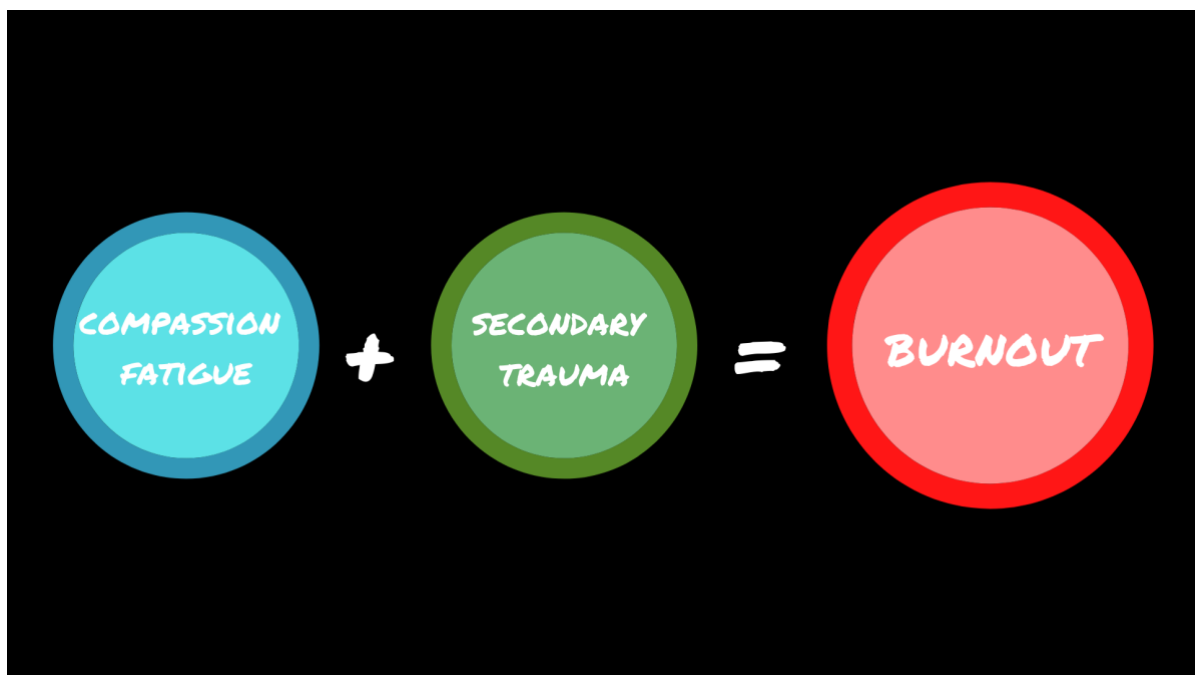
Ultimately compassion fatigue if not addressed can lead to burnout. If you're burning out and the burnout expresses itself as irritability, you might find yourself always snapping at people or making snide remarks about them.

If the burnout manifests itself as depression, you might want to sleep all the time or always be "too tired" to socialize.

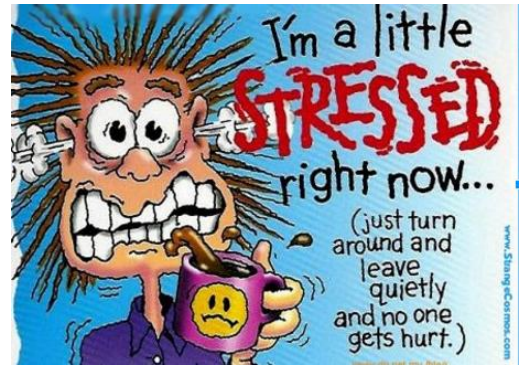
You might turn to escapist behaviours such as sex, drinking, drugs, partying, or shopping binges to try to escape from your negative feelings.

Your relationships at work and in your personal life may begin to fall apart.

Source: www.4-life.com.au/pdf/tip_burnout.pdf



What is Burnout?



Burnout is usually a gradual process.

There is usually a progression that takes place:

1) Progressive Loss of Ideas

- You stop thinking you can make a difference
- You start to get cynical about people – distrust peoples motives
- Start thinking nobody really cares anyway – what's the point?
- You get discouraged
- Begin to think that people only care about themselves

2) Progressive Loss of Purpose

- Begin to feel detached
- Feel flat, no real feelings

3) Progressive Loss of Energy

- Tired all the time
- Not motivated to do anything
- Can't be bothered, all too hard

4) Progressive Loss of Humour

- Start to resent people – get annoyed easily
- Make mountains out of molehills
- Feelings get hurt easily – very sensitive

5) Progressive Loss of Morals

- Start to be able to justify things
- Think everyone is taking from me, no one is giving
- Feel sorry for yourself
- Then the temptation to compromise values comes
- Cycle of guilt/shame

**Save me, O God,
for the floodwaters
are up to my neck.
Deeper and deeper
I sink into the mire;
I can't find a
foothold.
I am in deep water,
and the floods
overwhelm me.**

Psalm 69:1-2 (NLT)

DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN BURNOUT AND STRESS

- Burnout is a defence characterized by disengagement.
- Stress is characterized by over engagement.
- In Burnout the emotions become blunted.
- In Stress the emotions become over-reactive.
- In Burnout the emotional damage is primary.
- In Stress the physical damage is primary.
- The exhaustion of Burnout affects motivation and drive.
- The exhaustion of Stress affects physical energy.
- Burnout produces demoralization.
- Stress produces disintegration.
- Burnout can best be understood as a loss of ideals and hope.
- Stress can best be understood as a loss of fuel and energy.
- The depression of Burnout is caused by the grief engendered by the loss of ideals and hope.
- The depression of Stress is produced by the body's need to protect itself & conserve energy.
- Burnout produces a sense of helplessness and hopelessness.
- Stress produces a sense of urgency and hyperactivity.
- Burnout produces paranoia, depersonalization and detachment.
- Stress produces panic, phobic, and anxiety-type disorders.
- Burnout may never kill you but your long life may not seem worth living.
- Stress may kill you prematurely, and you won't have enough time to finish what you started

Source: Dr. Archibald D. Hart



Balance

The key to maintaining personal health and well-being is found in having a balance in all aspects of life: personal development, work, social, spiritual, physical, emotional, thinking, and intentional recreation. *Having the right balance does not happen automatically.* It takes continual sorting out. We do not arrive at a mythical place called “balance” and then stay there every day we need to consider how we balance our responsibilities, relationships, roles and recreation.



Getting a balance in your life

- make balance a priority and commit to it
- make time to reflect on your life and balance needs.
- Add small enjoyable activities into your life
- and (list what else you can do)

Relationships

- Add more fun and play into your life
- Build a support network in for family and friends for talking and sharing regularly and reducing isolation.
- Resolve those conflicts quickly, festering conflicts are huge stressors
- Learn to forgive
- and (list what else you can do)



Recreation

- Take regular days off
- Plan annual holidays
- Develop a hobby
- Make space for life's little pleasures most days
- And (list what else you can do)

Review Responsibilities

- Know your job role and responsibilities
- Manage your workload by prioritizing, take care of unpleasant tasks first and get them out of the way
- Think ahead and accept achievable goals
- Accept your limits
- Have breaks to relax, energise or debrief
- Avoid long hours and additional responsibilities. This can be difficult but small changes make a difference.
- Learn to say 'No' to things that are non-essential. Have good boundaries.
- Develop a climate of support amongst your colleagues
- Celebrate and record the 'wins'.
- Learn to accept what you cannot change & take positive steps to change what you can.
- Create a balance between work and the things you enjoy doing. Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed by new commitments.
- And (list whatever else comes to mind that you can actually do)



Physical well being

- Make sure you have enough time to rest, relax and exercise.
- Part of learning to relax requires you to set aside some time in the day to do the things you enjoy.
- Physical exercise such as walking, swimming, dancing, playing golf or going to the gym can help relieve the tension in your muscles and relax your mind.
- Try and do some physical exercise every day, even if it's just going for a walk.
- a healthy diet provides excellent stress buffering
- Drink more water – aim for a minimum of 2 liters per day.
- reduce your intake of caffeine, nicotine, drugs, alcohol
- see your GP and other health professionals regularly
- Recommended Resource: 7 Pillars of Health – Dr. Don Colbert
- and (list what else you can do)



"What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one hour a day or being dead 24 hours a day?"

Develop Spirituality

- take time to clarify and discuss your values, beliefs and the meaning of life with a trusted person
- discover different ways of experiencing God
- be intentional, set spiritual goals
- ensure you have a daily personal devotional time
- review how much you do your ministry compared to how much you prepare yourself for ministry
- have a spiritual mentor
- read Christian books
- and (list what else you can do)



I recommend Rick Warren's book "Purpose Driven Life"

RECOVERY FROM COMPASSION FATIGUE & BURNOUT - TWELVE STEPS TOWARD RECOVERY

1. **Learn at least one relaxation technique and practice it on a regular basis.** This helps to rest critical components of your body's emergency system.
2. **Balance your life by exercising regularly.** Good physical conditioning strengthens the body's immune system and increases endorphins that are the brain's natural tranquilizers.
3. **Get proper rest.** Allow adequate time for sleep. Contrary to what we have been taught in a previous generation, most of us need more sleep than we get. Adrenal arousal reduces our need for sleep – but this is a trap since we will ultimately pay the penalty for it.
4. **Learn to be flexible.** Your ideas and priorities may need to change. Flexibility reduces the likelihood of frustration.
5. **Slow down.** Remember: God is never in a hurry. "Hurriedness" is a human characteristic caused by inadequate planning and poor time management. Hurry speeds up the "wear and tear" of our bodies and minds and increases the production of destructive adrenaline.
6. **Learn constructive ways of dealing with your anger.** Remember that anger is a 'signal' telling you something is wrong with your environment, or it is evidence that you are in a "fight or flight" mode. Identify the source and confront it assertively.
7. **Pay attention to "little hassles"** – they are more likely to kill you than the big ones. It is the everyday, minor irritations that are the deadliest. Keep them to a minimum.
8. **Develop your ability to be empathetic in your care of others and keep sympathy under control.** Understand your own neurotic needs so that they can be kept out of the way of your pasturing.
9. **Focus your educative and care role on essentials.** Reduce redundancies, eliminate unnecessary activities, avoid demands that will stretch you too thinly and learn how to say "NO" kindly, without giving offense and without experiencing a sense of guilt.
10. **Stay in touch with reality.** Do not let your ambitions outrun the limits of your capabilities. Seek honest feedback from trusted friends on your talents, then pray for wisdom and set your sights accordingly. Aiming too high at unrealistic goals to satisfy an unsanctified ambition will only lead to burnout.
11. **Avoid states of helplessness by taking control and implementing a coping strategy no matter how minor.** Helplessness is often an "erroneous belief" that you are trapped and no solutions are possible. Exercise faith, believe that solutions are possible, and you can break out of the helplessness cycle.
12. **If you cannot resolve a major conflict area in your life, leave it.** Move on if necessary. Notions of being super-human often keep us in severe conflict situations. We believe we should be able to master every circumstance and this can lead to a persistence that is destructive. Even Jesus was hindered in what he could do (Matthew 13:58) and had to move on. Why not you?

Finally, don't be afraid to seek professional help when you need it.



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