5 tips for managing burnout during the pandemic

It's hard to comprehend how much the world has changed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has turned our lives upside down in many ways, from school and business closures to quarantines and social isolation. With no clear end in sight, it is not surprising that many people are having difficulty getting used to the "new normal" that is far from what normal life once was.

Families face the challenges of online and home schooling, and the coming school year brings more uncertainty. In addition, many people are experiencing financial strain from reduced working hours or job losses. Workers may have to work from home and adapt to an entirely new way of working, with little social interaction. For some workers, juggling parental and domestic duties with the demands of work has been very stressful. Over time, chronic stress can lead to burnout.

Symptoms of burnout include feeling physically depleted, emotionally exhausted and negative about work.[1]

The signs of burnout are similar to those of depression. If left untreated, burnout can lead to physical illness and mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety. Here are some practical tips to manage burnout:

- **Set boundaries between work and private life.** If you work from home, set clearly defined working hours and a specific work area.
- **Take breaks during the day** and build transitions in your life between the start of work and the end of the working day. For example, making a transition to work can be as easy as getting a cup of coffee each day and logging into your computer at the same time. To end the day, practice a daily routine such as checking your emails, reviewing priority tasks for the next day and logging off your computer.
- **Take your well-earned time off.** Even if the pandemic kept you from going somewhere for vacation, a planned "staycation" will allow you to enjoy the well-deserved rest and relaxation. It is important to recharge; you will feel refreshed when you return to work.
- **Don't forget to socialize.** When your colleagues start working from home, you may miss the casual social interactions had throughout the day. Like any skill, use it or lose it. Socialization in a time of pandemic takes effort to maintain.
- **Make self-care a part of your daily routine.** A healthy diet, getting enough sleep and maintaining an exercise schedule can help you cope with and reduce stress.

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[1] https://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/burn-out/en/

- **Maintain consistent family routines.** A regular routine can help all family members feel more focused and productive. If your child is at home learning online either full or part-time or you're home-schooling, set consistent times for meals, schoolwork, other activities and bedtime.

For more information and tips, visit www.MagellanHealthcare.com/COVID-19.

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