

3 ways to help yourself or a colleague avoid burnout



Burnout is on the rise, causing exhaustion, negative feelings about work, and reduced work performance and productivity.



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There are many factors both within and outside the modern workplace which can cause stress - with research from the Mental Health Foundation finding 74% of UK adults have at some point felt so stressed that they couldn't cope. Prolonged or frequent bouts of stress can lead to burnout and even physical and mental illness.

In the workplace, the most common causes of stress found by CIPD's annual wellbeing survey are workload, work-life balance and relationships with line managers.

We look at three ways to help lower stress levels and reduce the risk of burnout.

1 Awareness and open communication

Self-awareness is so important for good mental health and wellbeing. Pay attention to how you are feeling and behaving. And practice self-care. The busier we are, the more important it is to prioritise our health by eating well, keeping active, getting enough sleep and keeping talking. Seek support from friends, family, colleagues, managers or professionals as soon as things start feeling they're getting too much.

As a colleague, it's essential to create an environment that is safe and supportive for everyone. One way to do this is to open up communication channels. Encourage your colleagues to talk about their feelings and struggles.

Be there for them and offer a listening ear and be understanding of their issue; sometimes, people just need someone to talk to, and being there for them can make a world of difference. To be able to vent about something that's bothering you is essential for helping to clear the air.

2 Improve your work-life balance

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance can be hard. But it's crucial for your overall wellbeing and productivity. Here are some top tips for achieving a healthy work-life balance:

Set boundaries: Establish clear boundaries between your work and personal life. Create a healthy routine to signify that you have switched off from work, especially if working at

home. Try clearing your desk and going for a walk around the block, or doing something you enjoy for 15-minutes. Avoid checking work emails or taking work calls outside of your designated work hours.

Prioritise your time: Make a list of your daily tasks and prioritise them based on their importance. This will help you focus on the most critical tasks and avoid getting bogged down by unimportant stuff or something that can wait.

Schedule your breaks: It's important to take regular breaks throughout the day to refresh your mind and reduce stress, even if you don't feel like one. Use this time to engage in activities that you enjoy, such as going for a walk, reading a book, or practising mindfulness, and encourage others to do so as well.

Learn to say no: It's okay to say no to tasks that don't align with your goals or take up too much of your time. This will help you prioritise your time and reduce stress.

Achieving a healthy work-life balance is an ongoing process. It requires effort, self-awareness, and discipline, but the benefits are worth it.

3 Limiting social media

In today's world, social media can be a significant source of stress and anxiety, not to mention very distracting at times. You might feel the need to overshare and/or let out some confidential information.

Social Media Fatigue (SMF) is a phenomenon that has increased following the Covid-19 pandemic and refers to information overload due to extended usage of social media. Limit your social media use if you find it overwhelming or stressful, as this could offer much-needed breathing space. You should try and aim to take regular breaks from social media and to spend time doing things that make you feel happy and calm.

Look out for others

If you notice that a colleague doesn't seem like themselves and is struggling with their mental health, encourage them to seek help from professionals, who can provide them with support and guidance. There is nothing wrong with asking for help and it can be life-changing.

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