



Live Well, Work Well

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PREVENTING BURNOUT DURING THE 2024 HOLIDAY SEASON

The World Health Organization defines burnout as a syndrome resulting from workplace stress that has not been adequately managed. Everyday life can be hectic enough without the added pressure of the holidays, which can also be a source of major stress and burnout for many people.

A 2024 survey by telemedicine provider Sesame found that 3 out of 5 Americans say their stress levels increase during the holiday season. Planning events, shopping for gifts, navigating family dynamics and traveling can make people feel overwhelmed and exhausted.

Even though levels of burnout are high, there are ways to help avoid and manage it so you can enjoy your holiday season. This article highlights tips to help prevent burnout during the 2024 holiday season.

Set Realistic Expectations

When the holidays hit, there may be many moving pieces to consider for a successful holiday season. Setting realistic expectations is crucial so you don't overcommit yourself or fall into the trap of perfectionism.

One easy switch is to send holiday e-cards versus sending physical cards. This can help you connect with loved ones while saving time putting together envelopes and postage. Other ways to help keep tasks realistic during the holidays are to break down goals into digestible tasks, set timelines and reward yourself for checking items off your to-do list. It's essential to keep

your holiday commitments manageable to avoid burning out.

Start Early

No matter your holiday plans, spreading out your tasks and starting early will help with stress levels. This way, you won't be waiting until the last minute to complete tasks and rushing through responsibilities. Consider the following ways to prepare ahead of time:

- Send digital invitations for parties or hosted events at least two weeks in advance.
- Make necessary purchases a few weeks ahead of time.
- Decorate a few days before any hosted events.
- Arrange food plans, such as who's bringing certain dishes to share, at least one week in advance.

Planning ahead and starting early on tasks will help prevent last-minute stressors. It may also be helpful to create a schedule that balances holiday activities with downtime. Prioritize tasks and delegate when possible.

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Take Time to Recharge

Regular breaks from daily stressors can prevent burnout by helping your body and mind relax and recharge. Rest restores your energy, boosts your mood and increases productivity. It's essential to make time for activities that refuel you, such as reading, spending time with friends and going on outdoor walks. Try to create a balanced schedule that allows for this type of self-care.

Maintain Boundaries

It's important to set boundaries between the time you can take to accomplish tasks and the time you need to rest. Boundaries protect your emotions and your physical space. They can be a healthy strategy as you navigate the holiday season and a full calendar. To maintain healthy boundaries, you can avoid overcommitment by scaling back on tasks and having a firm end time for parties. You can also try to compromise on events so you don't get burned out; for example, you could say "no" to an all-day gift exchange but make time to stop by for a couple of hours to see loved ones. Don't feel guilty about setting boundaries. The less stress you have to endure, the more fun the overall experience will be.

Conclusion

Burnout during the holiday season is common, but you can practice strategies to manage or even prevent it.

If you're experiencing burnout and these tips aren't helping, reach out to a doctor or mental health professional.