

# EAP Matters

## How to Avoid BURNOUT

“Burnout” is a stress condition brought on by being involved in an intense situation for a long period of time without rest and recreation. Most often thought of in relation to a job, burnout can also occur in other situations, such as being a primary caregiver to small children or a sick elderly person. It’s the result of feeling overworked and unappreciated. Learn how to avoid burnout by knowing your own limits, taking care of yourself and listening to the ideas of others.

### Know Your Limits

Sometimes we can control a situation that has the potential for burnout by recognizing it at the outset. In fact, certain jobs, such as air traffic control, are known for their high incidence of burnout, as are jobs which involve caring for the very ill or in which a great many hours of overtime are demanded.

Some people thrive on stressful environments, but if you’re the type of person who can’t help but get involved—to the detriment of your own needs—you might reconsider the situation and choose not to participate. Knowing yourself well enough to avoid situations of potential burnout can be a healthy strategy for you.

### Take Care of Yourself

When you ignore your physical and emotional needs during a period of constant or severe stress, burnout may result. Good self-care includes eating well-balanced meals and getting regular exercise and adequate sleep. You also need regular rest and recreation. If you find yourself in a stressful situation where one or more of your self-care habits have gone by the wayside, it might be time to take a good look at what is causing the stress and take action to change it.

### Talk With Others

Share your feelings about the situation with others in the same or a similar situation. Listen to what they say about the strategies they use to cope. Or talk with someone from outside the situation who is able to be objective and who might also offer new ideas. You might find that communicating with others about your own situation is a positive step away from stress and burnout and a positive step toward greater health.

### Contact Your Employee Assistance Program

Your EAP is a professional resource that can help you manage burnout or other stressful life circumstances. Just call 320.484.4555 (or 800.870.6478) for personal and private consultation.