

MAINTAINING BALANCE AND HEALTH IN A STEM MAJOR AND AVOIDING ACADEMIC BURNOUT

California Central Coast Community College Collaborative (C6) sponsored STEM Student
Presentations – Fall 2023



BURN●OUT (AKA: RUNNING OUT OF GAS)

noun

noun: **burnout**; noun: **burn-out**

1.

- the reduction of a fuel or substance to nothing through use or combustion.

2.

- a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress



WHO IS AT-RISK FOR BURNTOUT?

- One of those road hazards in the life of high-achievers
- I can do it all and am passionate about what I do, harder to see it coming
- Working long hours, exceedingly heavy work loads, enormous pressure on self to excel, ripe for burnout

WHAT IS ACADEMIC BURNOUT

- Negative emotional, physical and mental reaction to prolonged study that results in exhaustion, frustration, lack of motivation and reduced ability in school
- The culmination of many weeks or months studying the same material or working on the same project, or from continuous years of schooling.
- Academic burnout makes students feel depleted and cynical about school. They might start avoiding assignments or skipping class. Creativity and academic performance can also take a hit.
- This is not to be confused with the occasional feeling of frustration when you have been studying for hours on end, or tiredness from pulling an all-nighter. It is rather more of a chronic condition from long-term study or school work.

CAUSES OF ACADEMIC BURNOUT

- Academic burnout is unlikely to be caused by one thing in particular. Many factors will contribute to stress, which over a prolonged period of time may result in academic burnout if not managed properly.
- However, there are several aspects of student life, that are likely to cause added stress and make academic burnout more likely.
Academic loads, feeling isolated, financial stressors, personal problems
- Having a large amount of academic work to complete by a certain deadline can often add to students' stress levels. This is especially true when you feel you need to achieve a certain grade.

WARNING SIGNS OF ACADEMIC BURNOUT

Feeling exhausted: Mental and physical exhaustion are key signs of chronic stress.

Less enthusiasm about school: Common signs include dreading class, worrying about upcoming tests, and a lack of interest in school.

A decline in academic abilities: Stress leaves students feeling drained. They may experience a decline in academic performance, including lower grades.

Increased irritability or anger: For many, irritability or annoyance is the earliest sign of stress and burnout. This can grow into frustration and anger.

Increased anxiety: A growing sense of anxiety, worry, or agitation is common with burnout. Some may also experience restlessness.

Physical sensations: The physical warning signs of stress include fatigue, headaches, and stomach discomfort

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO AVOID BURNOUT

Make Time for Enjoyable Activities:

And not just on the weekend! Sprinkle your calendar with things you love to do throughout the week, and you'll feel start to feel more motivated to start your school days.

Get Plenty of Physical Exercise

Try to exercise at least three times a week, stay hydrated and eat healthy to keep your mind and body active and healthy.

Get Outside:

Studies have shown that time spent in nature can reduce stress levels so spend some of your free time in some greenery!

Make Time for Social Activities:

Not only do friends and family provide you with a positive support system, but time spent in fun social environments will make you happier and give your mind a break.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO AVOID BURNOUT

Stay engaged

Taking an elective that really interests you or becoming involved with a club or group that involves your passion is really refreshing and helps pull you out of burnout mode,” Montenegro said. “It’s important to be self-aware of when you start to feel tired and to make a change within your schedules to freshen things up.”

Develop Good Relationships with Professors and peers:

This will make it so that you don’t feel like going to class or study hall is a chore

Set Reasonable Goals:

And stick to them — use a calendar and daily reminders to stay motivated to achieve deadlines.

Develop good study habits

Establishing good study habits and creating a weekly schedule will help students to stay on track,” Willan said. You can start developing [good study habits](#) by finding a good place to study with limited distractions, having a tidy study area and being organized.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO AVOID BURNOUT

Avoid Procrastination:

When you are feeling stressed, putting off assignments and projects is tempting, but ultimately this will lead to sleep deprivation, frustration and end in more stress

Get Better at Time Management:

This is a key factor in making sure you stay on track with deadlines, avoid procrastination and end up with a more positive relationship with your studies. Check out our tips on [improving your time management skills here](#).

Learn to say “no”

Work-Life Balance:

Work-life balance is just as important for students as it is for workers. Set up your schedule for equal parts school and fun or social activities. And don't forget to make time for just YOU.

THINGS YOU CAN DO WHEN EXPERIENCING BURNOUT

Reach out

If you think you're experiencing burnout and everything seems a bit overwhelming, the best thing you can do is talk to someone. This might be your personal tutor or a lecturer who you feel comfortable around.

Stop comparing yourself

students have a tendency to compare themselves with others – particularly when it comes to grades. This puts unnecessary pressure on themselves and if they get a lower grade than their friends they catastrophize and think they've failed.

However, this focus on getting a particular grade doesn't necessarily translate to the job market.

Break down your problems

Plan out your day and make a to do list. Break down your day into small tasks. this will give you better control of the situation you're in. If the tasks seem smaller, they're more manageable.

WHEN COLLEGE BURNOUT BECOMES CHRONIC

- Creating healthy habits in college can help students avoid burnout and set them up for better mental health in the workforce.
- However, sometimes getting more sleep and managing goals isn't enough. Personal changes can only help so much.
- Chronic burnout might require changing majors, moving to a part-time enrollment status, or taking a semester off from school.
- If you're feeling chronically burnt out, reach out to the student counseling center for professional support.
- Banishing burnout can take time, but it's worth the investment.

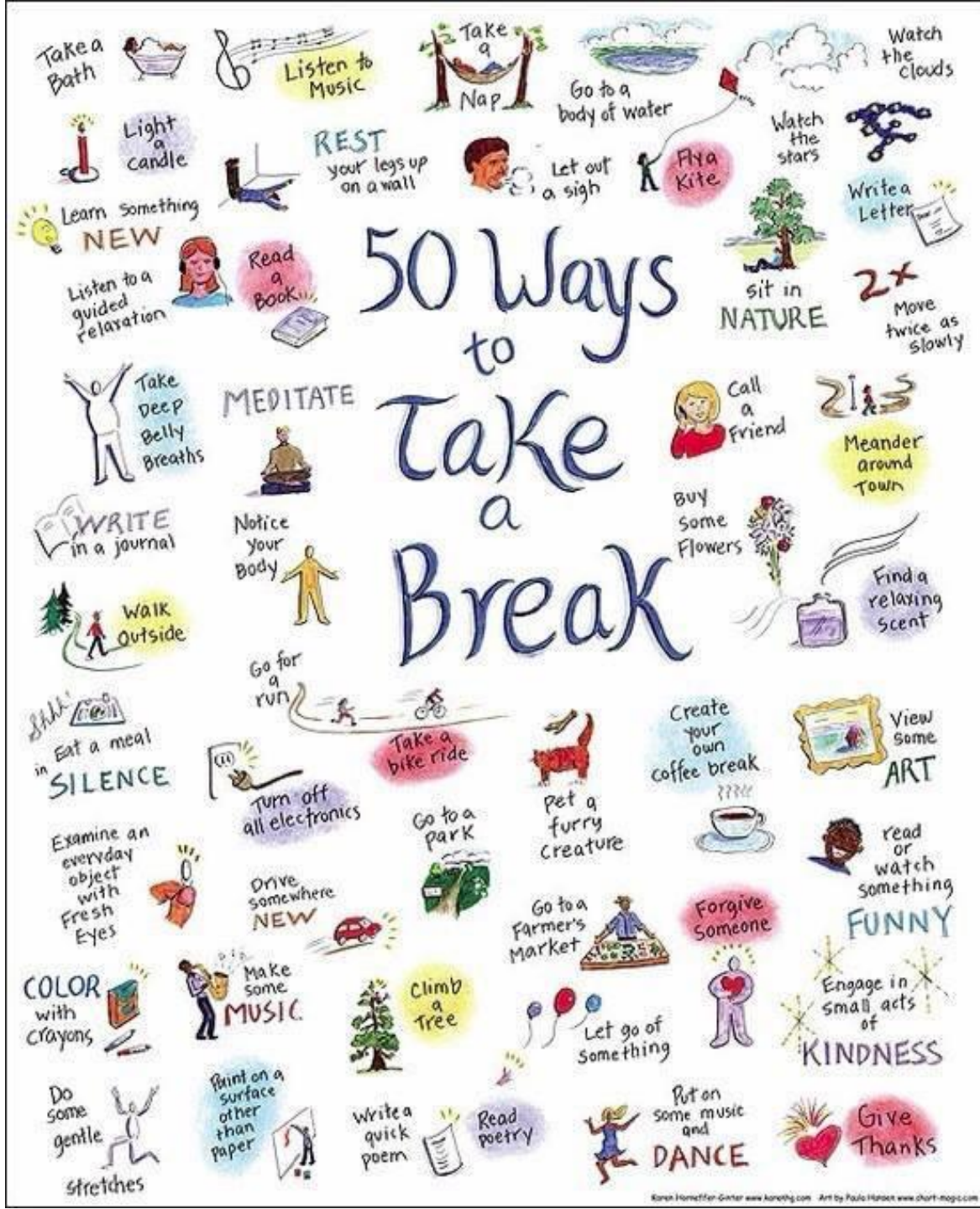
OVERCOMING BURNOUT (A WEAKENED STATE)

- Take some rest
- Take inventory
 - Make a list of situations that cause stress, anxiety, worry, frustration, hopelessness – don't rush developing the list
- Evaluate how to modify the situations to reduce stress, implement, and remodify if needed
- In recovery, say NO to any new commitments
- Delegate, delegate, and delegate again
- Control your gadgets
- Socialize
- Lessen the workload
- Reduce the need for perfection
- Seek support



MENTAL HEALTH

- Students experiencing burnout warning signs should reassess their mental health and make changes in their routines to prioritize their well-being.
- Take care of your mental health to avoid things getting worse
- Seek support !



STAY CONNECTED

- With peers
- Support network (programs, clubs, staff/faculty, counselors instructors, mentors, family)
- Visit Health Services Center