

How To Prevent Burnout In The Workplace



Toronto, Nov 6, 2019 (Issuewire.com) - Burnout is real. I don't care who you are, where you are from, or what you do. You could be the most resilient, persistent, and strong person in the world. Burnout will still get you unless you do something about it.

I work as a campus physician for one of the most prestigious universities in the world. The University of Toronto was ranked 18th in the World University Ranking by Times Higher Education in 2019. It is the home to much groundbreaking research and innovation in a wide range of disciplines including

medicine, engineering, commerce, humanities, and more. And more importantly, it is the home to some of the most brilliant young minds in the world.

These students were at the top of their classes in high school. Many moving to a new city, to a new country to pursue higher education at a world-renowned institution. Sounds like a dream come true and students must be ecstatic right?

Wrong. Last year alone, three University of Toronto students committed suicide on campus. Everyday at the clinic, my day sheet is filled with mental health visits ranging from depression to anxiety. What is driving these brilliant students to feel this way? Is it rigorous academic responsibilities? Is it a lack of social support? Are we just a “soft generation” as some have pointed fingers at?

World Health Organization defines burnout as “feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism, or cynicism related to one’s job; and reduced professional efficacy” as a result of workplace stress that is not properly handled.

After long days of busy clinic and juggling personal and professional life, I too become a victim of burnout. Sure, there are many things that need to be improved at the institutional level: better access to mental health support, increased awareness to name a couple. But what can we do as individuals to reduce burnout?

- Do not compare yourself to others. In the modern era of social media, it is very easy to compare yourself to others. There is always someone prettier, wealthier, better than you on social media. But social media captures only the highlights of one’s life. Do not let that fool you. Everybody struggles in one way or another. Do not let others define your happiness. Write your own story. You do you.
- Take time to do what you enjoy. In the hectic day to day schedule, it is easy to be lost. As we mark down different meetings, conference calls, and classes on our calendars, it is equally important to mark downtimes to do things that we love. Set off time to go see friends. Book of time to read. Take time off to travel. You won’t regret it.
- Stay active. Psychological wellbeing is tightly related to physical wellbeing. Numerous studies have shown that regular exercise increases serotonin levels which in turn improves your mood and sense of wellbeing.
- Understand that losing is a natural part of life. We all lose at times. Even the GOAT, Michael Jordan started his career with three straight first-round playoff exits. What is important is to learn from the mistakes and move on.

Recently deceased beloved comedian John Witherspoon famously said in his movie Friday, “You win some, you lose some, but you live. You live to fight another day”. Cheers to all of us who are here to live to fight another day.

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