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Stress Management

Job Burnout

Suffering From a Job Burnout?



June
2011

City of McAllen

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Stress Management

Are You Suffering From A Job Burnout?

- Do you find yourself being more cynical, critical and sarcastic at work?
- Do you drag yourself into work and have trouble getting started once you arrive?
- Have you become more irritable and less patient with co-workers, customers or clients?
- Do you feel that you face insurmountable barriers at work?
- Do you feel that you lack the energy to be consistently productive?
- Do you no longer feel satisfaction from your achievements?
- Do you have a hard time laughing at yourself?
- Are you tired of your co-workers asking if you're OK?
- Do you feel disillusioned about your job?
- Are you self-medicating — using food, drugs or alcohol — to feel better or to simply not feel?
- Have your sleep habits or appetite changed?
- Are you troubled by unexplained headaches, neck pain or lower back pain?

Answering yes to any of these questions could indicate a job burnout, but it could also be a sign of other health conditions such as depression. Always consult with a doctor about any health concerns you might have.

Stress is a part of life that, for the most part, is unavoidable. We can either learn and grow from stressful situations, or we can allow these moments to hold us back in life. The following article provides information about stress, and how you can take control of stress in your life.

Stress can be defined as a normal, psychological, and physical reaction to the demands of life. Most individuals aren't aware that the brain comes wired with an alarm system for our protection. During times of high stress this alarm system alerts the brain to go into fight mode and release thousands of hormones into the body. Unfortunately, due to the non-stop stress that we experience in everyday life, our body is never given a moment to rest. Overtime, this constant amount of stress can lead to serious health problems. Signs of stress can vary from headaches to extreme amounts of nervousness and anxiety. So what can be done to cut down on the amount of stress in our lives? The answer to this question is most often referred to as Stress Management. Stress management is a combination of steps and techniques that allow individuals with high amounts of stress to reset their alarm system. These steps include:

1. Identify stress triggers. Stress triggers refer to those moments or objects that cause us to experience stress. Some triggers might be a job loss, divorce, or death of a loved one. Stress triggers can also be small, daily hassles such as finding child care at the last minute.

2. After identifying possible stress triggers in your life, the next step would be to think up strategies that might make these triggers less problematic. Solutions might be as small as turning off the television if the news is too depressing.
3. The most important step in stress management is to make overall lifestyle changes. Exercising more, eating healthier, and getting plenty of rest might be the key to reducing stress in your life.

Sometimes the task of reducing stress triggers, or stress in general, can be overwhelming. It is important to remember that reducing stress does not have to be done alone. Seeking help from a medical professional, family, or friends can be a stress reliever in itself. Stress does not disappear overnight, and stress management should not be considered a cure. Reducing the amount of stress for all individuals takes time, patience, and support from others.



Preventing a Job Burnout

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Job burnout is a state of physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion caused by long term exposure to demanding work situations. Usually job burnouts are a cumulative result of stress. People who suffer from job burnouts might experience risk factors in advance such as: they identify strongly with work and are unable to maintain a proper balance between work and their personal lives, trying to please everyone, having a job that is monotonous, feeling little or no control over their work, or working in a helping profession such as teaching, healthcare, or law enforcement. In order to overcome job burnouts, the cause of it must be determined first. Some causes of job burnout are:

- Lack of control: this feeling can result from the inability to work the amount of hours you want, choosing which hours you work, or not receiving the amount of work you were expecting.
- Unclear job expectations. Sometimes individuals are unclear about the degree of authority they have. This can cause a job to become very stressful and eventu-



- ally lead to a job burnout.
- Dysfunctional workplace dynamic. Working with an office bully, being undermined by colleagues, or having a boss who micromanages your work.
- Mismatch in values. Working for a company or with coworkers that have a difference in values can sometimes be upsetting and stressful.
- Poor job fit. Working in a job that doesn't fit your interest and skills can become more stressful over time.
- Extremes of activity. When a job is too monotonous or chaotic, constant energy is needed to remain focused. Situations like this can lead to energy drain and job burnouts.

Consequences of not attending to signs of job burnouts in the early stages can be:

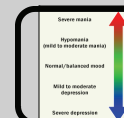
- fatigue
- insomnia
- unhealthy weight changes
- depression
- anxiety

There are many ways to prevent or overcome a job burnout. If you feel as if you are close to experiencing or are experiencing a job burnout, it is best to speak to a supervisor or doctor. It might be possible to make changes in the workplace or it could be determined that another job would better satisfy your needs. No matter the solution, fixing job burnouts takes time and requires patience.

Coming Soon >>>

In The Next Issue

Mood Disorder I: Bipolar Disorder



Take an in-depth look of Bipolar Disorder



Fireworks Safety Tips

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As always, the City of McAllen Benefits Department is here to help you in your insurance inquiries as well. We can be reached at 956-681-1400 or by email at benefits@mcallen.net for your convenience.