# THE TOOLKIT

A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women and non-binary undergraduate students.

Preventing Burnout

Stress in an inevitable part of life, especially when we're working towards big accomplishments and bright futures ahead. So what happens when we take on more than we can handle? When stress becomes too overwhelming, you might start to experience burnout. In this issue of The Toolkit, you'll learn the signs and symptoms of burnout and the skills to stop burnout in its tracks.
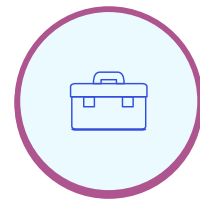
"TO HELP DEAL WITH THE BURNOUT, I WOULD SET ASIDE TIME TO DO THINGS THAT I ENJOYED AND A BIG PART OF THAT WAS BAKING. I'M NOT THE BIGGEST FAN OF BAKED GOODS (ESPECIALLY IN LARGE QUANTITIES) SO WHAT I WOULD DO INSTEAD OF ACTUALLY EATING IT ALL MYSELF WOULD BE TO GIVE IT TO PEOPLE I WORKED WITH OR LIVED WITH OR FRIENDS. IT FELT NICE TO SHARE/SEE A POSITIVE REACTION TO THE FOOD, WHICH HELPED ME CALM DOWN A BIT AND BE MORE WILLING TO DO MY SCHOOL WORK. ANOTHER WAY OF DEALING WITH IT WAS AVOIDING CAMPUS AND TRY TO GIVE MYSELF A DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT LIKE A STARBUCKS TO WORK SO THAT IT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE I WAS SURROUNDED BY REMINDERS OF WHAT I NEEDED TO GET DONE."

- ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING MAJOR

EWAAB

Tips & Tools

1 Recognize you're on the road to burnout before you actually get there. The signs of burnout can be broken down into three categories: physical, emotional, and behavioral signs and symptoms. Physical burn out might look like feeling drained even when you get enough sleep, frequent headaches or other aches and pains, or getting sick more often than normal. Emotional burnout can sound like self doubt, less motivation, and more cynical views of the world and yourself. Behavioral signs could be isolating yourself from friends, using food, alcohol, or drugs to cope, or withdrawing from your daily responsibilities.

2 Reach out and lean on others for support. Once you find yourself taking on a lot of stress, trying to push through it will only create more issues for you. Instead, take time to connect with the people in your life that lift you up and give you energy. Spend time with the people closest to you, limit your time with negative people, join community groups that share your ideals, and make new friends that you can relate to. Ask for help from mental health professionals, too. We are naturally social creatures so making connections with others can help validate and ease the burden of stress.

3 Change your perspective if you can. Reframing what's got you stressed can do wonders for helping to build resilience in challenging times. Whether it's school, work, or personal life stress that's weighing on you, try to remind yourself why that experience is valuable. Maintaining balance between all your activities is an important step in preventing burnout. For example, if you're finding yourself feeling frustrated with a certain assignment, take a break and give more energy to your personal life.

4 Make time for self care. Although selfcare has become a bit of a buzzword these days, practicing daily self care is one of the best ways to prevent burnout before it starts. It can be as easy as taking time to do your daily activities with mindful intention. Feel the heat of the shower on your skin, pay extra attention to the taste of your morning coffee, listen to your favorite music on your walk to class. Making time to relax and do activities that feed your soul on a regular basis is just as important.

Tips inspired by - "Burnout Prevention and Treatment" | HelpGuide

Further Reading

"Avoiding Burnout: Maintaining a Healthy, Successful Career" | MindTools
"Avoiding Burnout" | SkillsYouNeed
"4 Steps to Beating Burnout" by Monique Valcour | Harvard Business Review

A note from the author

I've been there: my to-do list grows bigger each day and the idea of taking on more feels impossible -- I'll snap at my loved ones for the smallest inconveniences and cry for seemingly no reason. Burnout feels all the more common given the new challenges of navigating a global pandemic. Building up your resiliency to burnout now will help you manage future challenges beyond college with much more ease. Saying "no" is a big part of that. It's ok to admit you need a break! Your future self will thank you for it. -- Hallie Stone, M.Ed.

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