

Strategies for Preventing Burnout

System-Centered Approaches

- Eliminating or modifying worksite stressors (e.g., limiting class load)
- Enhancing the job experience (e.g., giving employees a voice in policy decisions and job functions)
- Offering training (e.g., self-care, conflict resolution, time management)
- Creating an open, supportive, well-communicating work environment
- Offering regular recognition of employee achievement
- Making Employee Assistance Programs and wellness services available

Person-Centered Approaches

- Maintaining oneself professionally
 - *Change work patterns:* Decrease hours; slow down pace; take breaks; avoid overtime; take vacations, time off, leaves of absence; avoid unnecessary meetings; set daily priorities
 - *Focus on professional development:* Inservices, workshops, conferences; developing new skills and interests within your area of expertise; reflection on professional development including own observations and feedback from others; clarify professional goals and values and minimize the activities that do not fit; prevent boredom by seeking out novelty in work; increase skills for utilizing and managing technology
 - *Maximize your experience of professional success:* Evaluate different aspects of professional functioning; student learning/change/success; recognition by supervisors/peers/students/others; expert knowledge content; professional relationship processes with students, colleagues, others
 - *Minimize ambiguous loss:* Acknowledge that students come and go; consult with colleagues; find a way to get closure from loss of students by valuing the achievements they make, saying goodbye during classes, reflecting on what you have learned from students; avoid over-involvement with students by setting boundaries, saying no to unreasonable requests for help
 - *Create your own growth-promoting work place:* Seek out leaders, mentors who promote balance; seek out professional social support; laugh, use humor; learn to accept self as a "good enough" professional; pay attention to the aesthetics and personal comforts you have in your office
 - *Use rewards to increase enjoyment at work:* Rewards can be used to encourage yourself, acknowledge work completed, overcome barriers, soften unpleasant tasks, celebrate accomplishments; can include activities, relaxation, luxuries, food, time, exercise, self-praise, time with others

- Maintaining oneself personally
 - *Develop preventive coping skills:* time and stress management; conflict resolution; problem-solving skills; relaxation (deep breathing, visualization, listening to music, massage)
 - *Utilize social resources:* Professional support from colleagues; guidance from supervisors, mentors; personal support from family and friends; professional counseling; limit or eliminate unhealthy relationships; support provides direct assistance, emotional comfort, new insights, recognition of work, basis of comparison for one's reactions, encouragement, optimism, humor, reduces isolation
 - *Pay attention to physical health:* Adequate nutrition (balanced diet, avoidance of emotional eating); exercise (aerobic exercise, yoga, strength training); adequate sleep; avoid/limit use of caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, drugs; medical care (preventive care and/or ongoing medical management of health issues)
 - *Increase self-awareness:* Helps when monitoring oneself for signs of burnout and keeping balance between care of self and care of others; develop an understanding of one's personality, needs, attitudes, personal standards, expectations, spiritual-philosophical values and ethics, and motivations to gain insight into personal risks for developing burnout; spend solitary time in self-reflection, journaling
 - *Be a coach to yourself:* Encourage yourself instead of berating yourself; remind yourself to keep things in perspective by looking at/approaching situations in different ways or asking self if it will matter in 5 years; reiterate to yourself your commitment to continuous self-care and replenishment and the reasons for doing so; cultivate an attitude accepting of "altruistic egotism" whereby you hold your own welfare as sacred and believe that your obligation to your own well-being is necessary for competent care of and work with others
 - *Tap into your spiritual-philosophical resources:* Prayer, meditation, religious practices and rituals; reading spiritual or inspirational materials; spending time in nature; spiritual counseling/advising; reflect on values; reflect on meaning derived from work, life, etc.
 - *Cultivate your care-free side:* Spend time in leisure, recreation; develop and participate in hobbies; use humor and laughter as a stress-reliever; seek out positive life experiences; travel