

The 4 Stages of Burnout

(By [Leader Breakthru](#))

Stage 1: Exhaustion / Depletion

Physical exhaustion and loss of boundaries. Adrenaline, and its reserves, typically becomes one's main source of energy.

Typical Response: No acknowledgement- individual maintains current level of stress and continues to allow for increasing amounts of activity.

Stage 2: Physical Symptoms

Physical exhaustion and loss of boundaries. Adrenaline becomes further depleted. Physical symptoms manifest (fatigue, irritability, lack of sleep, nervous habits, etc). One's results are diminished.

Typical Response: Denial of situation- individual makes excuses and justifications while they begin to compromise their standards and values for behavior.

Stage 3: Frequency of Sickness / Depression

Physical exhaustion and loss of boundaries. Adrenaline is exhausted. Physical symptoms increase (loss of sleep, inability to rest, skin irritations, continued vulnerability to sickness and complete fatigue, etc.).

Typical Response: Extreme denial/compromise and lying to self and others- individual begins to drop their responsibilities, their commitments and even their involvement in close relationships.

Stage 4: Physical / Emotional Shutdown

Physical shut-down begins to occur. Hide and flight can be the response and/or norm. Physical exhaustion and loss of boundaries are present. Adrenaline is depleted.

Typical Response: Disengagement- complete state of physical depletion, inability to respond to others or offer contribution. Requires extended period of recovery and help from others.

Assessment Questions

1. Do you suffer from more physical illnesses lately than you have in the past... including headaches, body aches and pains, colds, stomach or other intestinal problems.
2. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in excess during the past 6 to 12 months?
 - Tired and worn out for high percentage of the time
 - Depressed for high percentage of the time
 - Unable to carry out your normal daily activities
 - Less and less enjoyment of life
3. Have you found yourself working through the following?
 - You feel like you're working harder and harder but have no real accomplishments or satisfaction
 - You easily forget appointments and deadlines
 - You feel disoriented at the end of your workday
 - You feel increased frustration or anger on the job or at school
 - You have a short temper
 - You feel disappointment in others
 - You have increased difficulty relating to other people at work, home, school, and elsewhere
 - You've begun to isolate yourself from other people