

thrive!

Helping AU employees optimize their health and wellbeing.

These factors can cause COVID-19 burnout

Stress, emotional exhaustion among warning signs

Note: This is the first in a series of communications on COVID-19 burnout and mental wellness that will be shared with AU employees in the next few weeks.

Auburn University employees have served their campus, their communities and the world in extraordinary ways since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as we approach the one-year anniversary of the pandemic, many in the Auburn Family are understandably dealing with COVID-19 burnout. Employees are stressed, exhausted and even depressed.

In fact, COVID-19 burnout is prevalent among American workers. Forbes magazine recently cited a survey which found that 75% of people have experienced burnout at work, with 40% saying they've felt it during the pandemic specifically.

In the next few weeks, Auburn University Human Resources will publish and share a series of articles on COVID-19 burnout, with tips and resources to help employees and supervisors. For this first article, we want to focus on the signs of COVID-19 burnout.

What is Burnout?

According to Zencare, burnout is an advanced degree of stress or fatigue. It occurs when we have experienced stress and fatigue for a longer time.

Dr. Christina Maslach, a social psychologist and pioneer in the field of burnout, points to three different components of burnout:

- **Emotional exhaustion:** Feeling chronic tiredness; being emotionally overextended; depleted; and/or lacking motivation.
- **Detachment:** Feeling less connected and less invested with work, clients, or bosses; increased irritability. This detachment can bleed into home life as well.
- **Reduced personal accomplishment:** Feeling less able to recognize and validate your work; lower confidence in yourself; reduced efficiency in your productivity.

The Zencare article also states that both personal and systemic factors can impact burnout.

Personal Factors That Can Cause Burnout

Within-person characteristics, such as your:

- Approach to work
- Stress levels
- Problem-solving skills

Systemic Factors That Can Cause Burnout

These factors are about the systems you negotiate, such as:

- High workload
- Workplace culture
- Accessibility of adequate resources
- Leadership style
- Institutional discrimination or ignorance



GOOD NEWS! HELP IS AVAILABLE

In the next few weeks we will share tips and resources to help counter COVID-19 burnout. Here are just a few of the articles and resources that we will be referencing. (Links will also be provided on our Auburn HR Facebook page):

* Zencare, "[8 Tips to Manage Burnout in the Age of COVID](#)"

* College of Human Sciences, "[Auburn expert explains the 'spillover effect' of COVID-19 stress](#)"

* "[Wellness Wednesday](#)", a series of videos created by HR Development that focuses on healthy lifestyle choices, community support and much more

If you have comments or suggestions for future topics, email univhr@auburn.edu.