



"Remember to take care of yourself. You can't pour from an empty cup." —Unknown

Statistics:

According to the [2021 National Physician Health Survey](#), the [2021 RNAO Nursing Through Crisis](#) and the new [2023 Provincial Report: Burnout and the Assessment of Team Cohesiveness \(ACE-15\) in Critical Care](#) report:

- More than 50% of physicians and residents highly burnt out
- In 2023, staff reported a 6.6% decrease in 'persistent' burnout symptoms compared to 2022.
- 'Complete' burnout symptoms among critical care staff decreased from 23.0% to 13.8% during the same period.
- These 2023 scores may indicate a recovery period from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prevalence of burnout varies by specialty:

- General practice/family medicine (57%) vs. other/administration positions (40%).
- RNAO(2021) found over 75% of Canadian Nurse respondents experienced burnout, especially in hospital and front-line roles.

Understanding Burnout

Burnout is characterized by a sense of emotional exhaustion and depletion, often resulting from prolonged exposure to stressors in the workplace (persistent high workloads, lack of support, and moral distress, etc.). This condition encompasses three main dimensions that individuals may experience to varying extents:

- **Emotional exhaustion** involves feeling a depletion of personal energy.
- **Depersonalization and cynicism** manifest as detachment from work, accompanied by a loss of motivation and interest.
- **Feelings of ineffectiveness** encompass a sense of helplessness, hopelessness, and perceived failure in achieving work-related goals.

What to Watch for: Common Signs and Symptoms

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of burnout is crucial, as it can affect various aspects of an individual's well-being:

1. Physical

- Fatigue and exhaustion
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Digestive problems
- Increased physical complaints

2. Emotional & Cognitive:

- Emotional distress (e.g., sadness, depression)
- Anger and irritability
- Inwardly directed criticism
- Difficulty concentrating
- Increased cynicism or negativity
- Increased doubts and uncertainty

3. Behavioural:

- Excessive use of substances (nicotine, alcohol, illicit drugs)
- Risk-taking behaviour
- Avoidance or dread of working with certain patients or colleagues
- Withdrawing from colleagues
- Decreased job performance
- Negative attitude toward the job, organization, and/or patients
- Absenteeism
- Lack of satisfaction from achievements
- Decreased sense of personal accomplishment
- Feeling unable to help
- Disillusionment
- Reduced job commitment, motivation, and career satisfaction

ProQOL: Professional Quality of Life assessment measures and resources. ProQOL Health was developed to serve healthcare workers with self-care and well-being.

Apps & Self-Directed Resources:

Occupational Health Safety & Wellness:

Check out some of the resources available for KHSC staff on the KHSC Staff Wellness Website.

- <https://kingstonhsc.ca/staff-wellness>

Homewood Health (EFAP)

- 1-800-663-1142
 - **Customer Account Name:** Kingston Health Sciences Centre
 - **Invitation Code:** KHS141
- **Life Smart Coaching** with Homewood Health includes programs to support life balance, health and career coaching.

LifeSpeak Mental Health & Resilience Resources:

Accessing LifeSpeak is simple. You and your family can access the platform from any computer or mobile device. Access ID: lifespeak

Apps Available:

MindShift CBT App by Anxiety Canada

Balance: Practice Mindfulness & Meditation

Headspace: A meditation app with guided voice sessions for a calm mind.

Shine: Stay motivated with positive words through the Shine app.

Class Pass Go: Access ready-to-play workouts of varying lengths and difficulty levels with this app.

Wellness Together Canada: Mental health and substance use support for people in Canada and Canadians abroad. Always free and virtual, 24/7.

Self-care Fact Sheet: created by the College of Nurses of Ontario

STEPS Forward Program: strategies to support physician well-being.

References:

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Grinspun, D., & Kellway, M. (n.d.). Nursing through crisis: A comparative perspective. Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. <https://nao.ca/sites/default/files/2022-05/Nursing Through Crisis - A Comparative Analysis 2022.pdf>
ProQOL. (n.d.). Proqol Health Manual. <https://proqol.org/proqol-health-manual>

Strategies for Recovery and Prevention

Prevention and recovery strategies for burnout involve implementing self-care practices that promote physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Regular engagement in replenishing activities can contribute to resilience and prevent burnout development.

Leader/Organization Strategies include:

1. Improving Work Environment:

- Create a well-balanced workload with regular downtime for a healthier work atmosphere.

2. Promote Work/Life Balance:

- Support regular breaks and advocate for staff vacations.
- Cultivate a culture that recognizes self-care as crucial for high-quality work.

3. Clarify Roles and Expectations:

- Provide clear job descriptions to ensure a thorough understanding of responsibilities.
- Ensure staffs are well-trained to excel in their roles.

4. Offer Support and Adequate Supervision:

- Conduct regular meetings to offer support and guidance to team members.
- Foster a sense of teamwork through peer support or buddy systems.

5. Prioritize Wellbeing:

- Boost collaboration and teamwork through regular team meetings.
- Highlight the importance of staff wellbeing.
- Recognize and celebrate staff achievements.
- Reinforce the value of each team member and express appreciation
- Provide information on stress and its impacts.
- Promote effective coping strategies to empower staff in managing stress.

Individual practices include:

1. Behavioural:

- Ensure adequate sleep (6-8 hours per night)
- Seek help from colleagues or supervisors when needed
- Develop competence and confidence in job-related skills
- Assess workload and balance it with new tasks to energize oneself
- Reorganize work processes or structure to allow more self-care time

2. Cognitive:

- Evaluate the alignment of personal values with organizational values
- Advocate for important values in the workplace

3. Physical:

- Engage in regular physical exercise
- Maintain a healthy diet, emphasizing fruits and vegetables while reducing processed foods, sugar, salt, and caffeine intake

4. Spiritual:

- Dedicate time to spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, or spending time in nature
- Find meaning or purpose in daily activities and employ strategies to reinforce this sense of meaning

5. Emotional:

- Practice gratitude by reflecting on daily blessings
- Cultivate strong social support networks for emotional assistance and regular connection with personal and professional contacts.