



Together for Neurodiversity

Empowering Futures, Embracing Differences

A Young Person's Guide to Burnout

What is Burnout?

Burnout happens when your brain and body have had too much for too long. It's like when your phone battery runs out, but instead of plugging in a charger, you need rest and care to recharge.

For autistic and neurodivergent people, burnout can happen more often because the world can feel noisy, busy, confusing, or overwhelming.

Burnout isn't laziness. It isn't weakness. It's your mind and body saying: "I need a break."

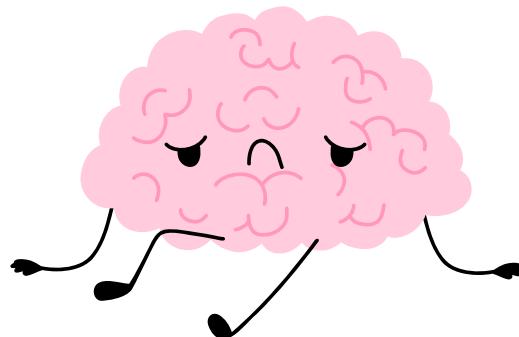


What Does Burnout Feel Like?

Burnout can feel different for everyone, but here are some common signs:

- Feeling very tired, no matter how much you rest.
- Struggling to do things that usually feel easy.
- Finding it harder to talk or explain how you feel.
- Wanting to hide away or be alone more.
- Getting upset or frustrated more quickly.
- Not enjoying your usual interests or hobbies.
- Forgetting things or finding it hard to concentrate.
- Feeling shut down, like you just can't do anything.

Burnout can be scary, especially if it seems like you've lost skills or energy you used to have. But it won't last forever. With the right support, you can recover.



Why Does Burnout Happen?

Burnout usually builds up over time. It can happen when:

- You've had too much schoolwork, homework, or pressure.
- You've been masking (hiding your true self) for too long.
- You're around too much noise, change, or stress.
- You don't get enough breaks or rest.
- You've had too many big feelings to deal with at once.

Think of it like carrying a backpack that keeps getting heavier and heavier. Eventually, you can't carry it anymore.

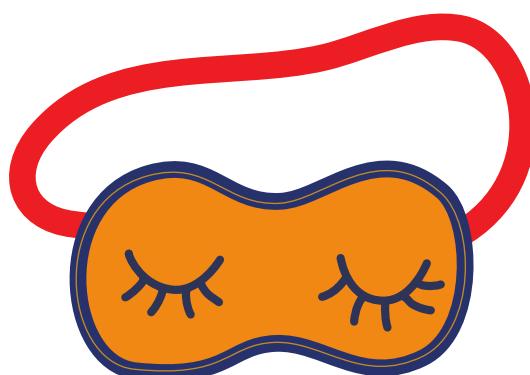


What Helps During Burnout?

When you're in burnout, your body and brain need recovery time. Here are some things that might help:

- Rest: sleep, naps, or just lying down.
- Quiet time: being in a calm, safe space.
- Comfort: favourite blanket, clothes, or fidget toy.
- Low-demand activities: watching a familiar show, listening to music, or drawing.
- Saying “no” to things that feel too hard.
- Support from someone you trust – a parent, carer, teacher, or friend.

The most important thing is giving yourself permission to stop and rest without guilt.



How To Avoid Burnout?

It's not always possible to stop burnout, but you can lower the chances by:

- Taking regular breaks, even when you feel fine.
- Having quiet time each day.
- Using tools like headphones, sunglasses, or fidgets when the world feels too much.
- Being honest about how you feel, instead of masking all the time.
- Planning downtime after busy days.
- Eating and drinking regularly.
- Asking for help before things feel too big.

Think of it like charging your battery every night, not just waiting until it's flat.



Making Your Own Burnout Plan

It can help to have a plan ready for when you start to feel burnout coming. Your plan might include:

- My early signs (e.g. I get more tired, I feel grumpy, I stop talking).
- What helps me (e.g. lying under my blanket, listening to music, time alone).
- Who can help (e.g. Mum, Dad, a teacher, a friend).
- What makes it worse (e.g. too many questions, loud noises, being told to hurry).

You can write this down or make a picture version so others know how to support you.



Moving Forward With Hope

Burnout can feel horrible, but it's not forever. With rest, support, and kindness to yourself, you can recover.

Remember: needing breaks doesn't make you weak. It makes you human. Everyone has limits — and learning yours is a strength.

You deserve to feel safe, calm, and supported. By noticing the signs, asking for help, and making space to recharge, you can look after yourself and bounce back.

You are not alone. Many young people go through burnout — and every time you take care of yourself, you're building strength for the future.

