



# Supporting yourself while helping others

Even before COVID-19 emerged, health care professionals were increasingly focused on another epidemic: provider burnout. For some providers, it's only gotten worse. Among U.S. psychologists, 45% reported feeling burned out in 2022, down just 3% from the previous year.<sup>1</sup>

## Provider burnout consists of 3 components<sup>2</sup>

- **Emotional exhaustion** – feeling overextended and being unable to feel compassion for clients and to meet workplace demands
- **Depersonalization of clients** – distancing from clients to prevent emotional fatigue
- **Feelings of ineffectiveness or lack of personal accomplishment** – feeling a negative sense of personal and/or career worth

## Recommendations for providers

It is important to recognize and acknowledge when you start to feel burned out. The following recommendations for self-care were created by the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress<sup>3</sup> and can help you take steps to support your health and well-being.

- **Meet basic needs.** Be sure to eat, drink and sleep regularly.
- **Take breaks.** When possible, do something unrelated to work that's comforting or relaxing. This rest leads to improved patient care.
- **Connect with colleagues.** Talk to colleagues and receive support from one another.
- **Communicate constructively.** Share your frustrations, as well as offer praise and support.
- **Contact family.** They may be an anchor of support outside of work. Sharing and staying connected may help them better support you.

## Provider burnout facts

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# 53%

of U.S. physicians reported feeling burned out in 2022<sup>4</sup>

# 54%

said burnout had a strong to severe impact on their lives, including relationships<sup>5</sup>

# 56%

of female physicians have faced burnout, compared to 41% of male physicians<sup>6</sup>

- **Respect differences.** Some people need to talk while others need to be alone. Note those differences in yourself and others.
- **Stay updated.** Rely on trusted sources of information and attend meetings to stay informed. Limiting media exposure is also important to avoid graphic imagery and messages that reduce well-being.
- **Monitor your moods.** Check in with yourself over time and monitor for symptoms of depression or stress, like prolonged sadness, difficulty sleeping or hopelessness.
- **Honor your service.** Remind yourself that despite obstacles or frustrations, you are fulfilling a noble calling – taking care of those most in need.

## Tips for building community

Community is vital to well-being. Here are some suggestions for facilitating more impactful gatherings:

- **Be intentional.** When sending invitations, be clear about the intent of the gathering, even if it's simply to connect with colleagues. People should know what they're in for and plan accordingly.
- **Consider two guiding questions.** After starting with introductions, welcome the conversation with a quote or question to stimulate discourse. Then, as you wrap up, try a lighter question that enables people to “leave the room” – virtual or physical – on a high note.
- **Consider having a facilitator.** We often have a lot of history with our colleagues and peers, which, while valuable, can also lead to interactions that grow routine. A trusted and skilled facilitator can help usher new conversations, probe when it feels right and meaningfully close the dialogue.
- **Be consistent.** While one-time gatherings can be enjoyable, it's essential that we build the scaffolding of community that will support providers. By making your gatherings a regular occurrence, you communicate that you're committed to connection.
- **Set the mood.** If you want to create space for connection, the space should feel purposeful and special. Try dressing for the occasion, preparing a cocktail or mocktail and paying attention to your surroundings.

### Sources

1. American Psychological Association. [Psychologists struggle to meet demand amid mental health crisis: 2022 COVID-19 Practitioner Impact Survey](#). Nov. 2022.
2. American Medical Association. [4 personal factors signaling your risk for physician burnout](#). March 4, 2019.
3. Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress. [Sustaining the well-being of healthcare personnel during coronavirus and other infectious disease outbreaks](#). Jan. 21, 2022.
4. Kane L. [U.S. Physician Burnout and Depression Report 2023](#). *Medscape*. Jan. 27, 2023.
5. Cision PR Newswire. [Medscape Physician Burnout & Depression Report 2022 Shows Pandemic's Continued Impact](#). January 21, 2022.
6. Ibid.



## Take breaks.

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