Gone are the days when you bounced out of bed ready to face life’s challenges. You used to juggle family, career, and social responsibilities with ease. You did it all. Now you drag yourself to work, are irritable and cynical and really don’t care about your job or anything else. You’re just getting through the day. You’re burned out.

Burnout has been defined as the consequence of severe stress and high ideals and from working too hard, too much and for too long. Years of long hours and extreme workloads together with the constant emotional demands of the job and pressures to excel can take their toll on a person’s physical, emotional and mental health. One day that overachiever realizes he or she is disillusioned, exhausted, and fed up with everything. They’re burned out.

Symptoms of burnout

Physical signs and symptoms
- Feeling tired and drained most of the time
- Lowered immunity, getting sick a lot
- Frequent headaches, back pain, muscle aches
- Change in appetite or sleep habits
- Emotional signs and symptoms
- Self-doubt, feeling as if you’ve failed
- Feeling helpless, trapped and defeated
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world

Behavioural signs and symptoms
- Loss of motivation
- Increasingly cynical and negative
- Having less satisfaction and pride in your work
- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done
- Using food, drugs, or alcohol to cope
- Taking out your frustrations on others
- Skipping work or coming in late and leaving early

Are you at risk of job burnout?

You may be more likely to experience job burnout if:
- you identify so strongly with work that you lack a reasonable balance between your work life and your personal life;
- you try to be everything to everyone;
- you work in a helping profession, such as health care, counselling or teaching;
For more information please call: English: 1 866 644-0326 En français : 1 888 361-4853

Homewood Human Solutions is a recognized leader in the field of Employee Assistance, Workplace Support and Employee Health Management Services. The firm provides EFAP/EAP, Crisis Management, e-Learning, health coaching, leadership development, psychological assessments, and other services in Canada and around the globe.

The Homewood Human Solutions mission is to provide behavioural health, productivity and performance solutions to ensure greater employee and organizational effectiveness.

*Please be advised that the content of this document is for information and educational purposes only and should in no way be considered as Manulife Financial Group Benefits offering medical advice. Please consult with your attending family physician(s) or other health care provider(s) as may be needed.

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• you feel you have little or no control over your work; and/or

• you feel that some aspects of your job have become monotonous.

Preventing burnout

Obviously when what you're doing is no longer fuelling your passion and/or commitment to your career, it's time to seriously assess your situation. Evaluate how you can change your current situation to re-ignite your enthusiasm.

• **Discuss your options with your supervisor and HR.** What are the options for professional development within your company? Is there a way to explore careers in other departments? Perhaps your supervisor can help in giving you new challenges or changing expectations?

• **What gives you joy outside the workplace?** If you love to sing or play an instrument, join a choir or band. Always fancied acting? Join the local theatre group. Pursue your interests by taking courses, getting involved in the community and meeting people with similar interests.

• **Volunteer.** Helping others is a great way to get a better perspective on life. From helping at a nursing home to getting involved at the animal shelter, there are many ways to have your talents, interests and experience make a big difference in the lives of others.

• **Make a bucket list.** Having and pursuing personal goals, no matter how trivial they may seem, can reignite your enthusiasm and that can spill over into all areas of your life. Start planning to make some lifelong dreams a reality.

• **Take some time for yourself.** When was the last time you took a vacation? A real vacation? Sometimes a week relaxing in the sun or experiencing a new country and culture not only recharges your batteries but provides new goals and new perspectives.

• **Seek support.** If you think you may be experiencing burnout, don't ignore your symptoms. See your family doctor to rule out any underlying physical issues. Reach out to friends, loved ones or coworkers.