



Preventing Commissioner Burnout

MCS 324

AND YOU THINK
THERE'S STRESS
IN YOUR
LIFE !



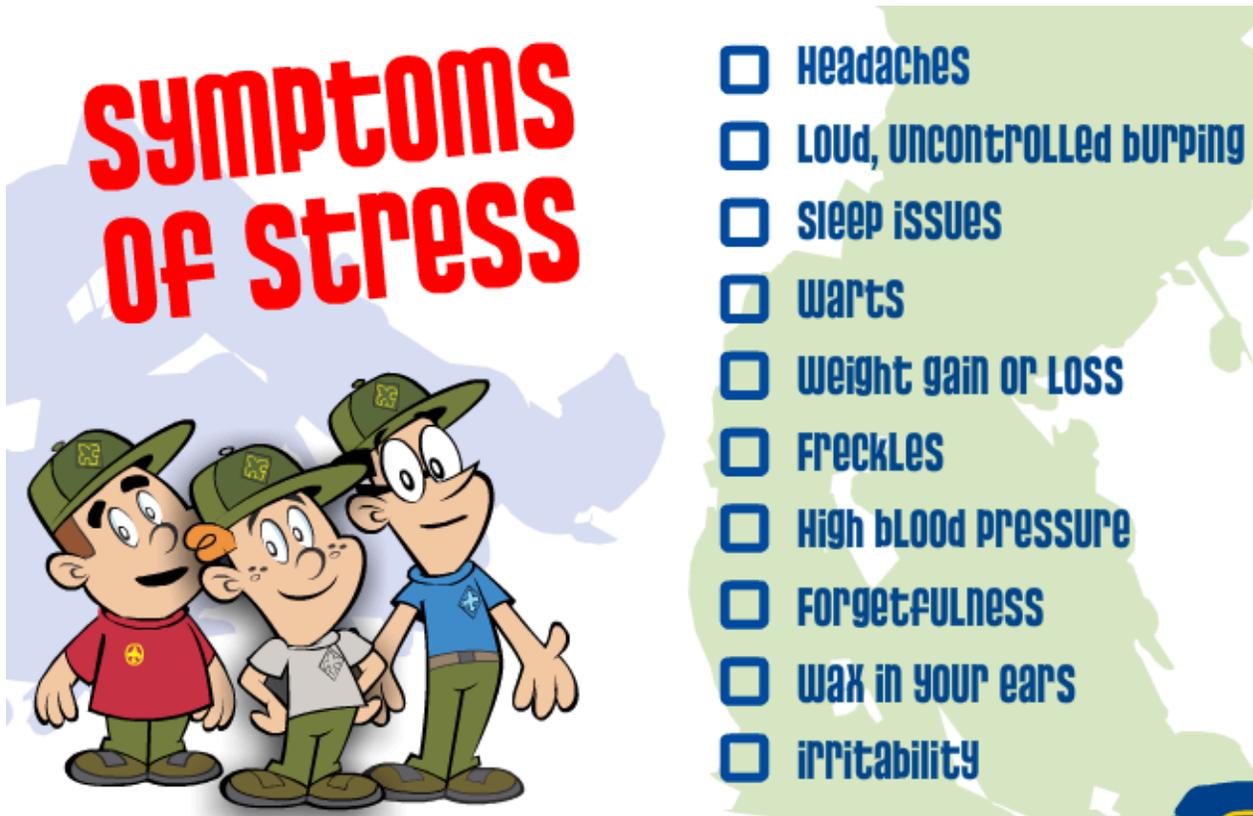
What is Burnout?

“A state of emotional exhaustion coupled with cynicism, inefficiency, anger, and frustration. An umbrella term used to describe **stress**.”

Why Do We Need to Know About It?

Volunteers of youth oriented organizations who begin their donation of time in optimism may succumb to the effects of burnout.

Volunteers may experience external conditions such as lack of support from supervisors or internal factors such as unrealistically high idealism which together serve to make them at risk for burnout.



SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- Headaches
- LOUD, UNCONTROLLED burping
- SLEEP ISSUES
- Warts
- Weight gain OR LOSS
- FreckLES
- High bLOOD PRESSURE
- FORgetFULNESS
- Wax in YOUR ears
- irritability

The infographic features a title 'SYMPTOMS OF STRESS' in large, bold, red letters. Below the title is a cartoon illustration of three young boys wearing green caps with a yellow 'M' logo. The boy on the left is wearing a red shirt with a yellow peace symbol, the middle boy is wearing a white shirt, and the boy on the right is wearing a blue shirt with a white cross. To the right of the illustration is a list of ten symptoms, each preceded by a blue square checkbox. The background of the infographic is a light green map of the United States.

Volunteers can begin to feel depleted for many reasons:

You have not been paying enough time or attention to nourishing and nurturing yourself;

Your own crises, life stresses, or losses have become temporarily overwhelming to you;

You are not getting enough support or recognition for what you do;

You are feeling helpless and out of control due to serious or intense problems of those who have sought help from you or because of the lack of agency or community resources to address those needs;

You are having difficulty effectively managing your time.

You are disorganized or trying to do too much too quickly;

You have either overestimated your own abilities or you have set expectations and standards that are too high for you.”

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The Right answers!

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What Do We Do About It?

Prevention:

More attention should be paid to the role of professional ethics, personal maintenance, stress and stressors, self-assessment, professional codes of ethics, values, professional training and competence prior to appointment as a Unit or any other Commissioner.

Education:

Scouting authorities should require education BEFORE placing any volunteer in a leadership position.

This also means requiring Youth Protection Training before assuming a volunteer role.

Continuing education should not be limited to the offering of the local Council Training Committee.

Professionals in the helping fields, whether they are registered with the Boy Scouts or not, can be invited to present workshops, seminars, and courses in professional development.

Supervision:

It is important to match the volunteer with the proper “job” in Scouting.

One person would make a great Commissioner but not a good Scoutmaster.

Is the selection of volunteers done in a thoughtful manner, or simply the plugging in of warm bodies in order to ensure Unit re-registration?

Practical suggestion:

In order to achieve the goals of prevention, education, and supervision, a yearly work shop on burnout could be offered in each Council.

Prevention, education, and supervision are suggestions which can at least bring about a greater level of awareness of the emotional, spiritual, and physical exhaustion experienced by those volunteers who might be at risk.

Practical thoughts:

Volunteers are human; they are subject to the day to day pressures and can experience physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual exhaustion.

The stress of responsibilities coupled with the unrealistic expectations of the volunteer combine to deplete the reserves of idealism and energy.

COMMISSIONERS

Make commissioner service your primary Scouting role.

Don't try to do three or four other things in Scouting.

Decide what's important. [Set your Commissioner Priorities.](#)

Do the things that will make a difference in the life of the unit -
that will solve a problem or improve the unit program.

A sense of belonging to a group can create loyalty and motivate a person to continue.

People will do a good job and remain active when they feel their voice is heard and
their opinions are valued.

Offer constructive ideas for improving commissioner service in your district. Help
make decisions and solve problems.

[Keep up-to-date](#) on your commissioner responsibilities.

Take a new training course.

A sincere, interested, helpful, and enthusiastic [attitude](#) will go a long way in motivating others.

You need to [realize how important your individual talents, interest, and skills are](#) to Scouting

Keep Scouting papers sorted out.

[Organize](#) and file the stuff you can use—key manuals and guidelines.

Throw out what you don't need.

Don't let mail accumulate.

Use your Commissioner Program Notebook for key notes, things to do,
names, and phone numbers.

Don't waste time always looking for the papers you need.

[Schedule appointments with long-winded people just before a meeting](#) you must attend.

This will cut down on time wasted by people who tend to overstay their welcome.

Group your commissioner tasks and appointments.

Going to the roundtable?

Good. Make a delivery en route.

Arrange to meet with a unit leader before the roundtable.

Plan to visit with others during the break.

Don't feel guilty about saying "no" (gracefully, of course).

You just can't do everything that people may ask you to do.

Don't procrastinate.

If the job looks too big, break it down into manageable pieces.

Listen carefully—it saves time and helps you get it right the first time.

Make a weekly commissioner to-do list.

Mark the priorities with an "A," other important tasks with a "B or C."

Do the As first.

Make a schedule and stick to it.

Commissioner Wellness

Learn to take it easy. Take time out for yourself to relax.





SLEEP ENOUGH EVERY NIGHT TO FEEL RESTED

Get regular **exercise**. Stay fit. Keep your weight under control.



EXERCISE LOWERS STRESS LEVELS

Lead a balanced life. **Live it up!**



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS = LOWER STRESS



Laughing = Lower stress



Seek prompt medical help for problems.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-management/MY00435>



STRESS

A graphic featuring the word "STRESS" in a large, bold, stylized font. The letters are filled with a pink and white pattern, outlined in black, and set against a background of a green-tinted eye. The background also includes a faint map of the United States.

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/>



DEPRESSION

A graphic featuring the word "DEPRESSION" in a large, bold, stylized font. The letters are filled with a pink and white pattern, outlined in black, and set against a background of a green-tinted face. The background also includes a faint map of the United States.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

ASK FOR HELP

Special Thanks

“Volunteer Burnout:

A Preliminary Study of Physical, Emotional and Spiritual Exhaustion
Among the Volunteers of the Boy Scouts of America,”

The Very Reverend John Thomas R. Bacon, M.T.S.,Th., M.Ed.

Scouting Graphics: BSA On-Line Training - Physical Wellness Training Module

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