

Real Talk



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**Research Area:
Cybersecurity @ Pioneer
Deep Learning & Mental Health**

Mental Health: Real talk

“Taking a breath”

**Feeling like you don't want to do anything?
Let's talk about what's beneath the 'I am fine.'**

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The current society encourages a **fast lifestyle**, a lifestyle which **people can't really rest, and have task after task piling up.**

- You finished your homework? Awesome, make sure you catch the new deadline in 3 days!
- You managed to do that as well? Alright, don't forget the exam next week.
- You passed that? Nice, just note there is another SAT you need to study for.

All these deadlines are making us hard to take a break, so some just decided: "you know what, I'll be fine without them. I'd rather use the break time to improve my GPA." Nice Idea, but as it turns out, you probably won't be "fine"...

In fact, according to the 2015 research by *Beiter, R., et al*¹. **Academic pressures significantly contribute to elevated stress and mental health problems among students.**

Why is “no rest” a problem?

Rest actually acts as an important part of our mental health. Without sufficient rest, one may experience “**burnout**”, which is a *psychological syndrome involving a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job*². In this case, your academics.

Some may think burnout are just feeling tired, in fact, it's not. Burnout negatively impact your emotional, physical, and social well-being. It has a significantly high correlation with mental health issues, including **anxiety disorders**³, **depression**⁴, and **cognitive impairment**⁵.

So, how can we identify if we are experiencing a burnout?

Common symptoms include **Emotional Exhaustion**, **Depersonalization** or **Reduced Personal Accomplishment**⁶.

In other words, if you feel like you are constantly running out of energy to deal with your studies, stopped caring for others or not achieving anything, **you might be needing a break**.

How to deal with burnout?

First of all, **rest!** Make sure you at least do some of the things you enjoy for an hour everyday. This is called **active recovery**⁷. No matter if it's hanging out with friends, playing video games or sports. Just leave your academics and put "relaxing" on your to-do list. The last step, **Intentional Relaxation** is important, according to *Meijman & Mulder, 1998*⁸.

Also, try not to judge yourself by the outcome, but by the progress. This is the **Growth Mindset**⁹. I know, this is hard and sounds inefficient. But if you think about it, putting max effort means this is the best you can do, losing doesn't mean you didn't do well, quoting a phrase said by *Horizon from Apex Legends*. "Losing means you have tried."

Another useful tip is to have a "vent day" every week or month, depending on your schedule, when you forget about all the academics and deadlines, and just play until you feel like "oh, that felt good..." This has been shown to reduce stress and improve emotional health significantly¹⁰.

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