

“The opposite of play is not work.  
It’s depression.”  
—Dr. Stuart Brown, Psychiatrist & Play Researcher

# Feeling Down? You’re Not Alone!

## Tech Burnout and Mental Health

www.karaeadscounseling.com

Today is the only day available to us;  
it is the most important day of our lives.  
- Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Master, Author

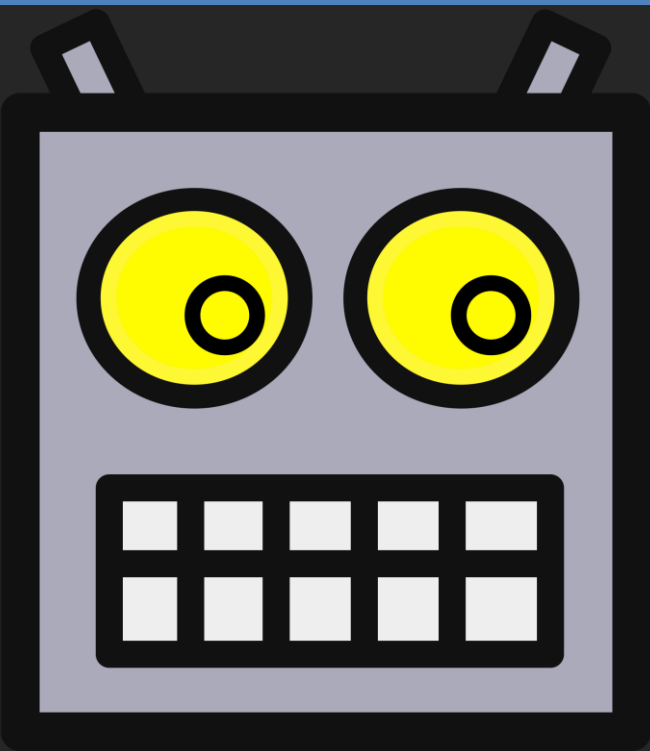
### Definition

Burnout is intense stress characterized by:

- **Exhaustion** - physical, emotional, mental
- **Cynicism about Work** - skepticism, doubt, pessimism
- **Detachment from Work** - dispassionate, disinterested
- **Personal Inefficacy** – feeling unsuccessful, powerless, useless, incompetent

### Possible Causes

- **Overwork** - long hours, problem solving beyond work hours, chaotic work
- **Lack of Control** - over your schedule, projects, workload, resources, progress
- **Ambiguity in the Job** - changing or unclear expectations
- **Poor-Fitting Placement** - monotonous work, poor use of your skills
- **Dysfunctional Workplace Dynamics** - lack of respect, bullying, micromanaging, abuse, discrimination, microaggressions, lack of appreciation, harassment, hostility
- **Values Crisis** - mismatch between your personal values and those of your employer, lack of interest in work topics/mission of the company
- **Lack of Diversity** - workplace ignorance & aggressions lead to isolation
- **Tech Activism Overwork** - being the voice of diversity, overworked by volunteering on too many opensource projects
- **Lack of Supports in Personal Life**

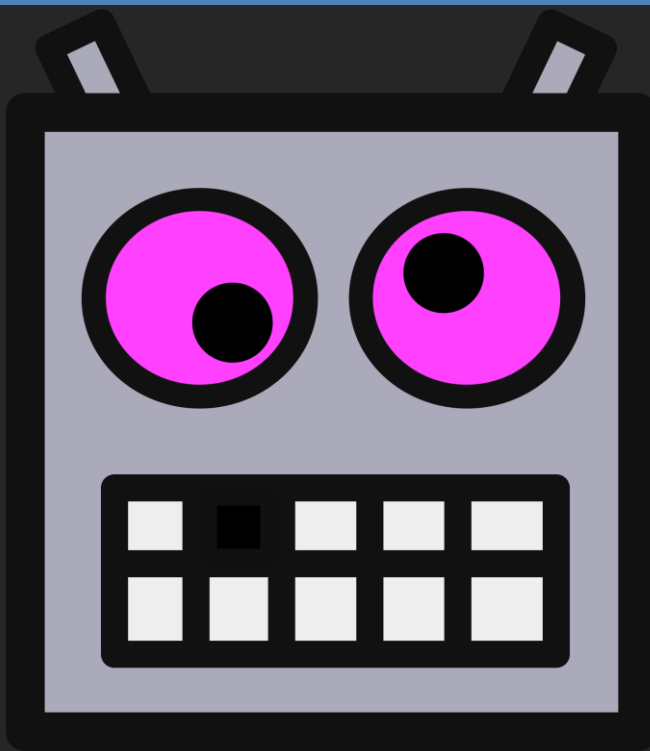


```
1 # All the warning signs are passing you by
2 try:
3     nose_to_the_grindstone()
4 except:
5     pass
```

### Early Warning Signs

- **Changes in Mood** - often feeling down, alone, frustrated, hopeless, irritable, negative
- **Decreased Energy Level** - dread going to work, having trouble getting started, inconsistent productivity
- **Changes in Sleep and/or Appetite**
- **Physical Pain** – eye strain, headaches, back aches, musculoskeletal pain, RSI (repetitive strain injury) from mouse use
- **Relationship Strain**
- **Coping by Using Alcohol and/or Substances**

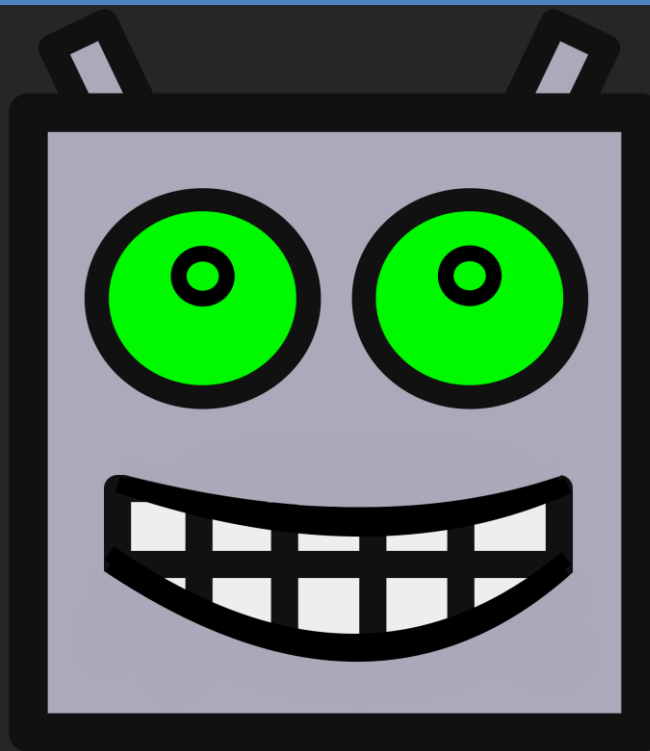
“We live in a world that celebrates work and activity,  
ignores renewal and recovery, and fails to recognize that  
both are necessary for sustained high performance.”  
- Dr. Jim Loehr, Performance Psychologist



```
1 # Meltdown!
2 import os
3 while (1)
4     os.fork()
```

### Symptoms of Burnout

- **Frequent Unpleasant Feelings** - depression, anxiety, panic, isolation, cynicism, anger, detachment, numbness, pessimism, apathy,
- **Suicidal Thoughts**
- **Excessive Stress, Fatigue, and/or Insomnia**
- **Forgetfulness, Difficulty Concentrating**
- **Asthenopia** - eye problems such as burning irritation, strain, redness, blurred vision
- **Physical Ailments** - musculoskeletal pain, medical conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, stroke, obesity, weak immune system
- **Excessive Alcohol and/or Substance Use**
- **Affected Personal Relationships** - negative spillover into personal relationships or home life, losing friendships, divorce
- **Deep Sense of Ineffectiveness** - lack of pride in accomplishments
- **Lack of Productivity**



```
1 # Set boundaries, avoid the meltdown!
2 # vi /etc/security/limits.conf
3 you_working_on_anything hard nproc 100
4 @while_at_work hard nproc 50
```

### Coping Strategies

- **Say No!/Find Balance** - set healthy boundaries, delegate work tasks, make time for hobbies, interests, & family
- **Build Work Community/Seek Personal Support** - establish camaraderie at work, find uplifting family & friends, see a counselor, join a support group
- **Physical Movement** – stretch, exercise
- **Identify and Creatively Manage Stressors**
- **Explore Alternative Work Options** – adjust expectations, job sharing, telecommuting, flexing your time, professional development
- **Take Work Breaks & Technology Breaks** - take your vacation time, take a sabbatical, log out of IRC, take company-wide email breaks, limit personal tech use
- **Increase Power and Self-Efficacy at Work**
- **Increase Self-Awareness & Authenticity** - identify and align personal values
- **Discuss Suicidal Thoughts**