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Spring 4-8-2021

### College Students and Burnout

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#### Recommended Citation

Malc, Alexandra, "College Students and Burnout" (2021). *English Department: Research for Change - Wicked Problems in Our World*. 62.

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Alexandra Malc

### Burnout...What Can We Do?

Burnout is something every student experiences at some point in their lives. According to multiple websites, "Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands." This shows that burnout can really affect people mentally and psychologically, and it is more than simply not wanting to do work. It is a medical condition many students face, with no idea how to soften the blow of burnout. However, burnout can also be caused by the lack of resources on many college campuses. It can also be caused by a lack of self-care. There are many reasons why students experience burnout, but how can it be helped?

Burnout is something that can really affect a person mentally. The feeling of never wanting to do work can really weigh on a person, especially as more work tends to pile up in its place. Christopher T. Pisarik talks about burnout in his article; "Exhaustion refers to the feeling of being emotionally and physically drained as a reaction to work related stress. Cynicism is often an immediate reaction to exhaustion that can prompt individuals to cognitively distance themselves from their work. Professional efficacy is an erosion of belief in one's personal effectiveness, and can be a function of either exhaustion, cynicism, or both (Maslach et al., 2001)." This article shows there is a psychological aspect to burnout, and it can really affect a person's mental health. It can be a feeling of exhaustion, but it is also the feeling of cynicism. However, this goes deeper than simply not wanting to do

schoolwork. This also can affect a student's work life as well later on in life, as one article states "Results showed that optimism and stress were significantly correlated with risk for job burnout. Moreover, path-analytic results indicated that optimism remained a strong predictor of risk for job burnout, independent of stress." (Chang). The more stressed a person is, the higher risk for burnout in their careers. This is an absolutely terrifying statistic, and more must be done to help students lessen their feeling of burnout, before it is too late and they enter the job world, already burned out.

Another aspect to burnout is the psychological aspect behind it. There is a serious lack of resources on many college campuses, and this can really hurt students in the long run. On Kutztown's campus, there are only about eight therapists for about eight thousand students. This is just simply not enough—therapists cannot handle each having hundreds of students on their workload. Yet the school refuses to hire more therapists, making it hard for burnout to truly go away. It is nearly impossible to make an appointment on campus, with weeks to months of a waiting time—this is inexcusable. Students deserve to be able to see a therapist whenever they may need, as many college students do need the help to handle their own workload. According to Gary Morse, "In public mental health, burnout is considered to be costly and "economically wasteful", especially given the expense of recruiting and training staff." This is ridiculous. Schools will not hire more therapists because it's...costly? This will only continue to hurt more students in the process. Students need mental health resources in order to get out their feelings that they do feel, but if the resources are not available, then they are just sitting ducks. That is unfair to students, who

pay thousands of dollars to this college to get an education. Students deserve to be able to see a therapist whenever they may need, without months long waiting times. According to Tyler Epps, College burnout can cause an array of serious health issues. "Chronic depletion can result in similarly chronic health problems, such as depression, infections, susceptibility to viruses." This is a terrifying idea that burnout can result in real medical conditions. We need to be there for students and offer resources instead of just throwing them to the wolves.

However, there are things students can do to lessen the feeling of burnout. Going on walks is incredibly helpful and can help students get away and just think for ten minutes to a half hour. Another idea is changing up eating habits and becoming healthier. This can drastically help students, as sometimes the feeling of burnout can diminish just by going on walks and eating more salads. However, if a student is already an athlete, there is more to do. For example, reading books, or getting fresh air and getting away from the schoolwork. There is plenty we can do as students to make this feeling better for everyone, but it is very hard when schoolwork keeps piling up. "According to [bestcolleges.org](http://bestcolleges.org), When you're experiencing heightened levels of stress, it's important to devote time every day to resting and relaxing your mind." This is very important to remember that we as students can do something to make the feeling of burnout much less loud than it normally is. We as students need to do whatever we can do to help ourselves and going on walks and eating better is an incredible idea.

We as students feel burnout very easily now. The workload is piling up, and students do not know what to do about it. There needs to be more resources on campus for students, as some students cannot go elsewhere to get help, whether that be for insurance reasons, or a lack of transportation. Going on walks and eating better can certainly help, but at the end of the day the administration needs to do better. Students are drowning due to the unrealistic standards put on many of them, and it is hard to know when to take a breath. We need to be there for students, and not ignoring their cries for help, before it is too late.

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