

IDENTIFYING BURNOUT AMONG ACTIVISTS

What is it?
What are the signs and symptoms?

Activist burnout involves feelings of exhaustion or collapse due to sustained overwork, the emotional burdens of activism, guilt about taking time for self-care, and the perception that one's work is not paying off.

It puts us, our families, friends, colleagues, and communities we seek to support at risk of harm.

Signs and Symptoms of Burnout



- Sleeplessness.
- Frequent illness (e.g. migraines, headaches).
- Lack of interest in usual tasks.
- Apathy.
- Uncontrollable emotional outbursts.
- Depression.
- Forgetfulness.
- Irritability.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT AND TREAT THE SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT AMONG ACTIVISTS AND ORGANIZERS?



Activists and organizers must politicize ideas and acts of individual and collective self-care. We must aim to adopt the healthy behaviours we hope to see grow in our communities.

LEARN MORE AND ACCESS ONLINE RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT:



- [HTTPS://WWW.HEADINGTON-INSTITUTE.ORG/TOPIC-AREAS/126/STRESS-AND-BURNOUT](https://www.headington-institute.org/topic-areas/126/stress-and-burnout)
- [HTTPS://CAPACITAR.ORG/CAPACITAR-EMERGENCY-KIT/](https://capacitar.org/capacitar-emergency-kit/)
- [HTTPS://WWW.THERAPISTAID.COM](https://www.therapistaid.com)

POLITICIZING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SELF-CARE

What does it mean to promote a radical form of wellness activism?

We must reject the idea that activism is about selflessness. Our bodies and minds are our toolkits. We must take care of them.

Individual self-care leads to collective care. Without self-care activists risk burnout, increased isolation and vulnerability to attacks by political opponents.



What is wellness activism?

- Modeling the behaviours we hope to cultivate and encourage in our communities.
- Doing for ourselves what we want for others.
- Attending to our own needs to be more effective activists.
- Filling our own cups with love and compassion and letting it flow into others.

"CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE, IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION, AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE"
- AUDRE LORDE



Activists and organizers must stay healthy and strong to make the biggest impact on social justice. Transforming violent and unequal societies requires long-term and sustainable movements.

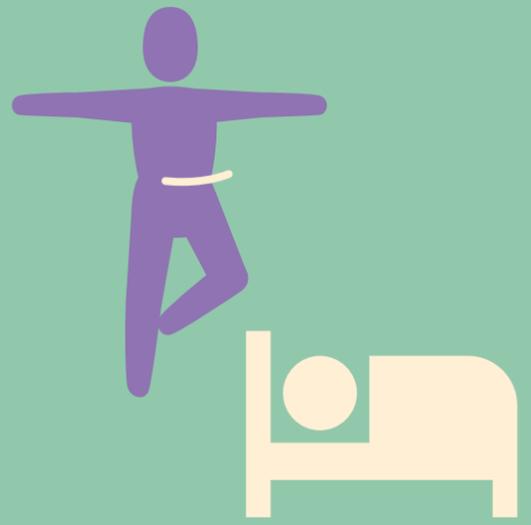
Self-care, like social transformation, is a daily practice that we must constantly work at. It is not just another task on a to-do list. It is a framework that requires ongoing learning and unlearning of practices that may be doing violence to ourselves and those around us.

CREATING A CULTURE OF SELF-CARE

Different strategies work for different folks.
Please take and leave what you need, and
consider what you are willing to try.

Honour your Body and its Needs

- Get enough sleep (7-8 hours).
- Exercise, even for 5 minutes.
- Seek green space and fresh air.
- Meditate.
- Find opportunities to acknowledge moments of pleasure in your life through touch, taste, sight, scent, and sound.



Set Boundaries

- Take breaks when working (5-10 mins every hour).
- Schedule time for hobbies, personal interests, and nothingness.
- Take time away from activism if you need it (e.g. take breaks from the news, social media, etc.)



FIND OUTLETS FOR EXPRESSION. TALK TO FRIENDS OR FAMILY.
JOURNAL. DRAW. MAKE MUSIC. SEEK COUNSELLING.

Harm Reduction

- Some people may use drugs or alcohol to manage stress.
- If you use substances, know your source and test your drugs.
- Ensure that you do not have existing health problems or take medication that could interfere with the substances.
- Do not use alone and use in a safe, familiar environment.



Finding strategies that work for you may take
time, and a lot of trial and error.

Remember that self-care is cultivated over time.
Please be kind to yourself and practice patience,
forgiveness and self-compassion.