

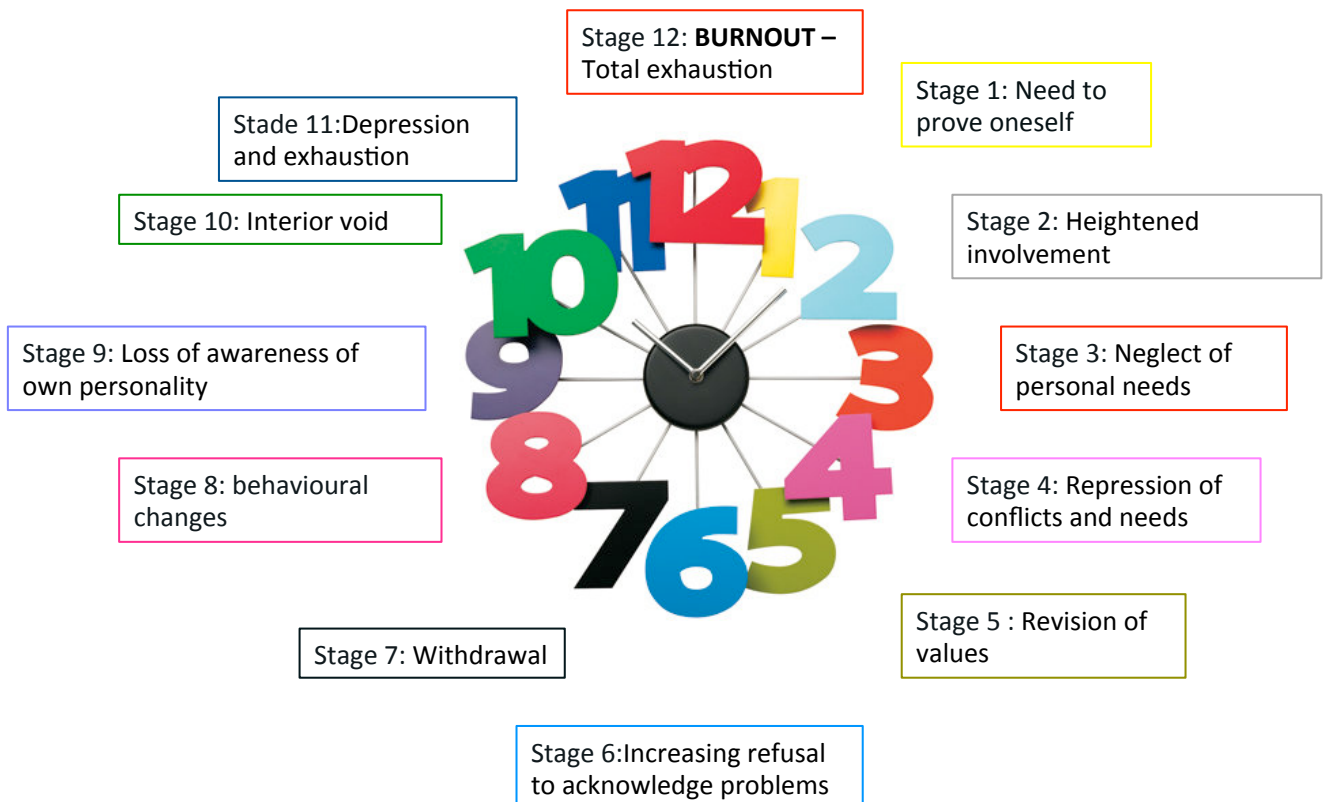


# THE BURNOUT CYCLE



## THE PATHWAY TO EXHAUSTION

*Freudenberger identifies twelve stages on the road to burnout:*



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# The Burn out Cycle

## Description of the phases

### **Stage 1: Desire to prove oneself**

*You put your heart and soul into your work because you love the job you are doing. You place high expectations on yourself.*

### **Stage 2: More intense commitment**

*You show an increased willingness to accept new tasks and do everything possible to succeed. Your superiors appreciate this performance and delegate more tasks involving still greater responsibilities. You begin to feel that you are indispensable.*

### **Stage 3: Subtle neglect of personal needs**

*You devote more and more time and thought to your job; as a result you have less contact with your family and friends and fewer activities in your private life. Your own needs are increasingly often neglected. Sleep disorders may appear at this stage.*

### **Stage 4: Repression of conflicts**

*You steadily lose your energy. You make mistakes, e.g. missed appointments and unfinished tasks. Sleep disorders become more frequent and you experience a lack of rest and energy; you feel weak, you abandon your hobbies and so lose an important source of compensation*

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## **Stage 5: Redefinition of values**

*Your performance at work and/or during your leisure time becomes your main objective. Weekends become days just like any other. You regard private contacts as a bind and try to avoid them.*

## **Stage 6: Increasing refusal to acknowledge the problems**

*You regularly feel alarm signals such as persistent fatigue or migraine. Despite everything you maintain your level of performance and demands on yourself and repress physical problems.*

## **Stage 7: Withdrawal**

*You are aware that your performance is tailing off. This causes a personal crisis. Feelings of growing frustration are the consequence. A loss of direction, the impression of being powerless and an internal void now set in. Psychosomatic reactions such as muscle tension, variations in body weight, back pains and an irregular heart rate now appear.*

## **Stage 8: Substantial behavioural changes**

*You avoid all social proximity with other persons. This stage typically also features a loss of initiative, lower productivity and meticulous observance of rules*



### **Stage 9: Loss of awareness of your own person**

*The impression of an internal void is prominent now. You are already showing a severe burnout syndrome which results in depressive behaviour. Private life has become almost non-existent.*

### **Stage 10: Internal void**

*You are no longer able to get up in the morning. You find it hard to concentrate. Fits of anxiety, panic attacks and fear of other persons now set in. This negative attitude towards life causes you to seek refuge in solitude.*

### **Stage 11: Depression**

*Outside observers distinguish various signs of depression. The persons concerned are exhausted and want to sleep all the time. Existential despair occurs and may go so far as ideas of suicide.*

### **Stage 12: Burnout – Total exhaustion**

*This phase is typified by mental, physical and emotional exhaustion. The immune system is attacked and cardio-vascular and gastro-intestinal disorders occur. There is a serious risk of suicide.*