

TOOLKIT · VERSION 1

Burnout Recovery Workbook

What burnout is, why it hits neurodivergent people hard, and how to come back.

How to use this toolkit

Skim once, then choose one practice to try this week. Toolkits are living documents — mark them up, share them with your team, and revisit as your needs evolve.

Overview

Burnout is not weakness. It's a predictable result of sustained mismatch between demand and capacity — often compounded by masking, sensory load, and inadequate recovery.

Why it matters

Autistic and ADHD burnout are increasingly recognized in research and lived-experience literature. Naming it accurately is the first step to recovering from it — and to redesigning the conditions that caused it.

Research summary

Autistic burnout shows a distinct profile of exhaustion, skill loss, and sensory hypersensitivity (Raymaker et al., 2020). Maslach Burnout Inventory research links chronic role overload with the same exhaustion-cynicism-efficacy pattern across professions.

Practical strategies

Stabilize

- Reduce inputs aggressively for 2–6 weeks if you can.
- Sleep, sun, protein, water — in that order.
- Defer non-essential decisions.

Investigate

- What was the mismatch? Sensory, social, cognitive, moral?
- What did you mask? What did masking cost?

Redesign

- What is non-negotiable for your nervous system?
- What boundary makes recovery possible?

- Who is on your support team going forward?

Ready-to-use scripts & worksheets

Recovery plan template

This week: reduce ____ • add ____ • protect ____

This month: redesign ____ • ask for ____

Long-term: change ____ • build in ____

Recommended lessons & next steps

- Toolkit: Burnout Recovery, Stress Management, Sleep — /toolbox
- AI Companion (Burnout pathway) — /companion

Selected references & further reading

- Raymaker DM, et al. "Having All of Your Internal Resources Exhausted Beyond Measure": Autistic Burnout. *Autism Adulthood*. 2020.
- Maslach C, Leiter MP. *Understanding the burnout experience*. World Psychiatry. 2016.

Ask the AI Companion

Visit understandingneurodiversity.org/companion to ask follow-up questions about **Burnout Recovery Workbook**. The Companion will recommend lessons, conditions, and research tailored to your role.