



Are You at Risk of Mental Exhaustion/Burnout?

By Lindsay Dupuis, M.A.

Mental Health Counsellor

We're all faced with stress from time to time, but did you know that the impact of stress can build up and play an important role in whether or not you become ill - physically *and* mentally?

In general terms, it is said that the experience of stress arises when demands exceed one's coping resources. When this happens, the individual normally experiences an overwhelming sense of losing control. If the individual isn't able to recover some level of control, their resources become further and further depleted until they eventually burn out.

Our psychological resiliency determines how each stressor will impact us to a large degree. In other words, what one person perceives to be stressful isn't necessarily what someone else might find to be stressful. For example, travelling might be viewed as exciting and invigorating by some, while others might find it to be incredibly stress-inducing. Nevertheless, as long as one perceives an event to be stressful, and the experience of stress is prolonged over time, the risk of developing symptoms of mental exhaustion and burnout greatly increases.

Thomas Holmes & Richard Rahe developed The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) as a way to measure one's risk of experiencing burnout. While the list of stressors certainly isn't exclusive, it provides a general overview of life events - each assigned a Life Change Unit - that are perceived to be stressful by a large number of individuals.

To calculate your risk of experiencing mental exhaustion/burnout, add up the scores associated with each life event that has been a source of stress in your life over the previous year.

Life Event	Life Change Unit
Death of a spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Imprisonment	63
Death of a close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Dismissal from work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gain a new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
Change in financial state	38
Death of a close friend	37
Change to different line of work	36
Change in frequency of arguments	35
Major mortgage	32
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30

Change in responsibilities at work	29
Child leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse starts or stops work	26
Begin or end school	26
Change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
Change in working hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in recreation	19
Change in church activities	19
Change in social activities	18
Minor mortgage or loan	17
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family reunions	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas	12
Minor violation of law	11

What Does Your Score Mean?

150 points or less = a relatively low susceptibility to developing a stress-related illness.

150 to 300 points = 50% chance of developing a stress-related illness.

300 points or more = 80% chance of developing a stress-related illness.

What to Do About It

If you have a moderate to high score, it's recommended that you re-evaluate the circumstances of your life and see if there is anything you can do to reduce the number of stressors (as much as conceivably possible) that you're faced with – both now and into the future. This might involve adjusting your priorities, learning to say no, and ultimately simplifying your days.

How Counselling Can Help

Talking to a mental health counsellor to help you make these adjustments is highly recommended. Counselling can also help you build resiliency and learn coping strategies that will help decrease the impact of stress on you, thereby lowering your risk of developing mental and physical exhaustion down the road. Of course, if you are already experiencing burnout, including symptoms of anxiety or depression, counselling can help you get to the root of the problem and help you obtain a higher level of functioning once again.

If you feel like you might be on the road to burnout and would benefit from talking to a counsellor, please feel free to contact us at **613-547-KIHC (5442)** and we can arrange a free 15-minute consultation to start getting you back on track!

Lindsay Dupuis, M.A.

Mental Health Counsellor



Lindsay Dupuis is a professional mental health counsellor who enjoys working with individuals affected by stress and burnout, symptoms of anxiety and depression, and everyday life concerns.

Lindsay graduated from the Psychology Specialist program at the University of Toronto with a minor in Canada's only Buddhism, Psychology, and Mental Health program. She also graduated at the top of her class with a post-graduate diploma in Behavioural Science Technology, and holds a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology.

Lindsay has also received specialized training in the Swedish Alnarp model of nature-based stress rehabilitation in Scandinavia, and is a professional member in good standing of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA).

Feel free to read more about Lindsay's counselling practice on her website:

www.lindsaydupuiscounselling.ca, or contact her directly at: lindsay.dupuis.counselling@gmail.com.