




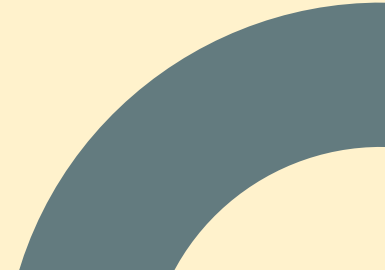
Needfinding: Student Burnout

Team EduCAUTION





How can academic
burnout be better
identified and managed
by faculty and students?



OUR INTERVIEWEES

2

Undergrads

3

Working Professionals

3

Grad students



Julie

★
Feels response to zoom fatigue doesn't improve with institutional support

Days just blend into one, even starting work soon doesn't excite her

Hard to change pace and find joy on a daily basis

★
Feels permanent side effects from Zoom fatigue, and has yet to recover despite having free time

FEEL

★
Little incentive to feel better, since we'll be here for so long

Dissatisfied by her free time

★
Trapped and lost, limited by resources which are not reinvigorating her

Feels that burdened by the expectation she should be energetic and recovered

Julia – Newly graduated, working professional

"I tend to sprint to the finish, I don't proactively monitor my wellness until I feel that it's fallen apart."

"I used to get extremely physically ill after pulling consecutive all nighters, e.g. finals week, and would often collapse only when I had the freedom to"

"I tend to take a few hours before classes and starting work just so I can calm myself from my day. Its procrastination but it also keeps me going"

"I would describe myself as a perfectionist and stress prone person, which I think is a toxic combination"

"I am prone to procrastination, because I need breaks but also want my assignments to be perfect"

SAY

Virtual learning was a lot better in ways; classes were easier, and I spoke to friends more"

I really suffered with zoom fatigue, right from the start

"Too much free time is not helpful for me"

"The only way I can recover from my crashes is with longer breaks"

Break duration is less important for recovery than intention and the deliberate execution of dedicated free time.

Awareness of being burnt out is not something that happens in real time, but after obligations free her to check in with herself.

Physical symptoms inform her of her exhaustion, rather than mental

THINK

Incorporating rest and relaxation for an hour or more on a daily basis was how she avoided burnout

Feels zoom burnout has caused a shift in her motivation, sense of hope, and engagement

Too much free time affects her self esteem (low because of low productivity)

Sees her perfectionist tendencies as toxic to her relationship with work.

Procrastinates starting her work until the late evening

Speaks to faculty mentors and professors for wellbeing and personal guidance

Coordinates social events weekly with friends

[In person learning]: wove in breaks at the start of the day

DO

Went outside to separate herself from her computer.

Meets new people to create a sense of momentum

Limits her schedule to be more cohesive (1 extracurricular vs. 3)

Spent < 2 % of her day in classes

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Jamie - University Lecturer

SAY

- wishes university would let faculty work from their school offices
- daughter has also been abnormally stressed during Zoom school
- "University lacks kindness and has an attitude of enforcement"
- initially switched from industry to teaching to avoid burnout
- wishes university could provide stipend for ergonomic home setups and childcare
- burned out from teaching so many classes + all the department meetings
- "It's hard to live in the Bay Area on solely a teaching salary"
- "Downside of being an approachable teacher" is that she hears a lot about student stress but feels like she can't do anything to help

THINK

- some professors haven't done enough to accommodate students
- university hasn't done enough to support faculty
- technology issues cause stress for both teachers and students
- wouldn't be teaching right now if she didn't have to
- burnout from teaching only started post-COVID

DO

- works long hours weekdays and weekends
- started going to physical therapy during the pandemic from being on computer all day
- held and shook head in despair
- uses Buddhify meditation app
- used swear words in frustration
- proactive about asking for student feedback in classes
- created a makeshift standing desk using a bookshelf
- listens to podcasts while walking dog to relax

FEEL

- loneliness from Zoom
- extra sympathetic to students
- frustrated, overworked, tired
- desperately in need of a break
- cynical about the university

Alice - Pre-Professional Graduate Student

SAY

department has lots of programming in place to encourage wellness

Has a lot of resources but they all "sound better than they actually are"

department hosts monthly town halls to crowdsource areas of improvement

Zoom burnout is "pretty real"

has more time to herself in the mornings with virtual learning

Didn't feel burnout in high school but had difficulty learning

Weren't many resources set up to help unhealthy but not failing students in HS

Didn't have a good study schedule and didn't know how to look for help in HS

More free time in undergrad that she would get so overwhelmed that she just wouldn't do anything about it

THINK

Trying to participate more and is easier because you can use the chat feature and see when other people are talking

there are benefits of being online

Wouldn't speak up in class as much if in person

Thinks she did feel burnout in (mostly) end of freshman year / beginning of sophomore year (which led to depression)

wellness programs set in place are nice but are just there to counteract the stress they place upon the students

everyone else in the program seems to be friends and she doesn't know how or when that happened

DO

takes walks to de-stress

trying to see the positive

participating in wellness small groups set up for her by the department

taking a class on wellness

Used to fall asleep all the time in class but doesn't anymore because she can make coffee whenever she wants

Uses planner pretty religiously now (whole daily schedule, all assignments)

Writing down all her thoughts on paper helps a lot because she's really forgetful

goes to physical class on a rotation basis

shares a room with a friend for social interaction and sanity

FEEL

even wellness meetings sometimes just feel like another responsibility

sitting all day

SICK OF IT ALL

being on camera and looking at the screen

being glued to the laptop for both class and homework

feels like she has no time to herself while still feeling lonely

Looking at a split screen is a struggle

currently just compartmentalizing it and suppressing stress

How Virtual Learning has Affected Burnout

62.5%

reported that virtual learning alleviated* their traditional stressors

and yet

100%

reported that virtual learning led to acute burnout

*to any degree

SUMMARY



TENSIONS

Zoom is both better and worse for student's health-- :) better accommodations but also :(loneliness



CONTRADICTIONS

Several students reported that Zoom improved their relationships. One student noted no significant changes in learning, just physical limitations.



SURPRISES

Some people don't associate unhealthy levels of stress with burnout



INSIGHTS

Landscape of burnout is changing due to Zoom fatigue. The difference between traditional stress & Zoom fatigue is that people can no longer escape their problems