

## Preventing job burnout

Job burnout is a state of physical, emotional or mental exhaustion combined with doubts about your competence and the value of your work. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are you more irritable and less patient with others?
- Do you feel disillusioned and no longer derive satisfaction from your accomplishments?
- Have your sleep or eating habits changed?
- Are you experiencing headaches or neck or lower back pain?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you might be suffering from job burnout. If you are suffering from job burnout, you are not alone. A combination of workplace factors and individual factors often contribute to burnout including lack of control, unclear expectations, workplace dynamics, differing values, poor job fit, extremes of activity, lack of social support and work-life imbalance.

Fortunately, if you believe that you are already suffering from burnout, there are a number of steps you can take to address the problem:

- **Set personal and professional goals and priorities.** Use them as a template for how you make decisions about your time and work.
- **Live a balanced life. Examine your lifestyle.** Are you spending enough time on the people and things most important in your life? Consider taking up a new hobby or class.
- **Determine what you can and cannot control.** And the best place to start is with yourself. Exercise, eat healthy foods, avoid self-medicating, and get plenty of sleep.
- **Learn to set boundaries.** This can include limiting work hours or making sure you take time off for lunch. It can also mean taking all your vacation or not taking work-related calls or checking your e-mail during nights or weekends.
- **It's okay to say no.** If the requests on your time don't match your goals and priorities, politely turn them down.
- **Talk to your supervisor.** Express your concerns, frustrations or suggestions in a constructive way to your supervisor. Share ideas and explore "win-win" opportunities.
- **Revitalize your job.** Find ways to break the monotony and make your job more enjoyable. Change your routine or volunteer for challenging projects. Come to work at a different time or redecorate your cube or office.
- **Find a mentor.** Mentors can be a valuable sounding board and source of ideas and advice. Find someone you respect, who has been around the block and shares your values.

For additional information on ways of preventing burnout, contact SupportLinc, your employee assistance program.